

Submission  
No 425

## INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

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My name is Louise Mavor.

This is my personal story:

I live on \_\_\_\_\_ with my husband and two boys, one of which attends Northern Beaches Secondary College Balgowlah. I am fighting against the building of the Beaches Link tunnel for him and his future.

On Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Gladys Berejiklian said: “The first thing we ask ourselves is what can we do to keep the people of New South Wales safe?” This was said in the context of Covid-19 however Gladys cannot be thinking about the safety of the people of the Northern Beaches when an *unfiltered* exhaust stack 20 metres high will be constructed 200 metres from a secondary school with an enrolment of over 1000 pupils. Not only will these students of Northern Beaches Secondary Campus Balgowlah be exposed to constant car emissions from the exhaust stack, they will also be exposed to years of construction noise from the estimated 795 heavy vehicles and 1850 light vehicles working day and night throughout their school day. This will create an estimated increase of 16-21 decibels of noise above normal levels every day and all day.

My son will be doing his HSC when construction commences and given the noise level will be that of a loud television I imagine this will not be conducive to his efforts to learn and study effectively.

You all have presumably completed your HSC year. Did you have to endure the noise level of a loud t.v. for every minute of every day of your most important academic year? The year that determines which university you do or don't get into.

Not only are you deleteriously effecting my son's education with the construction of this tunnel in front of his school, but you are also depriving him of his “back yard”. As I mentioned, we live on Sydney Rd and the Balgowlah Oval is our back yard. It is where my boys spend hours every week of the year practicing their footie kicks. My husband and I exercise there and our local AFL teams all play there, providing our tight knit community with an enjoyable green space to congregate.

Finally, once you have deafened and distracted him; then deprived him of his local green space you propose to poison him with an unfiltered exhaust stack 400 meters away from his home.

My son loves where we live – it's close to his school, the Oval, the bus stops, the shops and all his mates. The Beaches Link tunnel is going to make his life very stressful and unpleasant for his remaining years living at home. He will be constantly exposed to the noise, heavy vehicles, pollution and aggravation that this tunnel is going to bring his idyllic life. It makes me so sad to think how this project will possibly change his life drastically.

This is why I object vehemently to this project.

**(a) the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio,**

**(b) the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options,**

Why is Sydney trying to put more cars on the road by constructing a tunnel, when the rest of the world is trying to reduce the use of private cars? There is so much written about options for reducing traffic e.g. <https://www.smartertransport.uk/smarter-cambridge-transport-urban-congestion-enquiry/>. In this article congestion reduction measures fall into two categories: temporary and virtuous. Temporary measures free up road capacity that is soon filled by induced demand: people adapt their lifestyles to prevailing road conditions. Such measures are therefore worth pursuing only if they either buy time or lay the foundations for more radical interventions. They state that measures in this category should *not* be considered as solutions.

Virtuous measures start a feedback loop that induces more and more people to make a modal shift *away* from driving. Making a bus service more convenient or cheaper will increase patronage, which means that the service can be run more frequently and for longer hours, making it convenient and attractive to more people. These are the changes transport policy must support.

**(c) the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns,**

The cost per kilometre of the Beaches Link Tunnel is the most expensive of any road tunnel in NSW. A rail system, on the other hand, would cost less and will not funnel thousands more cars into the already overly congested township of Manly. On any weekend, traffic down Sydney Road into Manly is at a standstill due to the high number of day trippers. A tunnel is not going to make their travel time any quicker. All it will do is bring more frustrated drivers into the northern beaches trying to find a parking space. This is a tunnel into a dead end.

**(d) the consideration of the governance and structure of the project including the use of a 'development partner' model,**

**(e) the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project.**

Goal: a 10% reduction in traffic. This will affect residents in Mosman only. Manly will in no way have a 10% reduction in traffic. The project will benefit only a very small proportion of local residents. For tunnel users, any time gained will be offset by the long delays they will experience in Manly and neighbouring suburbs.

The Northern Beaches have recently been adversely affected by an extensive reduction in the number and frequency of buses to the suburbs. We understand that this is yet another misguided effort by the state government to privatize the public transport system. Your \$10 billion could be spent on upgrading the public transport system and penalizing the use of private car.

**(f) the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders,**

**(g) the extent to which changes in population growth, work and travel patterns due to the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted on the original cost benefit ratio,**

**(h) whether the NSW Government should publish the base-case financial model and benefit cost ratio for the for the project and its component parts,**

**(i) whether the project is subject to the appropriate levels of transparency and accountability that would be expected of a project delivered by a public sector body,**

**(j) the impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems.**

Plans for the Beaches tunnel include the decimation of Burnt Creek and the subsequent wiping out of the endangered grey flying fox population; the removal of thousands of trees to put in a six lane freeway along Wakehurst Parkway; the pollution of Middle Harbour with the heavy metals and pesticides that construction will wash into our pristine waterways and the removal of Balgowlah's popular green spaces – the Balgowlah golf course and the Balgowlah Oval. How can this be justified? Climate change is upon us and we know the causes and we know the antidotes. Increasing fossil fuel emissions and pulling up trees and green spaces is simple foolhardiness and shows complete disregard for the health of our planet and our people.

**(k) the adequacy of processes for accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally.**

I live on Sydney Road near the cross streets of Rickard and West streets. My immediate vicinity will become avenues for rat runs. These streets are extremely narrow and I hold concerns for the safety of their residents and all pedestrians and drivers passing through these streets as people try to either avoid the congestion that the construction will bring or try to access the tunnel entrance once it is completed.

**(l) the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin Point and Dawn Fraser Baths.**

**(m) any other related matter.**

Please **DO NOT** go ahead with the construction of this tunnel. There are better options available, put forward by people far more experienced than I. I am simply a local resident who believes strongly that this plan is foolhardy and ill conceived. We need to devise ways to get people out of their cars and improving the health of our environment, not the exact opposite, which this plan is clearly conceived to do.