

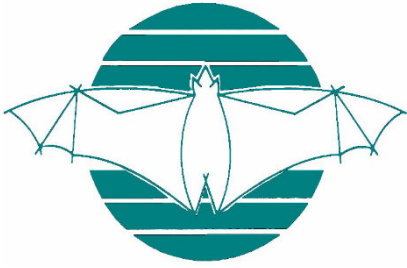
Submission  
No 454

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

**Organisation:** Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc.

**Date Received:** 18 June 2021

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# Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc.

Post Office Box 607, Gordon NSW 2072 Australia

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2767#tab-submissions>

## Submission to Impacts of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches link Parliamentary Inquiry

Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc. (KBCS) addresses the Term of Reference, (j) **the impact on the environment.**

KBCS is a community organisation which is concerned at the loss of habitat in the Sydney Basin for bats. Willoughby Council has recorded the following bat species in the Local Government Area which includes the Flat Rock Creek to Northbridge area affected by the proposed tunnel and feeder roads.

- Grey-headed Flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus* which is listed as vulnerable under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.
- Gould's Wattled Bat *Chalinolobus gouldii* and Lesser Long-eared Bat *Nyctophilus geoffroyi*. These microbats weigh less than 20 and 12 grams respectively. These small mammals feed on insects and contribute to the web of life in forests.

The removal of over 3000 trees for the Beaches Tunnel alone, including 300 in Flat Rock Gully - Northbridge and over 2500 along the Wakehurst Parkway and next to Manly Dam will be a significant loss of habitat especially for these microbats which have smaller territories. Flat Rock Gully is a key part of the network of wildlife corridors across Sydney required to maintain biodiversity. About 6.77 hectares of bushland will be removed for the construction footprint (EIS Chapter 19, p.19.9) at Flat Rock Gully.

For the microbats which live in the Flat Rock Gully, the bisection of the wildlife corridor at the dive site for the tunnel will be highly detrimental to these local species.

There is also expected to be a drawdown of the groundwater of 22m which is likely to lead to there not being enough groundwater for the remaining trees to survive. This will lead to further loss of healthy habitat in this part of Sydney.

Some of the bushland at Flat Rock Gully has been regenerated by Willoughby City Council and Bushcare Volunteers over 25 years. Destruction of this area of regenerated and planted bushland is unacceptable. Wildlife like the bats will not survive ever-diminishing areas.

Over 390 trees are targeted for potential destruction at Flat Rock Gully but only two-thirds are planned to be replaced. Yet the NSW Government is encouraging Local Governments to plant more trees to green Sydney to shield the community from some of the impacts of climate change.

KBCS considers that there should be no further loss of bushland or greenspace for community access. KBCS considers that using offsets to replace trees elsewhere is an unacceptable solution.

KBCS is very aware of the threats of climate change to bats. It is urgent that Australia takes these threats seriously and makes every project as carbon neutral as possible. We call on the NSW Government to replace this transport link with a public transport alternative instead of the current project which will increase car usage in Sydney and the northern beaches.