

Submission
No 459

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 18 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

Western Harbour Tunnel Submission:

Dear Honourable Member Mookhey,

I would like to issue a formal complaint about the consequences of the Western Harbour Tunnel Proposal as a resident of the area. I am cognizant of the industrial activity next to the Parramatta River being a student researching the impacts of this activity and understand historic chemical contamination. As there is an abundance of chemical waste present in the river's sediment, it would be disastrous if these chemicals were agitated. If this chemical waste was stirred, the ecosystem thriving in the Parramatta river would be impacted significantly, yet, current measures to reduce this are inadequate.

The proposed alleviation procedures, including shallow silt curtains, will not contain toxic chemicals in the sediment from the situation of the construction site. Prone to high waves, wind activity and currents, the environment from Birchgrove to Waverton is at risk. Mishaps, like dredge spoil spills, must also be examined.

I am also aggrieved with the information present in the accessible environmental impact documents. The WHT Environmental Impact Statement (EIS, January 2020) and Submissions Report (September 2020) both disappoint in recognising the key effects of the tunnel on the aquatic environment. In addition, the Environmental Risk Analysis and Revised Environmental Measures requires greater evaluation, comprising the risk of poisoning ecosystems, humans, and marine life.

The possibility for resuspension and redistribution of sediments which are contaminated , and the dissemination of dissolved toxic chemicals in the water were not assessed properly. Chemical levels in the Parramatta River are over that of the suggested standards and only include chemicals which are forecasted to be uprooted in Berrys Bay. Such pollutants can detriment and destroy the distinctive and endangered marine life, some of which are only seen in the Parramatta River. The deliberation to historic remediation efforts of this river is not being outlined. It is my opinion that this degree of negligence to the safety of the river ecosystems is outrageous. The Eastern blue groper (*Achoerodus viridis*) and Eastern blue devil (*Paraplesiops bleekeri*) are just two species that will be disturbed if the chemicals are expelled into the waterways residing towards North Head, South Head and Middle Harbour.

Moreover, the Contaminants Report (Golder-Douglas 2017) was commercial in confidence until after the public submission period had ended. This meant that the project was not exposed to adequate amounts of transparency necessary to judge the Western Harbour Tunnel's influence. Aspects of the report were only uncovered by the Sydney Morning Herald article later. Personally, I feel perturbed that the government has not seemingly inspected likely outcomes of the Western Harbour Tunnel project. The effect on both marine and human life will be significant for years to come. Toxicants which are released will gather in benthic animals, causing the detrimental motion of toxins up the food chain to birds, fish and humans. From the perspective of a student examining the ramifications of factories lining the Parramatta River, I am sorry to say this recent proposal will likely halt and even regress much advancement in making an unpolluted and biodiverse harbour.