

Submission
No 461

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 18 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

Calbina Rd
Northbridge NSW 2063

18 June 2021

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
Chair
Public Works Committee
NSW Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Public.Works@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Re Inquiry into the Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee,

My name is _____ and I reside with my family in Calbina Rd. Northbridge.

I have a number of issues with the proposed Northern Beaches project. Some of these concerns relate to the overall project and some are specific concerns with the effect on our local area.

The project is justified thus “This would also provide a direct connection to the Warringah Freeway corridor, improving journeys from the northern beaches to major employment centres and reduce pressure on the Spit at Mosman”. Westconnex Updated Strategic Business Case 2015

Term of Reference (a) the adequacy of the business case for the project, the cost benefits ratio

Huge Cost/Little Benefit

The project had a budgeted cost of \$14 billion. Latest estimates have increased to \$18billion.

The Northern Beaches compared to South West Sydney

The Northern Beaches area has a population of 252,878 in 2016. In 2006 the population was 225,106. The area has a population growth of less than 1%, the slowest in the city. Future growth will be equally anaemic with future housing to increase by only 450 residences in the next ten years. By comparison the rapidly growing South-west of the city has a population of 1million.

No major institution is located in the area with the exception of the new Northern Beaches hospital. No major employer is located there and the only major shopping centre is the Warringah Mall. Several smaller shopping centres along the strip, for example Warriewood Square and these cater for the local population. Several pockets of light industry are present and there is a concentration of tourist activities around Manly. A business park is located at Frenchs Forest.

The M5 to southwest Sydney is the home to any number of major institutions, gives access to the airport and port to thousands of businesses and is the main route out of the city to Melbourne and Canberra.

Transport Usage and Flows

In 2016 127,300 Northern Beaches residents were employed, 70,703 of these drove to work, 4400 were passengers in cars. 14,450 travelled by bus.

The traffic volumes along the Spit Bridge from 2011 to 2018 have not increased. Northbound and Southbound remain at 36,000 and 33,400 daily.

Traffic volumes along Forest Way similarly also remain stable. Flows on Warringah Rd at Beacon Hill have increased slightly between 2009 and 2018 from 26,000 per day to 27,500.

Traffic on Military Rd has declined. Traffic peaked in 2010/11 at 27,000 per day and in 2018 had reduced to 21,000. In 1985 traffic flows on Military Rd. were 23,500 per day. Traffic flows are lower on Military Rd now than they were thirty years ago.

According to the last census the use of cars in travelling to work was 20% higher on the Northern Beaches than in the rest of the city. There was a corresponding lower use of public transport.

Is there really a justification for the huge expenditure on this project? The Beaches area is economically the slowest growing region of the city. The population is small, just 250,000 and the rate of growth low. It seems to be particularly unappealing to migrant populations as the Northern Beaches has the highest percentage of Australian born population in the city.

By comparison the anticipated traffic flows on the M5/M8 by 2031 total 49,500. The anticipated cost was \$4.335 billion.

What will be the usage on the Northern Beaches Tunnel? I would suggest that it will not be nearly enough to justify the huge investment.

I am not aware of a publicly released business study for this project. The public should see the "numbers" to justify this huge public expenditure. You can't spend \$18 billion so Bill and Mavis from Avalon can get to the Airport 41 minutes faster for their annual trip to London/Darwin. Perhaps the justification is the one hundred Northern Beaches residents employed at Macquarie Park can save 23 minutes on their journey. Nor is it justified to save me some time on my annual summer trip to beach. This sort of traffic has little economic consequence.

Terms of Reference (k) The adequacy of processes for assessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally.

Local Northbridge Issues

Flat Rock Drive

This is the location for a proposed dive site. You state that there will be 60-70 truck movements per hour, 30-35 B Doubles in and out each hour. The sites are located at the base of a saddle steep inclines head out of the site in both directions.

Spoil Removal

I drove the route last week traffic when it was free of traffic. There were no impediments to progress as I drove from bottom to top heading South at 60km per hour. It took 40 seconds to complete the 400 metre ascent.

From a standing start, a fully loaded B Double might average 10km per hour up the hill. At that speed it will take 4 minutes to get to the top. If you persist with the plan release from the site every two minutes it will be probable you will have three or four B-Doubles on this 400 metre stretch of road at one time. A B double is 19 metres in length. Twenty percent of this stretch of road could be taken up with trucks.

You work it out. Will this be an efficient enough method of spoil removal? I suggest it is unlikely you will be able to remove the required amount of tunnel spoil at the required rate to keep this task on time and on budget. This echoes other projects around the city.

Pollutants

The Flat Rock Gully Reserve and the nearby Baseball Diamond was previously the site of the local dump. On this topic the book "Managing Our Waste: an environmental history of Flat Rock Creek and the Willoughby Incinerator 1900-2011" by Robert F McKillop makes interesting reading. Little control was enforced on the types of domestic and industrial waste deposited. Toxic chemicals, lead paints and unexploded WW2 ordinance are known to have been amongst the deposits.

Difficult Choices and Site Remediation

If this project is undertaken and if one of the two Flat Rock Gully sites is destroyed, the site will have to be remediated. The Baseball Diamond is easily rebuilt; the bush reserve on the other hand will take several decades to restore. The 10 hectares required for this job is 3% of the total bush habitat of the Willoughby Council area. The bush in the city is a rare commodity and should be valued and not thought of as a cheap and easy option.

As for considering the construction shed being converted to a basketball court at completion. No thanks. The traffic around here on Saturday is appalling now with the Saturday sporting activities. Netball, the Willoughby Leisure Centre, Shore Ovals, and the St. Aloysius sports grounds create large numbers of traffic movements which originate from out of area.

Enough is enough.

Regards