

Submission  
No 441

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 18 June 2021

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Partially  
Confidential

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns and relevance in objecting to the above project.

I have lived in the area all my life and I have worked and so travelled to the city and North Sydney using public transport for 34 years.

My sister and I are property owners in Dudley Street Balgowlah, which we have been told will be compulsorily acquired by the government to build the Beaches Link tunnel. We own adjoining townhouses which were built by our father. My father had a long career as a builder on the Northern Beaches due to the high quality and solid build of his constructions.

And our townhouses are no exception, so the sentimental value of our properties alone, is immeasurable. Our plan was to be neighbours at some stage of our lives, remove the dividing fence in the back yard and have our families enjoy a large back yard, whilst cherishing the legacy our father left us.

These dreams, due to the proposed Beaches link tunnel, have now been quashed.

However, my reasons for objecting to this project are not just personal reasons and I shall draw your attention to particular items in the Terms of Reference for this Inquiry.

- (a) The Benefit Cost Ratio has been calculated on pre-Covid data and no additional analysis post-Covid has been performed. The EIS is based on traffic data from 2011 and 2016.

According to the RMS, trips had already decreased along the routes prior to Covid.

With reference to item (g) our post Covid reality renders the business case for the project void. Business executives agree that working from home is here to stay, it is the “new normal”. I have family members and friends who have been working from home for 16 months and have been told by their employer that this is the permanent arrangement.

The business case of this project was also conducted prior to improvements in the public transport system, such as the B-Line bus and its designated parking stations.

With reference to item (b) the consideration of alternative options, the Committee for Health and Community Services published recommendations regarding future toll roads in 2017. A key recommendation was that any toll road proposals by the government should be assessed against public transport options and be published with the business case. Based on the EIS, this has been overlooked and no other alternative option has been examined.

The EIS demonstrates that the project is **not** a congestion solution, in fact, upon analysis, numerous congested intersections across the Lower North Shore will reach failure point, including those on Military Road.

This is a point in reference to item (e), meeting the original goals of the project, being to reduce congestion and travel times.

The EIS has also claimed improbable time savings on trips, such as claiming a trip from North Sydney to Leichhardt will be reduced by 20 minutes. Well, currently on average at peak times, a trip from North Sydney to Leichhardt takes 20 minutes (!!!).

In relation to item (c) with regards to cost blow outs, the EIS has stated a long list of risks involved with the projects, all of which will come with their own significant costs if they eventuate. From health and safety for communities, to environmental issues, to damage to existing buildings due to the new tunnelling methods never used before.

Items (f) (h) and (i) all involve transparency, and when it comes to this project, there has been a great lack of transparency with the public. This also includes the Parliamentary Inquiry, which my sister and I learnt about by chance.

The Inquiry into the WestConnex project found that greater transparency with the public regarding public business cases should be employed. However, with the Beaches Link tunnel, twice the community has submitted freedom of information requests for the business case documents and twice have been denied.

In closing, based on independent studies on this project, the business case has been performed on old, outdated and irrelevant data due to our post Covid world. The objectives of the project will **not** be achieved such as decrease travelling times and ease congestion at numerous intersections but exacerbate them. The EIS has stated a long list of significant risks in the project all which come with huge costs if they eventuate. There has been a lack of transparency and accuracy in the information and documents released to the public.

On a personal level, there is a conflict with time between the outcome of the Inquiry and the timeline stated in the compulsory acquisition letter we have received from the government yesterday, 17<sup>th</sup> June. We have been told that we have a minimum of 6 months and possibly a maximum of 9 months to reach an agreement with the government. We have also been informed that the Inquiry may take up to 12 months. The Inquiry may result in the government not proceeding with this project, however, if it takes 12 months to reach that outcome, we would have already lost our homes, and our father's legacy will be enjoyed by others.

I would appreciate your consideration of this submission, **and request that my name be withheld.**

Yours faithfully,