

**Submission
No 550**

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

Name: Ms Mary Cahill

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Mary Cahill

KIRRIBILLI NSW 2061

18th of June, 2021

Regarding Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

I am writing to share my concerns about the proposed Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) and upgrades to the Warringah Freeway. I do not support the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link because I believe the negative impact on our local community is high as is the risk of cost over runs. Finally, I don't believe the project will be able to deliver the original goals in this Covid / post-Covid period.

Below is a summary of my five concerns, which I submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in March 2020. I was both surprised and disappointed to learn that the 1400 submissions made during the consultation period, triggered no amendments to the design. Furthermore, since the period of lock down and the subsequent move to remote and flexible working, I believe the rationale for the project is less convincing.

1. The use of Berry Street as an entrance point to the WHT

The North Sydney Council district has become an educational hub with a rapid increase in enrolments in the past year and growth projected to continue. This district provides education to young children in daycare / preschool up to adults attending the Australian Catholic University. Local residents and students from further afield, utilize these facilities. I am concerned that pedestrian access to the local educational institutions will be negatively impacted by the location of the proposed Berry Street portal. Foot traffic from North Sydney Station and the new Metro Station will need to negotiate this very busy road. Furthermore, I assume the Berry Street Portal will have priority (traffic signaling) over the intersecting Miller Street. Peak hour traffic on Miller Street is currently heavily congested. I anticipate the new design will negatively impact on the flow of traffic along Miller St in particular impeding traffic turning right from the Pacific Highway into Miller Street. I witness dangerous turns being made by drivers across busy intersection in North Sydney regularly putting passengers and pedestrians at risk alike. I perceive the current design which draws more cars into a central business district and educational hub, as an outdated design and out of step with modern cities. If the WHT is to proceed, the entrance portal should be relocated outside the North Sydney CBD.

2. Loss of green space

North Sydney Council area is densely populated and yet has proportionately less green space. Access to green space is under increased demand with an influx of daily visitors to the North Sydney CBD and educational hub. I work with children, adolescents and their families addressing developmental and wellbeing matters. Access to green space is essential to child development, along with physical and mental wellbeing. As the design stands, there is a loss of green space. Should the WHT and Warringah Freeway upgrades go ahead, I would like to see a more innovative design providing increased amenity to the local area (land bridges with sporting fields included for example). With population growth in the Lower North Shore, access to sporting fields with adequate parking is challenging.

3. Ventilation design of the tunnel

During my career in Education spanning 20 years, I have observed an increase in students with complex needs requiring high levels of support. A particularly challenging combination of need is: respiratory concerns such as asthma combined with neurodevelopmental disorders. In this case, such students need higher levels of adult supervision periodically through out the day to observe and respond to breathing difficulties appropriately. This was particularly relevant in 2019 when we experienced an unprecedented number of days of poor air quality. I am concerned that the current design of the tunnel ventilation is outdated. I don't feel confident that we have adequate data on *current* air quality. I was surprised to see no data of air quality measures for Miller Street in the EIS given the number of students educated on this street (Monte St Angelo, St Thomas Preschool, Wenona, St Mary's Primary School, KU Grandstand, Marist College, Jacaranda Cottage and North Sydney Boys High School) Furthermore, the design isn't 'future proofed' as I see it. I believe we need to be prepared for future periods of poor air quality. Should the WHT proceed, I ask for at least the capacity for retrofitting of filtration to be included in the design.

4. The use of Ridge Street East to access storage in St Leonards Park.

Despite reported light truck usage for the Ridge Street East, I object to the use of this access point for the following reasons: a) the street and intersection at Miller Street has become increasingly congested in the past 18 months with increased enrollments at St Mary's Catholic School. I suspect the Ridge Street East access point and associated loss of parking spots, was considered many years ago during the early stages of development. Road usage and need for parking has intensified in the past 18 months as such, this design places an additional burden on this intersection and the immediate community. Earlier in the year, a 7 year old student of St Mary's crossing the road with her mother and two younger siblings was almost hit by a bus running a red light (matter reported to Transport NSW) b) St Mary's student utilize St Leonard's Park for Physical Education classes as well as play during lunchtime. Lunchtime use of St Leonards Park commenced in 2020 due to increased enrolments and the need for additional space. Given the recency of this arrangement, I wonder if this was considered in the planning process?

5. No safety provisions for the increased number of trucks on the roads during construction.

The risks as I see it fall into two categories: reduction in air quality and danger to pedestrians due to increased traffic. Additional trucks on our local roads to move excavated material will increase exhaust fumes. The negative impact could be mitigated by the use of non-diesel powered trucks or offset by the introduction of electric buses. To address the risk posed to young pedestrians, movement of these trucks should not occur during school pick-up and drop-off (as per school zone hours).

Improvements to the design will increase the cost of the project. I would like to see an improved design, as per suggestions above, and subsequent costing. Will the rationale for the project stand after an acceptable design is costed?

Regards,
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