

**Submission
No 551**

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

Name: Ms Anita Tymkiw

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SUBMISSION TO NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

I write to you as a parent of a student attending NBSC Balgowlah Boys Campus (Bally). I am deeply concerned about the impact the Northern Beaches Link will have on all who study and work at the school.

Bally has over 1,200 students in a very constrained space. Construction for the tunnel project is expected to span 5 to 7 years meaning at least 2,500 students plus teachers and staff, could cumulatively suffer detrimental effects at some point during the project. It is also possible that one or two cohorts may suffer disruption and noise due to the tunnel construction for the entirety of their high school education.

The EIS for the Northern Beaches Link tunnel indicates that construction and operational elements will significantly impact the learning environment and well-being of students, teachers and staff. The EIS notes that a 24-hour construction site will be located across the road from the school. Approximately 1,690 light and heavy truck movements are expected around the site each day. That's a truck movement every 2 and a half minutes during construction hours which presents both disruptive noise for learning and safety concerns for students as they enter and leave the school.

The noise from construction activities is expected to exceed the designated noise management level for an internal classroom at various stages of the project. Vibration will also result from heavy vehicles, blasting and excavation. On top of this, the school will lose access to the Council oval throughout the years of construction. The oval has become an important space for sport and general well-being since the student population outgrew the capacity of the school grounds. This is particularly disappointing given there are no other viable options for a sports field in the near vicinity.

The EIS also tells us that dust and contaminants are likely to impact air quality during demolition and earthworks. Once construction is complete, air quality will continue to be impacted by tunnel ventilation stacks that are just 320m from the school. Ongoing detrimental health impacts from poor air quality will likely result from the exhaust of higher traffic volumes.

Once the Beaches Link construction goes ahead, Bally's playground, school hall and G Block classrooms will be immediately adjacent to disruptive noise and air pollution. This quadrant of the school is used for every aspect of school life encompassing teaching and learning, exams, all types of gatherings as well as sport. As the hall is too small for whole school assemblies, the school's outdoor space is not just a play area but critical for school meetings and presentations.

Ongoing traffic impacts around the school also present challenges for safe access and the wellbeing of those on site. An expanded and signalled intersection will be built at the north-east boundary of the school. Existing traffic noise already impairs hearing capacity in the playground and the simultaneous acceleration of trucks, buses and cars in 3 directions at every light change of this new intersection will amplify existing noise pollution.

Increased traffic in surrounding streets and the likely removal of bus and parking bays on what will be an access road to the tunnel, will make safe access to the school more difficult. There has been no consultation on the adequate provision for school buses, drop off/pick up areas and staff parking and I am concerned this has not been considered. Likewise, numerous questions

about traffic management regarding potential dangers for bicycle and pedestrian access need to be addressed. What reassurance can be provided that routine access, transfers for excursions and community attendance can be made safe? Rapid egress in an emergency also presents risk management concerns given students, staff and visitors will be faced with busy traffic conditions on surrounding roads. Will these issues form part of the consultation program?

There is no doubt that construction and operation of the Beaches Link tunnel presents significant impacts to the Bally Boys community, yet there has been no discussion about mitigative measures with the school Executive or P&C. The school community has requested our local member and the Department of Education quantify construction and operational impacts of the tunnel on the school and that proper protective measures address these impacts. We also want to know what contingencies will be put in place for exams and classes if acoustic impacts cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.

It is vitally important that Bally Boys is addressed as a significant stakeholder throughout the Beaches Link construction. There is a desperate need for the school to be given an advocate so it can be adequately represented throughout the planning and construction phases. It is also critical that funding is provided to enable protective measures for school buildings and student access.

I appeal to the members of the Public Works Committee to help safeguard the learning environment and safety of Bally students. Likewise, I appeal to the Committee to make recommendations that will ensure the school it is not overlooked or unfairly disadvantaged.

Yours sincerely

Anita Tymkiw
18 June 2021