

**Submission
No 554**

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

Name: Ms A Hodge

Date Received: 18 June 2021

18/6/21

To whom it may concern,

I object to the construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Tunnel for the following reasons:

- 1. It has poor economics and does not merit funding, especially following the pandemic and the accumulation of massive public debt.** An economic model of the proposed tunnel shows that the people of NSW will likely have to subsidise a private operator for between \$5 - \$8 billion (if the operator buys a 100% stake in the Tunnel).
- 2. It is not a strategic priority.** In February 2020, Infrastructure Australia published its updated list of what it considers to be the high priority infrastructure projects (see Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure Priority List – Project and Initiative Summaries, Feb 2020). The projects are grouped High Priority Initiatives and Priority Initiatives. This project is classified a “Priority Initiative” not a “High Priority Project”.
- 3. It has no provision for public transport or a commitment for a public transport lane in the tunnel.** This misses a massive opportunity to reduce cars and congestion across the already heavily congested Northern Beaches.
- 4. It will release toxic and unfiltered gases in the close proximity of schools, childcare and exercise areas for children.** The proposed smokestacks are massive, unsightly and unfiltered, set to release double the maximum recommended limit of particulates recommended by the WHO and Balgowlah Boys High School is only stones throw away, as is a preschool and the Balgowlah Oval which hosts much sport activity.
- 5. It takes significant resources that would be better spent on rapid public transport options and capacity which is completely lacking in the Northern Beaches,** such as metro infrastructure from the Chatswood Metro Station to Dee Why (via the Northern Beaches Hospital Precinct) or from Crows Nest to Dee Why via the densely inhabited and heavily congested area of Military Rd Mosman.
- 6. It will lead to unsightly construction and traffic chaos for 6 years.** 500 trucks are planned each day and night to dredge up earth from 2023 to 2028, causing massive noise, congestion and dust issues for surrounding areas.
- 7. It will lead to the destruction of open spaces, pristine bushland and lead to wastewater pollution into critical and stressed environments.** I understand that 39 football fields of bushland will be cleared as well as 2,000 trees including critical habitat like Flat Rock Gully and some 425 000 litres of waste-water will be washed into Manly Lagoon, polluting an already stressed natural environment and affecting local wildlife and residents significantly. At Middle Harbour, toxic chemicals in the harbour sediment will be disturbed during dredging, posing a major threat to the marine environment and local parks like Clontarf. The open space of Balgowlah Golf Course will be largely destroyed. Many of the areas we love and use will be threatened or completely destroyed by this development.
- 8. It is not aligned with government policies such as NSW’s commitment to Net Zero by 2050 or the Greater Sydney Region Plan 2018,** which requires us to conserve green areas and encourage public transport, cycling and walkability, to create a more liveable, productive and sustainable city.
- 9. It will lead to more congestion on our local roads, both during and after construction.** It creates new sets of traffic lights and will increase the number of cars, since it will make public transport an even less viable option on the Northern Beaches and even more slow compared to driving. This just further encourages residents to use cars as we have no better alternative while our population and density continues to grow.

The recent disasters (drought, bushfires, floods and the Covid-19 Virus Pandemic) have placed extraordinary pressure on the current and future budgets of the State and Federal Government. Please do not support a project that has poor economics, lower strategic priority and will only encourage more cars, pollution and destruction of the beautiful Northern Beaches which we have chosen as our home because of its natural beauty. Please reject this proposal so our government is encouraged to find a better alternative instead.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Your sincerely,

A. Hodge