

Submission
No 557

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

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Parliamentary Inquiry on Beaches Link Tunnel

I am writing as a resident of beautiful North Balgowlah. An area I choose to move into back in 2006 due to abundance of trees, green spaces, proximity to Manly dam and the abundance of wildlife. It takes us 5-10 minutes to walk up and we are in Manly Dam and three minute walk and we are on the pathway that winds around Burnt Bridge Creek. It has been the perfect environment to bring up our 11 year old son. From when he was a tiny baby when you could take him down to see the ducks at the pond by the golf course or a shady walk by Burnt BridgeCreek to get him to go for an afternoon nap and to now where he happily cycles round Manly Dam and the other local cycles paths up along the Wakehurst Parking with his dad and his mates or camps there with his scout group.

It was hard to believe at times that you were living in a city with 5 million people when you surrounded so easily and quickly by wildlife and nature. From the birdlife to the water dragons and you never knew who might be around the corner from you when walking through the dam. Out dog has certainly been surprised by more than one wallaby or kangaroo over the years.

Burnt Bridge Creek and Manly Dam provide not only our family and other local residents but also our overseas visitors with a unique experience of our local bushland and it's inhabitants from flying foxes to echidnas, possums, bandicoots, turtles, eels and many many birds. So many of the flora and fauna in this already threatened by the encroachment of humanity into their world.

I am shocked at the EIS regarding the beaches link tunnel project and the widespread devastation that it will bring the area.

When the concept of the tunnel was originally raised, I was originally in support but having read the EIS grave concerns started to develop around the EIS which made me question my support. As a resident living in an area that will be directly impacted for along period of time during the construction, I believe my voice and the voice of my fellow residents should be heard. My main areas of concern are:

ENVIRONMENT: The impact of the local environment will be huge to our community with rare open green space being permanently removed including over 2500 established trees without any local biodiversity offsets

The EIS has stated that the tunnel construction in North Balgowlah and Seaforth will cause the water table in these two areas to fall resulting in the natural ground water flows into Burnet Bridge Creek to fall by 96%. This much loved creek will dry up only running after significant rain with massive impacts on the wildlife that currently thrives there and then knock on downstream impact to Manly Lagoon. Additionally who knows the impact this drop in the natural water table will have to all the large trees in the suburb, in our local public schools North Balgowlah has almost 100 trees in its grounds.

The widening of Wakehurst parking from Seaforth to Warringah Road will create polluted run off water from even moderate rain events during construction. The EIS states that due to the topographical constraints this can not be controlled. This is simply not acceptable.

The additional concerns about the dredging of Middle Harbour end the impact on the marine environment with silt curtains being the only means of protection during construction. The last mainland population of little penguins live on the middle harbour foreshore between Seaforth and Castlecrag with the EIS acknowledging that they will move out of the permanently such will be the damage to their environment.

Ventilation Stacks: Global health experts agree that pollution from traffic exhaust fumes poses serious health risks. The emissions can cause respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema and cancer. There are several schools, preschools, childcare centres and sporting fields within the vicinity of the proposed stacks that will sit either end of North Balgowlah's boundaries. The increased level of pollution from what we are currently experiencing and why we moved into the area is unacceptable. We should not have to experience pollution levels similar to an inner city. Similar issues are being experienced and similar concerns being raised by other areas impacted by the overall project. The lack of filtration for these stacks is not acceptable. I don't care if no other stacks in Australia are filtered. Just because this is the way its always been doesn't make it right. Our current premier advocated back in 2008 when she was in opposition that she understood the health and safety implications of unfiltered stacked - nothing has changed since then so why aren't the current stacks being filtered? Or is it different depending on what side of the house you are sitting in?

Business Case: I no longer feel the business case stacks up. The figures put forward in the EIS indicate only a minimal reduction in the traffic flowing through Mosman for a significant and disproportionate use of public funds. I feel that the assumptions for traffic used as a justification of the build in the EIS have not factored in lifestyle and working life changes that have taken place as a result of the ongoing pandemic.

I understand what the project is trying to achieve but don't believe its current format it should be proceed because I feel the costs far out-weigh the benefits. 2020 should have taught us to look after what we have, to look after and look out for one another and cherish and look after the environment that we have been blessed with. A solution for the traffic situation has to be found but I don't believe any more that THIS tunnel is the answer. Don't let us be part of destroying something beautiful for no real gain.