

Supplementary
Submission
No 526a

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

Name: Mr John Berry

Date Received: 18 June 2021

Dear Committee Members

Submission - Impact of the Beaches Link Tunnel

Thank you for giving me and other citizens the opportunity to comment on the Western Harbour (WHT) and Beaches Link (BLT) tunnel projects.

My name is John Berry and I am a resident of Cammeray. I strongly object to the Western Harbour Tunnel because of the potential for damage or destruction to ancient aboriginal heritage.

My submission and objections addresses the following Terms of Reference –

BEACHES LINK TUNNEL – POTENTIAL DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION TO ANCIENT ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

The lower north shore area of Sydney area has a rich indigenous heritage dating back 4500. There is evidence of Aboriginal occupation throughout the study area. Aboriginal occupation focused on accessing resources from diverse ecological areas, seasons and conditions. Occupation sites, hunting, travel and inter-clan contact would have been associated with coastal areas, smaller rivers, creeks and swamps. Aboriginal people have left us with a rich cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, which needs to be preserved. (1)

OBJECTION

I object to the potential damage or destruction to known and unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage within the construction footprint of the Beaches Link Tunnel project. The EIS identifies several known Aboriginal sites in the study area, within 50 metres of the construction zone ranging in significance from "low" to "moderate high". (2)

THE PROBLEM

The EIS states that the potential risk of damage to known terrestrial Aboriginal as "negligible". (3) However large construction projects can be unpredictable. For example, during the construction of the Lane Cove Tunnel there was an unplanned partial collapse of a unit building which had to be demolished. A similar fate could await known (and unknown) Aboriginal heritage sites.

The construction zone can vary post EIS approval depending on problems and constraints encountered by engineers of the construction company. For example, tunnel depths, tunnel routes and dive site locations can all be altered post EIS approval.

Even minor variations to these could put known terrestrial Aboriginal sites at greater risk of damage or destruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The potential for destruction or damage to significant aboriginal cultural heritage would be unacceptable to the community (particularly in light of recent destruction of aboriginal heritage by mining companies and others).

- 1) The project should be modified so that there is no risk to known Aboriginal heritage sites
- 2) Management recommendations Section 9, Appendix L Pg 74 should be made a condition of consent.

3. Archaeological monitoring during construction by qualified archaeologists specialising in Aboriginal cultural heritage should be a condition of consent present. The proposed training of construction staff in cultural and heritage awareness alone would be grossly inadequate. (4)

If unexpected finds are located during works, an archaeological consultant should be engaged to assess the significance of the finds and the NSW Aboriginal Heritage office notified.

4) Real time vibration monitoring of known aboriginal sites should take place and construction should cease in the event that damage is detected so that it can be accessed by a qualified archaeological consultant.

5) Any variation to the EIS sought by the construction company once the EIS has been approved should not be granted until the risk to known and potential Aboriginal heritage has been reassessed by engineers and archaeologists.

OBJECTION

I object to the potential damage or destruction of unknown but highly probable terrestrial and submerged Aboriginal sites in the study area.

THE PROBLEM

The EIS acknowledges the likely existence of unknown Aboriginal sites - which could be damaged or destroyed by the project and it would be very difficult to mitigate against damage or destruction of these unknown sites. (5)

The EIS identifies several areas in the study area with the potential for Aboriginal sites "The lower North Shore portion of the study area includes several parks and reserves including St Leonards Park, ANZAC Park, Cammeray Golf Course, Artarmon Park and Artarmon Reserve, as well as the Flat Rock Reserve and the surrounding alluvial terraces and exposed sandstone outcrops. These parks and reserves have been subject to less intensive disturbance and may have increased potential for Aboriginal sites." (6)

Destruction of unknown aboriginal heritage at these and other sites cannot be ruled out.

The study area is likely to have undiscovered submerged Aboriginal archaeology. "The pronounced rock outcrops at about 20 metres depth close to Seaforth Bluff are considered to have moderate to high potential for the presence and survival of inundated rock shelters. The possibility of undated rock shelters requires further investigation and rock shelters at Seaforth be protected from damage or destruction. There is a moderate to high potential for submerged aboriginal heritage at Pearl Bay (west of Spit West Reserve) and the area between Clive Park and Beauty Point." (7)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential for destruction or damage to significant aboriginal cultural heritage, both known and undiscovered sites, would be unacceptable to the community (particularly in light of recent destruction of aboriginal heritage by mining companies and others). The project should be modified so that there is no risk to known and potential Aboriginal heritage.

1. The project should be modified so that there is no risk to potential Aboriginal heritage.

2. Further investigation of submerged sites prior to EIS approval is warranted.

3. Management recommendations Section 9, Appendix L Pg 74 should be made a condition of consent.

4. Qualified archaeologists specialising in Aboriginal cultural heritage should be present at all times at all construction sites where known Aboriginal sites exist whilst work is in progress.

Proposed training of construction staff in cultural and heritage awareness alone would be grossly inadequate. (3)

5 Any variation to the EIS sought by the construction company once the EIS has been approved should not be granted until the risk to known and potential Aboriginal heritage has been reassessed.

REFERENCES

(1) 15.3.1 Ethnographic and archaeological context. The Sydney area has a rich indigenous heritage. Aboriginal occupation focused on accessing resources from diverse ecological areas, seasons and conditions. Occupation sites, hunting, travel and inter-clan contact would have been associated with coastal areas, smaller rivers, creeks and swamps.(7)

(2) EIS CH 15 Aboriginal cultural heritage Table 15-6 Pg21

(3) Table 15-7 Assessment of potential impacts to known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites Pg24

(4) EIS Ch 15 15.5 Environmental management measures - AH6 Construction Aboriginal heritage –impacts

Cultural and historic heritage awareness training will be carried out for personnel engaged in work that may impact heritage items before commencing works for the project. (31)

(5) EIS Ch15, Pg's 7,8

15.3 Existing environment

15.3.1 Ethnographic and archaeological context

“There is evidence of Aboriginal occupation throughout the study area, with areas of plentiful food resources associated with shorelines, riparian zones and adjacent areas including Clive Park, Burnt Bridge Creek and Flat Rock Creek. During urban development, many of these areas have been covered by fill, concealing original formations. Some evidence of Aboriginal occupation may also be present along movement pathways, meeting and camping sites, which were often associated with ridgelines.”

(6) EIS Ch 15 15.3 Existing environment

15.3.2 Environmental and landscape The lower North Shore portion of the study area includes several parks and reserves including St Leonards Park, ANZAC Park, Cammeray Golf Course, Artarmon Park and Artarmon Reserve, as well as the Flat Rock Reserve and the surrounding alluvial terraces and exposed sandstone outcrops. These parks and reserves have been subject to less intensive disturbance and may have increased potential for Aboriginal sites.

“in areas of remnant landscape, Aboriginal sites, where present, may be relatively undisturbed.”

5.3.2 Environmental and landscape context

“At the Wakehurst Parkway landscape region, there are sections of undisturbed remnant landscapes in two locations within or in close proximity to the project (Garigal National Park and Manly Dam Reserve)..... The Wakehurst Parkway landscape region is particularly significant because of the Hawkesbury Sandstone and its association with known Aboriginal rock engravings.”

(7) 15.3.4 Potential submerged Aboriginal sites Pg 17

Sincerely yours

John Berry

Cammeray 2062