

Submission
No 566

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 18 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

Date 18 June 2021

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
Chair
Public Works Committee
NSW Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Public.Works@parliament.nsw.gov.au

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Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to an inquiry regarding these concerning projects. I strongly object to the Western Harbour Tunnel (including the Warringah Freeway Upgrade) and Beaches Link (including the Gore Hill extension) projects and urge you to recommend that the NSW Government abandon these plans immediately.

First, a little about me, I have lived in the Cammeray/Naremburn area for the past 11 years. I cross the area daily to take my two children to school, and to commute to the City using public transport, while my husband drives to work across the city accessing the Warringah Freeway from both the Cammeray and Naremburn entries. During the week I use to the walking tracks through Flat Rock Gully for exercise and on the weekends as a family we use the bike tracks through Flat Rock Gully to visit friends, and access Willoughby Leisure Centre and Artarmon Park, or go for Bushwalks to Tunks Park.

All of these activities will be adversely affected by these projects particularly as most of these occur in and around the Warringah Freeway and Flat Rock Gully.

I am concerned about the degradation of public transport services with a 30% drop-in services on the North Shore and I do not see how these projects support the transition to a cleaner and more functional city. School and commuter routes are currently regularly blocked by traffic seeking to access the Warringah Freeway – limiting the on and off ramp access to this corridor will further exacerbate this problem – the project appears to do nothing for local traffic or local pollution, in fact the priority is through traffic and our local communities will be very much disadvantaged.

I am concerned about my children's health and safety and want to see better planning for their future. I also want to see Sydney transition to a cleaner, more efficient transport

system and away from our growing and unsustainable car reliance. I strongly object to these projects and the billions of dollars that will be wasted on them.

My reasons are further outlined in relation to the Committee's Terms of Reference below:

(a) the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio,

No business case has been released to the public, given that the reported cost at the time of printing is \$14-\$15 Billion for both projects, this should be made available so that the public see where and how their tax is being spent.

(b) the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options,

Alternative options have not been comprehensively scoped or compared to a toll road tunnel option. The option to address congestion via a dedicated mass transit solution ie) light rail, metro or rail has not been adequately considered. Build more roads and you will get more cars on the roads.

I understand the need to address the growing needs of Sydney and the investment that should be made in our road infrastructure, however, alternatives, especially those that are more environmentally friendly, and have the ability to move more people efficiently – like public transport options, need to be properly considered

(c) the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns,

The project admits that further testing and risk assessment is required to fully assess multiple levels of risk including serious contamination found in the Harbour and at Middle Harbour dredge sites and dive sites such as Flat Rock Gully (ex-landfill). Cost blow outs and delays associated with other projects have occurred due to unexpected or unmitigated contamination e.g. West Gate Tunnel, Victoria.

A risk assessment should be conducted on these projects before committing billions to projects that have the very real potential to cause serious contamination to local environments where our children play and we access on a daily basis. The remediation work required to rectify any contamination should be costed initially, in order to understand the likely cost overruns, and whether the projects should be undertaken based on the cost of remediation.

(g) the extent to which changes in population growth, work and travel patterns due to the Covid- 19 pandemic have impacted on the original cost benefit ratio,

I, like many of my friends, have had my work life changed due to Covid-19 and the lock down and working from home arrangements which became prevalent in 2020.

Businesses have realised that their staff can work effectively and efficiently from home, and staff are asking for more flexible work arrangements. In 2021, my business and most of my friends businesses have instituted hybrid work arrangements, with the majority of staff working from home at least twice a week, and coming into the office for the remainder of the week. I myself am working from home 3 days a week and commuting to the City 2 days a week. This is an arrangement I can see remaining in place for the long term as staff have become used to the greater work/life balance they can achieve by working from home part

time. I believe that travel patterns are permanently changed, and will be significantly different from those used in the original cost benefit ratio. Therefore the cost benefit of these projects should be rereviewed to make sure that they are still viable.

(h) whether the NSW Government should publish the base-case financial model and benefit cost ratio for the for the project and its component parts,

Given the projected cost of the projects, a model should be published. The project will cost approx. \$1 Billion per Km.

(j) the impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems,

I am very worried about the environmental impacts of the projects on marine life, the heavy tree losses, contamination risks, air quality, biodiversity offsets and an overall increase in emissions.

The Western Harbour and Beaches Link tunnels will produce more emissions than the Southwest Metro (approx. same distance) before adding cars. Lighting, emergency systems, ventilation fans and the concrete itself (larger than metro/ rail tunnels) all contributes to a higher emissions profile. I would like to see the money used from these projects to go towards funding the NSW Government to encourage NSW businesses and residents to reduce their emissions, rather than funding projects that will directly increase emissions.

(k) the adequacy of processes for accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally,

I am very worried that if these projects proceed there will be significant noise, vibration and other impact on residents during construction, with little in the way of mitigants put in place.

As it stands there are a number of heavily used roads which currently experience high levels of traffic, that are going to be used during the construction of the tunnels as rat runs – such as Brook St/Alpha Road. These roads do not currently have any form of noise reduction and can be heard at all times of the day. Brook St is intended to be used to transport spoil to the proposed dump site in Flat Rock Gully. The impact on local residents from a noise, not to mention traffic impact will be incredibly significant. We back onto Flat Rock Gully and experience noise already with no mitigation measures currently in place. We would expect that significant new noise attenuation measures will be implemented if the unwarranted project was to proceed.

(l) the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin and Dawn Fraser Baths, and

The use of Flat Rock Gully as a Dive Site and the impacts on this area have not been considered fully, ignoring the fact that it is an Aboriginal heritage site, was previously used as a contaminated tip area, increasing the likelihood of contamination.

It currently is a major water catchment area and flood zone, which already experiences contamination and flooding.

The dive site competes with a massive sewage tunnel which has recently undergone upgrades and services a large part of Cammeray and Naremburn, the associated loss of trees and the fact that it feeds out to Tunks and Middle Harbour. Does not appear to have been properly considered and the impact to the local community who uses these green spaces.

(m) any other related matter.

I am deeply concerned about the impact that these projects will have on the air quality around the lower North Shore, and the unfiltered stacks which will be situated around a large number of local schools.

I would like to have my name suppressed.

Yours sincerely