

**Submission  
No 571**

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

**Name:** Mr Manfred Fussi

**Date Received:** 18 June 2021

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Public Works Committee

18 June 2021

To whom it may concern,

Re: Inquiry into the impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

I am against the current proposal for the following reasons noted in accordance with the Terms of Reference of your inquiry:

- a. **The business case doesn't stack up.** According to the in-depth research of the Viable Transport Services Group, the Cost Benefits Ratio is likely to be 0.61 when we factor in changes to work and travel patterns due to Covid and the acceptance of working from home, well below the 1.0 required for a project to be cost effective (see page 30 [Balgowlah-Residents-Group-Beaches-Link-EIS-Submission.pdf \(viabletransportsolutions.com.au\)](#)).
- b. **Potentially better options have not been adequately considered.** The EIS includes only a very limited discussion of alternatives to the Beaches Link Tunnel to achieve the stated objectives. Instead there is an unbalanced and far greater discussion of alternative tunnel routes and tunnelling methods, which undermines public confidence in the transparency of the process. There is no consideration, for example, of providing rapid public transport to the Northern Beaches area by extending the metro from Chatswood over Frenchs Forest to Dee Why or Crows Nest via Mosman to Dee Why.
- c. **The cost and risk of the project, including potential overruns, is extremely high at a time when government budgets are overstretched following the droughts, fires, floods and COVID crises.**
- d. **The governance structure of the project does not favour the public.** 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) and the profits will largely go to a private company while the public is left with the costs including significant health and environmental issues as well as increased congestion as cars become comparatively even more convenient and the Northern Beaches slow public transport even less so.
- e. **The current proposal does not prove how it will meet its goals of 'addressing congestion, improving safety and providing more choice for how you move around Greater Sydney'.** The Northern Beaches is the missing link in Sydney when it comes to rapid public transport, providing this would certainly address congestion, improve safety and provide more choice for how we move about Sydney, but building more roads, making it faster to travel by car and encouraging people to drive does not.
- f. **Community consultation has not been effective.** Submissions made by community groups and individuals in the various community forums and recommendations made, such as filters for smoke stacks and modifying the entrance of the tunnel in Balgowlah to cause less destruction of green areas and health impacts, have not been taken on board by Transport for NSW.
- g. **Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there are significant reductions in population growth forecasts for the Sydney region and working from home has grown significantly which greatly affects the original cost benefit ratio making it not viable.** Please refer to the very thorough calculations from Viable Transport Services Group(see page 30 [Balgowlah-Residents-Group-Beaches-Link-EIS-Submission.pdf \(viabletransportsolutions.com.au\)](#)).
- h. **There has been a total lack of transparency on the base-case financial model and benefit cost ration for the project.** If we, the tax payers, are set to pay for it and be affected by it, this

information should and must be shared and will likely help prevent any massive potential errors that will have irreversible consequences for our great city and its inhabitants.

- i. **This project has not been subject to the levels of transparency and accountability that you would expect from a project of such major consequence on so many residents and such important areas of our city.** Engagement at the very early stages to consider this and alternative options was completely missing. Then the sharing of vital information, like the financial model, has been missing too while other information, such as the 12 000 page technical EIS document, has been done in a way which is too difficult for the majority of the community to process. Further, due to COVID-19 restrictions, normal face-to-face community consultation sessions which should have been done much earlier in the process rather than once the EIS came out were cancelled and virtual sessions held via Microsoft Teams software were a significant obstacle to some members of the community, noted by community including Viable Transport Services Group (see page 49 [Balgowlah-Residents-Group-Beaches-Link-EIS-Submission.pdf \(viabletransportsolutions.com.au\)](https://viabletransportsolutions.com.au/Balgowlah-Residents-Group-Beaches-Link-EIS-Submission.pdf)).
- j. **The impact on the environment is massive, in a rapidly growing city that is already placing increasing stress on its nature, which is one of the most unique and attractive elements of the city that gives it an enviable lifestyle and advantage ahead of most other cities.** Some 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 the jewel of 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 Northbridge Baths and Clontarf. The open space of the almost 100 year old Balgowlah Golf Course and some 300 trees will be largely destroyed. Many of the areas we love and use on a daily basis will be threatened or completely destroyed by this development.
- k. **There cannot be an adequate process for accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally, as this project is so massive and in the immediate proximity of a very large high school (Balgowlah Boys), a childcare facility and the Balgowlah Oval where hundreds of children practice various sports each week.** They are literally just metres away from the massive construction and dump site at the Balgowlah golf course over a 6-8 year period. Here 500 trucks are planned each day and night to dredge up earth from 2023 to 2028. No measures can adequately reduce the noise, congestion and dust issues that the high school and the surrounding areas will face each and every day during this period.
- l. **The impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Manly Dam, Clontarf, Flat Rock Gully, Northbridge Baths, and other areas that will receive the pollution from dredging and run off as well as exposure of contaminated grounds cannot be underestimated.** These jewels of our local area, which our communities flock to every day and add so much to our quality of life, will be at massive risk as is the unique wildlife which once it is destroyed, is unlikely to return.
- m. **Other related matters, in particular the fact that this project is against government policies such as NSW's commitment to Net Zero by 2050 and the Greater Sydney Region Plan 2018, which requires us to conserve green areas and encourage public transport, cycling and walkability as well as reduce carbon emissions to create a more liveable, productive and sustainable city.**

**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 and will only encourage more cars, pollution and destruction of our spectacular natural areas that make Sydney the envy of the world.**

**Please reject this proposal so our government is encouraged to find a better and more sustainable alternative instead.**

Thank you for considering my submission.

Your sincerely,

Manfred Fussi