

Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade

I am strongly opposed to this project for the following reasons:

1. Induced demand. Building more roads encourages more use of private motor vehicles. This is a world-wide phenomenon. Private motor vehicles are the most inefficient means of transportation. The space occupied on a per passenger basis for private motor vehicles is far greater than that provided by heavy rail, light rail, metro rail, bus, motorcycle and bicycle. Space is obviously at a premium in Sydney, hence the government reluctance to compulsorily acquire surface property to build more surface roads. The space taken up by this project below and above ground is wasteful.
2. The northern beaches peninsula is poorly served by public transport for many reasons. There is still no rail link to the area. The funding for this project should be reallocated to producing a metro rail line from North Sydney and Chatswood to Palm Beach to capitalise on the known environmental, health and equity benefits of public transport.
3. The project is predicated on increasing motor vehicle traffic in order to make it attractive to funding by motorway companies. This model is in direct conflict with the aspirations of local, state and federal government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to curb the dangerous phenomenon of global warming. There may be some take up of electric vehicles in the coming decades, but given the inefficiency of private motor vehicles compared to public transport as outlined in 1. above, promoting this form of transport will still produce more greenhouse gas emissions than public transport.
4. Australia has poor standards for quality of fuel, no commitment to fuel efficiency for vehicles and is utterly reliant on imported refined fuel supplies. Given our advantages of abundant renewable energy sources it would be folly to continue to consign our society to this dated fossil fuelled past. Projects such as this perpetuate our dependence on fossil fuels with all the attendant air pollution, health and strategic supply risk consequences.
5. This project has been presented as a foregone conclusion by those who cannot see beyond the dated paradigm of just providing more motorways. The public domain will be worse as a result. The vision of yet more road 'sewers' is highly unattractive compared to that of public spaces that are safe, attractive, lively, socially vibrant and ecologically sustainable.

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