

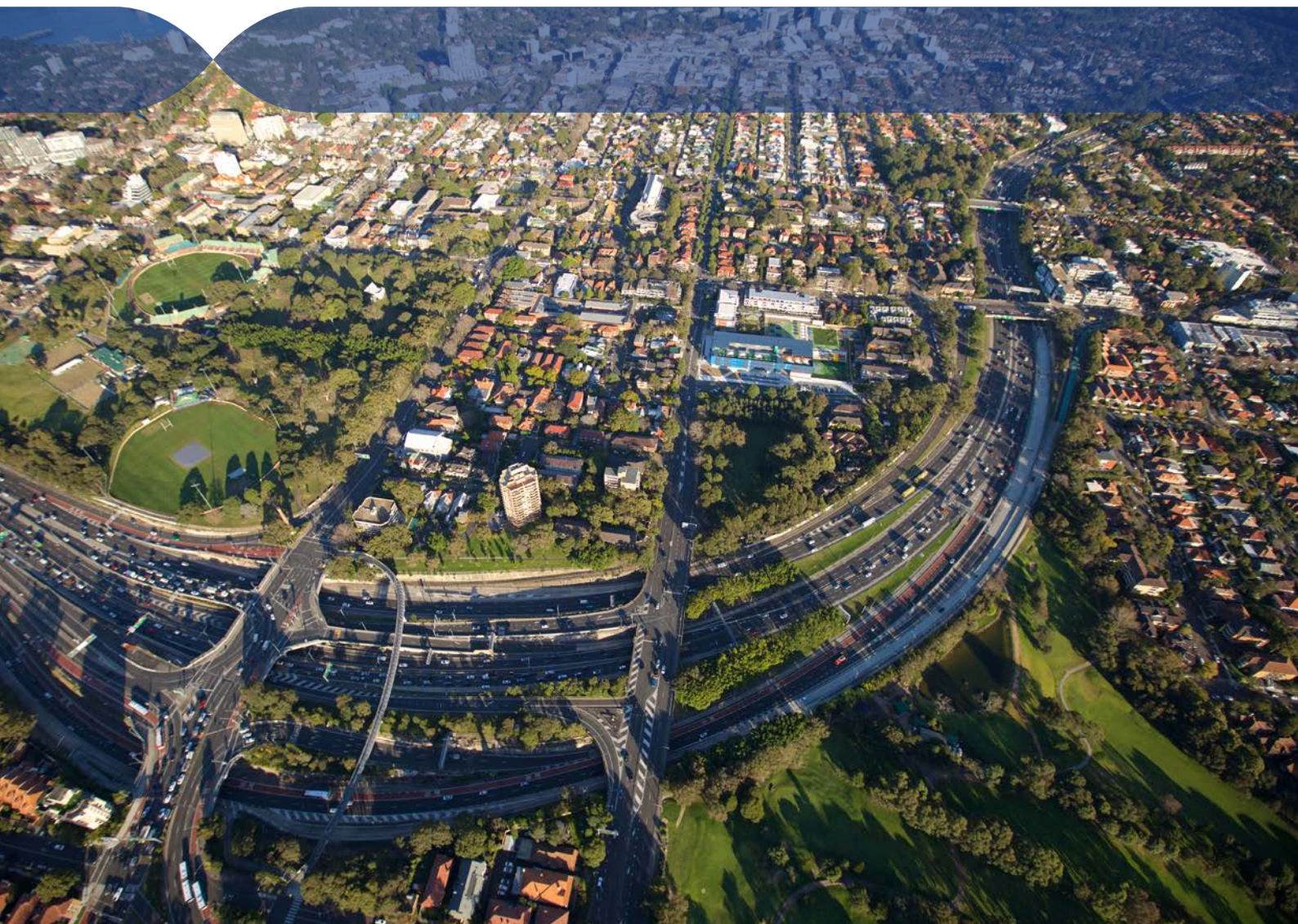


Transport for NSW

# Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade

Executive summary

September 2020



## Executive summary

*The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link program is a major transport infrastructure program that would make it easier, faster and safer to get around Sydney. As Sydney continues to grow, faster and more reliable trips are essential to reducing congestion and providing new levels of access to jobs, recreation, and services such as schools and hospitals. By creating a western bypass of the Sydney CBD, the Western Harbour Tunnel would take pressure off the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Harbour Tunnel and ANZAC Bridge; while Beaches Link would create an alternative to the Military Road and Warringah Road corridors to relieve traffic pressure on the North Shore.*

*The program has been designed as part of an integrated transport network, with a focus on new public transport connections and improved journey times and reliability for buses. It would also provide improvements to walking and cycling routes, providing more shared transport options.*

Transport for NSW is seeking approval under Part 5, Division 5.2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* to construct and operate the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project (the project).

The project is part of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link program of works, which include:

- The project, which comprises a new tolled motorway tunnel connection across Sydney Harbour, and an upgrade of the Warringah Freeway to integrate the new motorway infrastructure with the existing road network and to connect to the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project
- The Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project which comprises a new tolled motorway tunnel connection across Middle Harbour from the Warringah Freeway and Gore Hill Freeway to Balgowlah and Killarney Heights including the surface upgrade of Wakehurst Parkway from Seaforth to Frenchs Forest and upgrade and integration works to connect to the Gore Hill Freeway at Artarmon.

A combined delivery of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link program of works would unlock a range of benefits for freight, public transport and private vehicle users. It would support faster travel times for journeys between the Northern Beaches and south, west and north-west of Sydney Harbour. Delivering the program of works would also improve the resilience of the motorway network, given that each project provides an alternative to heavily congested harbour crossings.

The project and the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project are subject to separate but coordinated environmental assessment and approval processes.

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project would comprise two main components:

- A new crossing of Sydney Harbour involving twin tolled motorway tunnels connecting the M4-M5 Link at Rozelle and the existing Warringah Freeway at North Sydney (the Western Harbour Tunnel)
- Upgrade and integration works along the existing Warringah Freeway, including infrastructure required for connections to the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project (the Warringah Freeway Upgrade).

The project is an integrated transport solution that would address urban congestion on Sydney's road network. It would provide a new western bypass of the Sydney Central Business District

(CBD), providing an alternative to the heavily congested Sydney Harbour Bridge, Western Distributor and ANZAC Bridge. It would reduce pressure and provide faster and more reliable journeys on roads around the Sydney CBD and increase the resilience of the road network to incidents and delays. The project would also provide major benefits to public transport with a free-flowing continuous bus lane southbound on Warringah Freeway - removing weaving between buses and other traffic and improving bus transit times for all buses using Warringah Freeway. The project would also provide direct bus access to North Sydney.

Construction of the project is expected to take around six years to complete.

Transport for NSW has requested that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces declare the project as critical State significant infrastructure. Section 5.13 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* provides for the declaration of critical State significant infrastructure by means of an environmental planning instrument. Clause 16 of the State and Regional Development State Environmental Planning Policy declares development listed in Schedule 5 to be critical State significant infrastructure. Transport for NSW's request is that the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project be listed in Schedule 5.

### **Environmental Impact Statement**

An environmental impact statement was prepared for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project in accordance with the provisions of Division 5.2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. The environmental impact statement addresses the environmental assessment requirements issued by the Secretary of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on 15 December 2017 and the relevant provisions of Schedule 2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000. A copy of the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements and where they are addressed in the environmental impact statement are provided in Appendix A (Secretary's environmental assessment requirements checklist) of the environmental impact statement.

In accordance with Part 5, Division 5.2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the environmental impact statement presents an assessment of all potential environmental issues identified during the planning and assessment of the project. The assessment considers the areas directly or indirectly affected by construction and operation of the project. Prior to it being finalised and placed on public exhibition, the environmental impact statement, including detailed technical studies, was reviewed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and its independent technical reviewers as well as key NSW Government Agencies, to confirm that it addressed the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements.

The environmental impact statement was placed on public exhibition on 29 January 2020. The public exhibition period for the environmental impact statement was initially scheduled to be 43 days. However, following community feedback, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment extended the exhibition closing date from 12 March to 30 March 2020 (equating to a total exhibition period of 61 days). During this period, the community, interested parties and key stakeholders (including government agencies and councils) were invited to provide comments and submissions on the environmental impact statement for consideration by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as part of the planning assessment process.

Consultation activities carried out during the exhibition of the environmental impact statement included community information sessions and distribution of a range of information materials. The environmental impact statement was available during the exhibition period, and still is available, to view and download from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website and on the project's interactive portal. Hard copies were also made available to the public at ten locations across the project area. Touch screens displaying the 3D model of the project and the interactive portal were also installed at three shopping centres. Eight community information sessions were held to address queries on the environmental impact assessment, in addition to ten drop in sessions at local markets. Prior to the exhibition period, multiple meetings and briefings were held with key

stakeholders to present an overview of the environmental impact statement and discuss any issues of interest or concern.

## Submissions report

This submissions report outlines Transport for NSW's response to submissions received on the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade environmental impact statement during the public exhibition period. To prepare this report, Transport for NSW has reviewed all submissions and prepared clarifications and responses to the issues raised.

This report sets out the following key information:

- An introduction is provided in **Part A, Section A1** (Introduction and background)
- A summary of community and stakeholder involvement prior to and during the environmental impact statement exhibition, as well as consultation proposed for the future, is outlined in **Part A, Section A2** (Community and stakeholder involvement)
- A summary of the submissions received is provided in **Part A, Section A3** (Submissions received) and refinements that have been made to the project as a result of submissions received are provided in **Part A, Section A3.3**
- Clarifications in response to issues raised as well as minor errors and discrepancies noted in the environmental impact statement are addressed in **Part A, Section A4** (Clarifications)
- Issues raised in submissions received from government agencies and councils are addressed in **Part B** (Response to key stakeholder submissions)
- Issues raised in submissions received from the community are addressed in **Part C** (Response to community submissions)
- An outline of the proposed construction environmental management framework is provided in **Part D, Section D1** (Construction environmental management framework)
- A revised list of environmental management measures is provided in **Part D, Section D2** (Environmental management measures)
- Conclusions and next steps are summarised in **Part D, Section D3** (Conclusion and next steps)
- Appendices, comprising:
  - Updated Environmental Risk Analysis (**Appendix A**)
  - Additional technical memos to address issues raised in submissions (**Appendix B to G**).

The submissions are available to view and download on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Major Projects website <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/10451>.

## Issues raised in submissions

Thirteen submissions were received from NSW Government agencies and five from local councils. The submissions are responded to in **Part B** (Response to key stakeholder submissions). Council submissions were categorised by key issues.

A total of 1441 community submissions were received by Department of Planning, Industry and Environment from 1086 submitters. Issues raised in each submission were analysed in a database and then extracted for consideration and response by the environmental impact assessment team and proponent. **Part C** (Response to community submissions) presents summary descriptions of issues raised in submissions and the corresponding responses. The subjects most commonly raised in the community submissions (in order of total number of issues raised) relate to:

- Air quality
- Socio-economic
- Operational traffic and transport
- Land use and property
- Strategic context and project need
- Project development and alternatives
- Construction noise and vibration
- Construction traffic and transport
- Project description
- Stakeholder and community engagement
- Assessment process
- Biodiversity
- Geology, soils and groundwater
- Urban design and visual amenity
- Construction work.

### **Refinements and clarifications in response to submissions**

Based on feedback and concerns raised in submissions on the environmental impact statement, a number of refinements to the project have been made in this submissions report to further minimise impacts on the community and sensitive receivers. Refinements that have been made to the project are provided in **Part A, Section A3.3**.

A number of general clarifications are also provided in this submissions report, as well as corrections to minor errors and discrepancies in the environmental impact statement. Clarifications are addressed in **Part A, Section A4** (Clarifications).

### **Environmental management measures**

A full list of the environmental management measures proposed for the project, including any additional measures, or changes to measures to address issues raised in stakeholder and community submissions, is provided in **Section D2** (Environmental management measures).

Should the project be approved, detailed investigations, planning and surveys will be undertaken by the appointed contractor. The design presented by contractors will need to satisfy all technical road design requirements and road functionality as described in the environmental impact statement and this submissions report, and be consistent with the approved scope of the project, including the environmental management measures and conditions of approval issued for the project.

### **Ongoing consultation with community and stakeholders**

Transport for NSW, as the proponent for the project, is committed to carrying out further engagement and consultation with communities and stakeholders about proposed changes to the project and opportunities to provide future input, prior to and during construction. Should the project be approved, certain aspects of the detailed design of the project would be made available to the public for input including the Urban Design and Landscape Plans.

Further, the construction environmental management plan and associated sub-plans would be prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders as described in **Section D1** (Construction environmental management framework) and as required by the conditions of approval.

The appointed contractor would also prepare a community communication strategy, outlining consultation with stakeholders and the community during construction. This would include protocols for providing notifications and updates on construction activities and program, responding to enquiries and concerns in a timely manner and minimising potential impacts where possible.

These requirements for further consultation are captured in the environmental management measures proposed for the project.

### **Next steps**

The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will, on behalf of the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, review the environmental impact statement and this submissions report for the project. Once the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has completed its assessment, a draft Environmental Assessment Report will be prepared for the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, which may include recommended conditions of approval.

The assessment report will be provided to the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, who will then make a determination on the project. If the determination is to approve the project, the determination is anticipated to include conditions of approval considered appropriate.

A copy of this submissions report has been made publicly available on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Major Projects website and the project interactive online portal ([nswroads.work/whportal](https://nswroads.work/whportal)). The NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces determination, including any conditions of approval and the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Report, will be published on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Major Projects website following determination.