

Attention: Director, Transport Assessments
Planning & Assessment, Department of Planning
Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Note: Please delete my personal details before publication

Date: 01.03.2021

Objection: Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Upgrade – SSI_8862

Please consider my objections as outlined below, with regards to the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Project. I have done reviewed as many of the EIS documents as possible in the available time. However, as there are over 12,000 pages it is not reasonable to expect the public to review the full scope of this proposed project since being made available, as it coincided with the Covid-19 crisis, which has demanded much of our attention. I strongly feel that the public consultation period needs to be extended to allow people sufficient time to study and digest the details. I could not find a published business case and question the justification for this project. I'm sure Infrastructure Australia's have other projects that would generate better return for the Australian public as well as our sustainability goals. In particular, an alternative public transport option has not been adequately considered for comparison. Furthermore I note from the EIS that there are risks to health and safety.

I object to the project for the following reasons:

- This project was released at the end Australia's most challenging year for nearly a century (Covid-19 epidemic). Families, schools and the broader local community have all been under a huge amount of Covid-related strain throughout the exhibition stage, so have had impaired capacity to review and comment on the EIS. As an executive member of a school P&C I can comment that we did not have the opportunity to review the documents at our meeting and like other parents I was busy caring for my children during school holidays. It is very difficult to read documents which are many thousands of pages long on a screen and due to Covid-19 restrictions was not permitted to borrow a hard copy from a library. There is a strong case to argue that the project should be re-exhibited after the Covid-19 crisis has abated – once people can give it the attention that it demands to digest and weigh up its likely impacts. Many schools in the area will be impacted and the tunnel passes through a significant swathe of residential areas.
- There are significant contamination risks to both the broader environment (particularly our waterways and green spaces) as well as risks to human health. As a former landfill site, Flat Rock Gully has a high level of contaminants in the soil as well as the ground and surface water. These contaminants are known to be leaching into Middle Harbour. Disturbance of this site places a great risk of increasing the leaching of these contaminants as well as silt into the surrounding area and Middle Harbour. Additionally Cammeray Golf Course, Spit Reserve, Middle Harbour and Wakehurst Parkway all have confirmed contamination. The risk assessment for this was not completed before the EIS was open to public consultation, and this this could be an unacceptable risk to human and fauna health, as well as a risk to a budget and completion date blow-out.
- The scale of this project concerns me greatly. I am not satisfied that the proposed groundworks will not significantly threaten sensitive residential areas, as well as bushland and foreshore environments. As a regular kayaker on Middle harbour I have witnessed the progressive decline of marine life due to siltation from construction in the surrounding catchment. The proposed excavation around Flatrock Gully as well as the significant works required to create the underwater crossing from Northbridge to Seaforth are likely to cause unacceptable damage to these fragile areas. As a regular bush walker and mountain bike rider around the Wakehurst Parkway / Garigal National Park areas, I am deeply concerned about the impacts to this precious corridor of bushland, whose catchment feeds into Middle Harbour on the western side, and Manly Dam on the east.

- Having lived in Balgowlah, and having endured the horrible experience of being besieged by the years of construction noise, vibration, light pollution, dust, constant heavy vehicle movements and traffic congestion from the Warringah Road upgrade and Northern Beaches Hospital construction, I object to the project. With a minimum timeline of 5 years, it will have an unreasonable level of impact on the quality of life for local residents during the tunnel construction and operation.
- I object to the project due to the threat to our biodiversity and green spaces. Thousands of trees will be cleared, just as our encumbered bushland and wildlife is trying to recover from the recent devastating drought, as well as the open slather sanctioned by the 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code. We have already lost too many trees and Climate science says we desperately need to preserve the vegetation we have. The tunnel will need ventilation exhaust stacks and some of these will be near residential areas or in fragile bushland. The leaching of contaminants from sites that the project proposes to excavate, as well as the ensuing siltation and pollution of waterways is unacceptable. The damage to the green spaces, including the tailings site next to Flat Rock Gulley (which has been painstakingly rehabilitated by Willoughby Council over the last 20 years) is highly objectionable. Wastewater will be diverted down our creeks. In the long term the tunnels themselves will draw down waste water and contaminants into Middle Harbour. The likely damage to Middle Harbour around the Northbridge to Seaforth crossing is highly objectionable. As is the risk of damage to the sensitive bushland along the Wakehurst Parkway. There are threatened species here including the Red Crowned Toadlet that I have personally sited in this area, as well as Powerful Owls, micro bats, Little Penguins, seahorses and the White-bellied Sea-Eagle.
- I object to the project as it will have a significant adverse contribution towards mitigating Climate Change. The amount of concrete (an extremely unsustainable material) that would be required is appalling. We are racing headlong into a climate crisis and this project will only hasten this.
- I object to the project as shows a glaring lack of vision for a more sustainable future. More roads = more cars and a more entrenched car culture. The government has not completed a full options analysis. If the massive budget earmarked for this project were invested in previously flagged mass transit alternatives (e.g. Dee Why to Chatswood and Neutral Bay Metro - which have a far lighter footprint and would be more effective congestion relievers in the long term) then our community (including future generations) and environment would be much better served. For example, the B-Line buses have been successful in reducing congestion - yet no public transport alternative has been analysed with which to compare this project.
- I object that not only will the Tax payer be encumbered with the debt from this project, but we'll also get slugged with a yet to be revealed toll for both the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Tunnels, possibly heading in both directions. This will exacerbate the toll avoidance already being experienced across Sydney. With very few entry points, this project has a high risk of providing little relief for local traffic in the surrounding areas. Like the Warringah Road upgrade, it will also drive more development on the Northern Beaches, further damaging its encumbered natural environment.

This project thwarts the public's desire to see Sydney transformed into a healthy and sustainable city with a public transport system that meets the needs of the majority of people, thus eliminating the need for private vehicle use. The EIS shows that this toll road will consume a massive amount of Taxpayer funds with adverse effects on our future sustainability or amenity. I implore the Department of Planning to investigate and publish an alternative public transport feasibility study before any further planning occurs so that impacts and outcomes can be fairly compared.

(I have not made any reportable political donations in the past two years.)

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Frenchs Forest 2086