

## **SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE EIS FOR THE NORTH CONNEX TUNNEL PROJECT**

We live in Wahroonga, approximately 300 metres from the proposed Northern Ventilation Stack. We strongly object to the North Connex tunnel project as described in the EIS.

We applaud the desire to reduce congestion and pollution along Pennant Hills Road and we accept the contention that there may be a small net reduction in air pollution over the length of the tunnel, but we would like to point out that this reduction is being achieved at the marked expense of severely increased pollution for those living, working or attending school near either end of the tunnel. It is relevant to note that in addition to a sizeable family population in Wahroonga and Waitara, nearly 10,000 children attend schools located within 2 km of the proposed North Connex northern ventilation stack and there are also a number of aged care facilities and hospitals close by.

The North Connex tunnel may alleviate the problems on Pennant Hills Road for a period, but it should be obvious that it will immediately exacerbate pollution and congestion issues in Wahroonga and Waitara.

Our concerns are as follows:

1. There is already traffic congestion in Wahroonga. Most of the traffic travelling north of Sydney along the Eastern Seaboard of Australia passes through the M1 corridor from this point.

At present, the two lanes of north-bound traffic on the Pacific Highway turn right onto the M1 and have to merge along with a further lane of traffic turning left onto the M1 from the opposite direction on the Pacific Highway. Those three lanes of incoming traffic from the Pacific Highway merge into just one lane to get onto the M1. The traffic coming from the Pacific Highway, then fans out into the extra two lanes of traffic that comes through from the start of the M1 at Pennant Hills Road, 300 metres to the south west. North Connex's proposal does nothing to alleviate this troublesome bottleneck. In fact it considerably worsens the problem by reducing the two lanes from Pennant Hills Road to one lane and then almost immediately, it will add two more lanes emerging from the tunnel (and in the future a third lane). Congestion and accidents are inevitable.

2. It is totally unacceptable that air quality and noise measurements have not been made at the locations of the portals for the tunnel. Making predictions on the basis of background air quality at Lindfield and Prospect is farcical. Extrapolated meteorological data from other weather stations does not take into account the topography, meteorology and existing pollution at the portals.
3. The EIS assumes pollutant concentrations the tunnel air intake to be zero. It does not consider the effect of polluted air intake at the interchanges or the effect of the inevitable increase of pollutants with the ventilation stacks pouring out pollution 24/7.

4. Not providing filtration of pollutants is criminal in this day and age. The pollutants do not magically disappear. They are simply dispersed and how that dispersal will be controlled by local meteorology and topography which has not been assessed. But one principle is certain – what goes up, must come down and breathing in particulate emissions is not beneficial to health. So filtration is essential.
5. Sound barriers have been designed without carrying out a detailed sound study locally. Much higher sound barriers are needed because the freeway noise has grown greatly in recent years and the terrible sound of truck air-brakes wakes residents at night. It is likely that sound will be amplified and reverberate against the walls as the trucks come in and out of the tunnel.

Recommendations:

1. We submit that the politicians and bureaucrats concerned with the decision to proceed with the North Connex tunnel have the opportunity to make a difference by having the strength to insist that the tunnel be lengthened and the northern portal be located in the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. This would make Wahroonga and Waitara much quieter and cleaner and would alleviate the bottleneck situation at the start of the M1.
2. Alternatively, please give consideration to the Equilibria Proposal for extending the tunnel a further 1 km and building 2000 apartments on the redundant M1 land. The proposal has a lot of merit and would be a landmark project rather than a local environmental disaster.
3. Insist that a proper environmental study is undertaken and that the ventilation outlets are filtered.
4. If none of these recommendation is acceptable, then we respectfully submit that property owners affected by the ventilation stacks should be compensated for their loss of enjoyment and the loss of value of their properties.