

SUBMISSION ON THE NORTHERN BEACHES TUNNEL AND LINK RD

The Northern Beaches Tunnel and Link Rd will have a significant impact on surrounding Balgowlah. While some believe it will be good and save travel time, that will be soon gobbled up, leaving ultimately the same log jams we have now on the Harbour Bridge and Harbour Tunnel. Opposition to the tunnel and link road is growing in intensity and across a wide area as people become more aware of the issues. Daily, we are finding more and more evidence to suggest that the project is a folly. However, being a project of state significance makes it difficult to negotiate changes. I do hope, however, that authorities do take people's well-founded objections seriously, and heed the academic research readily available on air quality and traffic congestion. Overseas, countries are moving away from traffic-based solutions and moving to rail as cities grow larger.

I am opposed to the Link Rd and the Tunnel on environmental, air quality and safety grounds in the main. I am also opposed to it because many do not think it will provide a solution to transport problems.

I am opposed to the Link Rd and Tunnel where it is, on environmental grounds. We have Burnt Bridge Creek running along the edge of Balgowlah Golf Course, a vital catchment area for Manly Lagoon, which has been rehabilitated over the last couple of decades, and a 6 million year old Gondwanaland fish, the climbing galaxias, was found there. The NSW Environmental Trust and Manly and Warringah councils have spent years of effort and money in rehabilitating the area. Now the Link road to the tunnel will rip up Burnt Bridge Creek. It is said that this will be rebuilt, but you know you can't reconstruct ecosystems man made. It will take many years for the creek to re-establish. Gone will be many significant plant species that have been growing for decades, advanced specimens of *Cyathea australis*, native palms etc. The project also threatens the survival of a Wollemi Pine growing near the creek. A number of smaller animals, frogs, water dragons, ducks, birds will be bereft of habitat. No indication has been made as to what will happen to them as construction begins: where will they be housed?

Not only is this injurious to flora and fauna, but there is a walkway and cycleway along the creek, much loved and used, which will suffer the same fate. Re routing it is not the same, as many unforgettable hours have been spent by people there for many years, families stopping at the duck pond to see the animals. All will be gone.

I am opposed to the project in so far as it will lead to a deleterious air quality. Three schools border the entry to the Link Rd - Balgowlah Boys High, St. Cecila's Catholic Primary and a Pre-school. Ray Nassar, Ray Kearney and others, have compiled research to show that the impact of particulate matter from vehicles generally is injurious to health. This will be intensified with the volume of traffic build up with a project like this. They point to retarded growth of lungs in children, a higher incidence of asthma and lung disease, the incidence of stroke and cardiac failure in adults. Cowie et al have shown that there is a greater frequency of these diseases along main roads, and interestingly, within 500m plus of ventilation stacks. This is despite a study showing that the air coming from stacks would essentially be little different to ambient air. I think there needs to be more studies done on this to show that is safe. Otherwise, down the track we are going to have a plethora of health

problems and possible litigation a la Hardie's.

Moreover, there will be children from these schools having classes on Balgowlah oval, only metres away from the cars on the Link Rd. As well, a number of sporting teams use the oval, Balgowlah Suns AFL and Seaforth Soccer, and have training times to coincide with peak hour traffic. Medical research has, again, shown the vulnerability of children to breathing traffic fumes, particularly while exercising.

There is no safe level of air pollution. 3,000 people a year die from air pollution related diseases in Australia. And many more contract lung and cardiovascular disease. Pundits have called it the new asbestos and the new tobacco. The annual State of Global Air Report by the Health Effects Institute found that over 95 percent of the world's population is breathing unhealthy air. Long-term exposure to air pollution contributed to 6.1 million deaths in 2016 with strokes, heart attacks, lung disease and lung cancer causing many of them. Air pollution is now the fourth-highest cause of death worldwide, behind smoking, high blood pressure and diet.

India and China lead the world in the total number of deaths attributable to air pollution in 2016 with 1.61 and 1.58 million respectively. (Niall McCarthy, Forbes, April, 2018) I saw a program on TV on Delhi, India, which has a population of about 22 million. It has high levels of air pollution. The compere pointed out that there were 4.4 million children, with 2.2 million having some lung impairment or disease associated with this air pollution.

The removal of the Link Rd will alleviate the air pollution problems a little, but this is an on going problem that Sydney and the world have to face generally over the next decades.

One consideration would be to test air pollution levels on a daily basis and show that on a screen near the oval, as is done with electronic road signs. It would be courtesy to let schools and children using the oval know whether it is safe on any particular day to use the oval.

I object to the placement of the stack on Balgowlah golf course. Whilst it debatable what the air quality issuing from it will be like, studies have shown a significant rise in lung disorders of people living within 1.5 kilometres of ventilation stacks. Moreover, while the claim is made that much of the noxious gases will dissipate, the prevalence of PM 2.5's and PM 10's remain. They are not destroyed, and will be dispersed onto neighbouring suburbs such as Manly, Fairlight, Curl Curl, or depending on the wind factor, back into Balgowlah. Serious monitoring of the behaviour of particulate matter is an imperative, as people would like to know what is going into their lungs. No one wants to countenance litigation in the future, and this would give people some peace of mind.

I am opposed to the idea of killing off Balgowlah Golf Course, the destruction of valuable green space. Apart from the loss of facility for golfers, the increasing reduction of green space across suburbs has led to social alienation. The number of places to walk and meet is becoming less as we become more urbanised. In addition, the possibility of reinventing the golf course, turning it into playing fields is an ambitious dream. No self-respecting parent would consider allowing their children to

play within coee of a stack. The psychological stigma of the stack will remain forever. No one will want to play sport near it, and related to this, Balgowlah Oval may end up an oval no one will use. Moreover, no one will want to live near it. Forget the idea too, of having units and town houses etc adjoining Sydney Rd and extending down into the golf course (which rumour says has been a thought bubble by the Department of Planning for years)

I am opposed to the Link Rd because of the rat-runs it will induce. Already, the area of Sydney Rd and Wanganella St has reached saturation point in morning peak hour. The introduction of the Link Rd will further pull traffic to this area. The holding road area planned will not satisfy the demands of the traffic build up, and it will be an impediment to traffic flow, not the easy flow traffic situation envisaged. The two sets of lights, entrance and exit to the tunnel, will further exacerbate the situation. Traffic gridlock is the likely scenario. The common sense experience of people living in the area will testify to that.

I am opposed to the Link Rd on safety grounds. The entrance anywhere near Balgowlah Boys' High is a significant safety issue. Further over head crossings would have to be put in place to get around this. Not just one. Despite the revelation there may not be an intersection leading to the Link Rd established around Maretimo St. consideration should be given to the children going to and from school, knowing that teenagers can be rash, and do not behave the same as adults around roadways. Similarly, the induced traffic build up will be intensified around St. Cecilia's as cars try to negotiate the Wanganella St log jam to get onto Sydney Rd or Maretimo St, to enter a new supposed Link Rd further along. The same air quality and safety issues apply.

I am opposed to the type of tunnel envisaged. The longitudinal tunnel system is the cheapest, but not the best. (contrary to RMS claims they would deliver the best system) The best tunnel systems are in Japan and Spain, and are transversal. Longitudinal systems are not recommended for longer tunnels, such as this 7.2 kilometre one. Even the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, far shorter, has a transversal system, which pushes out noxious gases along its distance. The view that everything will be thrown out and upwards from the stack and everything will be fine, is looking through rose-coloured glasses. Not all gas is dispersed and neutralised, especially around the portal. The gases and PM2.5's and PM 10's being heavier than air will come to land somewhere, as we saw with the particulate matter from the dust storm a short while ago, covering cars and houses etc. The fine particles stay in the air for some days, to be breathed in. Filtering is a necessity. It has worked well overseas. We should look to overseas examples for best practice. We've only had one trial here. That is not sufficient. The response here sounds more like the 'department of saving money'. Studies have found the linkage between lung disease and proximity to stacks and tunnels, and will continue to do so. If this project is to be informed it must become more evidence based. It must deal with this issue, not wave it away.

I am opposed to the Link Rd and Tunnel based on health issues for workers. They are the ones in the front line who will be digging up materials, creating the dust, breathing in the air pollution, to create the tunnel. The highest incidence of lung disease is among workers on similar projects. It might be wise to do a study on West Connex workers. I propose that air quality be monitored on an hourly basis for workers, that

they be provided with face masks to protect from inhalation of particulate matter from concrete, dust and vehicles. And perhaps on going medical checks should be made on their health. After all, air pollution has been labelled as the 'new asbestos.'

I am opposed to the Tunnel because there is a view becoming more apparent, that it will not solve the transport problems of the peninsula. The Sydney Harbour tunnel worked fairly well for a while, and now the traffic has reached saturation point in peak hour. Even on weekends it can be very slow.

Rising population has a lot to do with it. There are many thousands more using it these days. As the population grows on the peninsula the same thing will occur. The population of the Northern Beaches will grow to 309,000 in the next decades. This will mean more cars using the tunnel. The assumption is that most of them will use the Western Harbour Tunnel, but figures show that most trips at the moment are to the eastern suburbs. This will further choke the Sydney Harbour Tunnel.

Michelle Zeibots has spoken about 'induced traffic'. The Northern Beaches tunnel will work fine for a few years, but as more and more people use it, the time saved will lessen, from 15 mins to 5 mins, then nothing, then it will take longer. A second and perhaps third tunnel will have to be put in. Which is an absurdity. Britain and Europe are experiencing the same problems: tunnels and roadways are becoming overrun with traffic, and more of the same is not a solution.

It has not been made clear what the philosophy of the tunnel is, apart from it saving time, and perhaps feeding other major roads. As a society how does it improve our way of life? This is lacking. And it does need to include contested views. If we are to have a major project like this, it needs to be mulled over and analysed by experts. As it is, there is not bipartisan support for it.

There needs to be a lot more thought put into transport issues in Sydney and across Australia. The future may well hold cars as redundant, and fast trains become the option, as is happening overseas. Or electric bus-trains. In ten years time even before this project is completed, it could well be old fashioned, and needs to be severely reworked. It needs to be future proofed. The world moves quicker than projects of this kind.

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