

Submission on the Environmental Impact Statement for the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection

Project Application Number: SSI-8862

Public Availability of Business Case

Objection:

I object to the fact that a Business Case for the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection has not been made available to the public for assessment.

The EIS states on page E-3:

The project is also identified as a **priority initiative** under Infrastructure Australia's Australian Infrastructure Plan: The Infrastructure Priority List (Infrastructure Australia, 2018) for its importance in addressing urban congestion on Sydney's road network, providing cross-harbour connectivity and Northern Beaches connectivity.

While this is true, it is interesting to note that Infrastructure Australia's *Infrastructure Priority List*, dated August 2020, also lists projects as High Priority Projects, Priority Projects, and High Priority Initiatives. Projects listed as Priority Initiatives are very far down the list.

Furthermore, the definition of an **Initiative** by Infrastructure Australia is:

Potential infrastructure problems or 'early-stage' solutions **for which a business case has not yet been completed.**

The promoted cost of this Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project is \$15 billion, yet it is highly likely that this figure will increase, given that there are many aspects not fully considered in the EIS such as unknown geology along the route; the cost of removing and treating the highly toxic contaminants in Sydney Harbour, Middle Harbour and Flat Rock Gully; the cost of repairs to probable damage of many Federation homes which are more than 100 years old.

The cavalier approach of Transport NSW to its infrastructure projects is summed up in the following comment in relation to the NSW Government seeking a development partner for the Western Harbour Tunnel:

Project costs will only be finalised when construction contracts have been awarded.

Source: <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases/nsw-government-seeking-development-partner-for-western-harbour> Published 31 Jul 2020

This is hardly best business practice and indicates that no business case was developed for the Western Harbour Tunnel. This assumption can quite validly be made for the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project.

Furthermore the approach of the NSW Government does not appear to have changed since the Public Accountability Committee's report into *The Impact of the WestConnex Project* published in December 2018.

The Recommendations from this report appear to have been ignored, namely:

Recommendation 3: That the NSW Government: publish the strategic business cases, appropriately redacted of commercial in confidence information, for all major infrastructure projects.

Recommendation 5: That the NSW Government ensure that the delivery of future large-scale infrastructure projects, irrespective of whether they are delivered privately or publicly, be subject to the same levels of transparency and accountability that would be required of a project delivered by a public sector body.

Solution:

I request that

the NSW Government immediately adhere to the recommendations of the Public Accountability Committee's report into *The impact of the WestConnex Project* and publish the strategic business case, appropriately redacted of commercial in confidence information, for this major infrastructure project - the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

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