

I'm a resident of Balgowlah Heights. I strongly object to the building of the tunnel for a number of reasons. The tunnel will not only have negative impacts on my family and my immediate community but also on our planet.

Increased car traffic and associated greenhouse gas emissions

The tunnel will induce demand. Initially roads will be less congested once the tunnel has opened, so more people will drive rather than take public transport. It's predicted that our area will reach the same congestion levels it had before the tunnel was built just two years after opening of the tunnel.

In a world of global warming where we have to focus our scarce resources on projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, this project will have the opposite effect. It will create more car traffic and more emissions. Instead of building more road infrastructure for individual car traffic, public transport options have to be explored. We need to get people out of their cars and onto buses, trains, metro and ferries.

The recent bus changes on the Northern Beaches have complicated the situation further: Only the main arteries, eg Condamine Street, have an increased frequency of buses, but all 'feeding suburbs' have seen their bus services reduced or chopped up. This has led to an increasing number of commuters driving and students being driven. Something the NSW Government can easily fix by reversing the cuts.

Congestion of local streets

It's predicted that the local, smaller streets surrounding the entry & exit of the tunnel will see increased levels of congestion, as more traffic coming to or from the tunnel will have to travel on these roads. In addition, some local streets will become rat runs as locals try to avoid the more congested main roads.

One example is Lauderdale Avenue, connecting Balgowlah and Manly, which will become the rat run to avoid Sydney Road.

The Seaforth roundabout is another traffic nightmare waiting to happen. It's close to the newly designated 'Seaforth bus hub' where many commuters are changing buses to get to and from the city. This roundabout will also be used by the majority of construction vehicles to get to and from the construction site. Already, school buses are late in the mornings due to congestion at the roundabout. It cannot cope with more traffic.

More severe parking problems

Parking is already at a premium on the Northern Beaches. With more people from other parts of Sydney driving to the beaches on weekends, this problem is going to be magnified. Already, it's extremely difficult to park in Manly on a weekend. The same is true for other local beaches, eg Freshwater and even Curl Curl at times. Where are all the additional cars going to park?

People have to be incentivised to take public transport to travel to the beaches, e.g the Manly Ferry or direct buses but cars will lead to mayhem.

Environmental Impact

The fragile ecosystems of Manly Dam are under threat by the widening of the Wakehurst Parkway to six lanes. Spoil and wastewater have the potential to pollute the dam.

Queenscliff Lagoon will have nearly half a million litres of wastewater pumped into it daily, contaminating the lagoon and beaches.

Burnt Creek water flow will be reduced by 96% by the end of the project, destroying the ecosystem.

High contamination risk has been cited for heavy metals and organotoxins into Middle Harbour from tunnel dredging, polluting The Spit, Clontarf etc .

Air Quality

The ventilation shafts are currently not designed to be filtered. Therefore, a large area, including schools such as Balgowlah Boys, will be impacted by increased air pollution. Air pollution is the leading killer worldwide, leading to not only lung diseases but also heart attacks and strokes. The government has to work on reducing emissions, and work to mitigate the effects of the tunnel.

In conclusion, I strongly hope the Beaches Link will not go ahead at all and money will instead be re-directed to public transport infrastructure.

In case the Beaches Link does go ahead, the NSW Government should seek to address as many of the above problems as possible.

In order to incentivise people to take public transport, the tunnel should contain at least one 24/7 express bus lane to prioritise public transport over private cars. The private operators of the tunnel will have no interest in increasing public transport as it reduces their fees, so a solution has to be found by the NSW Government to address this conflict.