

**Submission on the Environmental Impact Statement
for the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection
Project Application Number: SSI-8862**

Air Quality

Objection:

I wish to object to the fact that the emissions from the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection tunnels will not be filtered.

I refer to the NSW Parliament Public Accountability Committee's report into *The impact of the WestConnex Project* published in December 2018.

The Recommendations from this report appears to have been ignored when preparing the EIS, namely:

Recommendation 13: That the NSW Government install, on all current and future motorway tunnels, filtration systems in order to reduce the level of pollutants emitted from ventilation stacks.

When she was in Opposition, the Premier Gladys Berejiklian, supported by Michael Richardson (the then Member for Castle Hill) and Anthony Roberts (Member for Lane Cove), expressed their concerns about the dangers of unfiltered air from tunnels.

Their comments to the NSW Legislative Assembly on 8th May 2008 clearly state the case for the dangers of air pollution and strongly support my objection to the fact that the ventilation stacks from the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection tunnels will not be filtered:

Mr Michael Richardson (Castle Hill)

"Air toxics are another contaminant in the air and can cause leukaemia, long-term harm to the immune system, skin and eye irritations, drowsiness, dizziness, headaches, central nervous system dysfunction, narcosis, light-headedness, irritation of the respiratory tract, fatigue, tremors, coordination difficulties, impaired pulmonary function, cancer, and nose and throat irritation. Air toxics can also cause kidney and liver damage, respiratory irritation, exacerbation of asthma, bronchitis, coughing and throat irritation. The impacts of air pollution on health are significant. Dr Ray Kearney, Chairman of the Lane Cove Tunnel Action Group and noted authority on air pollution, said: "Research confirms that up to a fifth of lung cancer deaths are attributed to exposure to carcinogen-laden fine particles in vehicle exhaust emissions." ... The report continues:

Statistical evidence suggests that the health effects of particulates can occur independently of the presence of other pollutants such as ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. There is also increasing evidence that the adverse health effects of particulates are more closely associated with the PM2.5 size fraction than with larger fractions.

Health studies of fine particles have shown that they can increase mortality from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, increase hospital admissions for chronic

obstructive pulmonary disease and heart disease, reduce lung function in children with asthma, and increase respiratory symptoms in school-age children. One can understand why we want a filter on the Lane Cove Tunnel—indeed, why we want to filter all road tunnels in Sydney. Electrostatic precipitators are needed; it is not just a matter of filtering the stacks. The particulate material needs to be removed from the tunnels. Electrostatic precipitators are capable of removing up to 95 per cent of particulate matter in the tunnel ...

Air pollution does have health effects. What we would expect is that efforts would be taken to minimise those effects.

That is an absolute joke. The Government has foisted yet another unfiltered road tunnel on Sydney without any consideration of the health impact on surrounding residents, workers and motorists using the tunnel ...

Ms Gladys Berejiklian (Willoughby)

... “For the benefit of members who are not aware, Dr Ray Kearney is an associate professor in the Department of Infectious Diseases and Immunology at the University of Sydney. As I mentioned, he has been a long-time community advocate of the installation of filtration systems in road tunnels and has advocated the removal of noxious exhaust poisons. His stand relates to all tunnels. Although he is a resident of Lane Cove and a constituent of the local member, he is passionate about filtration of all tunnels. I thank him again for the great role he has played in exhibiting community leadership and assisting community organisations as well as for being a very strong advocate on this very important issue. The health aspects and concerns highlighted by Professor Kearney, members of Parliament and community leaders are well known. It is not only existing health complaints, such as respiratory illnesses, that are matters of concern: current technology does not allow us to foresee the impact that a failure to add filtration to our tunnels will have in the future.

We do not know the quantum of unfiltered air that people are inhaling and we do not know the impact that that may have in the future. As the member for Lane Cove said, that is a matter of concern. Schools in our electorates are situated in very close proximity to the stacks ...

At the end of the day what the Government says on climate change, the environment, health and youth means nothing because when it comes to the crunch it does not prioritise. It does not think it is important to safeguard the health of local residents, ensure air quality or take out insurance for the future health of people who live, work and play in the vicinity of these stacks ...

Why did the Government not make filtration of the tunnel one of the conditions? ...

The Government has failed to address residents' concerns about air quality and many other associated issues. It has treated the community with contempt ...

As Professor Ray Kearney and others have described publicly, even if respiratory and other issues are not triggered currently, they could have a huge impact in the future. Members of Parliament should examine their conscience and consider how they would feel if their children or the children of loved ones were exposed to this level of fumes every day and they were part of a government that could have put in place measures to reduce the impact of the fumes. It is not too late: the Government can still ensure that filtration is a possibility ...

Mr Anthony Roberts (Lane Cove)

The filtration of the Lane Cove Tunnel is incredibly important to my constituents and those in the electorates of Willoughby and Ryde. It is of significance also to many other communities in Sydney who are fighting for their health and for filtration in their suburbs ...

The Coalition continues to urge the Government, because time is short, to follow world's best practice by filtering the Lane Cove Tunnel, and indeed all tunnels in metropolitan Sydney, not because it is the right thing to do scientifically, but for the health and wellbeing of our children, our families and our communities. Mark my words: What we are dealing with here is the new asbestos. It will haunt this Government and any members who oppose this filtration for decades to come. I commend the bill to the House.

Source: Legislative Assembly Hansard – 08 May 2008

Unfortunately, it is rarely possible for politicians to admit that they are wrong when they change their position on an issue. It is very disappointing that now that Ms Berejiklian and Mr Roberts are in Government, their concern for the health and well-being for the people of Sydney is no longer paramount.

Solution:

The solution is clear.

It is stated in the NSW Parliament Public Accountability Committee's report, from December 2018, into *The impact of the WestConnex Project*, Recommendation 13:

That the NSW Government install, on all current and future motorway tunnels, filtration systems in order to reduce the level of pollutants emitted from ventilation stacks.

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