

I strongly object to the Beaches Link Tunnel for the following reasons;

Before we spend upwards of \$10billion of taxpayers' money and potentially decimate our valued native landscape, fauna and flora we need to consider the following;

How the pandemic has changed the way we live, work and think;

1. Employer surveys conducted have shown that the majority of staff wish to work from home the majority of the week. A number of city employers have already reduced their property footprint to 60% of employee numbers.
2. Coupled with the heightened anxiety over climate change impacts, the community is fiercely protective of their ever-shrinking native green space.
3. We are taking up ocean swimming, kayaking and other outdoor activities in ever increasing numbers and really value our waterways and public spaces.
4. We are enjoying spending more time with our families and less time commuting.
5. We are taking up e-bikes and scooters at great rates
6. We have become resilient and are more willing to try new things and be progressive in our thinking, especially if it means we can save our environment and our way of life.

We need to have tried all other alternatives:

1. Congestion tax.
2. BLine bus routes.
3. Change of school start and finish times to use buses more efficiently.
4. Improved public transport.
5. Reduce spit bridge openings.

#### **A: Lack of real engagement**

We have seen a very polished marketing show from Transport for NSW (TfNSW), what has been lacking is active listening. As such I believe there are holes in the design and omissions in the EIS as detailed under the respective headings below.

We are extremely lucky to have a 'brains trust' of qualified and experienced professionals in our community willing to work with the TfNSW to solve for a number of our concerns. Given the lack of real engagement with the community we will be left with a suboptimal solution.

#### **B: Design faults**

##### 1. Taking the fastest route

It is proposed that cars travelling north to Manly will exit the Balgowlah tunnel at a set of lights at the Link Road. They will then travel through 8 sets of lights down Sydney road before getting to a parking station in Manly.

A car seeking the fastest route would travel through the tunnel to Kenneth Road and travel to Manly beach having travelled through only 2 sets of lights.

##### 2. Why the Link Road?

It is most likely that:

- I. all residents from Warringah Road North are most likely to take the Wakehurst Parkway tunnel,
- II. all residents South of Warringah Road to Condamine Street will take the Balgowlah tunnel; and
- III. all residents of Seaforth, Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, Clontarf, Fairlight, Manly (Harbour side) and anyone not wanting to pay the toll will continue to use the Spit Bridge.

The question then arises why build the Link Road, especially given;

- TfNSW modelling provides for a reduction in traffic on Sydney Road and Wanganella Road;
- those from (III) Harbour side above, who would like to take the tunnel could just use Condamine Street/ Kenneth Road with fewer lights.
- Fastest route ie. Less traffic lights, for travellers going to Manly Beach is not the link road, as explained above.

### 3. Public Transport design thinking not included

There is no inclusion in the design on how public transport from the Harbour side suburbs ((III) above) are expected to use the tunnel. One would expect a hub and spoke junction at some point for residents to be able to access West bound public transport.

Given the communities continued request for improved public transport one would expect that this should all be included in the design phase.

### 4. Modelling errors and omissions

The EIS is flawed in a number of material respects. Modelling is based on 2017 traffic, doesn't consider the effects of either the expected change of work arrangements, nor the very successful BLine bus.

Given it has omitted a study of local traffic it hasn't considered expected rat runs that will result to bypass traffic lights and toll costs. The effect on local traffic, along with public transport design, should be considered in the tunnel design phase (not after execution) to ensure the best outcome.

## **C: Local traffic problems**

The EIS omits an impact assessment on local roads suggesting this falls under the jurisdiction of the Northern Beaches Council (NB Council). It is not clear whether there has been any engagement with the NB Council as to how the traffic issues will be solved for.

To date the NB Council has failed to find solutions to current local traffic issues. With bottle necks at Kenneth Street, Roseberry Street, intersections of Wanganella Street and Sydney Roads, Wanganella Street and White Street, and Condamine Street around the Warringah Mall.

It is also not clear whether the NB Council had been consulted over the increase in north bound lanes from 2 lanes to 3 lanes prior to the design being included in the EIS statement.

It is expected that upwards of an extra 40,000 vehicles would descend on the Northern Beaches over summer weekends. It has not been determined how local roads will cope or where these vehicles are expected to park. Best practice would be to determine the impact and include in the design phase.

A family of four could drive to Manly Beach for an \$8 toll. This is cheaper than taking a ferry or other modes of public transport, as such they are more likely to drive, overburdening our roads and compromising the patronage of our public transport.

**Condition to be included as part of project:**

- Tunnel Project, after engaging with NB Council, include in the design the impacts on local traffic and a public transport solution for Harbour side residents.
- NB Council/Tunnel Project include in the design, an electronic board at tunnel exit detailing real time parking availability at Manly Beach. Beach goers would then seek a beach further up the Northern Beaches and not compromise local roads should parking not be available.

**D: Environmental Concerns**

Our community values our very sparse native green space including Burnt Bridge Creek, Garigal National Park, Bantry Bay and Manly Dam Reserve. This has become all the more apparent since the pandemic and our concern over climate change impacts.

We need to seriously consider the future ramifications of losing waterways and ecosystems for more traffic. These native bushlands, mature trees and ecosystems need to be held in trust for our children. Felling 150year old trees is irreplaceable in our children's lifetime.

The EIS states there will be up to 96% reduction in baseflow in the Burnt Bridge Creek with permanent loss of the fauna and flora that live off and around it, yet there is no suggestion on how this impact can be deterred, as though it is inconsequential.

**Condition:**

- The Tunnel Project provide a solution to save the Burnt Bridge Creek and dependant ecosystem.
- The remaining native green space on the Northern Beaches be kept in trust so as not to be further compromised at the whim of State government, and local council.

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