

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

Another Toll Tunnel

Objection:

I object to the construction of yet another tunnel requiring the payment of tolls in both directions.

Transport experts have given Sydney “the dubious honour of having the most extensive — and expensive — urban toll road network in the world.”

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-26/sydney-has-most-toll-roads-in-the-world/10845944>

By the time the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection are built, the city will have 16 toll roads:

- M2
- new M4 WestConnex
- M5
- M7
- M4
- Eastern Distributor
- Cross-City Tunnel
- Lane Cove Tunnel
- Sydney Harbour Bridge
- Sydney Harbour Tunnel
- M4 tunnels
- M5 (from Beverly Hills to St Peters)
- M5 East (Beverly Hills to General Holmes Drive)
- M4-M5 link
- NorthConnex
- WHT

"Tollways aren't successful at reducing road congestion," writes Dr Michelle Zeibots, research director of the UTS Transport Research Centre.

"The reason why governments continue to build them is that they are put under enormous pressure by the tollway industry and individuals sometimes within their own party, who I would suggest are there to see tollway businesses make a lot of money.

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-02-26/sydney-has-most-toll-roads-in-the-world/10845944>

The increasing cost of travelling on Sydney toll roads leads people to seek alternative routes, thus avoiding the need to pay tolls. As recently as January this year, “...thousands of extra cars and trucks have been flooding onto southern Sydney roads since a new toll was imposed on the M5 East motorway as drivers try to save money.”

Source: SMH, January 28, 2021

The EIS acknowledges that:

One impact is the potential to increase congestion volumes on surrounding roads as a result of toll avoidance. The use of a toll road can also increase the cost of living and can exacerbate social inequality. Specifically, the impact of roads tolls on households can be assessed as a function of household income, urban spatial structure, and available mobility choices. Depending on the travel routes of individuals, and the individual economic situation, there would be a proportion of the population that avoid the use of tollways due to affordability.

Source: Beaches Link EIS page 13-27

With the increase in the number of toll roads across Sydney, the accumulated total of tolls paid in a week or a year by privately registered cars will not be adequately compensated by the NSW Governments offer of free car registration. Drivers have pay \$1352 in tolls per year to qualify for this offer or \$26 a week. I personally know of many people who pay more than \$26 per day!

Furthermore this offer does nothing to compensate drivers of commercial vehicles. Increases in their costs always flow down to the consumer resulting in increases to our cost of living.

The increasing privatisation of toll roads results in the NSW Government having no control in the increase of the tolls each year. The only toll to have avoided annual increases is the Sydney harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, both owned by the Government.

Toll fatigue already exists among drivers. Yet another toll for yet another expensive tunnel will result in avoidance of the toll roads, and thus a minimal reduction of traffic congestion on surrounding roads. I am quite confident in predicting that there will be no change in the traffic on Military Road in spite of the construction of the Beaches Link tunnel.

For these reasons I object to the construction of yet another tunnel requiring the payment of tolls in both directions.

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