

Dear Sir/Madam

Objection to the Beaches Link Tunnel

We are a local Seaforth family who appreciate the amazing privilege we have of living in one of the most environmentally beautiful areas of the world. We utilise our local beaches, creeks, bushland and dam almost daily and want to see this unique area, and its flora and fauna, preserved for generations to come.

In reviewing the EIS for the beaches tunnel I strongly object to many components of the project as outlined below.

Environmental Destruction

I object to the destruction of the Burnt Bridge Creek which would lose 96% of its water flow through this proposal. Our family regularly uses this area to connect with nature, exercise and to travel between Seaforth and Manly. It is an area of environmental significance which should be protected at all costs. This proposal would result in significant hydrological and ecological impacts resulting in permanent loss of habitat and associated biotic communities. Instead of a beautiful creek ecosystem we would have a series of disconnected pools with poor water quality and reduced ability to support flora and fauna. The impacts on the creek will also likely have devastating impacts on the biological communities further down the creek down to Queenscliff Lagoon.

I object that at Middle Harbour toxic chemicals may be disturbed during dredging, posing a major threat to the marine environment. Important and successful work has been done to improve the quality of Sydney Harbour in recent years. This proposal goes backwards for the work to protect our harbour environment and its marine life. The Australian Marine Sciences Association has raised risks to marine life due to the dredging of contaminated sediment for the Western Harbour Tunnel, and the same concerns would be relevant for dredging in Middle Harbour.

I object to the removal of 39 football fields of bushland along with approx 2,000 trees for this project. Our environment, home to important plant and animal species, should not be removed for road infrastructure through this project. These areas are home to threatened species such as the Eastern Pygmy Possum and well as many other native species.

I object to the ongoing pollution coming from the Wakehurst Parkway widening, impacting Garigal National Park and Manly Dam potentially resulting in the extinction of rare flora and fauna. These areas should be managed to preserve their health so the community, and wildlife which use them, are not adversely impacted. Our family regularly uses Manly Dam and would be one of thousands of families who would suffer if its environmental quality is impacted and it was no longer safe for swimming activities.

I object that during construction, 425,000 litres of waste water will be washed into Manly Lagoon every day, affecting its biotic community, the water quality of this important area and impact the thousands of people who utilise this popular beach area.

I object that there will be a long-term loss of groundwater in the catchment. This would impact our green spaces, including local trees.

Adverse Health Impacts To The Local Community, Including School Children

I object to unfiltered exhaust stacks being included in the project. These would emit double the maximum limit of particulates recommended by the World Health Authority. covering a 1.2km radius per stack, stretching across numerous suburbs and many schools and childcare centres. The dangers associated with such unfiltered, polluted air includes cancers, emphysema and asthma.

Overseas projects use filtered stacks. It seems as though the NSW Government doesn't want to justify the expense of filtered stacks in this project, despite the clear risks to community health. They should absolutely use filtering systems to ensure the health of our community.

The longevity of this project means that school children eg at Seaforth Public School and Balgowlah Boys would be studying amongst construction, noise, dust and pollution for perhaps all of their residency at the school. The health impacts could be significant. For example children at local schools may have to endure noise at 16-20 decibels over recommended noise management levels.

I object that the construction will have over 3000 vehicles per day and 1.5 heavy vehicles per minute moving across the construction areas. This will result in traffic chaos and safety risks along roads not designed for such vehicles. For example heavy trucks will be potentially lethal if navigating down Frenchs Forest Road with the sharp turn by Seaforth Public School, particularly in wet conditions, surrounded by local, young children coming and going from school. Heavy vehicles moving from the site down Military Road will result in enhanced traffic congestion in this area for the duration of the build.

A Flawed Business Case

I object to this project's proposal to spend \$12 billion dollars on a tunnel that will hugely and detrimentally impact the northern beaches community during its construction over a period of at least 6 years (likely longer), when it has only minimal traffic congestion gains. Estimates are that it will reduce travel time to the city by only ten minutes.

There is also strong evidence around 'induced traffic' - that increased roads and tunnels only leads to more traffic and therefore more congestion so there is no net improvement of traffic flow within a few years after construction.

I object that more forward thinking, clean and green transport alternatives are not being implemented such as more buses/electric buses/light rail etc. This tunnel proposal is already outdated, and does not meet the needs of (a) looking after existing nature areas, (b) introducing greener transport systems (c) looking after the health of local northern beaches communities (including local children) and (d) sustaining a good quality of life on the beach (due to the impact of the build during its 6+years of construction).

I object to this project being pushed forward due to the 2023 election. It should not be fast-tracked for political reasons.

I would like to see the EIS reissued for public consultation with:

- A full contamination assessment completed
- A comparative mass transport alternative assessment
- A proper business case including travel times, surface traffic changes and costs fully justified against alternative transport options

Conclusion

The Beaches Link Tunnel is an outdated concept which has minimal benefit for transport. It will destroy many natural areas of significant beauty utilised by the community, create years of local chaos and present health risks for the local community.

Whilst I appreciate progress is necessary, far more effective transport solutions can be achieved through improving public transport without destroying the local environment.

COVID has made us realise, more than ever, the importance of our health, and that of our environment. We are privileged to be custodians of one of the most beautiful spots in NSW, here on the northern beaches and must do what we can to preserve this for future generations.