

I am strongly against the Beaches Link project proceeding at all. It has gradually come to light that there are many issues with this project that negate any possible claimed benefits to its existence and I do not believe it is a plausible solution to the transport issues on the Northern Beaches.

The aims in building the tunnel are to alleviate the existing road congestion and better link the Northern Beaches to the CBD and other areas of Sydney, thus creating the opportunity for an increase in jobs, development, additional dwellings and thus population.

There are arguments to refute each purported goal of the Beaches Link, with the EIS not fully addressing all issues and even playing down some of the consequences.

IMPROVED TRANSPORT:

The goal of improved safety by reducing traffic congestion and rat runs has been refuted by transport expert Dr Michelle Zeibots, who states that our existing traffic problems will return to the same levels we now have within 2 years of the tunnel being opened. She feels improved public transport is clearly the best option for the Northern Beaches. Already the B-Line bus has made a huge positive difference to the commute to the CBD, however it seems that buses will not be permitted in the tunnel as they would take up too much of the area proposed for private/toll paying cars. The \$12 billion cost of constructing the tunnel would negate any chance of investment in public transport for the Northern Beaches for the next several decades, resulting in a massive private toll road system with no development or improvement to mass public transport. The ongoing costs to the residents (as if the \$12 billion isn't enough!) will be the high cost of the tolls; a projected \$8 one-way for the tunnel and an incredible \$23 round trip per day to get to the city. This project may suit Transurban and the construction companies, but will not provide any benefit to residents of the Northern Beaches.

CONSTRUCTION:

Where to begin with this? At every reading there appears to be more issues; the enormous cost at \$12 billion, the long 5-7 years of at-best inconvenience and at-worst major life upheavals for residents, 4,000 homes affected by noise levels of more than 75 decibels, one heavy truck movement per minute for the duration, tunnelling construction proposed 24/7 with tunnel vibrations in shallow levels of as little as 10-15 metres below the surface which indicates issues for any living creature nearby and structural damage to existing buildings, the unallocated and increased demand for parking for construction workers in residential streets, the increased local traffic in residential streets trying to avoid the construction sites and subsequent delays.

ENVIRONMENT:

The EIS describes the Burnt Bridge Creek as a 'vital ecological corridor of ...habitat'. With the project comes a reduction in the natural water flow by 79%, removal of a lake, discharging 400,000 litres of wastewater per day into the creek which then flows through to Queenscliff Lagoon, 2,000 trees removed from a National Park (!), Manly Dam and its rare flora and fauna polluted by the construction wastewater run-off, forecast increases of 15% to air pollutants, groundwater flows reduced by up to 96%, toxic sludge disturbed in the harbour and spreading to the Spit and harbour beaches, uncontrolled water flows during heavy rain, devastation to many endangered species of both flora and fauna, including the 60 million year old Gondwanan Climbing Galaxias Fish.

Is this destruction justified?

FUTURE PLANNING

The proposed growth of 20% in the Northern Beaches over the next 10-15 years has been justified by the Beaches tunnel. The NB Council and NSW Government portray it as an unavoidable step between the NB Hospital construction and the following building of the Frenchs Forest precinct around the hospital. The proposed amount of around 5,000 new dwellings would be decreased to a maximum of 3,000 without the east-west bus service and the tunnel. Considering the initial amount would have created a population of half of Dee Why in the smaller confines of the hospital precinct, and at an unhealthy pace of growth, this may be an encouragement to more contemplative and considerate planning, including a requirement for a decent percentage of affordable housing. The proposed project lessens the current attractions of the Northern Beaches (fresh air, natural environment, low-medium density housing, active lifestyle) with the future costs of the tolls being a further detriment.

NO VOICE

Perhaps one of the most concerning aspects of this project is the lack of heed of the people. 80% of residents have stated their opposition to several aspects of this project, including the polluting exhaust stacks, and alternative solutions have been suggested by community groups. When the EIS reports that the modelling shows, relating to air toxins in the atmosphere close to the stacks, that not enough people will suffer medically as a result of the increase in air toxins to justify the additional expenditure on installing filtration, in order to reduce those additional health problems/deaths, this reveals the governments' value of its people versus the 'value' of development and growth. Although a government is ideally 'of the people, by the people and for the people', with regards to this project, seemingly a continuation of the WestConnex issues, the government is *not* representative of the people and is certainly not acting *for* the people.

The EIS fails to take into account the option of the Western Harbour Tunnel being constructed WITHOUT the Beaches Link, with no subsequent evaluation of this scenario. Given the many problems listed here that would be caused during the lengthy construction period of the Beaches Link, the huge cost (financial, environmental and to the community) and no long-term benefit, there seems to be no comprehensible reason for this project to go ahead.

ALTERNATIVES;

A few alternatives that I believe have already been proposed are;

- The B-Line express bus along the east-west corridor; already proposed but stalled in 2020.
- Electric trams (such as used in Newcastle) without the need for overhead lines.
- A mass transit 'spine' with feeder routes to access points.
- Boost the ferry system between Manly and the CBD (having just decommissioned several of them!), an affordable public transport route not dependent on, and a good alternative to, the road systems.

In summary, while some of the intentions of the Beaches Link Tunnel project are worthy of consideration, the multi-faceted enormous cost, destruction and long-term damage caused by this project does not warrant its approval and construction.