

I OBJECT TO THE BEACHES LINK TUNNEL PROJECT

The tunnel will not relieve traffic congestion and delays in the longer term.

- The time savings set out in the EIS (30 minutes into the City from Balgowlah in 2037) are a nonsense. It rarely takes more than 45 minutes to get to the City from Balgowlah even in Peak Hour. The tunnel will not achieve these levels of time savings.
- As an actuary, I am skilled in modelling future potential outcomes. However, while there may be a best estimate, there should always be a range of results given the significant uncertainty of many of the assumptions. Where are the alternate scenarios in the EIS? What if the traffic volumes are different to those modelled by 10% or 20% either way? There must be a number of plausible outcomes but the EIS is deficient in providing only one potential outcome. It is likely that many potential outcomes will make the project uneconomic which given the long term nature of the project is a significant risk.
- The EIS states: "Ongoing and continuous traffic surveys carried out by Transport for NSW indicate that the 2016 baseline year is appropriate for modelling purposes as there is little material difference between 2016 and existing (2020) traffic conditions in the project area." This is a complete nonsense. 2020 was impacted by COVID with a significant reduction in public transport usage and a resultant increase in car usage. Public transport usage continues to be well down on normal, but this will moderate once the COVID vaccine becomes widely available and people's tolerance to being in close proximity to strangers increases.
- There is little credence given to the future impact on traffic flows of working from home. Sorry, but the world has changed, and for many people, working from home (for at least some of the working week) will be a permanent feature. The assumptions underlying modelling of future traffic flows do not appear to reflect reality and future trends.

Public transport and cycleways

- The EIS, Chapter 4 (page 4-12) states "without measures to improve journey times by increasing the road efficiency or capacity, the addition of more buses to the network can contribute to congestion." This is a ridiculous statement. Do we have transport planners or car planners?
- Where are the options for increased public transport and cycle ways? Prior to COVID, the B Line Bus into the City had a major favourable impact on public transport usage. The car is not the future. We need alternate thinking in this country, not 1960s thinking. Priority has to be given to alternatives to the car.
- How will the tunnel improve public transport usage? There will be no dedicated bus lane so buses will be caught up in the inevitable traffic congestion. If the tunnel is to be built, there should be a dedicated bus lane to increase public transport patronage.
- ***Consideration of public transport options must be conducted via an independent cost-benefit analysis for all transport options and released publicly.***

Military Road

The EIS states that according to traffic modelling, the traffic along Military Road will fall by 11% once the tunnel project is completed. As I noted above, the outcomes in the EIS are based on assumptions. What if these assumptions are wrong? Where are the alternate outcomes based on different assumptions? For example, if the traffic volume forecast for 2037 are too high, the claim of

an 11% reduction in traffic along Military Road of will be wrong, and the reduction in traffic will be less than this.

Consequently there has to be significant doubt about the claim by TfNSW that residents in Mosman and Cremorne will experience a major/dramatic reduction in traffic. This does not align with the stated objective for the project.

Environmental Issues

- There will be significant destruction of valuable bushland and green spaces. In a growing city, we cannot afford anymore destruction of the “lungs” of our city.
- There will be significant loss of and impact on bird and animal habitat that cannot be replaced.
- Due to the destruction of Burnt Bridge Creek, the amount and quality of water will fall with consequent impact on Manly Lagoon and various beaches. Manly Dam will be impacted by run-off and wastewater. We need guarantees that water quality will not be impacted.
- The potential impacts on Middle Harbour, Sandy Bay and Clontarf Beach (including the ocean pool) from construction is a major concern. Disturbing the sludge from the bottom of Middle Harbour and releasing toxins into the water creates a risk that in my view is unacceptable. Clontarf Reserve is a heavily used recreational park and the waters around the reserve are a haven for swimming, boating, canoeing etc. The control of sediment, silt and sludge by means of floating curtains around the construction site in Middle Harbour is a serious challenge, and the contractor will not be able to provide a guarantee that the levels of toxins in the waters of Sandy Bay and Clontarf Beach will be within safe levels. How is the government going to mitigate and manage this risk?
- Once again, the car champions over our environment. However, it is the environment, not the car, which sustains life on this planet, and further environmental destruction will increase the impacts of climate change.

Local traffic impacts

For 6 years (and likely longer) the people of the lower Norther Beaches will endure:

- Increased traffic congestion from trucks.
- Increased traffic congestion and parking from construction workers.
- Rat running from residents trying to avoid the resultant congestion.
- Slower public transport times.

The EIS seems to suggest that this is Council’s problem!

Once again the State Government creates a problem and leaves the mess for others to deal with. What a complete abrogation of responsibility.

In Conclusion

- The Beaches Link Tunnel will not solve any traffic problems, but simply increase the number of cars on the road due to traffic funnelling and the need to the operator of the tunnel to get a return on investment.

- The modelling is based on flawed assumptions that should be challenged.
- The Beaches Link Tunnel will have a disastrous impact on the lifestyle of residents and during the construction phase and cause long term irreparable damage to our precious environment and green spaces.