

Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection

EIS Submission - Objection

1/3/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

I object most strenuously to the proposed Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project.

I object to the project overall and its lack of foresight in spending \$14 billion of taxpayer's money on an out of date, short term and unsustainable transport solution which will, in fact, create traffic congestion in the medium to long term.

I am extremely concerned at the negative impacts likely to result from the proposed Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project, both in the construction phase and in ongoing operations. I object strongly to the proposal as it stands and to the massive impost that the construction and operations would have on the communities of the Northern Beaches, and in particular Balgowlah, North Balgowlah, and Seaforth as well as communities at the other end of the tunnel in Cammeray and North Sydney.

Summary of Concerns

The Consultation Process

1. The community consultation process has been appalling. To release a massive and highly complex EIS document in December, at the start of school holidays when the bulk of the population are heading into a well-earned break with families is inappropriate (at best). The document is extremely lengthy and very complex and it is difficult for the general population to find the time to digest, interpret and respond appropriately to the issues.
2. The interactions with the local communities have been limited to two virtual seminars (that I am aware of) for our area in Balgowlah. In addition, I followed up with Transport for NSW 3 times seeking their response to the many unanswered questions on the night, without success.
3. The consultation window is woefully inadequate both in terms of community engagement and in terms of the time provided to the community to adequately assess and respond to the issues.

The Project Overall

1. The proposed project (in conjunction with recent cuts to previously excellent public transport options for the area in the form of the bus network such as the E71) will force many more cars onto the roads, undermining the desired trend for a reduced reliance on, and use of, cars as a predominant means of transport. Commuting to the CBD for work has recently been made significantly more difficult for my area.
2. There does not appear to be a dedicated bus lane in the new tunnels which is unthinkable in an era of vastly increased environmental awareness and general community expectations around sustainable public transport options.
3. More cars on the road will increase pollution outcomes as well as increasing traffic in all supporting road networks that lead to the tunnels creating traffic chaos and vastly undermining the ability of Northern Beaches locals to go about their business without unacceptable delays in (already very busy) traffic.
4. The proposal to install unfiltered stacks in Balgowlah and Seaforth is quite simply unacceptable. The health risks are enormous, particularly given proximity to so many schools and childcare centres. The developing lungs and bodies of children are particularly susceptible to the negative effects of air pollution generated by traffic. The Balgowlah stack is being built at the bottom of a 'basin' inhibiting the ability of air currents to disperse the outflow of heavily concentrated

pollution from thousands of cars. The links between road pollution and negative health outcomes for humans is well documented.

5. There does not appear to be any associated planning for infrastructure such as local roads and parking to deal with the expected influx of traffic into the Northern Beaches area because of the implementation of the tunnel. An additional 40,000 vehicles are mooted to access the Northern Beaches every weekend utilising the new tunnel, there is no insight into where they are to park or how they are to get beyond the exit of the tunnel on the already overcrowded local road network.

Construction Phase

1. The proposed construction impacts of significantly increased traffic including heavy truck movements, excessive noise, dust, vibration and air pollution on surrounding neighbourhoods and schools (including Balgowlah Boys and St Cecillas schools) is unacceptable.
2. The failure of the EIS modelling to include Balgowlah Boys campus as a sensitive receiver in assessing potential impacts of air pollution is unacceptable.
3. There will be unacceptable interruption to the ability of the 1200 students at Balgowlah Boys High School and the hundreds of students of St Cecillas Primary school to adequately focus on study and learning given all the above-mentioned impacts of construction, in particular noise, traffic, and air pollution. The education of thousands of children will be vastly undermined.
4. The loss of open space for students at Balgowlah Boys, who have very limited open space available within the school grounds, is unacceptable.
5. The loss of bushland, open space (Balgowlah Golf Course) and foreshadowed environmental damage to existing protected bushland around Manly Dam is unacceptable.
6. The potential environmental damage to Middle Harbour resulting from dredging for installation of the tunnel on the seabed is unacceptable.

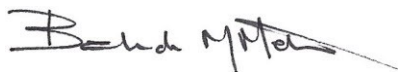
This project is aimed at providing a very expensive, out of date solution to the existing road congestion problem. It is likely to provide a band aid solution at best to traffic congestion, it is lacking in foresight, innovation, and any kind of strategic thinking on behalf of the NSW Government.

We desperately need efficient and effective public transport options to relieve the road congestion to and throughout the Northern Beaches, not more roads and more cars, at the expense of existing public transport options.

The proposed construction period will have a devastating impact on the local area and the people who live, work and go to school in it.

This project should be taken back to the drawing board both in terms of its overall goal and in terms of its associated implementation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Belinda Mellowes', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Belinda Mellowes