



MINUTE OF THE MAYOR

Dated: 23 March 2020

RE: Western Harbour Tunnel & Warringah Freeway Upgrade Environmental Impact - It's Time to get Political

In recent weeks I have met on several occasions with members of the community who are deeply concerned about the impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) project including Georgina Taylor, Paul Walter, Brian Emanuel and Ian Grey. We have discussed the complexity and breadth of concerns about the project and agreed that we need to focus on some key priorities if we are to ameliorate the impact of the proposed work.

Let me be clear at the outset. I am not opposed to the project, per se, and I'm sure many people in the community feel the same way. But why should infrastructure that benefits the whole city be built at the cost of the North Sydney community?

In its current form, this project trashes our open space, undermines our economic and sustainable future and may jeopardise the health of our residents. I don't believe I am going too far when I say that this project will leave a trail of devastation, just as the Warringah Freeway did when it was first built.

The Combined Precincts Committee recently voted to oppose the WHT project. While I understand the sentiment, I believe we need to make this more personal and vote to oppose the project until ALL the major and minor impacts on the North Sydney LGA have been mitigated.

North Sydney residents are generally well-educated & well-informed people. We usually see both sides of the story and tend to be polite. The time for politeness is over. It's time to get political, it's time to get vocal and it's time to act if we are to protect our quality of life.

Of course with the Coronavirus Pandemic local residents are quite rightly focussing on their health, their families, their jobs and how to manage their rapidly changing circumstances. At this point in time I acknowledge it's increasingly difficult to ask our residents to pay attention to the complex Environmental Impact Statement for the WHT. However, as Mayor, I am committing to keeping this discussion alive.

Council staff have prepared a detailed and thoughtful submission which I hope will be considered by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment as it progresses the project. However, if change is to be achieved, this matter also needs to be escalated to a political level so that the Premier can fully understand the impact her Government is having on the lives of people in her community.

Residents have told me they want Council to be a united voice on this subject. They have also told me what they consider the deal breaker issues are for them. I have therefore prepared four Mayoral Minutes addressing these matters to ensure they receive the focus they need.

I therefore recommend:

- 1. THAT** Council immediately begin a public campaign seeking widespread community support for changes to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project to ameliorate the impact on the North Sydney LGA;
- 2. THAT** the General Manager identify a budget of \$50,000 to fund the campaign;
- 3. THAT** the campaign direct people to contact the NSW Premier, in both her capacity as Premier and Member for Willoughby, seeking an agreement to fund the cost of measures to address and mitigate the impacts that have been identified; and
- 4. THAT** Council write to the NSW Premier seeking financial and/or other compensation for the temporary and permanent loss of amenity created by the Western Harbour Tunnel project.

**COUNCILLOR JILLY GIBSON
MAYOR**