NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Minister for Roads Melinda Pavey today announced a preferred route, the start of geotechnical drilling, notifications of property owners and the commencement of a market sounding process for the delivery of Beaches Link and the Western Harbour Tunnel.

After more than 2 years of hard work, the NSW Government has today:

- Revealed the preferred route for the project;
- Begun notifying 71 property owners potentially impacted by the route;
- Committed $77 million to undertake necessary geotechnical work along the route to start just after Easter;
- Commenced a market sounding process involving the private sector to investigate funding options and delivery approaches; and
- Started community information sessions on the general alignment.

“The NSW Government is committed to delivering this important project which will reduce congestion along the gridlocked Spit and Military Roads and provide a Sydney Harbour and Anzac Bridge bypass for Western and Southern Sydney motorists,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“We have been working for over two years to bring this project to reality and today the NSW Government has taken a big step towards delivering it.”

Ms Berejiklian also took the opportunity to thank her predecessor Mike Baird for all the work he had done to make today possible.

Ms Pavey said geo-testing will begin shortly after Easter and will take place over the next 6 to 9 months in suburbs including Balgowlah, Seaforth, North Sydney, Neutral Bay and Cammeray.

“Residents should be aware there will be up to 235 borehole sites tested,” Ms Pavey said. “These investigations will feed into detailed engineering design, final costings for the project and further route analysis.”

RMS has today started speaking to residents and businesses in areas around the expected tunnel portals in Artarmon, Cammeray, Seaforth, and Balgowlah. RMS will ensure that people who may be impacted are kept updated and engaged around development of the project.
While it is too early to confirm exact property acquisition details until the final reference design is complete, 71 properties may be directly impacted. RMS expects further notifications as the project progresses.

This next stage of work, expected to be completed in mid-2018, will include:

- Reference design;
- Final project costings;
- Funding strategy including tolling options and private sector involvement; and
- Construction timelines including start and completion dates.

The Beaches Link tunnel will connect the Warringah Freeway, cross underneath Middle Harbour connecting with the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation at Balgowlah and upgrade the Wakehurst Parkway to two lanes each way, between Seaforth and Frenchs Forest.

It will bypass up to 19 sets of traffic lights and cut up to 40 minutes in travel time between Brookvale and the CBD and will also slash up to 45 minutes between Manly and Parramatta. The tunnel will reduce travel times for Northern Beaches bus commuters by up to 40 per cent and will also reduce rat-running on local streets.

The Western Harbour Tunnel will connect to WestConnex at the Rozelle Interchange, cross underneath Sydney Harbour and connect with the Warringah Freeway at North Sydney.