On 16 March 2017, the NSW Government announced the preferred route, the start of field investigations, community engagement and market sounding for the proposed Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link.

The Western Harbour Tunnel would connect to WestConnex at Rozelle, cross under Sydney Harbour between Birchgrove and Waverton and connect with the Warringah Freeway at North Sydney.

Beaches Link is a tunnel which would connect to the Warringah Freeway, cross underneath Middle Harbour linking with the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation at Balgowlah and the Wakehurst Parkway, which would be upgraded to two lanes each way between Seaforth and Frenchs Forest.

Geotechnical test drilling has been carried out in suburbs including Balmain, Balgowlah, Seaforth, North Sydney, Neutral Bay, Cammeray and Frenchs Forest. These investigations are feeding into engineering design, final costings for the project and further route analysis. Testing began around the Warringah Freeway shortly after Easter.

Roads and Maritime Services has commenced consultation with owners of 71 properties in these areas. It is too early to confirm which properties will be impacted. We have contacted owners early in the process, so they are engaged and informed of the investigations underway.

Further work currently underway includes detailed financial analysis, discussions with the private sector over funding options, community engagement, as well as extensive field work such as geotechnical studies, traffic analysis, noise and air quality monitoring, and flora, fauna and marine ecology studies.

This current phase of work is expected to be completed in mid-2018 and will include a reference design; confirmed final project costings; funding strategy including tolling options and private sector involvement; construction timeline including start and completion dates.
**Site investigations**

Site investigations have been carried out to help inform the design for the proposed tunnels. Although a great deal is already known about underground conditions around Sydney, a more detailed assessment is needed to confirm existing data and to obtain further information about geological features, such as rock fault lines.

The tests so far have been carried out over a broad study area. Their location does not indicate a precise project alignment.

Marine geotechnical testing has been completed and about 75 per cent of land-based test drilling has also been finished.

Where possible, investigations are being carried out in open space such as parks or on roads.

Test work has included geotechnical drilling on both dry land and in Sydney Harbour and Middle Harbour.

Roads and Maritime will notify local residents and work to minimise any disturbance to the local community and operate in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner.

**Western Harbour Tunnel**

- Western Harbour Tunnel would connect WestConnex at Rozelle with the Warringah Freeway via a new tunnel beneath Sydney Harbour.
- This new cross-harbour bypass of the CBD would take pressure off the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Harbour Tunnel.
- The project would provide essential capacity to connect the North Shore and Northern Beaches with the Sydney CBD and beyond.

**Beaches Link**

- Beaches Link would connect the Warringah Freeway with the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation at Balgowlah and the Wakehurst Parkway, which would be duplicated to Warringah Road.
- Beaches Link would offer new east-west connectivity from the Northern Beaches to the Lane Cove Tunnel and Hills M2 via the Gore Hill Freeway.
- The tunnel would bypass 19 sets of traffic lights in five kilometres between The Spit and Falcon Street.
- Beaches Link would significantly reduce travel times for Northern Beaches bus commuters by up to 40 per cent.
- Beaches Link offers opportunities for seamless interchange with both Sydney Metro and Sydney Trains at North Sydney.

**Warringah Freeway**

- The Warringah Freeway is one of the most complex roads in Australia.
- Changes to the Warringah Freeway would make the road safer and more efficient.
- The Warringah Freeway would include connectivity for both the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link.

**Other tests include:**

- non-invasive marine ecology surveys and sonar investigations to determine precise water and sediment depths for the harbour crossings
- terrestrial ecology surveys – non-destructive sampling and research into land based flora and fauna
- contamination testing – to identify possible contamination from previous pollution on land and under water
- air quality monitoring – to assess possible project impacts and benefits to air quality
- traffic counts – to measure current traffic flows

Geotechnical core sample taken
Project need

Every year, congestion costs the economy $5 billion and this is forecast to increase to $8 billion a year by 2020 if nothing is done. This congestion-busting project would deliver time savings of:

- Brookvale to CBD of up to 40 minutes
- Dee Why to Airport of up to 45 minutes
- Manly to Macquarie Park of up to 35 minutes
- Manly to Parramatta of up to 45 minutes
- Seaforth to North Sydney of up to 35 minutes

The Sydney Harbour Bridge is Australia’s busiest road, carrying 165,000 vehicles every weekday. In 2015, there were almost 4,000 accidents and breakdowns on the Sydney Harbour Bridge approaches. A major bridge incident can delay traffic for over three hours and cause backlogs to the Lane Cove Tunnel and the Anzac Bridge.

The Spit Bridge is the only opening bridge on an arterial road in Sydney.

There are long road queues whenever the bridge opens for maritime traffic. Travel times on Military Road around The Spit and Mosman in the morning peak can be as slow as 12 km/h.

Project objectives

- Improve public transport for the Northern Beaches
- Future-proof Sydney’s transport to meet population and growth challenges
- “Step change” for public transport for the Northern Beaches and Northern Sydney
- Deliver a new crossing of Sydney Harbour to make Sydney’s busiest transport corridor shock-proof
- Cut congestion across northern Sydney and the Sydney CBD
- Work to minimise impacts and maximise benefits with local communities
- Better access to jobs, education and community services for northern Sydney
- East-West, North-South connectivity
- Reduce rat-running on local community roads
Project timeline

**ACTIVITY**

- Community engagement.
- Geotechnical and other site investigations including harbour marine ecology studies.
- Market Interaction Process – discussions with industry about design, construction and financing.
- NSW Government final assessment of design options and costings following geotechnical investigations, community feedback and market engagement.
- Confirmation of project scope, final costings, including options for funding and private sector involvement.

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You can have your say at any time

To find out more about the project, or to have your say:

- 1800 931 189
- whtbl@rms.nsw.gov.au
- Customer feedback
  Roads and Maritime Services
  Locked Bag 928, North Sydney NSW 2059

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