Dear Gladys

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It’s time we had a chat. Things aren’t working between us. I need to feel like you’re listening to me, like really listening. Not saying you’ll consult me and instead doing what you always planned to do.​

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Things were going so well, but now it feels like you only care about construction. The final straw was the latest plans for the Northern Beaches & Western Harbour Tunnels. It doesn’t feel like you’re “Working for Willoughby”. From where I live, it’s just all pain, no gain.

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After me sending you all those emails that went unanswered, I really appreciated you writing to me the other day. But it somehow felt like you’d accidentally sent me your press release, rather than addressing my concerns. But then I guess that’s hard when you haven’t actually consulted with the neighbourhood most impacted by the tunnel construction.

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There’s just a few things I need to clear up:

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You’ve moved the proposed ventilation outlets away from the private schools, but they’ve actually come closer to the local public primary schools and daycare centres, not to mention Royal North Shore Hospital. The stacks you’ve moved to the “freeway” are 300 metres from a primary school. And saying there’s already unfiltered stacks there, doesn’t make it any safer.

The ‘industrial area’ in Artarmon you mention using for an unfiltered Stack site is in the impact range of our local hospital, school and around 10 daycare centres.

I know you want to do the right thing. After all, it was you who campaigned against unfiltered tunnels in 2008 saying it was “world best practice to filter tunnels”, so you know they’re unsafe. I just need you to remember that again and not build them next to my child’s school and daycare.

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I don’t think it’s fair to say our local footy field and tennis courts won’t be impacted, when you’re planning to put a major construction hub right next to them. That’s not only where we play sport, it’s where our children have their before/after school care. How can we play surrounded by sandstone dust, disturbed asbestos and 24/7 construction?

You’re thinking about not turning our baseball diamond into a construction site, but it’s not much better to put the major construction site directly next to the baseball diamond, is it?

You’ll be destroying our beautiful bush reserve, Flat Rock Gully, as well as disturbing the asbestos buried in the old tip site as well as the old quarry. That should remain untouched lest the health risks skyrocket.

And having heavy machinery and trucks roar up and down our local roads – the roads our children cross to get to primary school – is not safe. You seem to have forgotten these are quiet residential areas you’re planning to turn into construction zones.

Shallow tunnelling under the conservation zone in Naremburn, one of the oldest residential areas in Sydney, will do immeasurable damage to the historic buildings, due to drilling, water drawdown and tremors. And with no benefit to the suburb.

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I’d like to think it’s not really your fault, that maybe you’ve just fallen in with a bad crowd who aren’t giving you great advice. So I need you to get back in touch with your neighbours, so you can see how you’re hurting them.

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It’s not too late for us. I think we can still fix this. I just need to see you listen to the concerns of your neighbourhood and stop your plans to construct a tunnel through our quiet, historic, residential area.

Yours truly,

Your constituents