

PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL STAGE 2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

My Submission is comments concerning
the consideration of Flooring materials



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Preamble

To get started I have viewed your recent publication of the virtual engagement room and it all looks tidy, clean, and sanitary.

I have been a resident of Olympic Park since 2015; living in a high-rise unit block (30 resident floors). The foyer flooring in our building is polished marble and when it gets wet it becomes very slippery, and therefore dangerous and prone to accidents. There are many reasons for this, residents tracking in rain, leaking vestibule ceiling, dripping umbrellas, spills etc. ... Just like what happens in public transport facilities. I'm sure you add compounds to help avoid accidental slips, but it still happens.

I (and my partner) use and rely on public transport (mostly trains and buses) to move around this great city at least 5 days per week.

As my partner and I are becoming old (yes that is actually happening to all of us) we are becoming less flexible when we fall over, as we no longer bounce like we once did. We take considerable care in looking out for possible risks of falling in various environments.

Note: It actually hurts a lot when we fall on hard surfaces.

Statement of concern regarding the choice of flooring materials

In your virtual room I noticed that the floors were a hard stone like material in most areas. In designing floors for public space environments, you need to be on the lookout for flexible flooring solutions to meet customer demands. These solutions need to create dynamic and safe spaces and direct the flow of people to where they need to be.

Whilst I understand that you have selected this type of flooring material based on its strength, stability, sustainability, and performance in a high foot traffic area, but I believe that with an ageing and less mobile population this choice of material is unyielding in the event of a fall.

Fall-related injuries exert an enormous health burden on older adults. Softer landing surfaces, such as those provided by low-stiffness flooring, may prevent the seriousness of fall-related injuries by decreasing the forces applied to the body during a fall. I understand that they use hospital-grade vinyl in hospital emergency and treatment rooms. Secondary outcomes would be to reduce minor scrapes and cuts in any fall-related injuries.

A floor matting system can reduce the risk of potentially deadly or injurious slips, trips, and falls. Matting can also provide drainage and dry surfaces in wet environments, say like getting off trams.

I know that flooring plays an important role in providing comfort, insulation and cohesion and they have developed carpets of synthetic materials that may be used in entrance areas (to absorb water and dirt), and other solutions that can be used when entering and exiting trams; but these don't solve the whole problem.

With the ongoing development of new materials, I believe that as a responsible government project you should be working to improve your customers (general public and staff) safety and wellbeing.

Although whatever the flooring solution is, it might not save everyone from serious injuries. But you need to provide an energy absorption during impact to

vulnerable locations, such as the hip and head, without impairing balance or mobility during daily activities, such as standing and walking.

I would like you to look at flooring for “Injury Prevention” in caring for older Australians.

As a member of an aging population, I would like you to consider using more human crash absorbent materials on all your station floors. As such, the design of safer living environments for older adults needs to be addressed.