

26 November 2015

Project Number SSI 6878
Major Projects Assessment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

RE: ALBION PARK RAIL BYPASS

We refer to our previous correspondence of 24 November 2014 concerning the above. We note we wrote detailed submissions in November 2014 when your organisation asked for community input.

We note that despite submissions from organisations and members of the community nothing appeared to change with regard to the RMS's proposal for the Bypass.

We note the recent meeting held at the Albion Park RSL on 18 November 2015; where officers from the RMS addressed the meeting following the release of the Environmental Impact Report, a similar attitude on behalf of the RMS appears to be in place. That is regardless of what is asked for by the community, the RMS will do what it wants to do.

The Albion Park Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber) still maintains that the ramps shown on the plan and marked "*ramps may not be needed until a later stage*" should be constructed at the time the bypass is built.

The Chamber does not accept that the construction of the ramps is tied in to the construction of the Tripoli Way Bypass. We believe that this is nothing more than spin on behalf of the RMS to avoid having to build these ramps when the Bypass is constructed.

If the ramps are not built now, they will not be built.

It defies common sense to continue to send traffic some 4 kilometres through built up areas, including a school, when it can be easily diverted onto the Bypass outside Albion Park. With Albion Park being the Western Gateway to the Illawarra, South Coast and Southern highlands, not having direct access to the Motorway is short-sighted and detrimental to the development and continued growth of our area.

The Environmental plan indicates:

"The project would benefit the community by facilitating local movement to and from major centres in and around the region, improve access to local facilities and services by a reduction in through traffic and improved separation of through trips

and local traffic, reduce the frustration and delays of local congestion and improve local safety."

Provisions of the off/on ramps are a must and would increase this benefit.

We note that the Environmental report indicates that Flooding will still occur despite the Bypass being constructed.

The Chamber notes that in other areas of the State, bridges are used to traverse environmental sensitive wetlands. Why is that not being done for this Bypass? The RMS has put bridges over wetlands and grazing land at Gerringong and Minamurra in recent years. Your own assessment states:

"Much of the project traverses flood affected areas. Flooding is therefore a substantial constraint to the project and the design requires a number of bridges and culverts. The motorway elevation and configuration of the watercourse crossings has required careful optimisation to ensure that a high level of flood immunity is achieved, while mitigating flooding impacts to an acceptable level."

Further your study says:

"In general, the desired higher level of flood immunity for new roads is likely to cause flooding impacts within the flood affected areas, because the new roads act as a barrier to flows. For this project increased flood levels within the Duck Creek catchment are generally localised where the alignment crosses the three individual watercourses. These increases are primarily due to the new bridge over Duck Creek and higher road levels to the north of Yallah Road. Impacts are predominately within rural land and are not considered adverse."

Increased flood levels within the Macquarie Rivulet catchment are predicted to extend over the floodplain between Tongarra Road, Marshall Mount Creek and the existing Princes Highway. These impacts are primarily due to additional fill within the floodplain. Increased flood levels to the north of the Croom Regional Sporting Complex are primarily due to fill within the floodplain and the proposed watercourse diversion. Increased flood levels within the Horsley Creek catchment are generally localised where the alignment crosses individual watercourses and are primarily due to the proposed road embankments. Incorporation of new detention basin results in reduced flood levels in residential areas downstream."

A reading of this report would support our call for more bridges and less fill in the construction of the Bypass. Our initial fears that the Bypass could increase flooding in our area appear to be justified in light of this report.

Albion Park residents are only too familiar with flooding around the area, and any increase the likelihood of flooding could lead to extravagant insurance policies, inconvenience and damage.

The impact of the bypass on viable grazing land is also dramatic. The proposed bypass has the potential to destroy the dairy farm, *Meadowview*, one of only four dairy farms operating at Albion Park. Of the land farmed by the owners and their direct neighbours in the bypass corridor; 26% of the total bypass route is actually on their land. The true loss of the milking area; where the milking herd graze because of this project is 23%. The Farm currently produces 5 million litres of milk annually. Plans to increase this amount to 6 to 7 million litres of milk annually have been put on hold pending the resolution of the owner's dilemma.

We note the Environmental Impact Report, glosses over the destruction of this property; one which the RMS acknowledges to be one of the best managed dairies in NSW. The RMS appears to be totally against providing a workable solution that would enable the Dairy and the Bypass to coexist.

We are of the belief that the Bypass is being built to a cost and not to best practice.

The building of earth retention dams for the Fraser Creek catchment area and the use of fill to construct the Bypass across the floodplain are not acceptable in today's age.

The economic modelling does not show adequately the effect the construction will have on the surrounding area. Ravensthorpe; one of NSW premier wedding reception centres will be severely impacted, especially with regard to weekend work and construction hours.

The visual aspect and noise of the Bypass will also have to be considered with regard to the township itself and businesses centred in areas affected by the Bypass.

Our message is clear. Build a proper Bypass based on best practices not budget. We call on the NSW Government to provide more funds to do this Bypass properly not push it through for political expediency.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Middleton", is written over a horizontal line.

Paul Middleton
Secretary