[redacted]

25 February 2021

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Via online submission and email

Re: Application # SSI_8862 | Objection - proposed Northern Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

We wish to raise a range of issues and concerns that we have about the current proposal. We have listened to the virtual information sessions, but these did nothing to allay our ongoing concerns, and we continue to have objections to the proposal.

Our submission is in two parts:

1) what we are seeking; and
2) our concerns

1) What we are seeking

We are seeking three specific outcomes in light of the issues noted above:

- further consultation
- certainty around outcomes
- consideration of acquisition and compensation

<u>Further consultation</u>

We ask that serious consideration be given to extending the EIS submission period and that the feedback of the community / NSW constituents also be considered carefully. We implore the government to revisit the current proposal to include more sustainable mobility plans, exploring emerging transport technologies, including visionary sustainable public transport options for the future of Sydney.

<u>Certainty around outcomes</u>

When the initial noise wall was built, the plans we had showed it being abutting the kerbside of the BBCD. It ended up being right next to our boundary line, metres away from the kerbside. This change was done without consultation. This was also true of the air quality monitoring station, the final location was quite different to the one shown on community pamphlet distributed to us. We would like to have an assurance that the plans you share with us will reflect the reality. In particular, we would ask for you to share the final plans with us and, if there are variations, to advise us prior to the change. In addition (from the original noise wall installation

project), plants were meant to be placed and painting was meant to be completed on the western side of the noise wall and to date this has not happened. What assurances can you give us that the plans will be completed in full as stipulated?

In our experience with planning in NSW, what is stated in the EIS and what happens in reality could be very different. This has been witnessed by what happened for the residents in the Inner West. They had to endure years of construction in relation to WestConnex. It is our understanding that if a contractor claims they need to do work outside the agreed times, they simply have to seek and amendment by applying to the relevant government department to get approval. Residents will most probably be informed by a drop-off brochure, with limited information, due to "commercial-in-confidence". Residents will not be consulted, and they have no right of objection to what the contractor has been allowed to do. All we can do is complain. This is a major source of anxiety and concern for us. We will have no voice or any control over something that will have a major and damaging impact on our amenity and wellbeing and it will be happening right in our backyard.

Consideration of acquisition and compensation

In light of the above, we believe we have a compelling case for acquisition and compensation. We would like to be considered for such and wish to discuss these aspects further. We have been told that properties have been earmarked for acquisition under the proposal, and the owners advised. Given the clear potential for ongoing and adverse impacts on our properties, we are surprised that our properties were not considered for acquisition. In this respect, we would like to understand the specific criteria used for agreeing to the acquisition of these properties (over and above the statutory criteria) and why our properties were not included.

If our homes are not acquired, we feel that we have a strong claim for compensation during the construction stage, where disruptions will be significant and ongoing for a number of years. The proposal will cause ongoing disruptions, as well have adverse impacts on our amenity, lifestyle, and property values. We are a relatively small community that will have to sacrifice a lot for the 'greater good'. We feel that we should be fairly compensated for this. We do not want to live in a building site in our backyard for the duration of the project, which at a minimum is 5 years (according to your proposed timeline) and, in all likelihood, much longer. We would seek to be given alternative long-term accommodation of a similar standard and size in our local community for the duration of the project. Whilst we are in alternate accommodation, we would also expect our houses to have architectural property treatments for acoustic, light and air quality optimisation.

2) Our concerns

We are concerned about the potential for the proposal to cause ongoing disruption, as well as adverse impacts on our amenity, lifestyle, local environment and property values. In particular, we have considerable concerns around the significant ongoing impact on our mental and physical wellbeing. For a number of years, we have been placed in a very stressful situation, given the long drawn out process and the constant evolving plans that a project of this nature necessitates. We are in situation that is beyond our control and there are real implications on our mental and financial wellbeing.

Our specific concerns traverse a number of related issues including:

- air quality
- noise
- vibrations
- traffic
- project facilities
- survey reports
- adverse environmental impacts
- project viability

Air quality

We hold significant concerns about the very close proximity of the ventilation stack and the height of both the ventilation stack and the acoustic shed.

There is a statement in your document "There is very good evidence that $PM_{2.5}$ causes heart and lung disease, reducing people's life expectancy and leading to hospital admissions". Given our very close proximity to both the ventilation outlet and entry and exit points and our location in a valley, we are concerned about our exposure and the risks to our health. We do not understand what the modelling shows for the impact of these on residents' properties located directly next to them nor what our exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ would be.

Respiratory clinicians at North Sydney council meetings have voiced their concern at unfiltered stacks. There has been a statement that within the impact zone of the ventilation stack there will be a 1-15% increase in pollutants. We would presume that we would be at the 15% end of the range. We are seeking urgent assurances that safe levels will be constantly maintained for residents in close proximity. Furthermore, we are seeking additional detail as to how and when would we be advised if levels became unsafe. We are in the 'hit zone', forced to breath the pollution, with impacts potentially rendering our properties toxic.

With the impact of dust on our respiratory systems, we have also noticed an increase in darker dust particles in our homes since the installation of the grey wall/noise barrier. During construction we have concerns that the further increase in dust will negatively impact our health and would like to know what steps will be taken to mitigate this.

Noise

We understand that there will be 24/7 tunnelling. This will have a real and direct impact on us. We understand that 45 trucks will be coming in and out per hour for 24 hours, 7 days a week as well as 154 p/h of all vehicles. Our backyard is Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation (BBCD), trucks coming and going from the site will be equivalent to the trucks reversing in and out of our backyards. This situation is untenable. We are desperately worried about the impact on our mental and physical wellbeing and that of our families.

The current noise wall is ineffectual, as we still hear traffic on BBCD. Therefore, we have concerns that it will not provide us with protection against the proposed

construction works and then the subsequent traffic noise once the tunnel is completed.

Furthermore, there is currently no noise barrier at the creek and therefore the noise is channelled into our homes. We have been unable to find anything in the current proposals to address that issue; whether there will be any modifications being made to the existing noise barrier; or whether there are additional noise wall installations proposed. We need clarity and detailed plans on what is happening with the noise barriers.

We currently have a natural noise buffer of native plants between us and the Burnt Bridge Deviation with the construction footprint. There are real concerns that this will be removed, and we would like clarification as to what is happening with this zone. Also, we would like to know whether expansion is only happening towards Dudley St, or whether land will be reclaimed towards Hope St?

We are also concerned about sleep disturbances and health matters and are seeking assurances as to how you will ensure the safety of residents impacted. We are distressed now and are unsure who we contact for mental health support and/or how we go about getting support during the construction process, both about operational concerns and health and mental wellbeing concerns. Notwithstanding, ongoing health matters will be a huge ongoing burden and financial cost on the NSW Health System.

Vibrations

It has been stated vibration levels will be "above the human comfort criteria for some residents." As we immediately adjacent to the construction zone, we feel that we will be unjustifiably exposed to excessive vibrations.

Traffic

The proposal raises a number of issues regarding traffic.

We are unsure how the change from 6 to 12 lanes of traffic is being facilitated in the design. In the current shared plans, our trees adjacent to our boundary fence are still staying. Are they really staying or will they be removed?

The new set of traffic lights adjacent to our homes will bring with them potential accidents, along with the stopping and starting of vehicles. This means we will have increased traffic noise impacting negatively on our amenity and the value of our properties. What compensation can we seek to address this?

How will vehicles turn right from the new slip road onto BBCD heading towards Manly Vale? Are we going to have vehicle headlights beaming over into our backyards? Similarly, during construction will we have lights for night works impacting us? What can you do to assure us that this will have no impact on us?

Increased traffic at major intersections as well as the flow on effects from rat runs in streets will impact us greatly. Of high concern is Manly Vale, where currently we experience congestion and long delays regularly travelling to and from Seaforth. The tunnel will significantly increase traffic through this area as it is one of the main "feeder" roads – just pushing delays and traffic snarls further up the peninsula.

This congestion will also have an impact upon the Manly Vale / Balgowlah shopping precinct with 3 major supermarkets around Rosebery St.

This area currently suffers regular traffic gridlock and is not modelled in the Beaches Link tunnel EIS – any problems from increasing tunnel traffic will be relegated to council to resolve.

Whilst not within the BBCD project, the traffic snarl to get into the tunnel from Manly Vale will be significant and seemingly impossible to resolve, without another significant project, causing further inconveniences.

Project facilities

We would ask for clarification regarding the dimensions and the operational hours of the facilities building housed opposite us near the current golf course.

We would also like assurances that there will be no building sites directly adjoining [redacted] Hope St, on the north side between the boundary fence and the creek. A number of other questions remain unanswered from the virtual information sessions:

- will there be any construction sites towards the end of Hope St or on the Hope Street side of the Noise Wall?
- will the creek adjustments mean that there will be building works directly outside [redacted] Hope Street?
- what does this look like?
- how long will it take?
- when will the building works happen?
- will we continue to have access to Dudley St?
- what impact will this have on the creek bank safety (as several trees have fallen on our house and onto the path adjacent to our house recently)?
- where will your construction support site be for the creek adjustment?

Survey reports

We would ask that you confirm in writing (if and when) the project goes ahead if we would be eligible for the Pre & Post independent construction survey reports.

Adverse environmental impacts

For fauna and flora at [redacted] Hope St and immediate surrounds, we are immersed in the natural environment, next to the creek. We have a resident tawny frogmouth, we are visited by a powerful owl, echidnas and long nosed bandicoots and many species of birds flourish by the creek. We would like to know what will be done to protect them whilst construction is being undertaken.

Furthermore, we have real concerns about the death of Burnt Bridge Creek, despite the more recent modifications in light of the predicted 79% reduction of the base flow of the creek.

Project viability

We also have concerns about the viability of the whole project in the first instance. In particular, we have concerns about the government rushing through with a decision to proceed with a design that has:

- adverse environmental impacts
- marginal benefits in traffic reduction along Military Road
- significant increases in congestion in Manly Vale and in Balgowlah
- massively increased traffic coming to the northern beaches in the summer months
- significant financial impact

The project simply has too many uncertainties and potential long-term problems to rush. For example, the financial impact is real so why are travel costs not projected but travel time is? Does the business case really add up? It seems quite flawed in its current iteration. Further work needs to be done on understanding the long-term environmental damage and human cost of the project and whether the tunnel is really necessary.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

cc:
The Hon. Andrew Constance, MP, The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP, James Griffin, MP
Zali Steggall OAM, MP, Mayor Michael Regan, Deputy Mayor Ms Candy Bingham