



15 March 2021

Director – Transport Assessment, Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE)
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Attention: Belinda Scott, Senior Planning Officer

Dear Sir/Madam,

**BEACHES LINK AND GORE HILL FREEWAY CONNECTION PROJECT
WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) -**

The Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection (BL/GHFC or 'the Project') is part of the Western Harbour Tunnel & Beaches Link program of works ('the Program') which also includes the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade (WHT/WFU).

The EIS for the BL/GHFC Project was released on 9 December 2020. Given the substantial amount of information in the EIS, the potential impacts of the Project, the Christmas/summer holiday period and the break in Council meetings until February 2021, Council expressed its disappointment with the timing of the release of the EIS and the period available to make submissions in a letter to the Premier dated 22 December 2020. Council believes this was an inadequate period of time for a heavily affected community to review the EIS documentation and for Council to make a submission.

The official close of the exhibition period to make submissions was 1 March 2021. However, Council requested an extension from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) as the assessment/consent authority for the Project. This was to allow Councillors, staff and the community time to review the extensive EIS documentation and to endorse a submission at a Council meeting. The earliest meeting for which this was possible was held on 8 March 2021. This extension was granted by DPIE via email dated 25 February 2021.

A preliminary letter of submission was provided to DPIE by the 1 March 2021 deadline, copying the executive summary of Council's then draft submission, noting that the full, final submission would be lodged following the 8 March 2021 Council meeting.

At this meeting, Council did resolve to endorse a final submission for lodgement. **Council's final submission is attached to this letter. Also attached is a Community Sentiment Report** which summarises feedback received on the Project under a section created on the *Have Your Say* part of Council's website in January and February 2021. It must be noted that these results are from a self-selected group of people who chose to respond, following notification via email to all of Council's registered *Have Your Say* users. A more scientifically valid random sampling was not possible due to



COVID restrictions and the short exhibition period. These results are nevertheless considered a useful barometer of local community sentiment towards the Project.

The Program overall and the BL/GHFC Project in particular will have significant traffic and transport, environmental, social and economic impacts on the Willoughby local government area (LGA) with many issues remaining unresolved in the EIS documentation. As such, Council resolved to **object** to the Project in its current form until such time as the Response to Submission report is exhibited, addressing and responding to the concerns raised in Council's submission.

As advised in your email of 25 February 2021, it is requested that this covering letter, the final Council-endorsed submission and Community Sentiment Report be uploaded to the submissions page of the Major Projects website (to replace Council's letter of 1 March 2021). Finally, Council requests the status be changed from 'Comments' to 'Objects' in accordance with the resolution from the Council meeting.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this final submission. Please contact me on 9777 7707 or Chris.Binns@willoughby.nsw.gov.au if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Binns
DIRECTOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE