21st November 2014

NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL ROAD Connectivity and Network Enhancement Project Stage 1 and Concept Proposal (for Stage 2)

Following are concerns, comments and suggestions about the proposed road projects.

ROAD EXPANSION

- The proposed expansion of road surfaces and traffic lanes is excessive.
- The proposed width (of up to 12 lanes) for a 1km length of Warringah Road is far too wide within this urban context.
- The expanded road width is inappropriate in an area with high pedestrian movement.
- The extensive road space is unsuitable adjacent to a high school and a hospital site.
- The expanded road widths will have a negative impact on the surrounding area.
- Increasing the capacity of road network will increase car dependency and has the potential to increase congestion elsewhere in the road network.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- Public Transport infrastructure should be a priority for Stage 1 and 2.
- A kerb side bus lane should allow for express services along Warringah Road.
- A dedicated bus lane during peak hours would allow for faster services and relieve congestion.

EXPRESS BUS SERVICES

A priority or dedicated bus lane along Warringah Road would improve travel times for commuters during peak hour. Warringah Road is a more suitable road for express bus services than Frenchs Forest Road, which needs to allow for all stops services.

CYCLE-WAY

Off-road cycle ways that are separated from busy roads have not been included.

- An off-road / segregated cycle route should be considered via the back routes that avoid busy roads such as Warringah Road.
- A cycle route off road or with segregated lanes along low traffic streets provides a more attractive and safer option for cyclists.
- Retain the existing setback, trees and landscape buffer south of Warringah Road as a pedestrian and cycling corridor.

ALTERNATIVE ROAD OPTION

At the intersection with Frenchs Forest Road: a high level bridge across Wakehurst Parkway would have the following advantages:

1. Traverse the valley between two hills to E and W of Wakehurst Parkway.

2. Allow through traffic on Wakehurst Pkway to flow unimpeded.
3. Avoid unnecessary excavation of the hill on Frenchs Forest Road West.
4. Reduce road widening.
5. Reduce traffic on Warringah Road at 2 key E-W intersections.

BUS INTERCHANGE
Current bus interchange is located at / near Forest Way shops. This location should be retained as as a transport node.
Reason: Provides for intersection of E-W (Warringah Road and Frenchs Forest bus routes) and N-S bus services (via Forestway).

This KEY public transport node needs to be integrated into the bus and road network.

The NB Hospital Site location is <u>not</u> conveniently located for a major intersection serving bus transport along Forestway.

STAGE 1
I do not support the proposal to commence Stage 1 before the EIS has been considered for Stage 2. The 2 stages are interdependent and should be considered in conjunction with each other.

TIMETABLE
The timetable for the road works is too rushed and not enough time is provided to properly consider the impacts. More time is required to look at:

- Modified designs
- Public transport options
- Cycling and pedestrian routes
- Vegetation and wildlife corridor

With such a huge investment of public money ($400m) the government has a responsibility to allow more time to consider alternative strategies to reduce congestion.

COSTS
Itemised costs associated with the road works should be provided. This includes the cost of excavation and relocation of utilities, as a result of excavation etc.

COMMUTER CAR PARKING
The proposal is to allocate $67m to new commuter car parking. As an alternative, local / shuttle bus services would reduce car usage and provide a benefit to all.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT
What proportion of $400m is to be invested in public transport? Public transport should be the first priority to relieve traffic congestion at peak hours.

Feeder bus services that provide convenient connections to the bus routes would be a cost effective investment. A localised bus service that can negotiate suburban roads provides an alternative to reliance on private cars. This in turn would reduce the need for expansive and expensive road works.

AQUATIC DRIVE

- A vehicular link with Wakehurst Parkway would create a through road with greatly

increased vehicular traffic along Aquatic Drive.

- Widening and increased traffic along Aquatic Drive would have adverse impacts on bushland and waterways in the upper catchment of Manly Dam.

- Aquatic Drive leads to the footbridge above Wakehurst Parkway and provides a suitable E-W route for walking and cycling that avoids busy roads. The introduction of through traffic along Aquatic Drive would be to the detriment of the environment and recreational amenity.

- The road connection with Wakehurst Parkway is not necessary as other access is available for vehicles.

VEGETATION / WILDLIFE CORRIDOR
A loss of vegetation, trees and wildlife corridor would be associated with road widening in Wakehurst Parkway and Warringah Road. The wildlife corridor provides an important link between Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment and Manly Dam Catchment.

WATERWAYS
Increase in road surfaces will have impacts on waterways due to:
- Changes to natural flow regime
- Removal of vegetation
- Pollutants from vehicles

STAGE 1: IMPACTS
Stage 1 involves significant expansion of road space:
- Extensive road widening at the intersection of Frenchs Forest Road and Wakehurst Parkway.
- Multiple traffic lanes in Frenchs Forest Road West and East of the Wakehurst Parkway intersection.
- Extensive widening of Wakehurst Parkway between Frenchs Forest Road and Warringah Road.

Environmental impacts associated with the expanded road works include:
- Excavation of the hillside in Frenchs Forest Road West.
- Further loss of trees, vegetation and wildlife corridor.
- Extensive hard surface areas.

AMENITY
The extensive road works would also have adverse impacts on amenity, including:
- Loss of trees and vegetation to accommodate more road space
- Visual impact
- Traffic noise
- Air pollution
- Increased stress for pedestrians and cyclists
- In Stage 2: Loss of buffer area, trees and landscape setback along south of Warringah Road. This landscape setback is used for pedestrian access.

AIR POLLUTION
1. The increased road capacity will generate an increase in traffic, which in turn will increase the level of air pollution in the vicinity.

2. Adjacent high rise buildings, such as the hospital, would affect air flow and potentially restrict the dispersal of air pollutants.
3. Pedestrians and cyclists will be exposed to the highest levels of air pollution if using paths alongside roads with heavy traffic, such as Warringah Road.

OVERPASS

- The location on the plateau makes it less suitable for tunnels and cuttings.
- The proposed 4-lane cutting (depth of 5m) in the centre of Warringah Road would create a physical barrier and intercept groundwater.
- The alternative option of an overpass to separate E-W traffic at the Warringah Road and Wakehurst Parkway should be considered.

PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

- The loss of trees and vegetation will reduce the aesthetic amenity, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.
- In Warringah Road pedestrian crossings would be restricted to bridges traversing up to 12 lanes. This longer distance would increase security concerns at night.
- The widening of roads will intensify the traffic environment and significantly expand the road space. This will adversely affect pedestrian connectivity and amenity.
- The surrounds of the northern beaches hospital site will have a very poor pedestrian amenity for a major hospital with proposed wide, busy roads on three adjacent sides.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The widening of roads would be have many direct and indirect environmental impacts, including significant, irreversible and cumulative impacts.

Specific issues of concern include:

- A significant impact on the endangered Duffys Forest Ecological Community, with the loss of approximately 5.1 hectares.
- The loss of approximately 7.1 hectares of vegetations for road widening and construction.
- A significant impact on the Red-crowned Toadlet due to changes in hydrology.
- The significant loss and destruction of the Priority 1 Wildlife Corridor.
- The loss of potential threatened flora and fauna habitat.
- Indirect impacts on remaining remnants of vegetation.
- Impacts on creeks and aquatic vegetation.
- Cumulative impacts on the surrounding environment.

The environmental impacts associated with the road proposal should prompt preventative measures in terms of road design. It should also prompt consideration of public transport as an alternative to road expansion. Mitigation measures do not compensate for the significant damage to environmental assets.

I hope the above matters will be taken into account.

Yours sincerely

Ann Sharp