

This submission I write as president of Garigal Landcare, a group that has been involved in land preservation and restoration for over ten years.

We oppose the State Significant Infrastructure Application 5982 for the Northern Beaches Hospital at Frenchs Forest.

Our objection is based on environmental issues, evaluation of reports in your document especially regarding traffic, our connection with the local community and the local amenity and our experience of health service provision.

The decision of where to provide an upgraded new hospital has been going on for a long time, and as with the dispute whether Melbourne or Sydney should be the capital, a spot in between was chosen. Nobody at that stage had looked at the site carefully and the presence of Duffy's Forest Ecological Community or its regional wild life corridor function was not taken into account.

Wide community consultation was done in Aug 2002, with 91% of the community supporting Mona Vale to become the main hospital and Manly to keep ancillary services. Since then only restricted public meetings were held and this is the first opportunity to voice an opinion. We appreciate to be invited, however we feel the time span provided and the advertising of this opportunity were insufficient to deal with this major infrastructure proposal.

We believe that providing first class health care and protecting irreplaceable environmental values must go hand in hand. Our health is connected with environmental health and the northern beaches area is sought after especially for this connection. Visitors come here to experience the beauty of bush and beaches, restore their own health and residents moved here because of this beautiful healthy environment. The existing hospital site at Mona Vale has been established for this hospital- purpose and with widening of Mona Vale rd and excellent northern beaches public transport connections, that site offers what is needed.

The proposed hospital location at Frenchs Forest is home to our largest southern stand of Duffy's Forest Ecological Community (DFEC), an endangered ecological community of which only 15% remain. There are only few remnants of DFEC left; often they are small isolated patches, where weeds negatively impact. Here we have a stand preserved in astonishing good condition, with plenty of native fauna including a threatened species: the powerful owl. The DFEC at this location is distinguished by a particular vegetation assembly that is not matched in other locations. It contains species like *Eucalyptus resinifera*, *Pultenaea scabra* ssp *biloba*, *Pultenaea hispidula*, *Ficus rubiginosa* growing at impressive height out of an *Angophora costata*, *Gahnia radula* that are nowhere or extremely rarely only encountered in adjacent catchments. See attached 'Review of biodiversity aspects of NB Hospital EIS' by Smith & Smith, which highlights the high value of this bushland and demonstrates that the 'offsets' are inadequate.

The remnant of the Frenchs Forest bushland is not only great habitat for fauna, it also provides great potential habitat for the tiger quoll, a species that has recently been confirmed to exist within the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment. Quolls

love to hide and rear their young in old wooden logs, something that certainly is nowhere better to find than on the proposed hospital site.

The size of logs and tree trunks on the site is unmatched, and a wonderful reminder of the time when Mr. French did his logging around 'Frenchs Forest'. It deserves conservation from a historical perspective. It is sad to read that the local historical society was not invited to commend on the proposal.

The site is environmentally unique; it further is an essential part of two wild life corridors. The main corridor is north south, connecting Garigal East NP via the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment with the Manly Dam bushland area. This corridor is widely used as was demonstrated when the fence around the hospital was erected. Shut out from this bush land parcel the wallaby kill count on the adjacent roads went up dramatically. A path allowing pedestrians to cross was opened and when wallabies discovered this and starting to use it the road kill numbers dropped again. The second corridor is between the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment and Forestville Park leading to Garigal West NP. It is thin and only accommodates birds, small fauna species and flora. Wild life corridors are becoming more important with climate change and with more intense land use. We note the OEH has asked that the wildlife corridor be addressed and that has not been done in the SMEC report.

The local amenity of Frenchs Forest provides for family living. Many young families moved into the area, schools are nearby and a high school is next door to the site. Any large hospital destroys that sort of amenity. Hospitals of this size are intrusive. Intensive use, ambulances, helicopters, cars will bring constant noise and light pollution to the surrounding area.

Due to the elevation of this site, even to the far distant area will be affected by light pollution and visual pollution. Warringah's LEP did not allow for hilltop developments that would destroy distance views.

Parts of the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment are promised to become a State Park. The main area of the State Park is the lagoon itself. Narrabeen Lagoon will be the receiving waterbody from increased water run-off with added nutrients that would result from a hospital at this site. Parts of the catchment are already subject to regular flooding and adding hard surfaces in an area that is particularly suitable for absorbing large quantities of water would further increase these problems.

We note that the capacity of roads will be reached soon even with proposed mitigation measures and alone from that point of view the hospital location is poorly thought through. Patients need to be able to get there, quickly, safely, reliably and with public transport.

We oppose the concept of an up to 10 storeys, 70000sqm hospital at Frenchs Forest. We strongly oppose that any vegetation clearing is undertaken. We request that comprehensive community consultation is repeated with realistic options and that environmental considerations are fairly evaluated and balanced with the choice of site locations.

Garigal Landcare worked for years on the 10 ha offset site and is appalled that this land, which was granted to the community in return for accepting higher landfill at the Belrose tip is now supposed to be used for double dipping.

Conny Harris

(President Garigal Landcare)