

Submission regarding Northern Beaches Hospital (SSI 5982), Cnr Warringah Road and Wakehurst Parkway, Frenchs Forest

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

I, like many other residents, am very concerned about the traffic problems in the Frenchs Forest area already. It was acknowledged that the roads and traffic needed to be fixed before the hospital could be built, but the plans for the hospital are desperately inadequate to solve any of our existing traffic congestion issues, let alone prepare for the huge increase in traffic that the hospital will generate. I have lived in Frenchs Forest for almost 5 years and on the Northern Beaches for almost 14 years. The traffic congestion has worsened considerably every year, in particular on and around Warringah Road between Beacon Hill and Forestville. If this situation continues, not only will residents of the Northern Beaches be stuck in gridlock for a large part of each day, but essential hospital staff – nurses and doctors - are going to be in the same situation, and ambulances won't even be able to get to the hospital quickly in an emergency. This will put lives at risk -on a daily basis.

I increasingly have trouble just getting out of my driveway because of the long queue of traffic forming along Romford Road at the intersection with Frenchs Forest Road East, with drivers nearly all struggling to try and turn right out of Romford Road to get down towards Wakehurst Parkway and Warringah Road. It is not unusual to have to spend 15 minutes sitting in traffic trying just to reach Wakehurst Parkway. The same problem exists at Nandi Avenue. There is simply too much traffic to keep it moving on our current road network. Public transport also continues to be woefully inadequate, forcing more people to drive their cars.

Just last Friday at 5.10pm, I observed an ambulance with sirens and flashing lights trying to make this journey down Frenchs Forest Road East towards Wakehurst Parkway and it could not move for the amount of traffic banking up all the way down the road from Skyline shops. I can only imagine how the traffic will multiply once the hospital construction begins and after its completion. If we are in gridlock frequently now, then this is going to occur even more often, and for longer periods. The levels of pollution just from vehicles stuck in traffic jams will be dramatically increased also.

The plans show that the main ambulance entrance will be on Frenchs Forest Road but this road is only single lane each way with speed humps, apart from a small section with 2 lanes approaching the intersection with Wakehurst Parkway, and it's frequently gridlocked during peak times as well as at other times. This is not ideal for dangerously ill patients.

NOISE POLLUTION

The Forest High School's students as well as local residents in this residential neighbourhood will be negatively impacted by noise pollution from construction and ongoing noise from the increased traffic, ambulance sirens, air ambulances etc. Students will be disadvantaged by this noise throughout their school day, day in day out, and particularly for examinations such as the HSC.

VISUAL POLLUTION & OVERSHADOWING

Since the hospital site is on a slope it would make a lot more sense for the site to be excavated rather than just build a 10 storey building at the highest point in the area. The height of this building is totally out of keeping with the rest of the area and will be visible for miles around, ruining the character of Frenchs Forest. It is also going to mean that the high school will be overshadowed for longer. Classrooms will be colder and darker in winter, require greater use of electricity for artificial light and heating. If the building was set lower on excavated land it could reduce its footprint, as well as visual pollution and overshadowing.