

After some detailed study of The Star MP08_0098 Mod 13 Environmental Assessment Report (ERA) with particular interest in impact on traffic from Construction and Operation, I question the validity of the Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) Conclusion 14 that; “none of the potential environmental consequences identified and addressed in this EAR fall outside the scope of what the Minister could conclude were limited environmental consequences”.

Conclusion 14 reflects the sum of questionable conclusions in Environmental Assessments of aspects reported in Section 9, including P 9.16 Operational Traffic Impacts and P 9.38 Constructional Impacts drawn from the Traffic Impact Statement (TIS) Appendix J and the Construction Management Plan (CMP) Appendix HH.

The Operational Traffic Impacts and Constructional Impacts are assessed in Section 4 of the TIS against the Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) stated in table 1.1.

At this point it is important to understand the Methodology of assessment and reporting as stated in 9.1 of the EAR and note that no aspects assessed in the TIS are reported as having a negative impact! 9.1 says in part;-

◆ Where the EAR identifies a negative environmental impact, it considers any mitigation measures that can be implemented to manage those impacts. The EAR then determines whether those mitigated impacts will be limited beyond those already assessed for the Approved Project (Section 9 and 10). ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
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◆ Conclusion of environmental impact for each aspect – positive, neutral, or limited (based on implementation of the mitigation measures) (Section 11).

◆ Finally, this EAR provides conclusions as to whether the Proposal, as a whole, has limited environmental impacts beyond those already assessed (Section 11).

The EAR states that; “The SIDRA analysis indicates that the surrounding network will operate at existing or acceptable performance levels, despite the additional traffic associated with Mod 13 construction activity. The TIS assesses the cumulative road network impacts of Mod 13 construction as well as other approved or proposed construction activity near the site including the Harbourside and Darling Square developments”.

Conclusion 9.38.9. of the ERA states;-

“The construction works proposed under Mod 13 has the potential for traffic, noise and air quality impacts during the construction stage. However, as summarised above, the Construction Management Plan, Traffic Impact Statement, Noise Impact Assessment, and Air Quality Report provide a comprehensive range of mitigation and management measures that will limit the environmental impacts associated with the construction phase of the development to acceptable levels”.

While the stated purpose of the Construction Management Plan (CMP 1.2) is to support the conclusions in the Traffic Impact Assessment Report (TIS) Environmental Assessment Report (EAR), the significant impacts of construction activities identified in the CMP have been totally ignored and omitted from the TIS assessments and ERA Conclusions.

These activities include:

- Erection and operation of 2 tower cranes on Pirrama Rd and Jones Bay Rd.
- Movement of heavy vehicles in and out of the two loading and construction zones at curb side on Pirrama Rd and Jones Bay Rd (CMP fig.4).

These vehicle will include concrete ready mix trucks, mobile cranes, probably concrete pumps and semi-trailer trucks operating in a 3 metre wide loading zone on the side of the two lane road way with traffic in both directions. The activities will no doubt be continuous during the tower construction period causing traffic interruption, lane and road closures as addressed in 7.1 Traffic management Plan.

SEAR Construction Related Requirement 12 specifically refers to “light and heavy vehicle movements to and from the site”. I do not believe The Star has licence to not consider and omit the impact of stoppages and delay of the vehicles from Construction activities in the TIS.

I speculate that these construction activities will cause major delays through the Pirrama Rd./ Jones Bay Rd intersection, which also includes Darling Island Rd servicing the Fairfax Building, Darling Island apartments and the Revy building under construction. I expect there will be major impact on the surrounding traffic network as vehicles will avoid this intersection. The SIDRA analysis of Estimated Traffic Increases and Road Performance or Level of Service (LOS) through intersection is based on trip generated vehicle numbers only and does not account for the construction impacts on traffic flow. I note that for some reason table 4.23 Road Performance omits the Pirrama Rd/ Jones Bay Rd intersection.

Heavy vehicle movement in and out of the Construction/Loading Zone in the central stretch of Pirrama road servicing the L7 Ribbon and L5 Sky Terrace projects (CMP fig.4) will also require traffic control causing stoppages and delays adding to negative impact on traffic on Pirrama Rd and the Pirrama Rd. /Jones Bay Rd /Darling Island Rd intersection.

The rerouting of taxis and buses to the improver Service Road exiting on to Pirrama Rd North of the Pirrama Rd/ Jones bay Rd/Darling Island RD roundabout intersection is reported as a traffic mitigation measure. However, a significant number of the vehicles will turn right and travel through the Pirrama Rd/ Jones bay Rd/Darling Island RD roundabout to pick up passengers from the hotels or travel to Darling Harbour and the city, actually increasing the traffic impact on the intersection, Pirrama Rd and the Pymont Bridge Road and Murray Street intersection.

It is noted that for a period of time during the construction period the Service Road will be diverted to exit onto Pirrama Rd right between the Constuction loading zones for the Tower and L7 Ribbon L5 Sky Terrace projects adding congestion and impacting on the Bus Stop.

“The traffic Impact Assessment TIS section 4 is based on The SEGL mitigation strategy to assign more importance on the Pymont Street approach/ departure has spread the potential traffic impacts of the proposal more evenly across the adjacent network. This traffic reassignment strategy has helped reduce the potential impacts at critical intersections such as Pymont Bridge Road and Murray Street. Given the success of the SEGL mitigation strategies in achieving acceptable network performance levels under Modification 13”.

The proposed strategy to redirect traffic to mitigate traffic impacts and the conclusions (EAR9.16.2) rely heavily on the provision of a new car park entry on Pymont Street to spread the demand more evenly across the road network and reduce the pressure on Pirrama Road. We reiterate the Impact Assessment considers only vehicle numbers based on the calculation of Trips Generated by the Project (TIS 4.2), not including major Construction Impacts. Their conclusions on Network Performance (TIS 4.3 and Table 4.19) claiming Limited Impact and reduction on traffic on Pirrama Rd. depend largely on the mitigating effects of the new car park.

Their results are grossly exaggerated considering that construction of the new entry is not even scheduled to start until year 4 of the 4 year construction period (CMP fig.3) and the mitigation is limited to the capacity of the car park and 300 car spaces assigned to Star Sovereign Members only.

In summary –“The review of trip generation impacts and traffic network performance in Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.13, 4.14 and 4.16 demonstrated that the additional traffic generated by the proposal during construction, and operation, would have limited environmental impacts on network performanceThis is achieved through mitigation strategies” (TIS 5.3).

I dispute the validity the SEARS Assessment on the facts that:- 1. The assessment is based on trip generated data only and omit the traffic impacts from Construction activities identified in the Construction Management Plan as discussed. 2. The claimed effect of the mitigation measures on traffic impact during the construction period and beyond is exaggerated as discussed.

I note the Methodology previously stated (EAR 9.1), where a negative environmental impact can be “managed” by proposing mitigating measures to report it as a limited environmental impact with no onus of proof that they will be successful as claimed or even implemented . In these circumstances the mitigating measures are open to assumption and exaggeration.

Accordingly I dispute the validity of the Conclusions Based on the disputed SEARS Assessment(TIS 5.3) stated in the Traffic Impact Statement (5.4) and reflected in the Environmental Assessment Report Conclusions (EAR 14); “that the proposed development will have a limited environmental impact, during construction and operation”.

I trust this submission and other representations give reason for the Minister to find that the environmental consequences identified and addressed in this EAR do fall outside the scope of what the Minister could conclude were limited environmental consequences.

Respectfully, Robert D. Lynch, MIEAust CPEng(Retired)