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Wahroonga NSW 2076

Director – Infrastructure Projects
Department of Planning and Environment
Application number SSI 13_6136
Major Projects Assessment
GPO Box 39 Sydney NSW 2001

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Dear Sir/Madam

Please find below my submission with respect to the NorthConnex M1-M2 tunnel project.

General

The tunnel will provide a positive outcome for the residences and communities adjacent to Pennant Hills Road through the reduction of heavy vehicles. The initiative to construct the tunnel with the opportunity to use as three lanes in the future, and the additional height clearance are positive.

Documentation

The document should be available for download as complete documents. I appreciate the reasons for splitting, but a combined version would seem to be easy to provide and will make reading considerably easier.

Existing pedestrian crossing of Pennant Hills Road at Pearces Corner

Currently the phasing of the signals operates the northbound through movement concurrently with the right turn unless there is a pedestrian. When the pedestrian crossing across Pennant Hills Road is activated, the right turn operates and there is a red signal for the northbound through traffic. The pedestrian movement is not common and I have observed and experienced on numerous occasions vehicles travelling northbound along Pennant Hills Road that continue through the intersection on the red signal when the pedestrian crossing is green (narrowly missing pedestrians). The primary traffic signal being located on the left is difficult for traffic to see and is obviously missed. This is a serious safety issue that should be rectified with the new works. A mast arm signal post for northbound traffic with lanterns for both the straight through and right signals may address this issue and would be even more important with the additional lane proposed.

New pedestrian crossing at Pearces Corner

A pedestrian crossing should be added to the southern side of the intersection.

The fastest and most direct route from Russell Avenue to the city is via train from Wahroonga station.

The route to reach the eastern side of Ada Avenue near the station using the existing crossings on the northern side of Pacific Highway requires nine road crossings of which five are signalised (Pennant Hills Road, Pennant Hills Road slip lane to Pacific Highway, Pacific Highway slip lane to M1 ramp, Pacific Highway entry to M1 ramp, M1 exit to Pacific Highway westbound, M1 exist to Pacific Highway Eastbound, Bundarra Ave South, Woonona Ave South, and Neringah Ave South). The traffic signals add around five minutes to a walking time of ten minutes.

By introducing a pedestrian crossing on the southern side of the intersection, the number of road crossings can be reduced from nine to two with only one signalised crossing (Pennant Hills Road and Lucinda Avenue). This does not include the crossing of the Pacific Highway which can be crossed using the footbridge at Ada Avenue.

The inclusion of the pedestrian crossing on the southern side of the intersection would require the left turn movement to be held on red whilst the pedestrian crossing is green along with the right turn movement. The left turn operates together with the right from Pennant Hills Road into Pacific Highway allowing the left turn traffic to clear. There is adequate capacity in the left turn lane to avoid any interference with the right turn movement from Pacific Highway into Pennant Hills Road. The right turn movement is typically operated long enough for a second green phase for the left turn after the pedestrian movement has cleared.

The only observable limitation to including a pedestrian crossing is the existing property access located within the intersection. This is an unsafe and inappropriate location for a driveway and Northconnex should consider acquiring the property and removing the access. This property adjoins the park and could serve as an extension to the park and could provide an opportunity for tree planting to compensate for the loss of vegetation in the area including the significant Bluegum tree on Pennant Hills Road. This should be considered independent of the need the pedestrian crossing on the southern side of the intersection.

Footpath on Pennant Hills Road (west side)

The footpath between Russell Avenue and Pacific Highway is often use by cyclists in both directions. Observed movements include access between Pacific Highway and either Russell Avenue or Edwards Avenue, northbound cyclists often leave the road at Russell Avenue to use the pedestrian crossing at Pearces Corner to avoid the right turn movement, and others re-join Pennant Hills Road north of the single lane section. Consideration should be given widening the path to 2m and allowing pedestrian use.

Drainage on Pennant Hills Road

The section of Pennant Hills Road between Russell Avenue and Pacific Highway does not have any drainage pits and the runoff drains into Russell Avenue. The gradient of the road and gutter in Russell Avenue is ineffective and water ponds and runs across the road. Therefore, the catchment from the additional lanes should not be directed into Russell Avenue and should be captured along Pennant Hills Road.

New pedestrian crossing at M1

Consideration should be given to providing a pedestrian crossing on the southern side of the M1/Pennant Hills Road intersection.

Pennant Hills Road

The tunnel will effectively increase the capacity on Pennant Hills Road from 6 lanes to 10 lanes without any change to the lane configuration. This is a 67% increase in traffic lanes. To offset this, the existing kerb side lane appears adequate to allow a parking lane and bicycle lane.

Alternatively Pennant Hills Road should be adjusted to provide a bus lane for the full length.

I trust these comments will be reviewed and incorporated.

Kind Regards,

Angus Sturrock