

KU Children's Services

Box Q132, QVB Post Office NSW 1230
129 York St, Sydney NSW 2000
T 02 9264 8366 F 02 9267 6653
www.ku.com.au



NSW Department of Planning and Environment
Director Infrastructure Projects

15 June 2016

RE: Application SSI 15_7400 Sydney Metro: Chatswood to Sydenham EIS

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to express my concerns regarding the proposed Sydney Metro Project: Chatswood to Sydenham section.

KU Children's Services is one of Australia's largest not-for-profit providers of early education and care for children. We operate a 39 place child-care facility, KU Lance Children's Centre (KU Lance), 37 High Street, MILLERS POINT NSW 2000. The service operates 7:30am – 6:00pm, five days a week.

The proposed Barangaroo Metro Station site is located immediately adjacent to KU Lance. The Barangaroo Station site will also be the main construction access route for the tunnel project, and is approximately 50 metres from KU Lance.

KU Lance is the most sensitive receiver in the Barangaroo precinct. It is the only education and care service in the whole area, and will be directly affected for the duration of the project, approximately 4-5 years, perhaps longer. We hold considerable concerns regarding the impact of the works on the children and families who attend KU Lance, and outline our concerns below.

Noise

The EIS identifies that KU Lance will be exposed to excessive and unsafe levels of noise for the duration of the project, levels well in excess of acceptable community standards. These excessive levels will continue not just for a few days and weeks, but for years.

We draw your attention to the detrimental impact this noise will have on the development and safety of children attending this service. Elevated noise levels are known to create stress, and stimulate aggression and other anti-social behaviours in children, with toddlers and babies particularly vulnerable.

The levels predicted in the EIS will make it difficult for children to hear speech from educators, from their peers, and from themselves. The first five years of life are critical for the acquisition and development of language skills. The ability to hear from others or yourself is essential for development of speech, and constant and excessive noise can have devastating, life-long impacts on affected children.

The unpredictable nature of the noise, for example from piling, blasting and traffic movements will add additional strain to the children and staff at this centre.

Unfortunately KU Lance has already experienced several years' of construction related noise from the site remediation works and the development of the Barangaroo Headland Park. Our concerns are based on first-hand experience of construction noise. KU Lance is surrounded by rock, and we expect the reflected noise from the cliff wall behind the centre will accentuate the noise problem. The information you have supplied, indicates this new construction will experience even higher noise levels than previous works.

The teaching program at KU Lance includes music and storytelling as essential elements. Both of these experiences will be affected by noise disturbance. The children at KU Lance play and eat lunch outdoors. With the change in conditions to the environment, these experiences may not even be possible.

Language and social interactions go hand in hand. If children are having difficulty hearing and being heard, social interactions may be impaired, as children find it difficult to engage in conversations with each other or with staff.

General child wellbeing may also be affected by the unpredictable noises causing interruption to concentration and heightened anxiety particularly in our babies.

Sleep

Unexpected noises are known to interrupt sleep patterns. The babies at KU Lance sleep at times throughout the day. While babies will sleep through background noises, the unexpected noises caused by trucks being filled with waste, metal on metal, or blasting is a concern for the child's wellbeing.

We know that tired children are not happy children, and a child or baby being woken from deep sleep, changes their whole routine.

We expect all our rooms, but especially our nursery, will require upgrades to the air conditioning unit, or additional air purifiers to create background noise to mask the unwanted external noise and increase sleep quality.

Dust

We expect dust and perhaps other airborne problems will change the environment at KU Lance. We are very concerned about the impact of dust and any other airborne particles on our children and staff. We have many children with respiratory conditions, including asthma, and are concerned that the increase in dust and other contaminants in the environment will impact on the ability of the children to use the outdoor play spaces.

The nature of known contaminants on the Barangaroo site, including asbestos, heavy metals, PCBs and other toxins that will be disturbed during the construction phase, is of great concern to us.

Increased traffic and impacts on parking access

We expect that traffic around KU Lance will increase dramatically. Our concerns are for the safety of children being dropped off and collected.

Suggested solutions

- ▶ Noise/sound abatement measures at the site of construction
- ▶ Acoustic shielding and vibration controls on all preparatory work
- ▶ Increased sound insulation in the building
- ▶ Green zones, and/or vertical gardens at the front and back of the building to assist with noise and airborne contaminant control
- ▶ Internal curtains to assist with noise control
- ▶ Air purifiers
- ▶ Upgraded air conditioner
- ▶ Additional parking required for the safe drop off and collection of children.
- ▶ Compensation for extra cleaning costs – to reduce dust and airborne contaminants that cause respiratory problems
- ▶ Measures to absorb dust – possibly including the installation of screens

We appreciate your consideration of these concerns, and welcome the opportunity to work alongside the Department to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate these issues.

Yours sincerely,



Christine Legg
Chief Executive Officer