

In regard to the construction of the Rankin Park to Jesmond link of the Inner City Bypass, I do not oppose road and traffic flow improvements, but I strongly object to the plans as presented in the November EIS to sever the off-road shared cycle / pedestrian path that runs between Jesmond Park and Jesmond, and to replace it with three signalised crossings over multiple lanes of traffic of the bypass on and off-ramps. I do not oppose road and traffic flow improvements but that

My objections on the following grounds:

- **It discourages cycling.**

As a current member of the Newcastle Cycleways movement we, I are trying to encourage and lobby for safer cycling, in the greater Newcastle area and promote health and carbon neutral benefits. The action that the RMS is leaning towards in its proposal undermines the promotion and up take of cycling as a sustainable and green carbon neutral means for many to commute.

- **It is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists.**

Having to traverse three sets of signalised crossings will result in pedestrians becoming impatient, and crossing against the lights, with a heightened risk of being hit by traffic coming from multiple directions. Also the design will encourage cyclists off the path onto Newcastle Road, again with heightened risk of serious accident and injury due to the highly complex nature of this interchange.

- **It is detrimental to motorists.**

The current plan to replace the off-road path with signalised crossings is detrimental to the interests of motorists in two ways. Firstly traffic heading west on Newcastle Rd wanting to turn south onto the bypass will have to face delays as pedestrians cross at the lights. Secondly with no continuous off road shared path cyclists travelling east or west will choose to travel on Newcastle Rd instead, thus impeding motorists.

- **It is bad for the community.**

There are a huge range of people who use that path regularly and not just locals— My wife and I regularly cycle commute from Toronto to Newcastle and back along that path, there are many that walking their dogs, walk for exercise, workers cycling to their place of employment, avid cyclists riding the Two City Circuit, *The severance of the shared path represents a significant degradation in community amenity.*

- **It is bad for health.**

I took up cycling to work four years ago, I am now 12kg lighter and blood pressure has dropped to healthy levels with no need of medication and a much healthier and fitter person. The health benefits of cycling and walking is no mere statistic, but a living reality. Removing the Jesmond shared path provides a disincentive to people walking and cycling, and will have net negative effect on the health of the community.

- **It is financially imprudent.**

The failure to retain the east-west off road connection when the bypass is constructed means that it will cost much, much more to retrofit the connection at a later date.

- **It dismantles community**

The Jesmond shared path runs along the line of the former Newcastle to Wallsend tram line. Tram operations ceased in November 1949 and the rails were removed in December 1949. For 68 years the people of this area have been using this path to traverse between suburbs, and now the State Government wants to take this away without any just recompense. While the plans do contain a much needed shared path overhead bridge on Newcastle Rd that will benefit people travelling north-south, this is no excuse for significantly degrading the path for pedestrians and cyclists travelling east-west. *It is perverse that a government that is meant to serve the people should act in*

a way that marginalises those who desire to move themselves about by the power of their own two feet.

The RMS appear to be completely ignoring and going against what the community want. They are going against international trends in promoting sensible cycle friendly and safe designs.

In conclusion, I reiterate my opposition to the severance of the Jesmond Park shared path and call on the RMS to alter their plans as displayed in the EIS to retain the east-west off-road path, by means of an over-pass, under-pass, or combination thereof.

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