

16 December 2016

Newcastle Inner City Bypass – Rankin Park to Jesmond

I would like to provide the following comments in relation to the EIS for the above project exhibited on the NSW Planning website.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety

I sometimes cycle to work, utilising as many off road cycle paths as possible for my own safety. Part of my journey is along the shared path through Jesmond Park from the Howe Street intersection on Croudace Street, Lambton, to the Blue Gum Road intersection on Newcastle Road, Jesmond. This is currently the most beautiful and pleasant part of my journey. Additionally, my family use Jesmond Park recreationally and, while there, utilise the shared path to access Jesmond shopping centre. This currently requires just one road crossing at traffic lights.

The Executive Summary of the Traffic and Transport Assessment states that “The project would also provide improved connectivity and safety for cyclists and pedestrians traveling through the construction of new shared paths, paved footpaths, signalised pedestrian crossings, on and off road cycleways, and shared path bridges.”

My concern is that the project will actually significantly decrease safety for cyclists and pedestrians at the location near the existing Jesmond roundabout. As shown in Figure 5-14a of the Traffic and Transport Assessment, the existing shared path in this vicinity is located a considerable distance from the road and does not have any road crossings. The project proposal is to truncate the existing shared path at this point and have what appears to be three separate pedestrian/cyclist crossings controlled by traffic lights and connected by large, island style medians. The proposed shared path on the western side of these crossings appears to be right beside the road going under the proposed bridge over Newcastle Road.

I suggest it would be better for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists if there were either an underpass, or a shared path bridge at this location. This would avoid the need for pedestrians and cyclists to cross busy roads, as well as avoiding the added danger of having to wait on the medians for the lights to change.

Bushland Environment

I am concerned about the environmental impact of the bisection of the bushland environment between the Southern Interchange and the Northern Interchange. There appears to be only two locations for connection between the two sides of the bushland, one fauna underpass towards the Southern Interchange, and one bridge for bushwalkers and fauna towards the Northern Interchange. I think this is inadequate over the distance of 3.4km. Additionally, I think that an elevated roadway, similar to the system of bridges along the eastern sections of the Hunter Expressway would be far better environmentally for this location.

Yours sincerely

C Herlihy