

16 December, 2016

Department Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Rankin Park to Jesmond Bypass - EIS

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS for the proposed Rankin Park to Jesmond Bypass in Newcastle. Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group now in NSW for forty years, and has over 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups, including the very active Newcastle Cycleways Movement.

We wish to state firmly that the proposal as presented in the EIS has major flaws based on two main areas:

1/ The NSW (RTA) Bicycle Guidelines state a clear objective of:

"To improve the bike network by making comprehensive provision for bicycles on all new major road infrastructure projects with a strong preference for off-road cycling."

2/ The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements for this project state:

"Maintenance of existing cycle routes and consideration of opportunities to integrate elements within existing and proposed networks."

The present EIS fulfils neither of these requirements. The proposal does not improve the overall bicycle network and in fact causes a down grade in places, and safety issues at other locations. It does not show any clear consideration of opportunities, or a strong preference for off-road cycling.

It is disappointing that in 2016 a major NSW infrastructure project does not consider Active Transport seriously, and make positive provision of Active Transport infrastructure a clear objective. Active Transport does not rate a mention in the "Project Objectives" of the EIS Traffic and Transport Assessment (Aurecon, Nov 2016).

These flaws can be illustrated by:

A/ End to End Separated Cycleway

The proposal does not include a safe, separated cycleway from end to end. This is a major omission, and repeats the mistakes that have been made in most recent motorway projects. No consideration of this concept has been included. Instead it is proposed that bicycle riders use the road shoulder.

Riding on the road shoulder where the speed differential to the vehicles is high, does nothing to encourage Active Transport. It is well known that about 70% of NSW people would ride more regularly if it were safer and more convenient.

At present in NSW over \$10 billion per annum is being spent on transport infrastructure. Only about \$60 million per annum has been allocated to cycling infrastructure, ie about 0.6% of the total. The NSW Government has a stated aim of lifting the cycling transport mode share to 5%.

It is time that NSW made a serious commitment to cycling infrastructure. The Rankin Park to Jesmond Bypass presents an excellent opportunity to provide a safe, separated end to end cycleway.

B/ Southern Interchange

Bicycle NSW and Newcastle Cycleway Movement have been briefed by RMS on possible Active Transport improvements to the present proposal for the Southern Interchange. These include a shared path on the western side to link to the bypass. This should be further developed by RMS and included in the final proposal.

C/ Hospital Interchange

The present proposal for the Hospital Interchange includes a shared path on the northern side of the over bridge. This shared path then crosses the bypass exit ramp at an unprotected crossing. This crossing is unsafe and must be corrected. It is not acceptable to create new hazards. A simple test should be applied to this area:

Would you let your 10 year old child cross here without supervision?

The RMS must provide a safe solution in this area.

D/ Northern Interchange

At present the shared path the runs along the south side of Newcastle Road provides a safe and continuous Active Transport route. The present proposal breaks this continuity by having three signalised crossings. The Level of Service for riders and pedestrian would be greatly diminished as they wait for a green phase. There is no mention of Bicycle Lanterns on the crossing, and so under present NSW Rules, the bike riders would need to dismount and walk across the crossings.

This proposal produces a disincentive to Active Transport.

Bicycle NSW and Newcastle and Newcastle Cycleway Movement have been briefed by RMS on a further option for this location, ie a bridge over the entry ramp combined with an underpass of the bypass. This has been called the "Underpass/Overpass" option, and option should be included in the final design.

Yours faithfully,



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Bicycle NSW