Secretary
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

16 December 2016

Feedback on proposed Rankin Park to Jesmond - Newcastle Inner City Bypass project - EIS.

I wish to provide the following feedback on the proposed Rankin Park to Jesmond - Newcastle Inner City Bypass project.

I note that the design proposed within the Refined Strategic Design Report 2016 has incorporated many revisions and I am pleased that many of these address issues raised in my previous submission.

I have examined the EIS report and I am disappointed that none of my submission on the Refined Strategic Design Report 2016 appear to be accounted for.

I trust you will find my submission helpful and I welcome the opportunity to discuss the project with yourself or other parties.

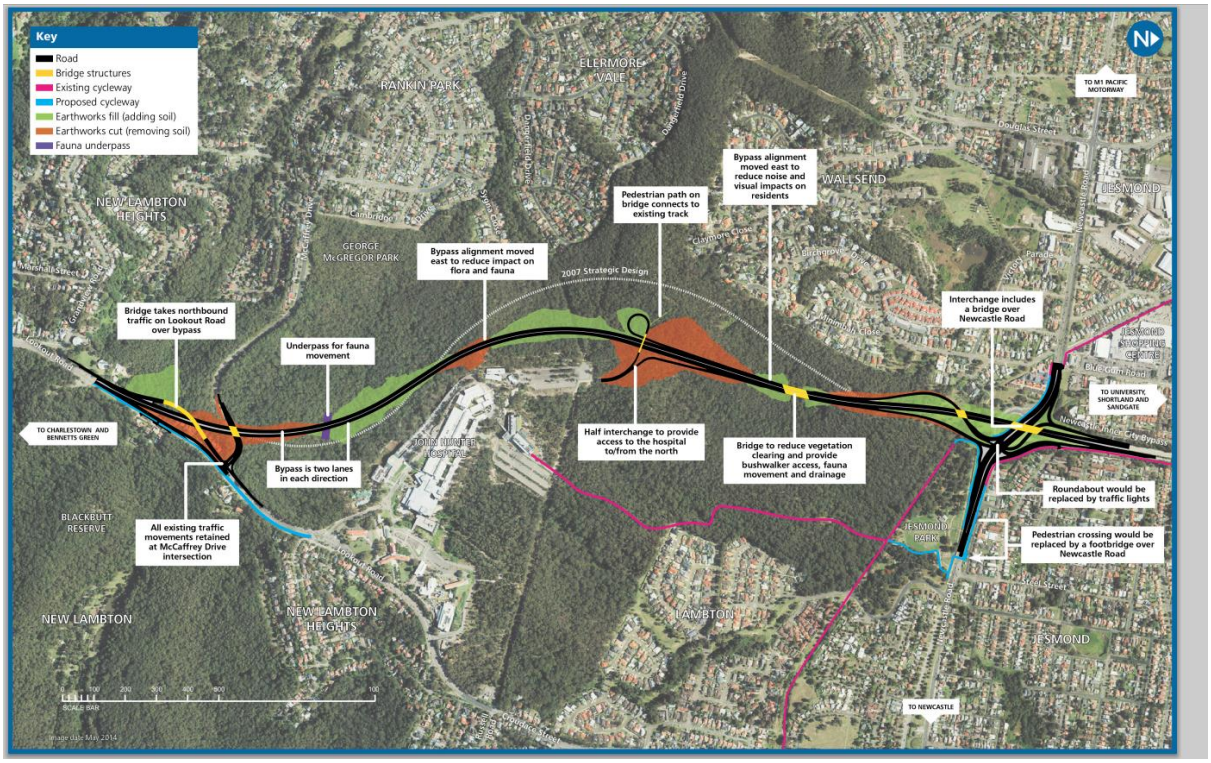
Regards,

Rodney Dean

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

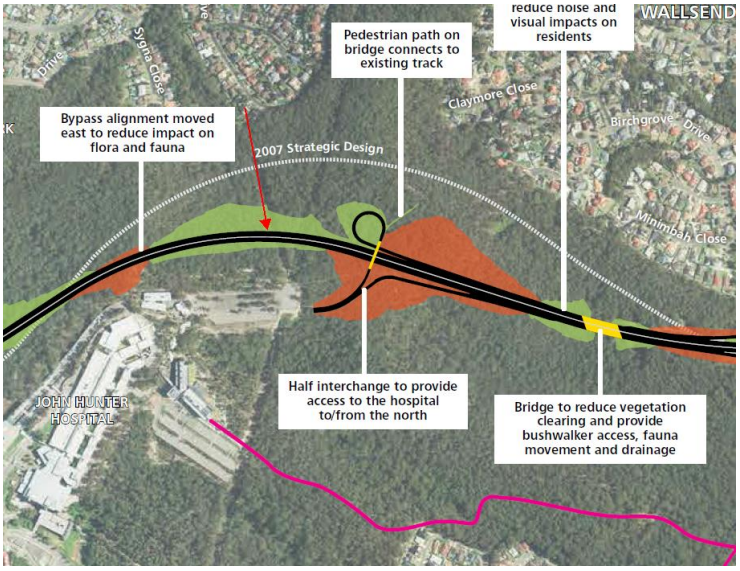
Design phase

- The revised Strategic Design route provides a significantly greater buffer between the road and housing. This serves to significantly alleviate the negative impacts of the road on housing and residents and is a net positive improvement. As a resident of the affected housing area this is greatly appreciated.



- Access to recreational bushland for residents of Silver Ridge and adjoining suburbs
    - The Jesmond Bushland area is an important and popular recreational bushland area for many residents in the adjoining suburbs. Popular activities include, cycling, mountain biking, running, bush walking and dog walking. The Bushland is also utilised by various sporting clubs for recreational activities such as orienteering and cross country running.
    - It is important to residents of Silver Ridge estate to maintain access to the bushland as a recreational facility. The revised design does make provision for access for residents of Silver Ridge providing an additional road bridge. This is noted and appreciated. However an important formal recreational walking trail is not accounted for in the proposal, see below.
    - An additional bridge / underpass structure in the vicinity of the red arrow (pictured below) would further facilitate access to the bushland for wildlife, recreational,

commuting and maintenance purposes.



- Access to bushland for emergency services / fire brigade
    - The revised design makes provision for access to emergency services and construction of fire trails to provide satisfactory access in events such as bush fire.
- Destruction of existing trails including
    - Jesmond Bushland Walking Track (Bicentennial Walk) – My recollection is that in 1988 government funding had been secured by Newcastle City Council to construct a walking trail through Jesmond Bushland that incorporates a double width shared pedestrian / cycle track loop passing significant boulder formations and scenic gullies. A commemorative plaque exists at the head of this walk and is located on the Jesmond Park to John Hunter Hostpital Cycleway. Although neglected by council with signs dilapidated or destroyed and tracks in poor condition and damaged during the 2007 flood event where an earthen bridge was washed away, this trail is still very popular with walkers and cyclists and it's geological features are remarkable and beautiful.

      The trail was originally well marked with signage; most of these signs are now in disrepair or have been removed or destroyed. The design should incorporate the preservation of the trail and it's unique features. This is likely to necessitate the restoration and redirection of the trail and the project should provide this. The revised design has no mention or consideration of this trail. This is disappointing as I explicitly sited the existence of this trail the previous call for submissions.

      The EIS does briefly describe the trail in Appendix I page 33 as:

      "A bicentennial walking trail established by Newcastle City Council is a short walking loop located through the bushland area from the existing shared path that connects John Hunter Hospital to Jesmond Park. The trail uses existing fire trails and informal tracks."

      The EIS is inaccurate. The trail does use existing fire trails, but the walking trails were formally constructed and commissioned by Council and although poorly maintained

and dilapidated in parts are still an important recreational facility to the community. The EIS and the project must take greater consideration of this trail and it's value to the community by recognising, mapping and planning for it's ongoing using during and after construction of the road.

The EIS must identify the impact of the project on the trail and the project should provide the necessary works to remediate and redirect the trail where necessary. The current provisions are inaccurate, inadequate and unacceptable.

Route of 1988 Walking Trail

The following photographs depict the commemorative marker and its location at the head of the trail. Various significant features exist including rock formations, drainage works and retaining walls. Some of the original trail marking signage and its location are depicted.

Figure 1 - Commorative Marker

Figure 2 - Location of commorative marker off the John Hunter Hospital Cycleway

Figure 3 - Rock formation on Jesmond Bushland Walking Trail

Figure 4 - Formal drainage works, part of Jesmond Bushland Walking Trail

Figure 5 - Formal drainage works and retainment, part of Jesmond Bushland Walking Trail

Figure 6 - Jesmond Bushland Walking Trail - Retainment and rock formation

Figure 7 - Formal Signage - Jesmond Bushland Walking Track

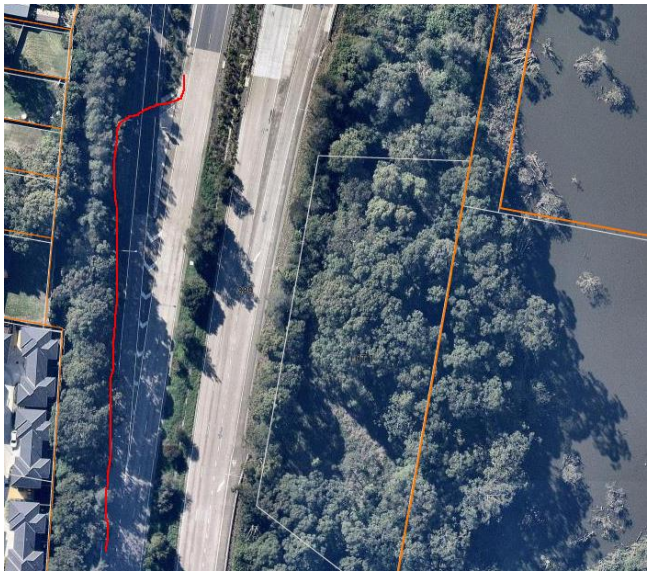
Figure 8 - Location of signage for Jesmond Bushland Walking Track, near basketball half court on the Jesmond Cycleway at the intersection of the John Hunter Hospital Cycleway

  - Major Fire Trails – Fire trails exist for the purpose of bush fire management within the Jesmond Bushland area. These trails are also used for recreational purposes. The design appears to provide effective access for emergency services and the reconstruction of fire trails.
  - Single track walking and cycling trails – a number of informal single track trails exist within the Jesmond Bushland area which are popular with recreational walkers, runners and cyclists. Some provision has been made to preserve or reroute these recreational trails. Addition provisions are required.
- Impact on flora, fauna and unique geographic features
  - The Jesmond Bushland is home to many species of native flora and fauna and hosts a number of unique geographic features such as granite boulder formations. The proposal provides for minimal impact and preservation of these.
- Air, noise and light pollution – The design of the project must incorporate measures to minimise the effects of air, noise and light pollution on the surrounding areas. The revised design provides significant improvements in these aspects.

  Techniques must consider:
  - Existing levels of air, noise and light pollution levels should be measured before commencement of works

- Minimisation of gradient changes of the roadway to limit engine noise and exhaust pollution.
- Excavation of cuttings to place the roadway below the ground level where the roadway is close to residential areas.
- Construction of earthen mounds to deflect and absorb noise and vibration
- Planting of vegetation to absorb noise and reduce visual impact
- Erection of sound deflecting barriers to minimise road noise
- Insulation of residences from noise pollution by offering the installation of noise arresting materials and double glazing of windows
- Directed lighting on the roadway with minimal light spill to surrounding areas
- Noise monitoring and the use of non-tonal reversing alarms.
- Restriction of dust and airborne pollutants. Monitor stations setup to ensure compliance.

- Provisions for transport for traffic other than motor vehicles – The corridor should provide a shared cycling and walkway linking the Jesmond / Silver Ridge area and the existing cycleway infrastructure to the John Hunter Hospital and existing Inner City Bypass. This will provide a significant community benefit as the hospital is a major employer of local residents and has well known problems with parking and traffic which would be improved by alternative transport to private motor vehicles. The design should provide for a cycle pathway link from the new corridor to the hospital that does not require dangerous road crossings.
- Integration with the Newcastle Cycleway Plan – The plan should complement and incorporate the local cycleway plan developed by the City Council and local cycleway movement. It is apparent from cycle routes and features developed by the RMS that are not always practical in implementation. Here is an example from the Northern end of the Newcastle Inner City bypass illustrating the path cyclists are directed to follow. This design is not practical is by the collection of debris on the designated path is demonstrably useless.



The design would benefit from input from actual cyclists to avoid impractical features such as right angle or tight corners, obstructions or ‘calming’ devices requiring cyclists slow significantly or to make full stops. The separation of cycle traffic and motor vehicle traffic should be maintained as much as possible. The necessity for cycle traffic to use traffic control signals should be avoided by route design and the use of underpasses and bridges.

- Provision for cycling and pedestrian traffic on the Jesmond Cycleway – The proposal for cutting the existing route and replacing it with a route requiring three separate unsynchronised traffic control light crossings is unsatisfactory and dangerous. Requiring cyclists and pedestrians to this difficult route to cross the interchange will foreseeably cause commuters to cross against the traffic control signals proposed and will inevitably lead to collision incidents between cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles. This aspect of the design is very poorly conceived and does not correlate with the Newcastle City Cycleway plan. <u>The proposed design is unacceptable and objectionable.</u>

  A better design is required for this interchange for cycle and pedestrian traffic that expedites movement without endangering commuters. This design should incorporate bridges and underpasses for the unimpeded flow of cycle and pedestrian traffic in an East/West direction from the existing Jesmond Cycleway.

  Please consider the following proposed design for this traffic which utilises an existing easement between properties on Victory Parade to connect Jesmond Cycleway traffic to an already designated cycle route on Victory Parade. This route separates cycle and pedestrian traffic from the complex series of road crossings and provides the opportunity to build tunnels or bridges to keep this traffic separate. This eliminates the risk of cycle/pedestrian and vehicle collisions incidents and serves to encourage rather than discourage cycling as a means of transport. The key feature of this design is to link the Jesmond Cycleway with the Victory Parade cycle infrastructure without road crossings. This is achieved by using the available open space and topology to underpass the two tributary roads shown at 1 and 3 on the below diagram and to use the designed overpass at 2 on the diagram.

  This design uses and existing easement between properties to route cycle traffic to Victory Parade and integrates with the cycling infrastructure provided by Newcastle City Council which extends along Victory Parade to Brickworks Park and to Newcastle Road.

  The advantage of this design is the separation of pedestrian and cycle traffic from heavily trafficked roads and the elimination of the traffic light crossings in the proposed design which cause avoidable delays for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians alike. By utilising short tunnels under the new roads and the bridge already specified in the proposal, this design

should be achievable without significant additional cost or complexity.

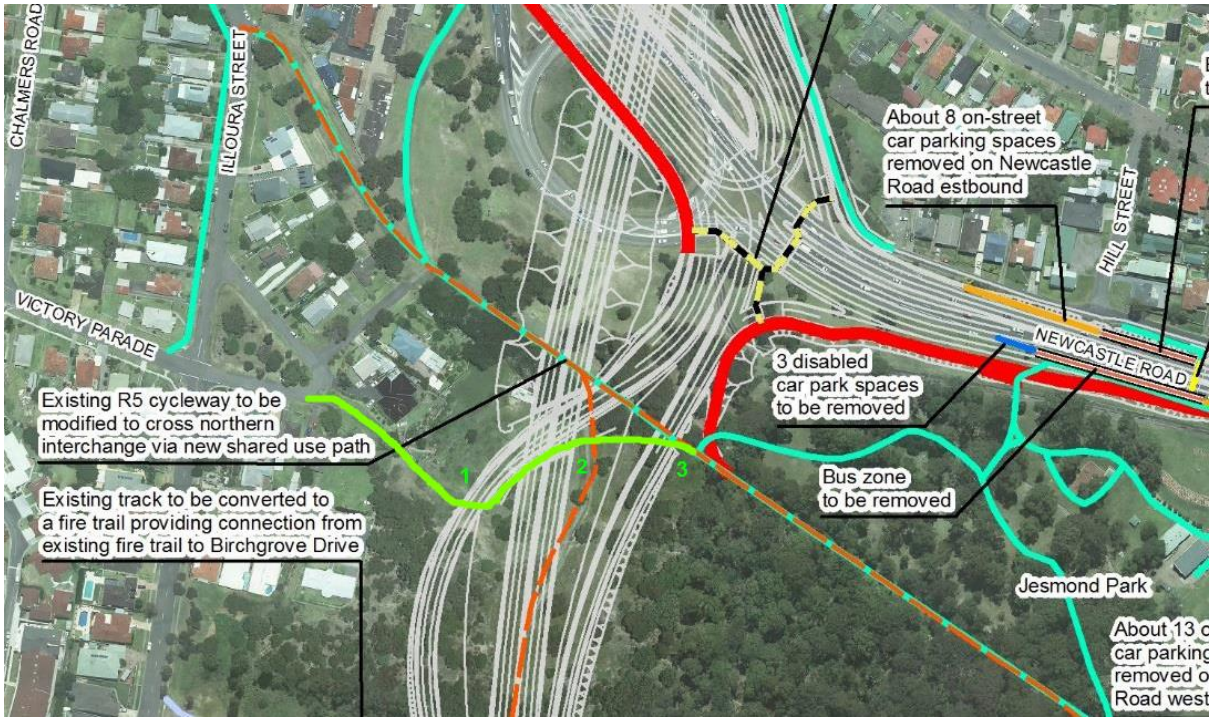


Figure 9 - Alternate design - Route for Jesmond Cycleway

- Proposed John Hunter Hospital Road Connection – The proposed connection from the Inner City Bypass provides significantly improved benefit from the previous proposal. The following points are noted:
    - Isolation of large pocket of bushland significantly adversely impacting recreation usage, flora and fauna
    - Destruction of existing trail structures
    - Additional construction time and expense
    - Redesign of hospital infrastructure, the entry point is via a staff car park and is not through traffic
    - The link now design incorporate a bridge for pedestrian (and cycle) access which

Construction phase

- The relocation of the route to give a much larger buffer between houses and noted and appreciated.
- Noise, dust, vibration, light, run off pollution and damage to resident's homes and properties – It is anticipated that the construction phase will entail levels of noise, light, vibration, run off and dust pollution beyond those from the existing peaceful bushland. The construction phase should use practices to minimise such impacts to the environment and eliminate damage to resident's property.
    - It is anticipated that construction vehicles will be a major contributor to pollution during the construction phase this pollution should be minimised by
        - Turning off machinery when not in use
        - Positioning stationary machinery away from residential areas

        - Lowering the sound of or removing reversing beepers of machinery, investigation of methods to keep a safe worksite without polluting the environment with constant loud beepers
        - Equipment should be stored in compounds away from residential areas
    - Regular monitoring of air, sound and light pollution during the construction phase and taking corrective action where pollution approaches unacceptable levels
- Impact on recreational bushland usage and access – It is foreseeable that the construction phase will have additional impact on access to the bushland to the completed design, the construction phase should incorporate provision to minimise this impact.
- Impact on flora / fauna – Flora and fauna destroyed or displaced in the construction phase may not recover or return. Provision should be made to retain the flora and fauna of the area during the construction phase. It is noted that the strategic design takes account of flora and fauna impacts. This appears to be satisfactory.
- Time to construct, hours / days of week of construction work – The operational hours of construction should be limited to normal working hours during weekdays to allow residents relief from the effects of construction activity.

- The proposal to extend construction hours beyond standard construction is unacceptable and objectionable

  Standard Construction hours:
  • 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday
  • 8am to 1pm Saturday

  These hours allow minimum respite from construction activity for the health and peace of neighbouring residents.

  The proposed extended hours would be:
  • 6am to 7pm Monday to Friday
  • 7am to 5pm Saturday

  These hours do not allow sufficient rest and respite for neighbours from construction activity. Neighbours such as myself with children will not have sufficient quite time for their children to sleep and do homework. Source: Sleep Health Foundation Australia.

Completion phase

- Scheduled completion date – The project should schedule a completion date and keep affected residents appraised of progress
- Contingency for over run – In the event of over run of the project projected completion residents should be informed. If the project is stalled, contingency should be made to restore access to the bushland and relocate equipment rather than abandon the site “as is” for an indeterminate period.

- Periodic monitoring of sound, air and light pollution – Upon the project's completion monitoring should be conducted to ensure that the levels fall within design projections and acceptable levels and contingency provided to make any improvements necessary.
- Restoration of bushland / Environmental impact – Upon completion the project should incorporate the restoration of bushland and recreation facilities to an optimal state, using indigenous species.
- Vegetation management program – An ongoing program to manage weeds, undergrowth and bushfire hazard reduction should be established along the easement between the road and residential properties.