

The Honourable Brad Hazzard MP
Minister for Planning & Infrastructure
Level 33, Governor Macquarie Tower,
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

Re: Major Project – Homebush Bay Bridge

The City of Canada Bay, at its meeting of 15 May 2012, considered a report from its Planning and Environment Department on the Homebush Bay Bridge.

The Environmental Assessment report for this Major Infrastructure Project has been on public exhibition over the last few months. The Council report outlined the nature of the proposal and also identified and discussed the significant impacts of the Bridge on the local Rhodes community, whilst acknowledging its merit in improving the connectivity of the broader area.

The Council resolved as follows:

1. THAT Council advises the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure that it supports the Bridge in principle, but that it also has a range of significant concerns about the proposed Bridge which it seeks to be addressed. These concerns will be communicated to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure via a formal submission to MP10_0192 which restates the issues and matters of concern raised in Sections 1 (1.1, 1.2, 1.3), 2 and 3 of this Report;
2. THAT Council requests the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission to hold a Public Hearing in relation to the Bridge Proposal, and to address Council's concerns, prior to any Approval for the Bridge being contemplated.
3. THAT Council requests the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission to ensure further consultation with Council on the drafting of any conditions of development consent and prior to their finalisation, in the event that Approval for the Bridge is to be issued.

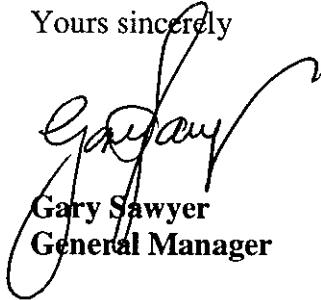
Accordingly, please find attached the **Council report** which serves as Council's submission in respect of the Bridge proposal and within which Council's concerns are raised.

A **meeting to discuss Council's concerns** is requested at your earliest possible convenience.

A **public hearing** is also requested, to enable the broader community's concerns to be fully heard and considered prior to any decision being made in relation to the proposed Bridge.

Should you wish to discuss the matter, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Tony McNamara, Director of Planning and Environment, on 9911 6555.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Sawyer', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Gary Sawyer
General Manager

4 June 2012

ITEM PART 3A PROJECT - HOMEBUSH BAY BRIDGE

Department Planning and Environment

Author Initials: UL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed Homebush Bay Bridge from Wentworth Point to Rhodes, is a Part 3A Major Infrastructure Project under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (MP10_0192) which has been on public exhibition from Wednesday 21 March until 4 May 2012. The consent authority for the project is either the NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission.

Public submissions formally closed on 4 May 2012, however specific arrangements have been made with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure involving extension of this date to enable the City of Canada Bay to formally consider the proposal at this current meeting.

This report provides an evaluation of the Bridge proposal, as it impacts on the Rhodes community and the City of Canada Bay, and suggests a number of recommendations which are proposed to form the basis of a submission to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure in relation to the exhibited proposal for the Bridge.

In summary, it is submitted that whilst the strategic benefits of the proposed Bridge in terms of connecting two communities (Rhodes and Wentworth Point), improving public transport options in the area, and reducing car dependency, thereby achieving overall improvements to Sydney's sustainability are recognised, it should also be recognised that the Bridge will have major impacts on the Rhodes community. These impacts have not been adequately addressed through the proponent's documentation, ie the Environmental Assessment Report (referred to as the EA) notwithstanding Council's earlier representations on these issues, and Council's many requests that they be addressed, prior to any determination of the Project. Council's submission is to request the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission to ensure that Council's concerns are fully addressed.



STRATEGIC CONNECTION

As detailed in the EA, the Bridge proposal satisfies a broad range of State and Regional Level Planning Strategies and Policies, but most notably the plans, NSW 2021, Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 and the Metropolitan Transport Plan – Connecting the City of Cities. The Bridge improves connectivity in the region in a number of ways, and has merit.

At a local level, the Bridge proposal has relevance to the following FuturesPlan20 Outcome areas:

- 2.2.3 Facilitate and advocate for transport links to open spaces and reserves within and around the City
- 2.3.3 Move to alternative and more sustainable transport choices within Council
- 3.1.2 Develop an integrated network of pathways and cycleways for incidental exercise as well as alternative transport options
- 3.3.2 Integrate Safety-by-Design into City Planning principles
- 3.4.2 Generate the development of infrastructure needed to facilitate a healthy city
- 4.1.2 Ensure accessibility to all public spaces
- 4.1.2 Encourage shared use of public space and facilities
- 5.1.1 Develop and enhance walking and cycling path networks around the City
- 5.1.2 Promote and support walking and cycling as a viable transport option
- 5.1.3 Promote and facilitate pedestrian and cyclist safety
- 5.2.3 Improve safety, comfort and accessibility to public transport access points
- 5.2.4 Promote and support physical connectivity across the City
- 5.3.1 Support sustainable transport options within the City
- 5.3.3 Advocate for improvements to public transport links and options
- 7.1.1 Create opportunities to meet and form community networks and connections
- 7.1.2 Provide access to a range of services and facilities that improve quality of life in Canada Bay

- 7.1.5 Celebrate and use our outdoor environment as creative and cultural spaces
- 7.4.4 Engage in regional partnerships to improve and enhance cultural activity and opportunity in the area.

Council is requested to note that it is the manner in which Council responds to the proposal (Council resolutions) and subsequent commitments required of the Proponent in the event of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission approving the Bridge via conditions of consent, that will determine the extent to which any of the above FuturesPlan 20 Outcomes can be, and are achieved.

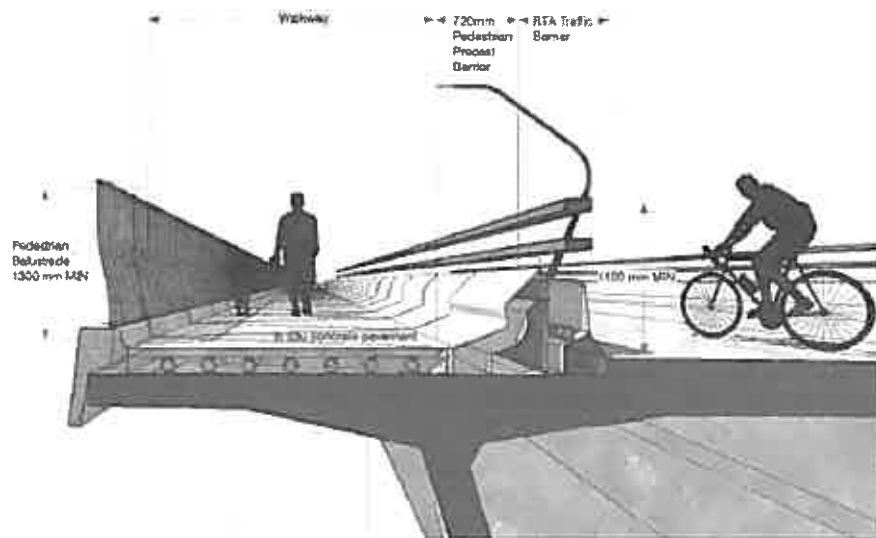


REPORT

SECTION 1

1.1 Outline/Background of Proposal

The Homebush Bay Bridge is a 300m-long, 11.4m-wide concrete and steel structure spanning part of the narrower section of Homebush Bay between the areas of Wentworth Point and Rhodes. The bridge is 9.2m high at its highest point ie, over the navigable channel of Homebush Bay on the Wentworth Point side, and lands at a lower level on the Rhodes side merging with shallow mudflats before reaching the eastern shore. It then lands gradually onto the foreshore public space at Rhodes and further connects with Gauthorpe Street. A range of alternative alignments were considered for the bridge, but the proposed location was considered the most suitable in terms of its connections with existing and future street grids and footpaths at both Rhodes and Wentworth Point. The bridge has a two-way bus lane and a separated pedestrian walkway.



The Homebush Bay Bridge was first identified in government planning documents as early as 2002. Initially, it was proposed as a facility to provide for pedestrian and cycle access only. However, the current proposal expands the function of the proposed bridge to provide access to buses and emergency vehicles, whilst limiting its use for private vehicles.

A detailed process of consultation via the Homebush Bay Bridge Community Reference Group and associated workshops with all stakeholders including government agencies, resulted in the preferred configuration of the Bridge being established as a two-way bus lane with separated pathway for pedestrians.

The City of Canada Bay has been involved in the evolution of the preferred design of the Bridge through the following channels:

- Council's General Manager met with the proponents and representatives of various State Government Departments in March 2010 to discuss the proposal. A report was prepared for Council's consideration in April 2010 to advise Council of the Project and to nominate representatives from Council. These included a Councillor, a senior staff member and two Rhodes residents (and alternates) to participate in the Homebush Bay Bridge Reference Group. The purpose of this Group was to ensure that CCBC is fully informed at every stage of the Project, and to participate in discussions which identify issues relating to the bridge and which may drive the final proposed design and function of the Bridge. This process occurred throughout 2010/2011 comprising a number of Reference Group meetings and workshops which were held to investigate specific issues relating to the proposed Bridge. CCBC's participation in those meetings and the issues raised throughout that process are documented in the EA report;
- Council was given the opportunity to comment at the time that Director-General's requirements were issued to the proponent (February 2011), and

also at the stage at which the initial Draft Environmental Assessment report was tested as to whether it met those requirements (Test of Adequacy – October 2011);

- The Environmental Assessment report relating to the Bridge has been on public exhibition from Wednesday 21 March until Friday 4 May 2012, and Council is now at the stage of making a submission on the exhibited plans of the proposed Bridge. The resultant submission will draw on the matters and issues raised in this report, and can be supplemented if Councillors raise further concerns as a result of this meeting.

The Homebush Bay Bridge has been proposed by an alliance of four Wentworth Point landowners including Billbergia Group, Sekisui House, Homebush Bay Holdings and Homebush Bay Properties. The Bridge will be constructed under a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) by the four landowners, subject to approval of a separate Planning Proposal for the remaining land at Wentworth Point. The City of Canada Bay is not a party to this VPA. It is between the Department of Planning, Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) and the Proponent Group.

Depending on determination and approval, completion of the Bridge is anticipated in 2015.

1.2 Key Benefits of the Bridge

According to the Proponent, the following key benefits of the Bridge are identified:

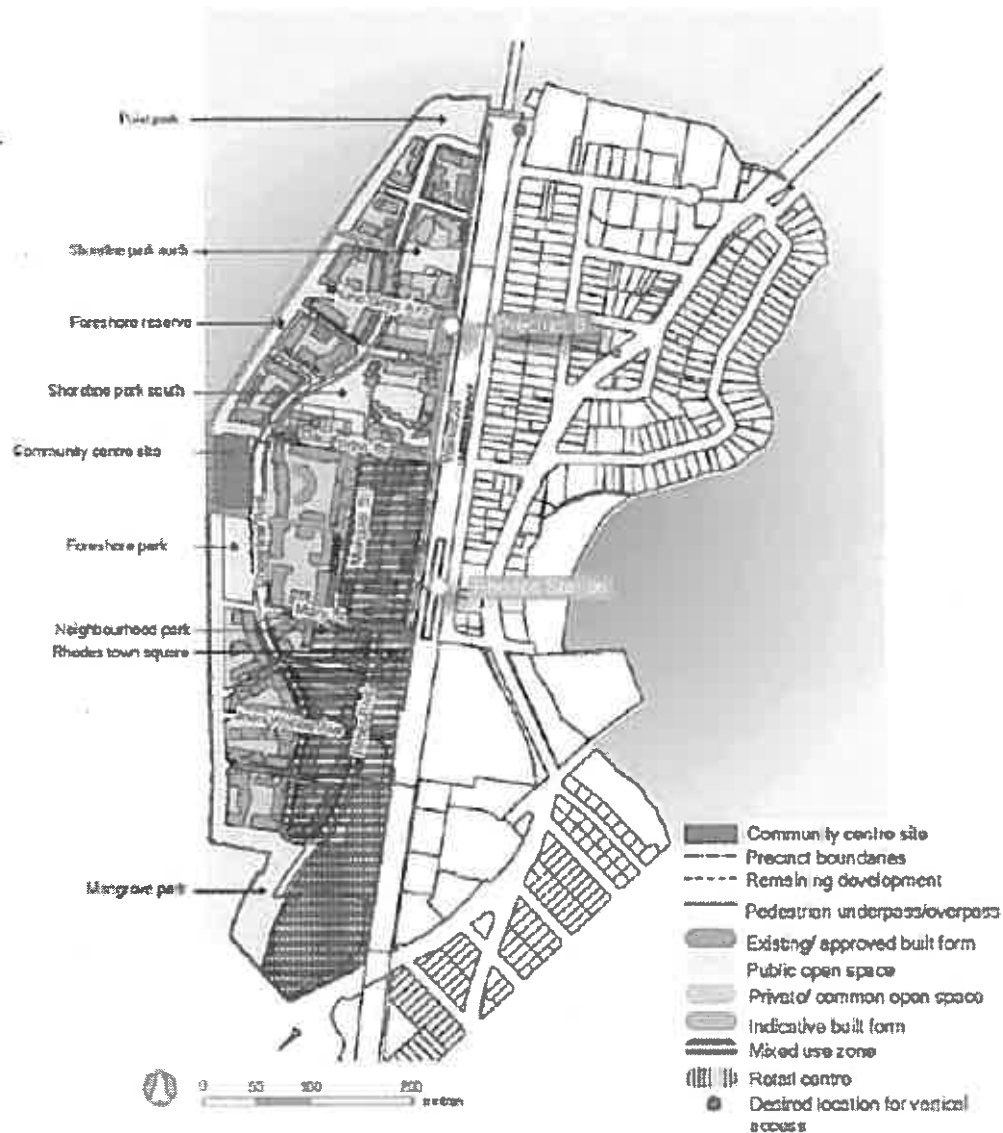
- Creates direct access between Rhodes and Wentworth Point across Homebush Bay;
- Minimises the reliance on private vehicles by integrating Wentworth Point into the Sydney public transport network;
- Reduces the distance to travel between the Sydney Olympic Park ferry wharf and Rhodes railway station from about 8km to less than 2km;
- Creates direct access from Wentworth Point to shopping, dining, entertainment and public transport at Rhodes;
- Provides a direct link from Rhodes to the proposed school, marina, waterfront restaurants and 450 ha of parklands at Sydney Olympic Park.

In summary, the Bridge will provide a vital link in the cycle and walking system along the southern side of Parramatta River and complete the cycle and pedestrian walk around the foreshore of Homebush Bay.

It is pointed out that Rhodes already has access to the Meadowbank Ferry Wharf approximately 1.5km (walking or cycling distance from Rhodes Station) although a link by bus, from station to ferry, is acknowledged as a benefit.

In terms of the proposed school at Wentworth Point, Council has not been advised that such a school is definitely to be built. Council staff have been liaising with staff from the Department of Education regarding proposals to provide additional school places for children living in Rhodes/Concord West over the last year, but no advice on any final decisions made in this regard ie regarding the location of those places, has been provided to Council. Council staff have been led to understand, however, that the additional places will be provided in a location on the Canada Bay side of the Bay.

In the opinion of Council staff, and upon analysis of the EA, the benefits of the Bridge to residents of Wentworth Point outweigh those to residents of Rhodes. This should be taken into consideration when considering also the significant impacts of the Bridge to Rhodes residents and to the City of Canada Bay (impacts to be further detailed in this report) and in any resolutions arising from this report.



1.3 Public Transport

A key component of the Homebush Bay Bridge proposal is to provide future capacity for public transport. According to the traffic report submitted with the EA, in the earliest year of opening, ie 2016, the bridge would carry 8-10 bus movements per hour during the busiest time being the AM peak for both directions. This would increase in the years up to 2023 at which time it would be likely to carry 20 movements per hour, for both directions. This means about 1000 persons per hour using buses at the Rhodes Station.

The main desired destinations for Wentworth Point residents are the Rhodes Railway station and Rhodes Waterside shopping centre. The preferred route for buses on the Rhodes side is Gauthorpe, Marquet, Walker, then back to Gauthorpe Street, in an anti-clockwise direction. A clockwise route is potentially an alternative option, but this could be made difficult by the grade of Gauthorpe Street. Buses may experience difficulties because of needing to stop and wait before making a right-hand turn into Walker Street (which can be busy), and then there may be difficulty of having to move off whilst stopped at an incline. There may be other options but the ability of the roads to handle the turning movements have not been adequately assessed under any of the potential bus route options. This needs to be properly investigated.

There are a range of other facilities including the bus-rail interchange upgrade, bus shelters, pavement upgrades, seating, signage, lighting and landscaping all likely to have significant costs associated with them. These facilities will be required because high usage of the bus route is expected. No information has been provided in the EA as to who will pay for these essential facilities.

There may be upgrades to other intersections, including key intersections providing access into the suburb, which will be needed to accommodate new bus routes and more buses servicing the area. The ability of all intersections to handle the turning movements of all buses needs to be properly investigated.

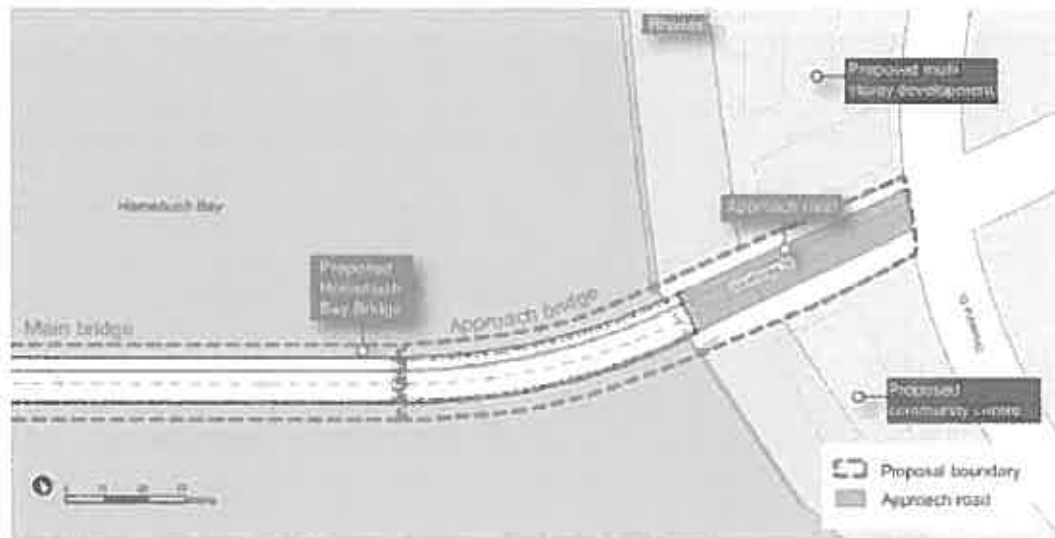
The EA Report indicates that there will be a further 20% modal shift towards public transport, if the Bridge is built, for the Wentworth Point community. The carrying capacities of both the platform at Rhodes station and trains, are believed to be full at present. Assurances are sought from Transport NSW that this capacity will be increased to accommodate the additional train commuters from Wentworth Point who will wish to use Rhodes Station.

At the moment, the facilities for bicycle users wanting to change to buses or trains at Rhodes Station are non-existent. To really achieve results in reducing car dependency, quality facilities ie change rooms, storage etc must be provided for cyclists wanting to convert to another mode of transport.

It is important that all of the above matters be resolved before final approval is given to the Homebush Bay Bridge.

1.3 Additional Concerns raised by Council

In view of the fact that Council will be the future owner of the Foreshore Park and also developing a community precinct (multi-purpose community centre and associated public space) on land to be dedicated immediately south of the Bridge, then it is of significant concern that the following matters, despite being conveyed in detail to the proponent over a number of meetings, still remain unresolved:



Bridge Levels/Public Domain around the Bridge

- Information regarding the exact level of the Bridge landing on the Rhodes side and how public open space in and around this landing needs to be designed to ensure amenity, safety, accessibility and an acceptable outcome in visual terms to both adjoining residents, residents of the suburb, future bridge users and the general public given that the site is an identified Strategic Foreshore Site.

It is proposed to land the Bridge at an RL level between 2.8m and 3.5m which is set by the existing height of the sea wall and consideration of sea level rise above that. The proponent has indicated to Council that an RL level of around 3.05m would mean that the bridge landing can be achieved within the foreshore area and still leave sufficient area to provide a designated and separated pedestrian/cyclist crossing point (for people travelling in a North/South direction) which will interface with people walking and cycling onto/off the Bridge, and buses travelling in both directions.

Council's preference would be for the bridge to land at the lowest possible level of 2.8m, as this RL would mean the least impact to Council's foreshore area, both functionally and visually.

However, notwithstanding the many discussions to date, this matter is still not resolved, and documentation of public domain around the Bridge has not been updated in the EA following Council's earlier representations in terms of this issue.

Council has successfully required the current owner of the land, Renewing Homebush Bay, to amend the original park design of the area taking into account the potential scenario arising from the construction of the Bridge, and to avoid future costly demolition of newly-built facilities (via a Section 96 Amendment to the original DA which gave development consent for the design of the Foreshore Space, issued by Department of Planning). This work, in its amended format, is currently being constructed. However, there are still many unknowns regarding the final design and levels of the landing, which will involve further changes to the public domain ie realignment of pathways, cycleway, new lighting, seating, accommodation of bus stop, and which have the potential to have significant cost implications for the Council.

- Concern exists about how the bridge, once a level is determined, will interact with the community centre site. If the bridge is to be approved, it is imperative that conditions of consent require the proponent to contribute to the cost of amending public domain in the areas interfacing with Council's foreshore park and future community centre.

undertaken prior to any finalisation of the bridge design, once the above details are provided.

Future Lease of Council Land by SOPA

- Concern exists that Council does not have, for its consideration, a copy of a Draft Deed of Licence with Sydney Olympic Park Authority so that it can fully understand the nature/extent of SOPA's access rights and maintenance obligations over the roadway proposed in Council's future public foreshore reserve area, and the affected part of the newly-constructed sea wall. The loss of public open space is approximately 800m². Areas around the bridge landing, roadway and seawall will also be impacted. Who will compensate Council for this loss in useable open space, and the cost of works to areas around the bridge landing and roadway to ensure that they are accessible, functional, safe and attractive public areas? These questions have been raised by Council from the very outset and have never been satisfactorily answered by the proponent or by other State Government Departments. It is contended that these matters are of vital importance and must be satisfactorily resolved prior to any approval of the Bridge being contemplated.

Public Art

- Concern exists about the fact that there is no formal commitment by the proponent that public art will be provided. If the Bridge is to be approved, Council would be seeking that the findings/recommendations of Council's Arts Plan for the area be incorporated and implemented at the cost of the proponent, including a process of how this should occur;

Lack of consultation with certain key groups

- Concern exists about the fact that there is no evidence that the proponent has consulted with the following groups/stakeholders in the area:
 - Aboriginal Groups, including the Aboriginal Land Council
 - CCBC's Access Committee, notwithstanding being requested to do so by Council
 - Police Local Area Command
 - Cycling Groups

Owners' Consents?

- Concern exists that there is no evidence that Renewing Homebush Bay, currently the owner of the foreshore land where the proposed Bridge is to land, has been a party to the Application, and that on the Wentworth Point side, there is no proposal for the bridge to connect to publicly-owned roads. What would be the burden of maintenance obligations on a community-title

development for a road carrying bridge traffic, and has this been fully investigated and publicly-made known?

Concern regarding Adequacy of Funding

- Information is sought from the State Government as to who will supplement the cost of the Bridge if it costs more than \$40M? Will the State Government commit to this?

Concern regarding use of the bridge by private cars

- Council seeks guarantees that the Bridge would never be used for private cars

FINANCIAL IMPACT

SECTION 2

Significant financial impacts (costs) to Council will be incurred if the Bridge is approved by the former Department of Planning and Infrastructure without conditions requiring the developer to fund works on the Rhodes side.

This is estimated to be around \$5M, incorporating:

- the need to provide appropriate treatments for pathways, cycleways, lighting, seating, signage and associated landscaping to ensure an acceptable level of amenity to adjoining residents and bridge users;
- the need to create an attractive visual appearance of this part of the foreshore as seen from the waterway using landscaping, lighting, public art etc;
- the need to upgrade Walker Street as a bus-rail interchange accommodating additional buses and bicycle users;
- the need to upgrade other roads and intersections in the Rhodes suburb and at entry/exit points to the suburb, to accommodate the additional bus movements.

SECTION 3 - CONCLUSION

The Homebush Bay Bridge is a Project with considerable merit in strategic planning terms, satisfying many aspirations of State and Regional level plans on how Sydney should develop and become more sustainable into the future. This includes accommodating additional population and creating better connections between where people live, work and play, with greater use of public transport, more walking and cycling, and less use of the car.

However, there are still many unknowns in relation to the delivery of the proposed Homebush Bay Bridge, and its implications to the City of Canada Bay (and Auburn Council) which must be fully resolved before its approval should be contemplated by the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Council advises the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure that it supports the Bridge in principle, but that it also has a range of significant concerns about the proposed Bridge which it seeks to be addressed. These concerns will be communicated to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure via a formal submission to MP10_0192 which restates the issues and matters of concern raised in Sections 1 (1.1, 1.2, 1.3), 2 and 3 of this Report;
2. THAT Council requests the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure or the Planning Assessment Commission to hold a Public Hearing in relation to the Bridge Proposal, and to address Council's concerns, prior to any Approval for the Bridge being contemplated.
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