

To: Department of Planning Industry and Environment NSW

**Subject: Submission on the Beaches Link EIS December 2020**

**by Colin Henson, 14 January 2021**

I make this submission as a practicing Transport Planner with over 40 years' experience of designing and evaluating transport projects. I am currently the Convenor of the Planning Institute of Australia Transport Planning Network, a consultant traffic engineer, and Principal Transport Planner at SMEC Australia.

In general, I support appropriate land use and transport development to improve productivity and the well-being of the community.

My main concerns with the Beaches Link proposal and EIS dated December 2020 are:

- the propagandist style of the EIS interactive portal website, and
- The unnecessary loss of public open space to provide road infrastructure.

The EIS Reports are relatively less biased in favour of the proposed project, but the summary information on the website is heavily and unacceptably biased in favour of the proposed scheme. For example the Interactive Map <https://caportal.com.au/rms/bl/map> shows 15 green ticks but no red crosses- how can this be said to present a balanced commentary to the public, especially those many people without the time or expertise to wade through the thousands of pages of EIS reports ? This fails a basic objectivity test. And even the green ticks are in error. For example, the green tick at the corner of Kenneth Road and Condamine Street states "Less congestion". Given the increased traffic to the whole Northern Beaches with Beaches Link, this assertion is wrong, although there is insufficient detail provided in the EIS documents to determine this. Also, Section 6.6.3 of Appendix F: Traffic and Transport clearly states "Analysis of intersection performance under the 'Do something cumulative' scenario indicates: - Most intersections in the Balgowlah and surrounds study area would continue to operate at a similar level of delay."

The proposed new road and car park through Balgowlah Golf Course is a very significant loss of public open space. The EIS notes that the Killarney Height Water Board site will return 4000m2 to the park with a big green tick – but no red cross for an order of magnitude greater loss of Balgowlah Golf Course and bushland environment to road reserve and car park.

EIS Figure 5.21 shows a widening of the road Motorway into the current parkland and very pleasant shared path environment. There are no illustrations of this existing idyllic location in the EIS.

The motorways facility building is proposed to be located in existing Golf Course and public open space -a place where no other buildings currently exist and wildlife is undisturbed. This area has been open space and bushland used by local residents for hundreds of years and indigenous peoples for thousands of years. This utilitarian building with associated vehicle parking should be located in a more suitable developed site, underground or similar to the Sydney Harbour Tunnel offices above the actual motorway.

No pedestrian crossings of Sydney Road are shown east or west of the New Access Road traffic signals, in contravention of TfNSW policy to provide pedestrian crossings on all legs of a signalised intersection. The new proposed crossing of the New Access Road is a worse safety and delay outcome for pedestrians where there is currently no need for such a crossing. Active transport users are penalised by the proposal.

An unnecessary left turn lane and traffic island is proposed on the eastbound approach, bad practice for pedestrians and cyclists around schools, playgrounds, recreation, and open space.

The existing shared user path is a pleasant Creekside experience. The proposal cross section shown in Figure 5-22 obliterates the existing nature corridor and replaces it with six new traffic lanes plus four shoulders plus two trough structures. That should not be considered an acceptable environmental impact.

Figure 5-22 shows the existing pleasant Creekside shared user path which separated from traffic by concrete barriers and a cyclone fence will be replaced by a shared user path directly abutting a Bus Lane and carriage way. This does not encourage Road Safety and Active Transport advocated by the EIS and the NSW Government.

Figure 4-5 illustrates a Red Corridor Alternative including Condamine Street and Sydney Road surface roads. Figure 4-8 shows “reduced permanent impact at Balgowlah Golf Course”. Figure 4-5 also states “Portal location results in poorer connectivity for Seaforth, Balgowlah, and Manly. Pressure on Condamine Street requires capacity improvements through to Sydney Road – including widening”. The word “requires” is again value-laden propaganda. Condamine Street and Sydney Road have always been the arterial roads serving this area, constructed as long-lasting concrete main roads from before the Burnt Creek Bypass was even constructed. Those roads had and still have plenty of traffic capacity as four lane main roads without widening. The recent TfNSW conversion to a 50 km/h speed limit could be seen as a cynical attempt by road authorities to downgrade these long-existing main roads to mitigate against the Red Corridor Alternative in Balgowlah.

The Red Corridor Alternative for the Balgowlah area means that traffic signals for a New Access Road across the Balgowlah Golf course are no longer required at Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation.

The road across the golf course is referred to often in the EIS e.g. Table 4-13 as “Provides connection to the new and improved open space and recreation facilities “. New but smaller and more desiccated open space cannot be considered “improved” over a historic golf course and riparian zone along the creek filled with existing wildlife and mature thriving landscape. This is again a false and misleading propaganda statement.

Figure 4-33 Balgowlah Connection Alternatives presents a misleading summary. It is not clear why Alternative 5 is less aligned with project development considerations than Alternative 4C. Arguably Alternative 4c is simpler, more legible to all transport users, requires no new traffic signals on the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation, is more environmentally sustainable, has no fundamental change to Community experience across the area, performs well for active Transport including buses, and would have lower construction costs.

In summary, I am strongly opposed to Balgowlah Connection Alternative 4c. I strongly prefer the Balgowlah Construction Alternative 5.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Col Henson', written over a horizontal line.

Colin Henson,

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