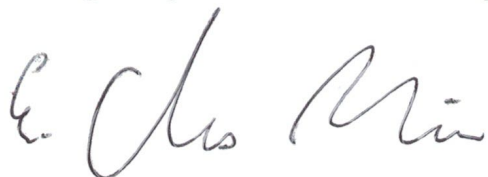


## **Submission to Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection Environmental Impact Statement**

I wish to make a submission (objection) to the Environmental Impact Statement for the above NSW Government Project.

The part of the project I wish to object to is the proposed siting of a construction site in what is currently native bushland in Flat Rock Gully Reserve. While the bushland to be removed is the result of regeneration by Willoughby Council and volunteers over 25 year period, it contains a large number of the local native flora species, and contributes to the total habitat area available for wildlife in the Reserve. The cumulative effects of habitat loss and adverse changes to water quality downstream will affect native flora, fauna and marine life if this bushland is cleared for the construction site. There is an alternative construction site (sports field) available on the western side of Flat Rock Drive which will at least prevent the habitat loss component of the adverse effects of the construction site. The area of bushland to be cleared might be considered to be small (approximately 7 ha, or 10% of the Reserve), but in small urban reserves, there is little scope for wildlife in particular to move to alternate locations. If populations of wildlife go locally extinct because of habitat loss in small urban reserves, recovery, if it happens at all, is slow and difficult. Re-instating a Hawkesbury Sandstone Forest with all its structural features that provide wildlife habitat is a project that takes many decades. I realise that if the sports field is used instead, there is inconvenience to the sporting community, but once construction is finished, re-instating the sports field is a comparatively rapid process and the inconvenience to the sporting community ends. In the balance of what will be lost in the short term (native vegetation and associated fauna vs sports field) and the time required to re-instate each (multiple decades vs a year), I would argue that using the sports field is the better option.



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3 March 2021

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