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21 August 2015

Director of Infrastructure
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Director

Submission regarding Northern Beaches Hospital road connectivity and network enhancement project Environmental Impact Statement – Stage 2 Network Enhancement Work (SSI 6622)

On behalf of the Shore Regional Organisation of Councils (SHOROC) I make the following submission in regard to the Northern Beaches Hospital road connectivity and network enhancement project Environmental Impact Statement – Stage 2 Network Enhancement Work.

SHOROC is a partnership of Manly, Mosman, Pittwater & Warringah Councils led by a Board of the council Mayors and General Managers. We advocate for our region, coordinate regional planning, and build partnerships to improve the strategic capacity of our member councils.

This submission has been endorsed by the SHOROC General Managers Advisory Committee (GMAC) of council General Managers.

The proposed road upgrades

SHOROC has long supported the need for the grade separation at the intersections of Wakehurst Parkway and Warringah Road, a critical part of the construction of the Northern Beaches Hospital, and Warringah Road and Forest Way. This was a key priority in SHOROC's regional strategy *Shaping Our Future*, adopted by all four partner councils in 2009, and a focus of regional advocacy to see this critical infrastructure delivered.

As such, the proposed upgrades to provide this grade separation outlined in the EIS are supported.

Enabling and facilitating BRT and fast public transport

SHOROC and our partner councils are also of the view that a critical missing piece of regional transport infrastructure is a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) link along Warringah Road, connecting Dee Why and Chatswood via French Forest.

Residents of the SHOROC region rely heavily on private vehicles and public buses to commute to work and for travel to retail and recreation places. The three major road corridors are significantly congested, with the Pittwater/Spit/Military Road corridor the most congested in Sydney according to Transport for NSW and Warringah Road identified by Infrastructure Australia as the third most costly corridor to the Australian economy due to congestion.

The region has high employment containment relative to other areas of Sydney, with 76.6% of jobs filled by locals and 48.0% of working residents employed within the region. However this has declined marginally in recent years and congestion is impacting local business operations. If not addressed it will mean a loss of local jobs and put pressure on future job creation, placing even more pressure on the transport network.

The need for a Warringah Road BRT is also supported by the NSW Business Chamber and Warringah Business Chamber to allow them to get on with growing their businesses.

It is noted that the Supplementary Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirement issued 18 May 2015 required the EIS to:

- Describe how the project will assist in improving bus services and what actions could be taken to assist in meeting the outcomes of strategies including the Northern Beaches Transport Action Plan.
- Describe what actions could be taken to enhance bus services to meet increased demand from land use changes

The government has already committed under its Northern Beaches Transport Action Plan to implement a Rapid Bus service from Dee Why to Chatswood.

As such it is critical that these works maximise the opportunities to provide significantly improved public transport through this Rapid Bus service as well as a potential Bus Rapid Transit link from Dee Why to Chatswood via Frenchs Forest, or other mode of higher capacity public transport in the future.

While it is acknowledged that the current plan is that Frenchs Forest Road will provide for the majority of bus services through this area, there is still the need to provide for those services that will travel along Warringah Road and also minimise the potential for traffic congestion as a result of buses stopping to pick up or set down. Warringah Road could also be the location for a future BRT or for direct express bus services under the planned Rapid Bus service.

It is considered that indented bus bays should be provided near the intersection of Warringah Road/Hilmer Street/Hospital entry and all of the bus stops on Warringah Road through the project area. This would enable buses to pull in clear of the through traffic movements prior to the installation of 'Bus Lanes' in the future as part of the express connections to Sydney/North Sydney/Chatswood.

SHOROC reiterates that the provision of a high frequency Bus Rapid Transit link along Warringah Road between Dee Why and Chatswood is a key component of providing good transport links across the region and to the Northern Beaches Hospital.

The increase in size of the Forest Way bus stop should also take in to account the potential future increases in bus services, including extending the size of the bus stop.

Active transport

Enabling and encouraging active transport (walking and cycling) around the precinct and to the major public transport hubs, the hospital, local businesses and shopping centres is a priority.

As such every effort should be made to maximise walking and cycling connections across the precinct. The proposals by Warringah Council on this issue in its submission are supported.

Need to ensure that the planning has adequately accounted for future growth across region

It is not clear in the EIS that the planning has adequately accounted for the projected increased growth across the region.

While it is acknowledged the RMS is working with Warringah Council and the Department of Planning in identifying potential precinct growth, there is also further growth projected across the region, including in Pittwater, which will directly impact on traffic seeking to travel through the planned road upgrades. For example the projected growth in Warriewood and Ingleside under *A Plan for Growing Sydney* will likely lead to significantly more cars seeking to travel via Wakehurst

Parkway to the Northern Beaches Hospital, to Frenchs Forest and on to further destinations such as the CBD and Chatswood via these new road upgrades.

It is vital that the upgrades adequately provide for this future projected growth in traffic volumes across the region.

Management of traffic and transport across the region during construction

The EIS outlines how the local traffic and transport impacts during construction will be managed and the proposals from Warringah Council in this regard in its submission are supported.

Concurrent to the planned construction timetable will also be construction of on-road infrastructure for the Pittwater/Spit/Military Road Bus Rapid Transit, increased traffic due to the Northern Beaches Hospital construction, potentially upgrade works for Mona Vale Road, and other impacts including major construction in the CBD.

These works are fully supported and it is acknowledged that there will be changes required in order to deliver a better transport system for the long term.

However, there is also a need to adaptively manage the traffic and public transport across the region during this time, not just locally, to minimise the cumulative impact on travel times and congestion. Alternative arrangements such as increased express bus services, more direct bus services to the ferries, encouraging commuters to adapt their travel times and other opportunities should be explored from a regional transport planning basis in conjunction with SHOROC and councils.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS for this important project. Should you wish to discuss this submission further please feel free to contact me on (02) 9905 0095 or by email to ben.taylor@shoroc.com.

Yours sincerely



Ben Taylor
Executive Director