

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

Organisation: Artarmon Progress Association

Date Received: 26 May 2021

The Artarmon Progress Association's (APA) submission to this inquiry is in four parts:

1. Cover letter to the Committee Chair
2. APA's submission to the Western Harbour Tunnel & Warringah Freeway EIS
3. APA's submission to the Beaches Link & Gore Hill Freeway Connection EIS
4. Joint Progress Association letter to Minister Stokes - Western Harbour Tunnel & Warringah Freeway Upgrade

26 May 2021

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
Committee Chair
NSW Parliament

Dear Mr Mookhey,

WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK PROJECT

The Artarmon Progress Association (APA) has lodged the following submissions in response to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link project:

- Response to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade Environmental Impact Statement – letter dated 21 March 2020 (attached).
- Response to the Northern Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection Environmental Impact Statement – letter dated 1 March 2021 (attached).

Additionally, the APA along with Naremburn, Willoughby South and Northbridge Progress Associations wrote to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to reiterate concerns regarding the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade - letter dated 20 November 2020 (attached).

The APA requests that the Public Works Committee consider the abovementioned submissions in its inquiry.

Yours faithfully,

Georgina Roussac
President
Artarmon Progress Association

Who we are

The Artarmon Progress Association, Inc. (APA) was founded in 1906 as a not-for-profit group and our objectives are to promote the welfare, physical and intellectual advancement of the suburb of Artarmon and the City of Willoughby, to protect the interests of the residents, and to encourage a keener spirit of citizenship and mutual help amongst residents.

Our newsletter, the Artarmon Gazette, is distributed quarterly to over 5,000 homes and businesses in Artarmon. We regularly communicate with residents and act as a conduit between local residents and elected representatives on matters concerning our local community.

Ms Naomi Moss
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Dear Ms Moss

**Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Western Harbour Tunnel – Warringah Freeway
Environmental Impact Statement**

The Artarmon Progress Association (APA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) – Warringah Freeway (WY) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Given APA's remit is to promote the welfare, physical and intellectual advancement of the suburb of Artarmon our submission is focused mainly on the Artarmon community.

The APA advised members of the WHT-WY EIS public consultation and exhibition period. Members were also invited to send their views to the APA to inform its submission.

In this submission the APA shares its concerns regarding the proposed WHT and WY projects and offers some suggestions as to how to address some of these concerns and maximize the benefits of the project to the community.

The APA would be happy to work with TfNSW to further develop each of the items proposed in this submission.

Yours faithfully,

Georgina Roussac
President
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Concerns

The APA's concerns regarding the EIS are:

Impact of the Project on Artarmon

APA is concerned that the impact on Artarmon and lower North Shore has not been fully considered.

APA notes that Artarmon residents, visitors, and workers use the Pacific Hwy, Reserve Rd, Willoughby Rd and Flat Rock Drive to access the Gore Hill Freeway and the Lane Cove Tunnel.

The combined project (Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link) covered in Appendix F of the EIS raises concerns of increased congestion on Reserve Rd yet provides no detail as to how this might be alleviated. More detail should be provided to the community for comment as to what is proposed for Reserve Road and Dickson Ave changes, before the WHT and WY projects are approved.

APA is further concerned by a recent TfNSW map titled "How to use the new Warringah Freeway Upgrade" which shows Reserve Rd as the access point to/from the Beaches Link. This will have significant direct impact on Artarmon due to the use of Reserve Road/Dickson Ave as the link road between the Pacific Hwy and Beaches Link and cause 'rat-running' on lower category roads as substitute connections. A direct link between the Pacific Hwy and Beaches Link roads is preferred as it will reduce pressure on the already congested Reserve Rd ramps. A direct link is possible as demonstrated later in this submission.

Project fails to address structural issues and local-regional traffic

Falcon St, Miller St and Brook St will not directly access the WHT, and Miller St and Brook St will not directly access the Sydney Harbour Tunnel (SHT). These access restrictions will force traffic off Brook St and Miller St-Eastern Valley Way and onto Willoughby Rd - which will have direct access to the WHT and SHT. Willoughby Road is favoured by TfNSW for motorway access as this intersection is further from the harbour crossing and thus suffers less congestion. Thus, traffic for the mid-North Shore will be concentrated on the main district road linking Chatswood, Willoughby, Naremburn, Crows Nest and St Leonards. There will be even greater conflict between local and cross-regional traffic.

Alpha Rd/Flat Rock Drive/Brook St should be the main mid-North Shore motorway access road as it does not pass through any local centres, is well positioned to distribute traffic to local centres, and only 100 to 150 dwellings would be subject to extra noise and traffic compared to thousands of residents and local centre users on Willoughby Rd if more traffic is directed there.

APA requests redesign of the Brook St / Warringah Fwy intersection allowing Brook St north and south bound traffic to access all Freeway options, i.e. Gore Hill Fwy to the north and Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Harbour Tunnel and Western Harbour Tunnel to the south.

Proposed modifications to the WHT-BL and BL-GHF project to improve Mid-North Shore connectivity and reduce local road congestion

APA suggests the following modifications to improve the connectivity of the Western Harbour Tunnel-Warringah Freeway, and Beaches Link-Gore Hill Freeway:

- Straighten eastbound BL tunnel portal to permit traffic from the Pacific Hwy and Longueville Rd to pass north of the portal to the Gore Hill Freeway as shown in Figure 1.
- Add branch of westbound portal to Reserve Rd that connects to the Pacific Hwy and Longueville Rd exit as shown in Figure 1.

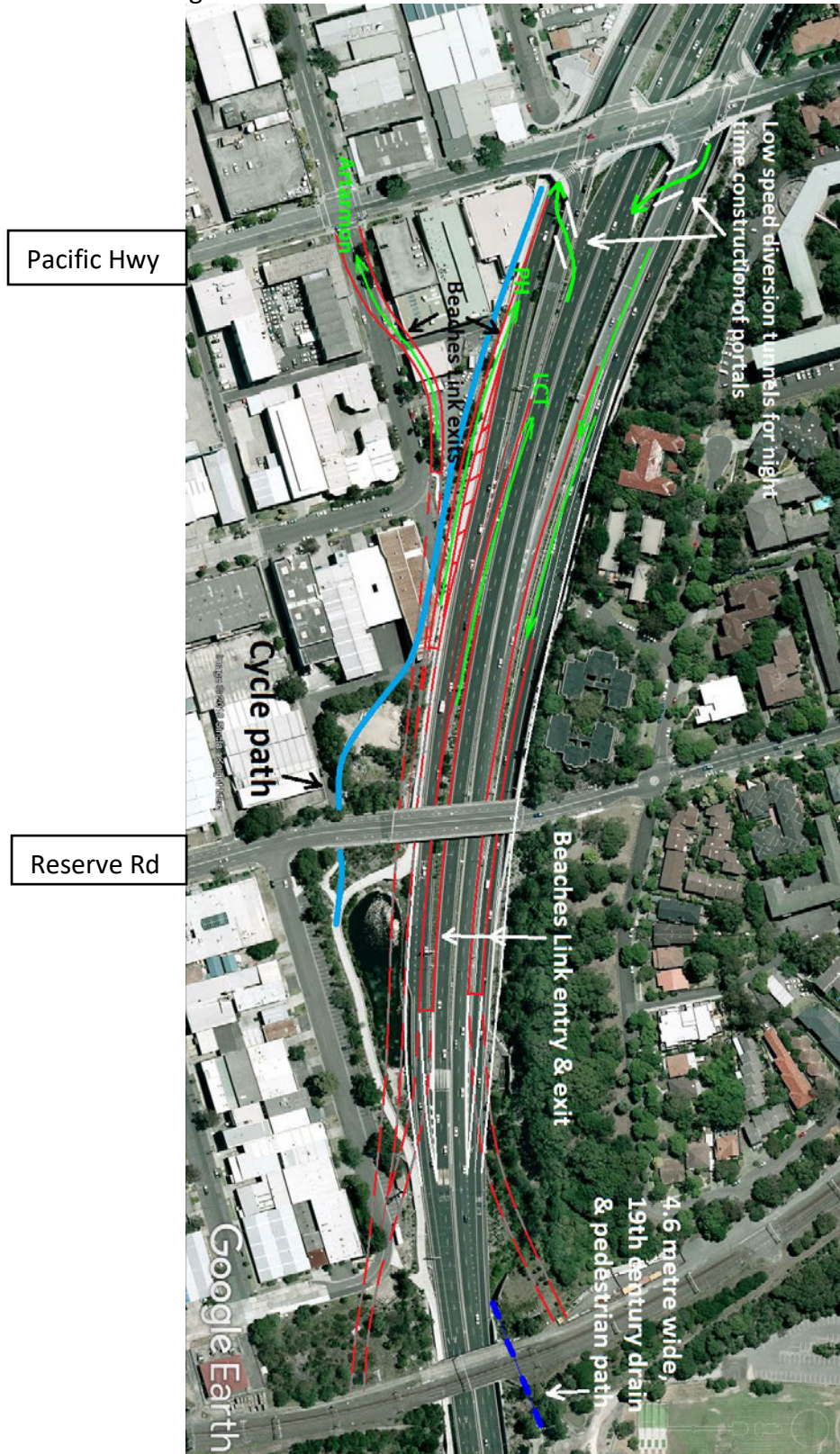


Figure 1 – Modifications to Beaches Link to restore missing connectivity

- Provide a 500m gap in the median strip (marked in red) between northbound SHT and western lanes of Warringah Freeway as shown in Figure 2.

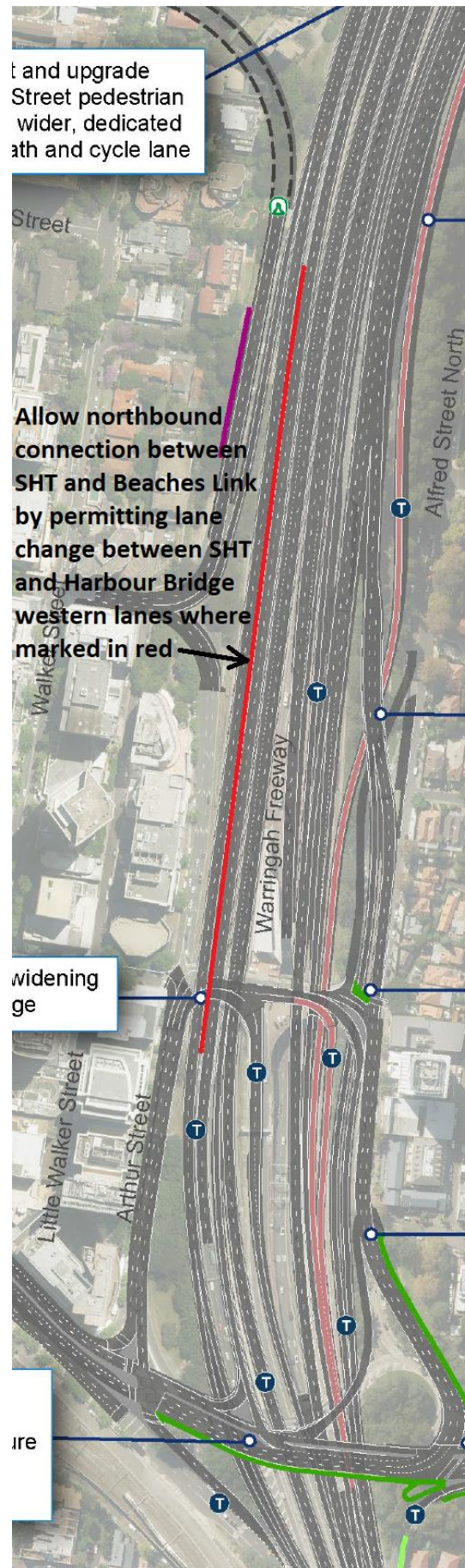


Figure 2 - WHT EIS Figure 5.28 Warringah Freeway

- Add Southbound tunnel connection (marked in red) between Beaches Link and Sydney Harbour Tunnel access lanes on the Warringah Freeway as shown in Figure 3.

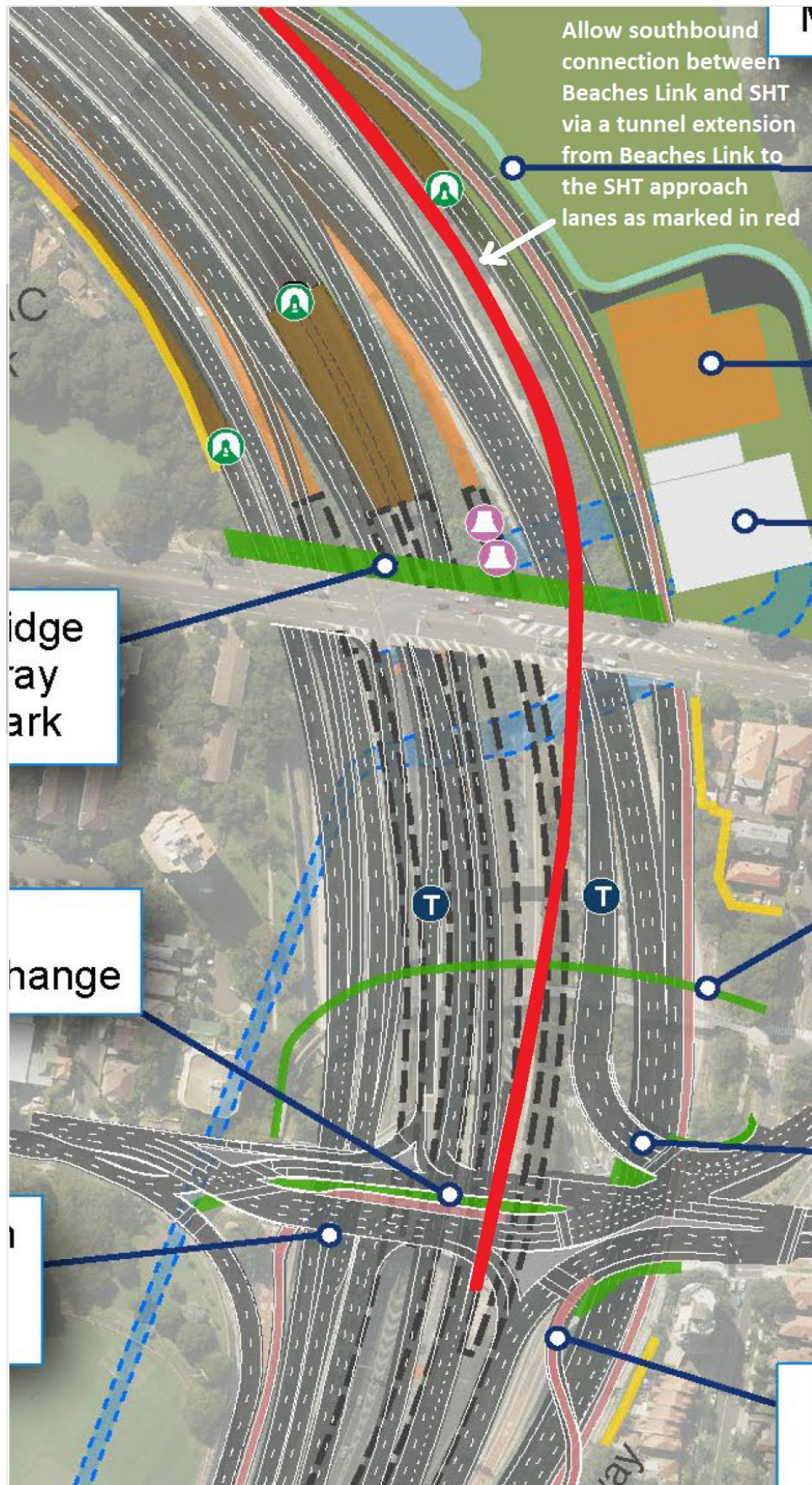


Figure 3 - WHT EIS Figure 5.29 Warringah Freeway with southbound tunnel connection between Beaches Link and Sydney Harbour Tunnel access lanes

- Based on the location of local and regional centres, Mid-North Shore motorway access should be concentrated at Brook St to allow local roads to serve local centres as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4 – Focus motorway traffic on Brook St to avoid cross-region traffic passing through local centres

Suggestions to improve community benefits of WHT-BL and BL-GHF project

Additional Recreation Areas

Due to a lack of level recreation space in West Artarmon and the commercial-industrial area, extension of Artarmon Park over the motorway will dramatically improve recreation space in West Artarmon as shown in Figure 5.

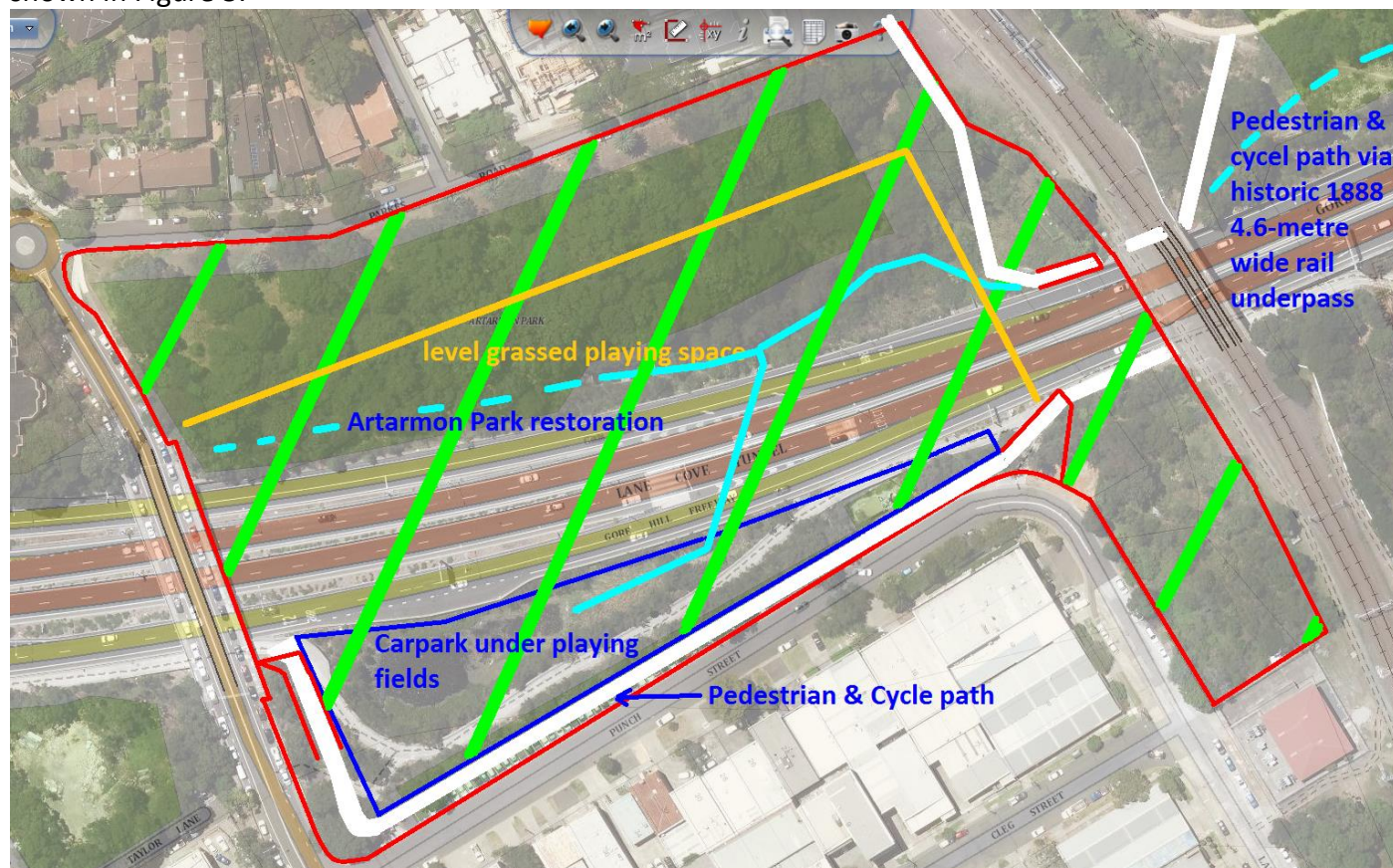


Figure 5 – Extension of Artarmon Park over motorway

Improved Public Transport using Sydney Harbour Bridge

Many in the Artarmon community have long expressed a preference for a public transport project to ease cross-harbour road congestion rather than another road project.

As a result of the expected reduction in car traffic on the Sydney Harbour Bridge due to traffic being diverted to the Western Harbour Tunnel, APA suggests that TfNSW consider converting the Cahill Expressway lanes on the SHB to rail use as the first stage of a Northern Beaches Railway between Wynyard and Neutral Bay. Such a railway would include stations at Observatory Hill, Milsons Point, North Sydney and Falcon St Neutral Bay. Virtually all cross-harbour bus services would be diverted to the three rail lines permitting the truncating of 3,000 bus services and a large saving in bus service costs. A further extension of this Northern Beaches line may alleviate the need for the Northern Beaches Link road project.

1st March 2021

Director - Transport Assessment, Planning and Assessment
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

**RE: Northern Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

The Artarmon Progress Association (APA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments on the Northern Beaches Link (NBL) – Gore Hill Freeway Connection (GHFC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Given APA's remit is to promote the welfare, physical and intellectual advancement of the suburb of Artarmon our submission is focused on the Artarmon community.

The APA advised members of the EIS public consultation and exhibition period. Members were also invited to send their views to the APA to inform its submission.

The APA objects to the Beaches Link project until the following concerns are addressed:

1. Significant increases in traffic through residential and industrial areas of Artarmon
2. Environmental concerns, including the reduction of groundwater levels under Artarmon Reserve and Oval
3. Cycling and walking impacts on residents.

In this submission the APA offers some suggestions as to how to address some of these concerns and maximize the benefits of the project to the community. The APA would be happy to work with TfNSW to further develop each of the items proposed in this submission.

Yours faithfully,

Georgina Roussac
President

Concerns

The APA's concerns regarding the EIS are:

1. Increased traffic

Increased traffic through Artarmon local roads is an adverse outcome of the Beaches Link as critical main road connections are made via local roads (managed by Council) to the avoidable detriment of the local community.

As identified in the EIS and as shown in table 1 below, as the only other north shore entry/exit point for the Beaches Link is in North Sydney, Artarmon will experience an increase in traffic through both its residential and industrial areas as traffic heads to and from Reserve Road.

Table 1 – selected data BL EIS Tables 8.22, 8.23, 8.14, 8.15

Intersection	Do minimum				Do something <u>cumulative</u>			
	AM 2027		PM 2027		AM 2037		PM 2037	
	delay	rating	delay	rating	delay	rating	delay	rating
Reserve Rd/Gore Hill Freeway	61	C	55	D	60	E	51	D
Reserve Rd/Dickson Ave	14	A	73	F	27	B	95	F
Reserve Rd/Barton Rd	69	E	>100	F	85	F	>100	F
Pacific Hwy/GHF	29	B	29	C	25	B	29	B
Willoughby Rd/GHF	>100	F	38	C	10	A	11	A
Brook St/Warringah Fwy on ramp	>100	F	14	B	64	E	25	B
Brook St/Warringah Fwy off ramp	61	F	22	B	16	B	29	C
Brook St/Merrenburn Ave	>100	F	11	A	50	D	39	C
Miller St/Warringah Fwy on ramp	7	A	6	A	5	A	7	A
Miller St/Warringah Fwy off ramp	12	A	15	B	8	A	8	A

The APA asks TfNSW to investigate the following four suggestions for changes to the project to help reduce the increase in traffic through Artarmon, provide a wider range of western destinations and generally improve traffic flows:

1.1. Reserve Road / Gore Hill Freeway Intersection.

The project proposes an extra north-bound lane be added to the Reserve Rd bridge as shown in image 1 below.



Image 1 - Proposed Reserve Rd Works

It is not at all clear what the proposed lane configuration is, however APA believes the extra lane will allow a greater volume of traffic to turn onto the Gore Hill Freeway eastbound and onto the Beaches Link.

However, as indicated by the data for Reserve Rd / Barton Rd in the above table 1, southbound traffic in Reserve Rd would also benefit from an additional lane to reduce queuing at the Gore Hill Freeway intersection.

APA offers 2 suggestions as to how the performance of this intersection could be further improved and asks TfNSW to assess these:

Option A: Diverging Diamond without addition of additional lane

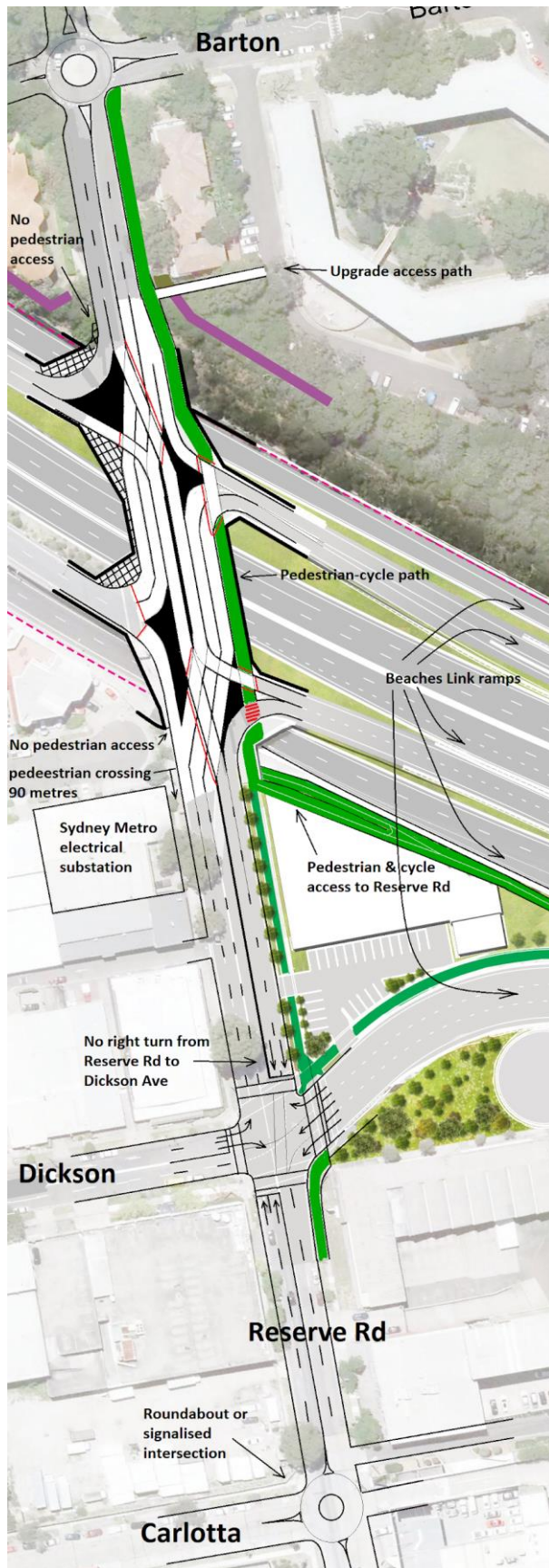


As shown in image 2, this concept is a reconfiguration of the existing intersection utilising a 'diverging diamond' to optimize the turning capacity from Reserve Rd onto the Gore Hill Freeway and Beaches Link from Reserve Rd onto the M2 and Longueville Rd. This option does not require the addition of an additional lane to the bridge so could be implemented immediately.

If performance of this intersection improved to the desired level, then it may be possible to avoid the need to add an additional lane as part of the project.

Image 2 - Concept: Diverging Diamond without addition of additional lane

Option B: Diverging Diamond with 2 right turning lanes



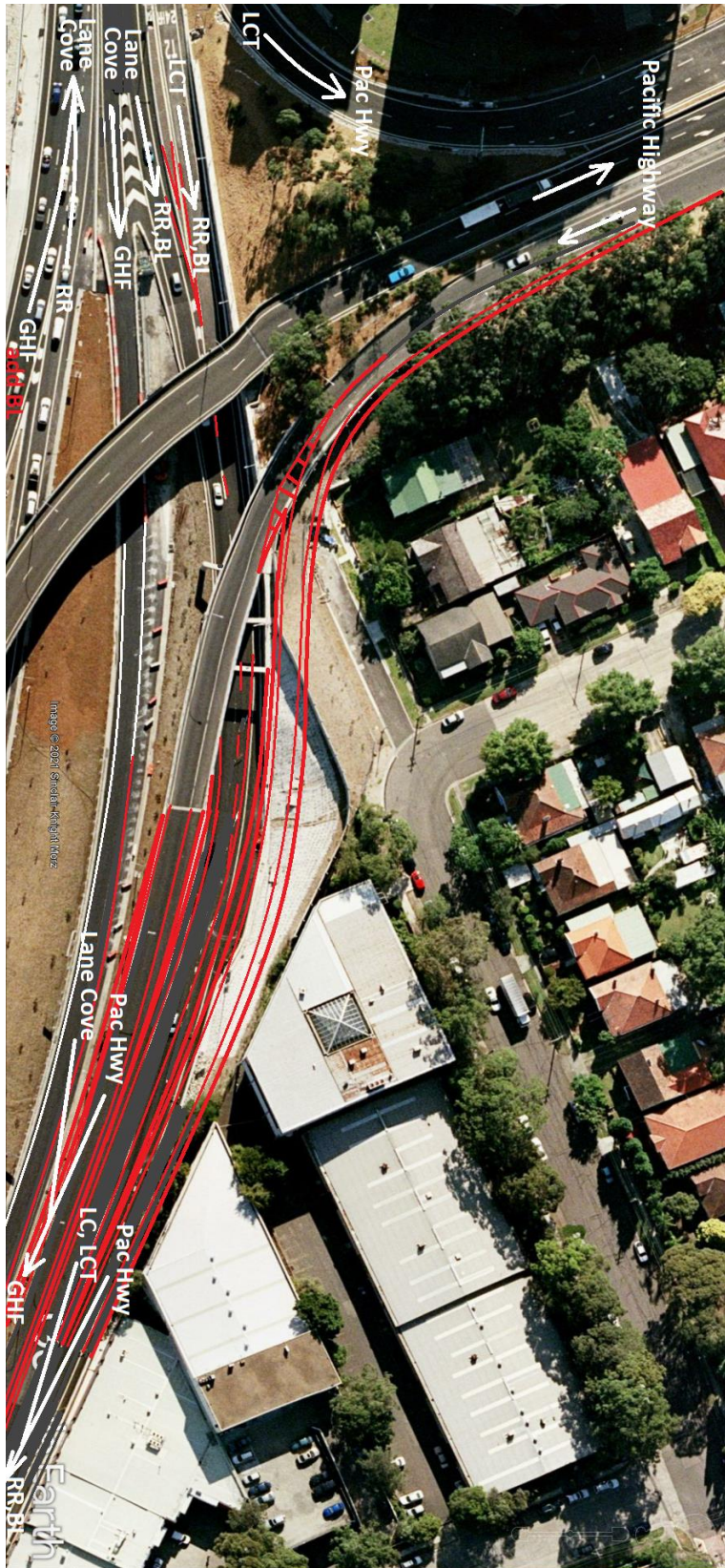
This concept, shown in image 3, allows 2 lanes of traffic to turn right from Reserve Rd onto the Gore Hill Freeway / Beaches Link eastbound and 2 lanes of traffic to turn right from Reserve Rd onto the Gore Hill Freeway / Longueville Rd westbound.

This option will provide significantly better performance and requires an additional lane to be added to the eastern side of the bridge and removal of the pedestrian-cycle path on the western side of the bridge.

In order to maximize southbound traffic flows on Reserve Rd and subsequently improve the performance of the Reserve Rd / Barton Rd intersection, APA suggests removal of the right turn from Reserve Rd into Dickson Ave westbound. Traffic wishing to access the industrial area would turn right at Carlotta St where a roundabout or traffic lights would be installed.

Image 3 - Concept: Diverging Diamond with 2 right turning lanes

1.2. Additional southbound lane from Pacific Hwy into Beaches Link



To improve the performance of the Pacific Hwy, APA suggests an additional southbound link lane be constructed from the Pacific Hwy to the Gore Hill Fwy which would allow access to the Beaches Link.

This is possible as per the image 4 to the left.

This measure, in addition to providing a right hand turn from Mowbray Rd West onto the Pacific Hwy southbound, would encourage traffic to use the Pacific Hwy rather than traverse via Artarmon village to access the Beaches Link.

Image 4 - Concept: Additional Connection from Pacific Hwy

1.3. Bifurcation of the Beaches Link exit ramp

Add a branch to the proposed Beaches Link exit ramp to the Reserve Rd-Dickson Ave intersection, to provide a direct link to the Gore Hill Freeway's Pacific Hwy & Longueville Rd exit ramp.

As outlined in red in the image 5 below, this link is parallel to the Beaches Link connection to the Lane Cove Tunnel. It would allow traffic to access either Dickson Ave or the Pacific Hwy & Longueville Rd exit ramp.

To facilitate this link, the Tier 1 pedestrian-cycle path is directed along the Punch St alignment to pass under the Hampden-Herbert road at the Taylor Lane underpass.

This measure reduces the 'cut & cover' tunnel length and likely to reduce costs. In addition it will reduce the increase in traffic in Dickson Ave which was never intended as an arterial road and has some current issues such as the 'four stop-sign' intersection with Clarendon Street which will need to be resolved.

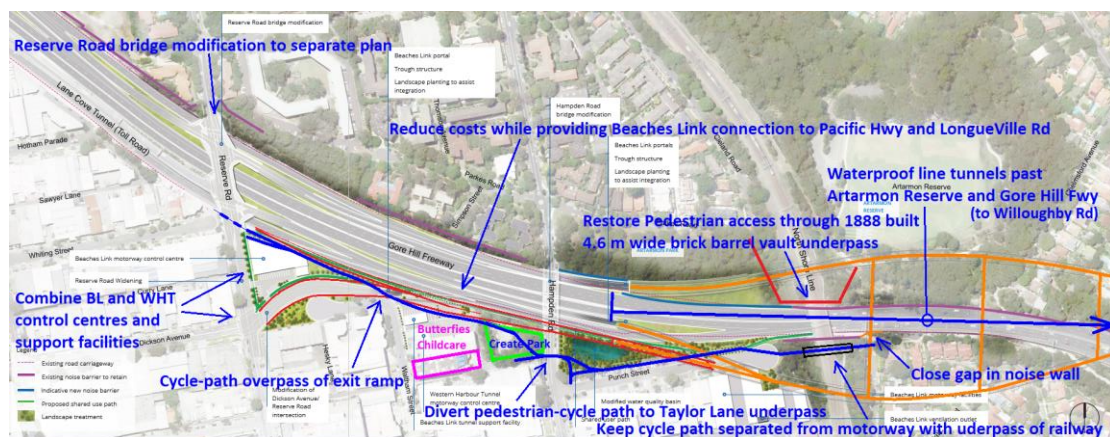


Image 5 - Concept: Bifurcation of the Beaches Link exit

1.4. Review Impact of Closure of Dickson Ave to Waltham St

Dickson Ave and Waltham St are currently used as a route between Reserve Rd and Herbert St. With the closure of this route, traffic may use either Taylor Lane or Frederick St as an alternative. Taylor Lane is completely unsuitable for any additional traffic and Frederick St is already busy and will become busier with the additional development planned for St Leonards and RNSH. APA requests the following changes be considered:

- Reopen Cleg St to Reserve Rd.
- Make Taylor Lane one way eastbound.

2. Environmental Concerns

The following environmental concerns resulting from the project have been raised:

- 2.1. Image 6 to the right, extracted from the EIS, shows the depth of groundwater draining by the proposed motorway 100 years after completion. It is about 8 metres less at the end of construction. If the tunnels get a "waterproof" lining, the groundwater draining is reduced by 8 metres. The EIS suggests lining the tunnels for the first 300 metres from the portal, but APA believes that 900 metres of lining (to Willoughby Rd) are needed to minimise the groundwater draining from Artarmon Reserve, Chelmsford Ave and Richmond Ave and the Channel Nine site.

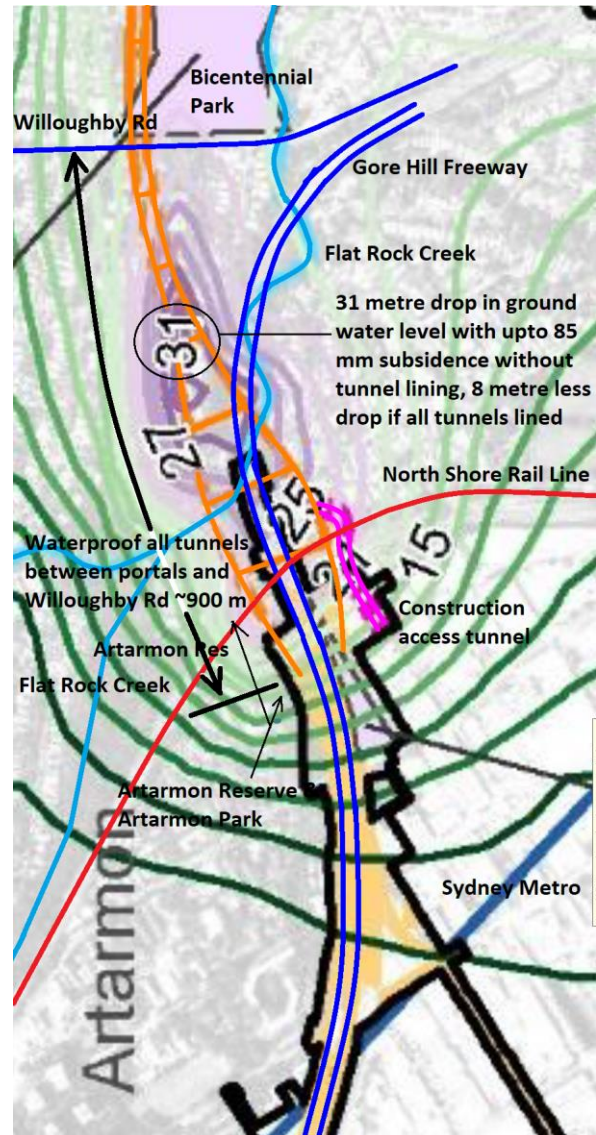


Image 6 - EIS Ground Water Levels

- 2.2. Whilst it is appreciated that free flowing traffic produces less pollution overall than congested traffic, there is concern that another ventilation stack in Artarmon, i.e. in addition to the Lane Cove Tunnel stack; is concentrating air pollution in Artarmon. APA requests ongoing monitoring of the air quality at key points in Artarmon, e.g. Artarmon Primary School and Artarmon Industrial Area, to ensure that there is no adverse health impact on Artarmon residents and workers. If air quality in the area fails accepted standards, then APA requests that filtration be installed on both stacks in the area.
- 2.3. With Flat Rock Gully Reserve proposed to be a central tunnelling site, concerns have been raised regarding the destruction of bushland,

contamination of soil and water in the area and the impact on fauna. The Reserve is currently enjoyed by many residents who enjoy walking or cycling on the shared pathways and is part of a wildlife corridor through the north shore. There are concerns that the EIS is deficient with regards to this area and that the risks associated with excavating in what was previously a landfill site have not been fully assessed. APA requests that a full assessment be made of the impact of the project on Flat Rock Gully Reserve and all measures be taken to minimise any impact.

- 2.4. Impact on Artarmon residents due to additional traffic and noise related to Barton Road West, Dickson Avenue and Punch Street worksites. APA requests all possible measures be taken to minimize this impact.

3. Cycling and Walking Impacts

- 3.1. The Beaches Link as documented in the EIS on public exhibition offers nothing for active transport on the Lower North Shore and will result in severe impacts on the existing shared paths and local amenity both during construction and possibly in operation.
- 3.2. Of greatest concern is the popular shared path alongside Gore Hill Freeway in Artarmon which provides a safe separated regional connection between Naremburn and Eastwood. The EIS states that this path will be closed during construction, which is estimated to take around 4 years, between Station Street, Naremburn and Reserve Road, Artarmon. This also breaks the local connection between neighbouring suburbs Naremburn/Artarmon and Lane Cove.
- 3.3. The document proposes an alternative route to divert pedestrians and bike riders along Station Street, Francis Street, Lambs Street, Cleg Street and Reserve Road. We know this is an extremely unsafe route, with already a high volume of heavy vehicles on a hilly road, before adding the heavy vehicles accessing the construction sites.
- 3.4. The EIS document downplays both the risk impact of the detour route and the significance of this shared path by:
 - Illustrating the detour route in the EIS document in Figure 8-12 as a version of the detour route with less hills and much reduced use of heavy vehicle Reserve Road than described in the text
 - Describing the detour in Chapter 8 (p8-47) as having a ‘moderate impact on pedestrians and a minor impact on cyclists, and would be managed by providing advanced notification to the community and appropriate line marking and signage’
 - Implying in Chapter 8 (p8-47) that usage is up to 150 pedestrians and cyclists in peak periods whereas this is shown in chart in Appendix E as up to 150 each hour over a number of hours – by far the majority weekday use is by bike riders
 - Failing to include any consideration of risks to pedestrians and bike riders on this detour in Chapter 23 Hazards and Risks
 - Failing to identify any access to the pathway at Reserve Road.

In summary, APA requests that any approval of the proposed Beaches Link ensure that access along the shared path remains continuous, safe and easy to use. Any necessary detour should:

- Be minimised to continue along the existing alignment wherever possible;
- Provide separation from vehicles, protection from heavy vehicles and to Austroads standards;

- Be included as part of the overall site design, rather than fitting around a predetermined site design;
- Be based on the final design of the path as much as practical;
- At all times be developed in consultation with the Artarmon Progress Association, Bike North and Willoughby council with timely notification of any adjustments;
- Provide an underpass of the railway line preferably connecting to Punch Street, so as to avoid steep hills and merging with vehicles on and around railway overpass road;
- Preferably provide an underpass of Herbert Street; and
- If detoured away from the shared path, connect directly back to the path from Waltham Street to avoid Reserve Road.

Who we are

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Naremburn
Progress
Association



20th November 2020

C/- The Secretary
Willoughby South Progress Association
wspassociation@hotmail.com

The Hon Rob Stokes MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Sent by Email

Dear Minister Stokes

RE: WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND WARRINGAH FREEWAY UPGRADE PROJECT ASSESSMENT

Naremburn, Willoughby South, Northbridge and Artarmon Progress Associations, as representative of residents and businesses along the southern edge of the Willoughby Local Government area provide the following short submission to reiterate our request for consideration of the following concerns regarding the Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) and Warringah Freeway Upgrade (WFU).

In making your decision we would urge you to ensure the following issues are addressed:

1. The inclusion of plans for the provision of cycle and pedestrian pathways across the proposed Warringah Freeway upgrade providing safe and user-friendly links to the comprehensive active transport paths already existing in the surrounding Local Government areas of North Sydney and Willoughby.

Bike riding and walking have significantly increased during 2020 as residents and essential workers look for safe exercise options and alternatives to public transport. In some areas of Sydney, bike trips increased more than 50%. Given that cycling and walking have played such an important role during the COVID-19 lockdown, it is critical that future transport proposals incorporate infrastructure to support and encourage their use. Cycling and walking also generate no pollution, are resilient to congestion and power outages, and are accessible to people who cannot afford to own and run a car.

The provision of additional safe transport options for all ages and ability levels will assist with movement options locally, enhancing our neighbourhoods and the productivity of local centres. The construction of the WHT and WFU provides the ideal opportunity for concurrent improvements to infrastructure for active transport and should not be overlooked.

2. We are strongly of the view that the proposed loss of access for Sydney Harbour Tunnel traffic to the Miller St and Brook St exit ramps and the Brook St on-ramp be abandoned due to the severely detrimental impact this would have on the Willoughby Rd exit and the Reserve Rd exit and their surrounding areas.

These existing ramps act as important dispersal roads along the Warringah Freeway and assist with traffic flow to the arterial roads of Sailors Bay Rd, Eastern Valley Way and Penshurst St, thence through the Willoughby Local Government Area to the Upper North Shore and Roseville Bridge area.

Changes to these access points will lead to further congestion on Willoughby Rd and Reserve Rd, undesirable rat running, and traffic pattern changes leading to a loss of safety and amenity in our Local area. Further, with increased traffic on these two arterial roads, parking availability may be reduced due to the creation of quasi-permanent 'Clearways' severely impacting on the viability of local businesses along and near these roads.

We appreciate your focus as Planning Minister on the delivery of great places and the promotion of walking and cycling in that aim. In furthering that aim, your confirmation that these matters will be included in your decision on this major project is sought.

We look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

Roger Promnitz
President
Naremburn Progress Association

Linda Tully
President
Willoughby South Progress Association

Matt Judson
President
Northbridge Progress Association

Georgie Roussac
President
Artarmon Progress Association