

VIVID leader joins HighLine campaign

A campaign to convert the railway abatement between Luna Park and Waverton into a New York-style HighLine has received a major boost.

North Sydney councillor Ian Mutton, who has helped drive the HighLine project, said Anthony Bastic, who was "instrumental" in creating VIVID, has joined the team.

"He and his team are working on plans to bring the HighLine's tunnel to life. The Sydney Harbour HighLine is set to become one of Sydney's great icons."

Bastic has helmed AGB Events for nearly 16 years and before that held senior positions with the Sydney Opera House and the Melbourne Commonwealth Games. For VIVID, Bastic specifically conceived and directed its world-famous light show.

"When you consider what he's achieved with VIVID, his joining the team is a vote of confidence in the vision of the Highline, a vision of another icon for Sydney," Mutton remarked.

The HighLine project was first conceived five years ago and will involve the creation of a walkway alongside the rail siding that departs the North Shore line south of Waverton and winds it way through a tunnel under McMahons Point to termination at Lavender Bay at Luna Park.

The project has been in some hiatus since 2019 when the NSW government said there was no money for it and that the siding would continue in operation for the time being.

Mutton says that this needn't be a barrier to the project proceeding.

In terms of the case for the HighLine, he says: "The HighLine delivers on two of the three key strategic themes for North Sydney – Connected Community and Living Heritage. It also captures all three of the destination's primary experience pillars: urban nature and open space; history and heritage, and with ample opportunity to feature innovative events; and arts and culture."

Benefits of the HighLine include the creation of a 3.3 km pathway adding almost 4.4 hectares to green space at a time when the state government is taking more than 2 hectares of open space from North Sydney to build its tunnels as well as linking and making accessible the isolated harbour-side parks and attractions such as Coal Loader, historic sites of Berrys Bay and Sawmillers Reserve and the icons that are Luna Park, the Olympic Pool and Bridge, says Mutton.

Earlier, Mutton had said that the project will cost around \$5 million. He suggested that while there may be some stretches of the line that are initially difficult or expensive to remediate they could be worked around and deferred until later.

On a related issue, Mutton is also calling for action on Luna Park and what he infers are opaque arrangements between the park operator and the state government that he de-



Anthony Bastic



Ian Mutton

scribes as a case of "regulatory capture." Mutton says that new rides must seek standard development approvals unless they are low impact.

But of nine new rides just built, three are not low impact, according to Mutton, with one—a rollercoaster—billed the tallest and fastest of its type in the country.