

In the end it's just about money

A letter from North Sydney councillor Ian Mutton

North Sydney Council has repeatedly opposed Transport for NSW's (TfNSW) proposal to build a linear cycle ramp through Bradfield Park and supported the community's alternative fold back proposal.

TfNSW offered North Sydney Council \$1.5 million, in return for Council's consent for it to apply for Heritage Act approval of the linear ramp – the first step in the approval process.

North Sydney Council's General Manager wrote on 24 February 2023:
The offer of \$1.5 million in contributions towards Bradfield Park South is not commensurate with the impact to the local amenity within the only completed section of Bradfield Park North and will not make any significant headway in the broader masterplan for the park. I am therefore unable to accept this contribution on behalf of the council and community.

The General Manager went on to advise the cost estimate for implementing that broader master plan is between \$20.5 and \$27.5m.

TfNSW increased its offer on 27 February 2023 by \$1 million and added a threat to withdraw the offer if not accepted within a day.

On 27 February at a meeting of Councillors, a majority of six being:

**Real Independents' Zoe Baker and MaryAnn Beregi;
Sustainable Australia's William Bourke and Georgia Lamb; and
Labor's Godfrey Santer and Shannon Welch**

voted in support of a resolution to accept TfNSW's offer. The acceptance was conditional upon the payment of the \$2.5 million.

The resolution put and passed was premised on a misunderstanding of the facts – the misunderstanding formed part of the resolution and reads:

THAT Council notes that amendments were made to the concept designs exhibited with the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to address submissions made by Council, the community and advice from the Heritage Council to address concerns regarding heritage impacts on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the entrance to Milsons Point station.

The misunderstanding arises because the design exhibited in the REF did NOT take account of Council's objections.

Here's the proof: On 25 November 2022 the REF was published by Transport for NSW and exhibited for public comment.

On 19 December 2022 North Sydney Council made its submission in response to the REF which, in part, reads:

The proposed linear overhead ramp coming off the existing cycleway south of the existing Bridge (cycleway) stairs and landing in the centre of Bradfield Park North, with associated on-ground and on-street cycle way works, will cause unacceptable impacts to the open space, heritage, and pedestrian environments of this section of Bradfield Park and Alfred Street South.

On 27 February 2023 Council took its decision.

On 1 March 2023 Minister Stokes in a letter copied to North Sydney Council wrote:

I am aware that there was significant community interest expressed during the public exhibition of the Review of Environmental Factors in late 2022, which Transport for NSW is currently reviewing.

Council was wrong when it noted that amendments were made to the concept designs exhibited with the REF to address submissions made by Council. Wrong because, as Minister Stokes says, Transport for NSW is currently reviewing the REF. Council's objections are not addressed in TfNSW's REF.

Petition to Parliament - please sign: https://www.change.org/p/save-our-sydney-harbour-bridge-heritage?source_location=search

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cycleramp>



Artists' impression of the linear design

Ian Mutton
North Sydney Councillor, Chair of the Sydney Harbour Highline Inc, Wendy's Secret Garden Inc