



Report to General Manager

Attachments:
Nil

SUBJECT: Council Response to the Proposed Milsons Point Ferry Wharf Upgrade

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report has been prepared in response to the proposed upgrade of the Milsons Point Ferry wharf. NSW Roads and Maritime Services advised Council on 21 October, 2016 of the proposed upgrade of the Milsons Point ferry wharf. The upgraded wharf will include a second ferry berth to the east of the current berth. This will significantly reduce the queueing for ferries waiting to embark and disembark passengers at the current single berth. The proposal will also result in improved disabled access facilities to the ferry wharf.

The works are being carried out under the provisions of the NSW Infrastructure SEPP 2007 and the RMS is the consent authority.

Council was invited to make a submission identifying any issues that should be considered in the preparation of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to which officers responded to on 21 November, 2016.

The REF was then placed on public display from 13 December 2016 to 7 February 2017. Public consultations were held between December 2016 and January 2017.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NIL

Local Government Act 1993: Section 23A Guidelines - Council Decision Making During Merger Proposal Period

The Guidelines have been considered in the preparation of this report and are not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a formal submission be made in accordance with the matters raised in this report.

LINK TO DELIVERY PROGRAM

The relationship with the Delivery Program is as follows:

Direction: 2. Our Built Environment

Outcome: 2.1 Infrastructure, assets and facilities that meet community needs

Direction: 3. Our Economic Vitality

Outcome: 3.1 Diverse, strong, sustainable and vibrant local economy

BACKGROUND

The Milsons Point ferry wharf was upgraded to its current state in 2012 and was one of the first wharves upgraded under the ferry wharf upgrade program. More recently services have been reviewed across the network and Milsons point was identified as a 'bottleneck' due to the high frequency of services and the single berthing dock. As a result, many services are delayed while another ferry is using the berth.

This situation has resulted in the current proposal to upgrade the wharf to permit two ferries to berth simultaneously.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

The proposed wharf upgrade has been notified to the community and key stakeholders in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations 2000 and RMS guidelines for Works carried out under Part 5 of the EPA Act 1979. Such works are those that require the preparation of a Review of Environmental Factors (REF). The proposal was put on public display from December 13, 2016 and February 7, 2017.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

This report deals with a NSW State government asset site and has the potential to impact the environmental, and economic QBL pillars of North Sydney. The impacts would be primarily to facilitate the use of public transport by enabling more efficient ferry services to North Sydney.

DETAIL

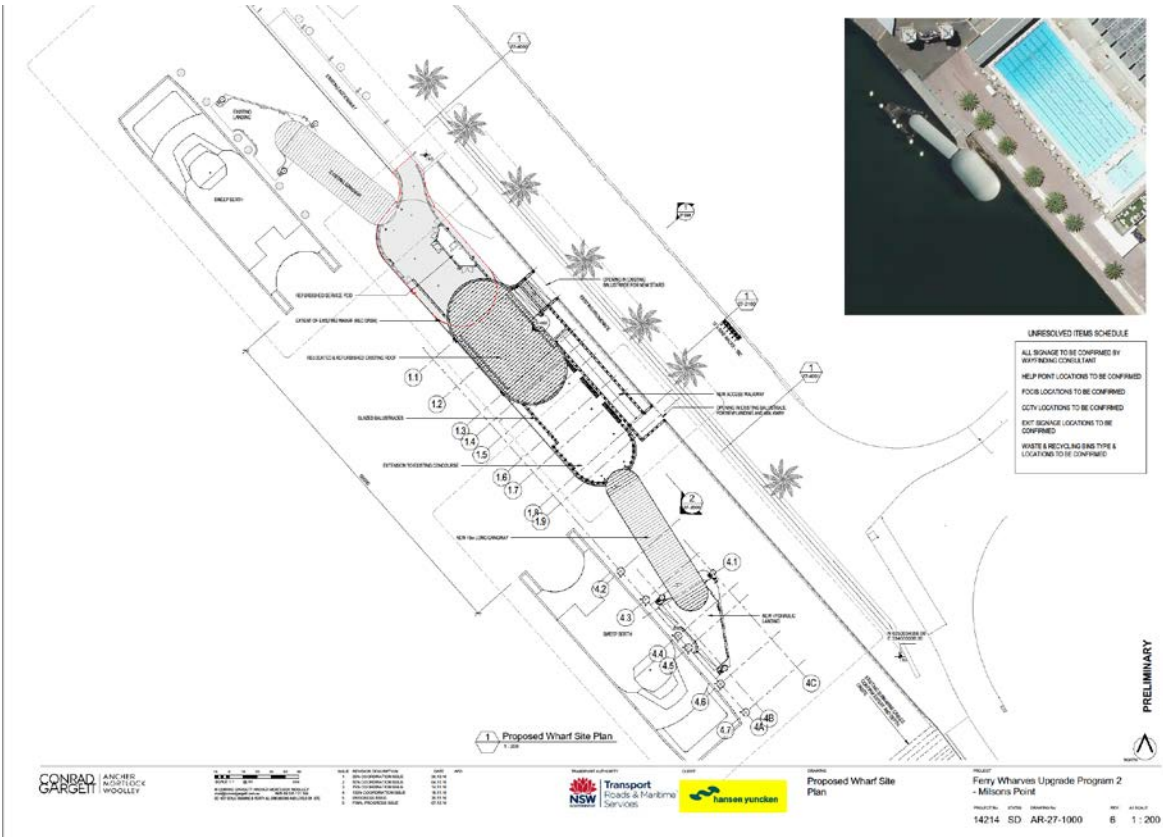
The proposal is to create a second berth extending from a central covered wharf. The design and materials will be in accordance with the standard ferry wharf palette and will be similar to the current style.

Associated works will be carried out to provide disabled parking on the eastern side of the bridge and improvements to the kerb side access ramps. No changes are proposed to the adjacent bus stop.

The images below describe the proposed works.

RMS Image





RMS Image

The red oval in the diagram indicates the current location of the covered area.

Considerations Arising from the Proposed Upgrade

The proposed works were notified to relevant internal stakeholders throughout Council and the following issues have been identified;

Heritage Significance

The Milsons Point Ferry Wharf is located within the World Heritage Listed curtilage of the Opera House and within the immediate vicinity of a number of heritage items of high local significance, listed with NSLEP 2013 Schedule 5. They are: 1. North Sydney Olympic Pool (I0537) 2. Luna Park (I0536) 3. Sydney Harbour Bridge Pylons (I05541) 4. Bradfield Park (I 0538) The REF for the proposed expansion of the wharf should consider any impacts to these heritage items, including impact on fabric, and the preservation of views to the heritage items from Sydney Harbour. In addition, the wharf is located in the immediate vicinity of items listed on the State Heritage Register, being the Luna Park Precinct and Sydney Harbour Bridge approaches and viaducts. The proposal should be referred to the Office of Environment and Heritage for their comment and consideration, in regards to any potential impact on Luna Park and the Sydney Harbour Bridge, including the retention of iconic views to these items from the harbour.

In the circumstances it is extremely important that the wharf and associated works are designed to have a minimum visual presence. In this regard careful consideration should be

made regarding materials, colours and the prevention of visual clutter. It is specifically requested that signage, lighting, balustrading and structures are considered in totality.

It is noted that the project will adopt the design and materials palette being used at present in the network wide upgrade of ferry wharves. This palette was developed in consultation with Heritage NSW.

In respect of the requirements to consider the potential impact on the World Heritage Listed Opera House Curtilage (SREPP, Sydney Harbour Catchment 2005) it is considered that the potential impact is similar to the impact from a number of other ferry wharves within the curtilage area (Neutral Bay, Cremorne Point and Blues Point). These wharves have been upgraded using the same design/materials palette and their impact on the heritage qualities of the Opera House curtilage have been determined to be reasonable and consistent with the objectives of the SREP.

Views

The proposal involves removing the current centrally located all-weather waiting area and relocation it as shown in the diagrams above. The site has been inspected to assess any potential view loss. It is noted that the roof and walls will partially impede the views of the Harbour from the Olympic Pool however the pool is set higher than the wharf by approximately 1.5m. As a result, pool users will have uninterrupted views of the City, the bridge and circular quay. These views are highly valued and measures should be taken to prevent further obstruction.

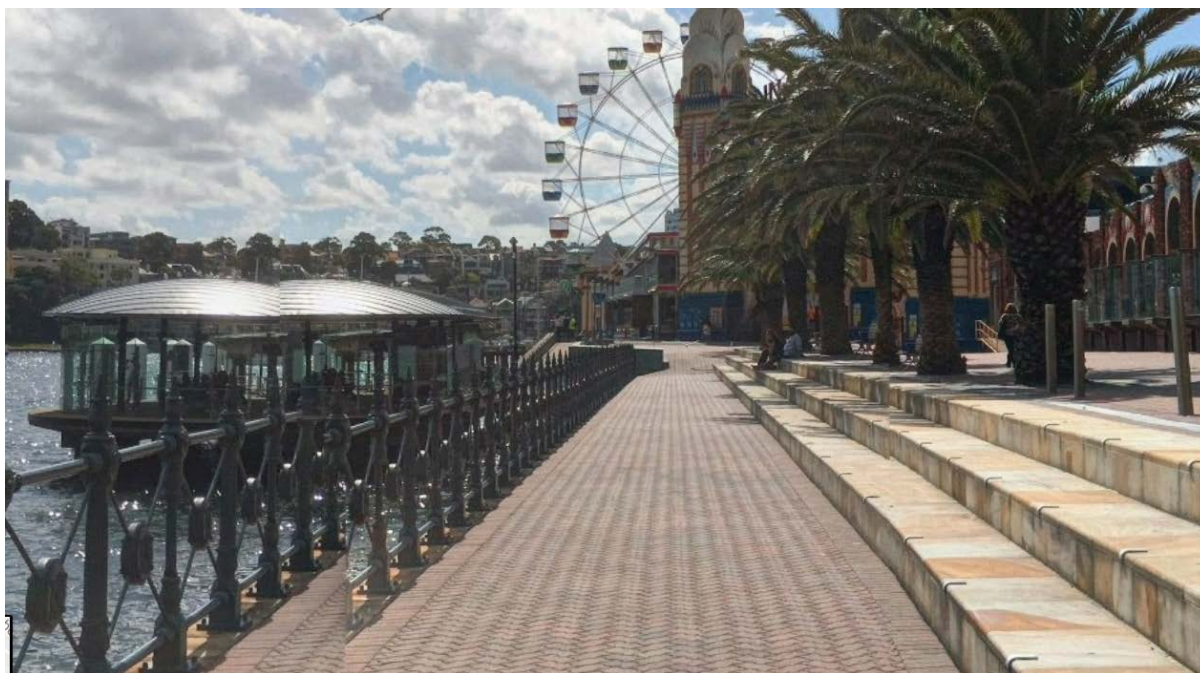
The photo below shows the view from the Olympic Pool windows.



The photo above shows the current ferry wharf with the view of Sydney and the Harbour Bridge.

The new ferry wharf will be located to the left (to the approximate location of the bench shown in the photo).

The photo below (from Google Streetview) shows the relative heights of the pool windows and the ferry wharf. The relative heights will remain unchanged.



A full consideration of view loss indicates that there will be some loss of views of the water but the iconic views (City, Harbour Bridge, Circular Quay and Opera House) from Milsons Point remain significantly intact. It is noted that the walls of the wharf are full height clear glass permitting views from the foreshore promenade. In the circumstances it is considered that any impact on views from various vantage points is reasonable.

Construction Noise

The schedule of works will cause loss of amenity for some nearby residents. It is requested that a detailed acoustic management plan is developed and implemented. Such a plan should be guided by expert acoustic engineers and should moderate noise impact to the north and north east of the construction zone.

Lighting

All lighting related to the upgrade should be considered in a lighting strategy and should be designed to minimise light spread. Such a strategy should also include timing and screening for necessary lights. Existing ambient lighting in the vicinity should be utilised wherever possible.

Impact on Council Land and Infrastructure

All activities that utilise/impact on Council land or infrastructure will need to be agreed to by North Sydney Council. One issue that remains to be resolved involves the relocation of the inlet pipe supplying seawater for the Olympic pool. Discussions are currently underway to address this matter.

Justification for the Works

Council has received a submission from the public regarding the works and questioning the need for the upgrade. RMS has advised that the intent of the upgrade is not to increase the number of services but to eliminate delays to services caused by ferries having to queue up to pick up/ disembark passengers. The REF should provide a clear summary of the current and expected demand for the ferry services in order that the community understand the demand levels which justify the upgrade.

Summary

The above issues have been conveyed to RMS during discussions with Council.

After the public consultation finishes (7 February 2017) RMS will consider all submissions and determine the suitability of the proposal. If the project is approved there will be conditions imposed on the works in a similar manner to the development application (DA) process. It is considered that the matters identified above address the issues relevant to the Council and the community
