

Cooks Cove Project Team
Department of Planning and Environment

Submitted via [portal](#)

6th June 2023

Dear Department of Planning and Environment,

Re: Planning Proposal 13-19A Marsh St, Arncliffe (PP-2022-1748)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the planning proposal for the Cooks Cove precinct.

Bicycle NSW has been the peak bicycle advocacy group in NSW for forty-seven years, and has more than 30 affiliated local Bicycle User Groups. Our mission is to '*create a better environment for all bicycle riders*', and we support improvements to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. We advocate for new cycling routes that incorporate dedicated paths within both green corridors and the road environment, to provide connections to jobs, schools and services for daily transport and recreation trips. Bike riding provides a healthy, congestion-reducing, low-carbon form of travel that is quiet, efficient and attractive for all ages with the correct infrastructure design.

The planning proposal seeks to remove the subject land from the operation of Chapter 6 (Cooks Cove) of State Environmental Planning Policy (precincts – Eastern Harbour City) 2021 and insert new site-specific planning provisions into the Bayside Local Environmental Plan 2021.

The NSW Government determined that the site will be a logistics and warehousing precinct to serve Sydney Airport, with some supporting uses such as hotel accommodation, serviced apartments, commercial office and retail. We understand that the planning proposal only indicates the form and location of buildings (Figure 1).

Bicycle NSW is **delighted** that the development will incorporate a 20m easement to finally allow separated walking and cycling paths along the Cook River. This will contribute to completing the Bay-to-Bay cycleway. In addition, there will be new active transport linkages to Marsh Street and the M5 underpass, and paths through the new Pemulwuy Park (Figure 2).

However, we are **concerned** about many aspects of the proposal, including (but not limited to);

- Critical active transport connections to the wider regional network are not part of the proposal
- The new Pemulwuy Park has very limited frontage to the foreshore and instead faces the motorway
- Enormous logistic warehouses butt right up against the foreshore, overshadowing the public space.

Cook Cove offers DPE and the stakeholders a once-in-a-generation opportunity to develop foreshore land in a valuable and central location. It is essential to achieve the best possible outcome for the community.



Figure 1: Indicative master plan (Source: Hassell)



Figure 2: Indicative pedestrian and cycle network (Source: Hassell)

Bicycle NSW makes the following comments and **recommendations**:

- **Leverage the Cook Cove development to deliver a safe, off-road active transport link from Kyeemagh to the new Alexandra Canal cycleway.**

The proposed foreshore active transport paths (in blue, Figure 3) contribute to the regional network but fail to provide critical connections to the new Active Transport Link delivered by the Sydney Gateway project from Tempe Reserve north, or the ATC to be built by the M6 project south of Bestic Street.

It is vitally importance to create uninterrupted protected space for walking and cycling as Sydney's population grows. It is understood that safety, connectivity and comfort are essential to inspire more people to ride and walk. NSW Government wouldn't build a new road and not connect it to the network.

Current access across the Cooks River uses the inadequate, sub-standard Giovanni Brunetti bridge. The shared user footpath across the bridge is very narrow and close to three lanes of often fast-moving traffic in each direction. It is unsafe and not suitable for a regional route. An alternative is to cross at the Princes Highway Bridge which has a reasonable shared path. However, this route involves a 1 km detour (in orange, Figure 3)

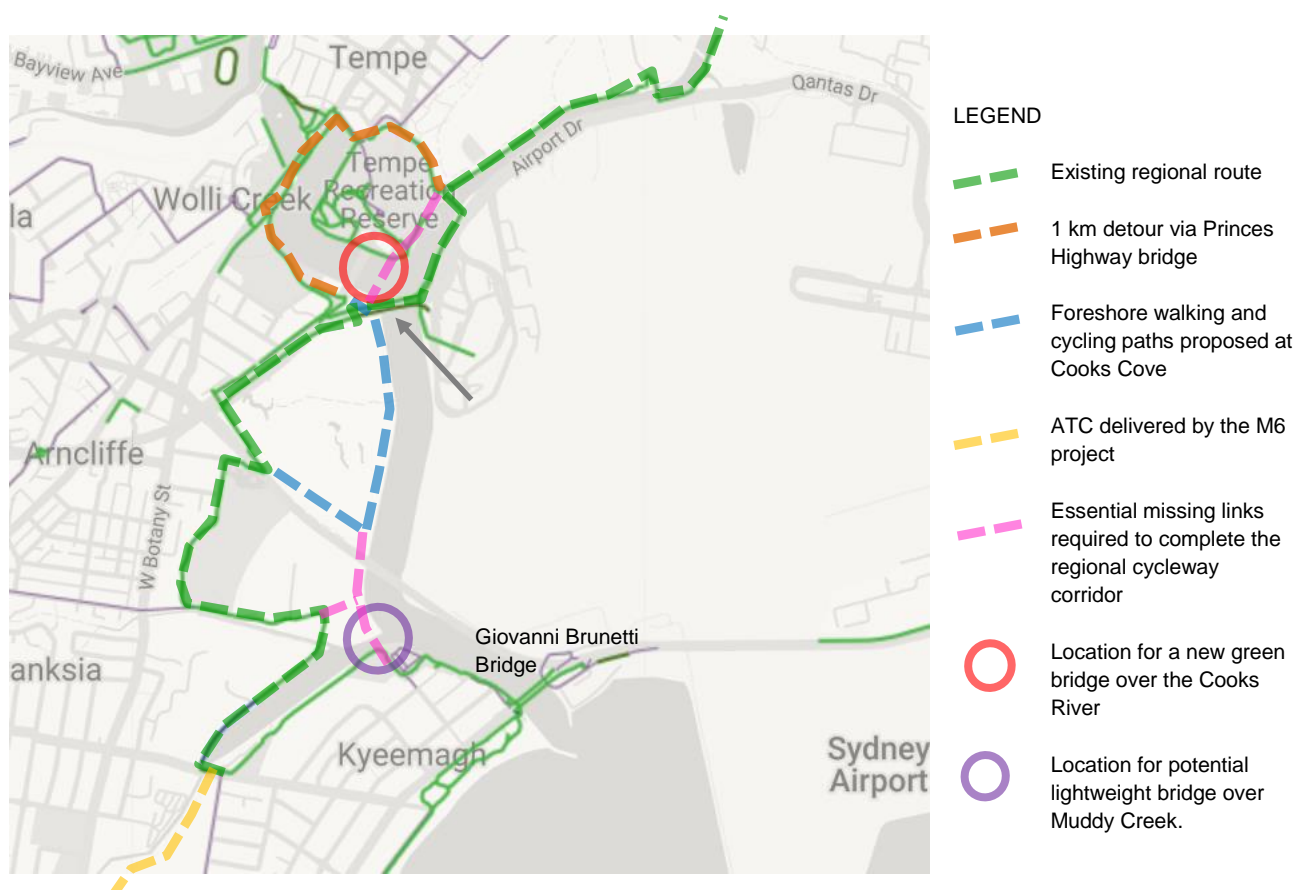


Figure 3: Existing and proposed routes from Kyeemagh to the Alexandra Canal (Source: TfNSW Cycleway Finder / Bicycle NSW)

South of Marsh Street there is an indirect dogleg cycleway that links Wolli Creek to Kyeemagh. The shared paths are in poor condition, cross numerous driveways and several busy roads. The section of path along the pipeline is dangerous in low light conditions, and the underpass at Marsh St is hazardous even in broad daylight. The proposed foreshore active transport paths (in blue, Figure 3) only cut out a section of this convoluted route.

It is essential that State and Local Planning Agreement contributions for Cooks Cove developments deliver:

1. **A new green walking and cycling bridge across the Cooks River close to Giovanni Brunetti Bridge to provide safe and direct access to Tempe Reserve**
2. **An extension of the foreshore paths south to Muddy Creek**
3. **A new lightweight active transport bridge over Muddy Creek to create direct access to the Botany Bay foreshore.**

In addition, the amended Bayside Council Development Control Plan 2021 (DCP 2021) must require future-proofed end-of-trip facilities for workers and visitors, secure bike parking and e-bike charging points.

Cycling infrastructure must comply with TfNSW's Cycleway Design Toolboxⁱ and the 2017 Austroads Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides (AP-G88-17) to ensure that the paths are constructed to current best practice and meet the needs of riders of all ages and abilities using a wide range of mobility devices.

The need to develop a strong and continuous north-south route is highlighted in a suite of strategic plans. Of particular note:

The Eastern Harbour City Strategic Cycleway Corridorsⁱⁱ was released under the direction of Minister Stokes in April 2022. 30 strategic corridors have been identified for eastern Sydney, making up approximately 250km of cycle network (Figure 4). The corridors will connect key centres and form the backbone of the Principal Bicycle Network. Exact routes will be subject to detailed design and collaboration with councils and the community. The M6 Stage 1 ATC is a crucial opportunity to complete the Brighton-le-Sands to Tempe corridor.

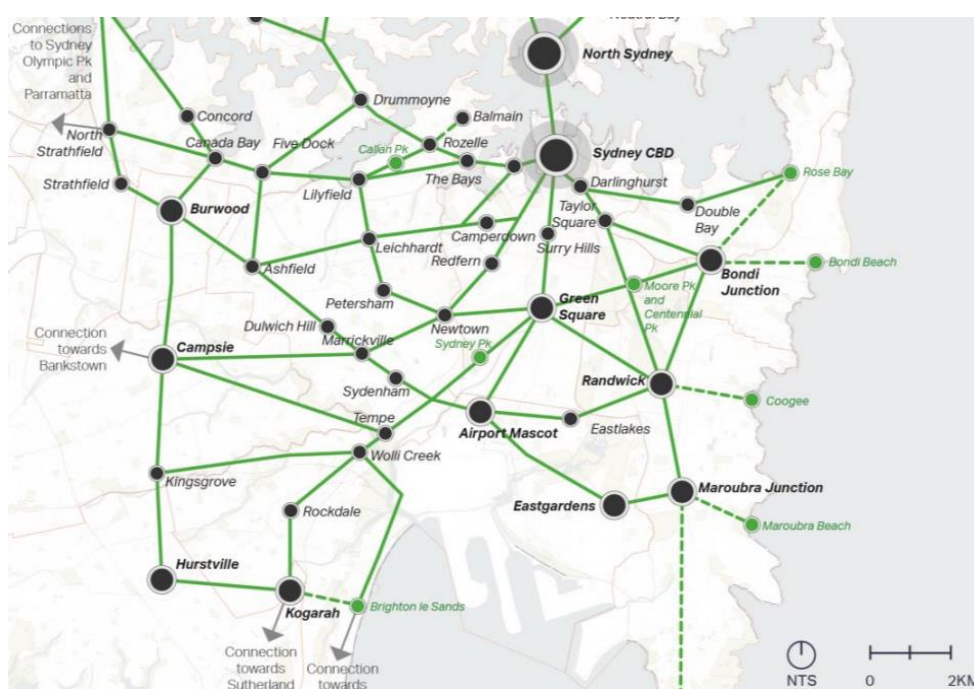


Figure 4: Extract from the new Strategic Cycleway Corridors network for the Eastern Harbour City (Source: TfNSW)

The Sydney Green Gridⁱⁱⁱ, developed by the NSW Government Architect in 2017 and reflected in the district and region plans, proposes an interconnecting network of open spaces that support walking and cycling. The Green Grid creates important links between activity centres and support active recreation. The project opportunities for the Bayside area are shown in the extract from the Green Grid in Figure 5. The long-term

vision of extending the Cooks River Open Space Corridor to Kyeemagh and developing the Rockdale Wetlands Open Space Corridor is established by the Green Grid.

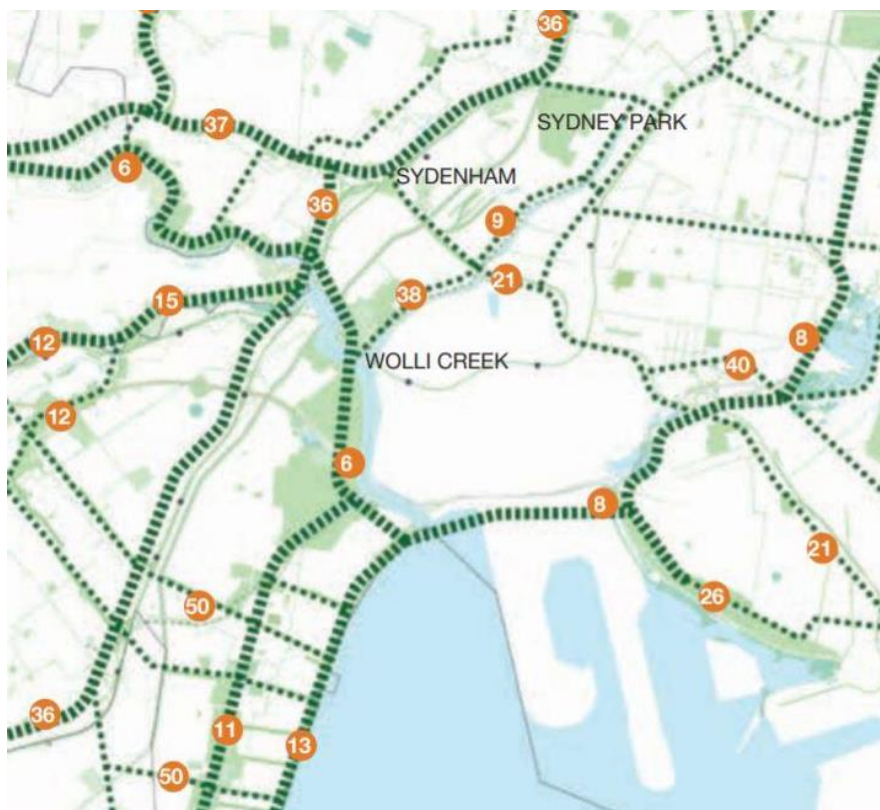


Figure 5:
Extract from the Green Grid showing
project opportunities in the Bayside area
(Source: Tyrrell Studio / NSW
Government Architect)

Priority project opportunities:

- 6. The Cooks River Open Space Corridor
- 8. Mill Stream and Botany Open Space Corridor
- 9. Alexandra Canal
- 11. Rockdale Wetlands Open Space Corridor
- 12. Wolli Creek Regional Park and Bardwell Valley Parklands
- 26. Joseph Banks Reserve and Foreshore Drive
- 38. Airport to Bourke Street Active Travel Link

The Sydney Gateway Active Transport Strategy^{iv} was finalised at the end of 2022. Several priority connections to the airport (Figure 6) are discussed and analysed. Two options are put forward for locating a new Cooks River bridge for pedestrians and bike riders.

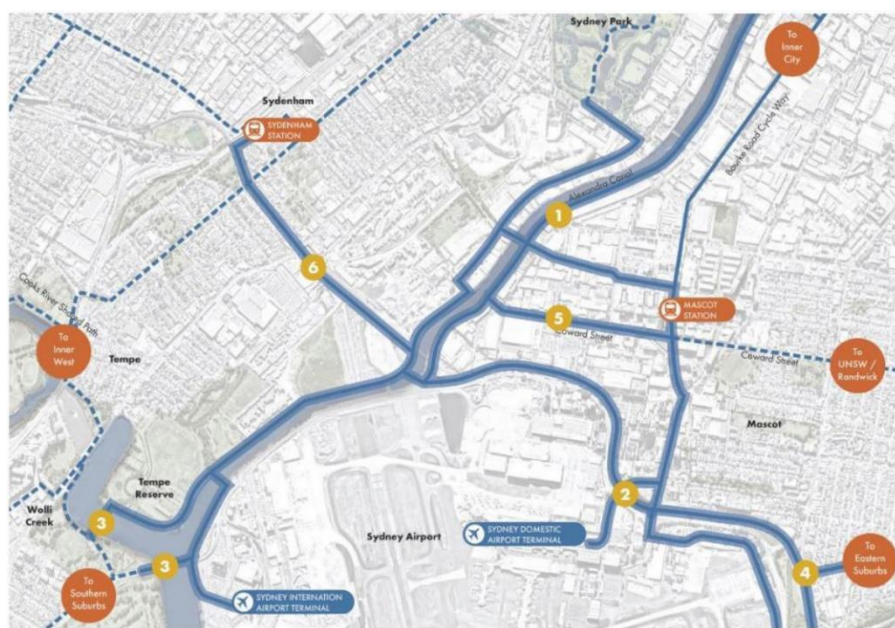


Figure 6: Sydney Gateway active
transport network opportunity map
(Source: TfNSW)

- **Consider locating the parklands along the foreshore**

The new parklands are of course welcome but it is a huge shame that there is so little connection from the public open space to the waterfront. The park instead overlooks a motorway corridor. We understand why council-owned land (Figure 7) has been chosen for the parkland but wonder why DPE has not negotiated with the owners of the Golf Course land to allow more appropriate land use across the precinct.

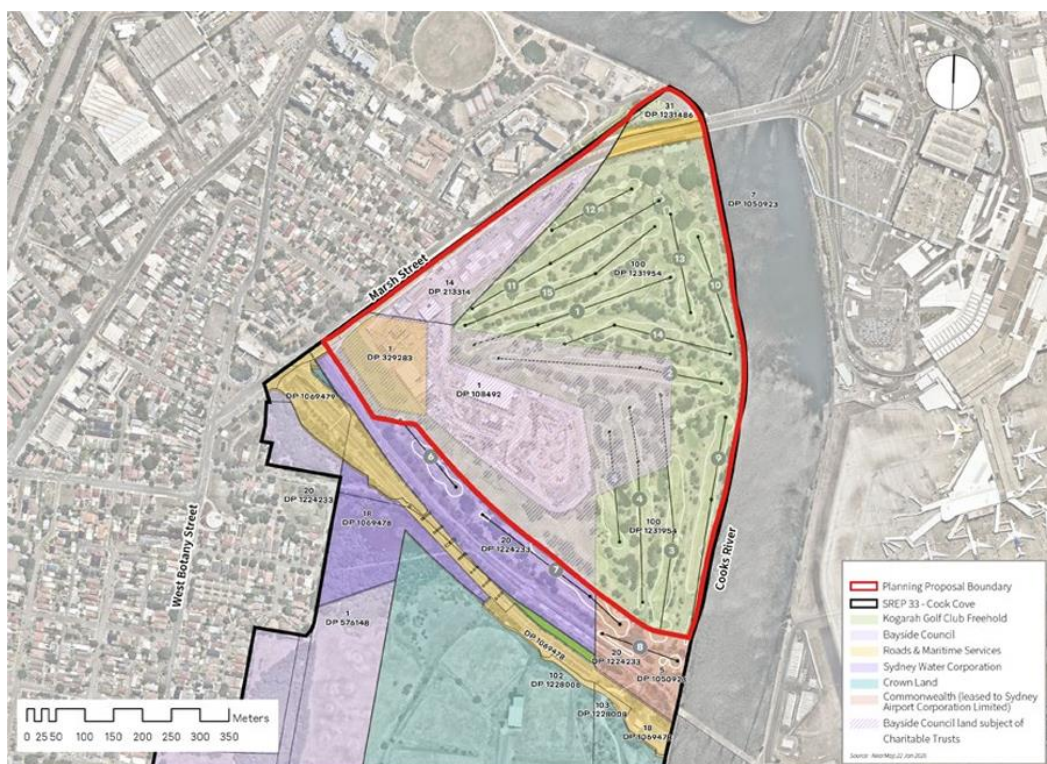


Figure 7: Landownership plan with current golf course overlay Source: Ethos Urban

In addition, the golf course is already landscaped with mature trees, and occupies the flood-prone section of the precinct (Figure 8). Why build in the flood zone??

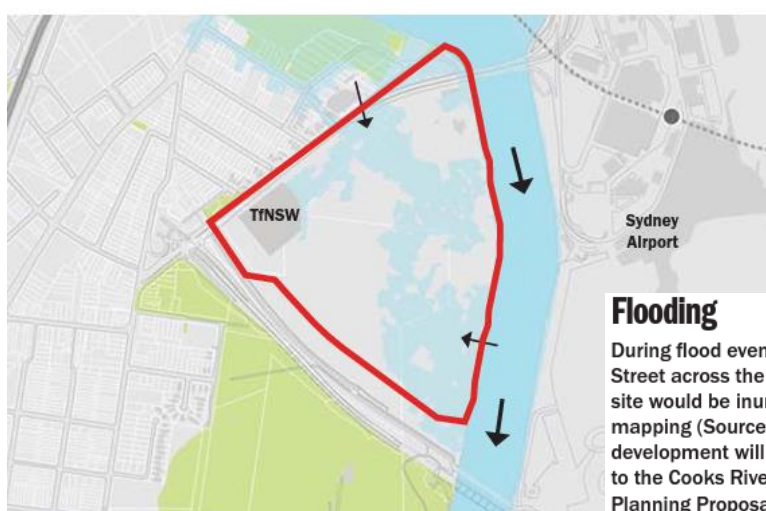


Figure 8: Area affected by flooding (Source: Hassell)

- **Reduce the dominance of the logistics warehouses on the public foreshore space**

If large warehouses must be located along the foreshore, we ask the NSW Government to insist on a much bigger setback and a stepped built form to ensure a sunlit and spacious foreshore area. Active ground floor frontages would help provide visual interest and security to users of the foreshore.

The long-awaited opportunity to reclaim a broad foreshore space for public use and restore coastal mangrove habitat to the river is at risk. The development must consider the public and environmental legacy of rewilding this rare waterfront land.

Conclusion

The Cook Cove development has enormous potential to address the poor active transport infrastructure in Bayside, marred by disjointed shared paths and few best-practice separated cycleways. The active transport mode share lags behind neighbouring LGAs despite Bayside's central location and flat, scenic topography^v.

Bayside is uniquely placed to connect the Inner West, Sydney Airport, City of Sydney, Randwick, Georges River and Sutherland, and facilitate access for the community to critical strategic centres and opportunities. Provision of safe, separated, and legible cycling infrastructure with high-quality end of trip facilities will help to drive mode shift.

We look forward to working with DPE to deliver a high-quality regional route ALL the way from Kyeemagh to the Alexandra Canal and beyond. It is also important that DPE continues to consult with Bayside's experienced and dedicated planners at every step as the planning for Cooks Cove evolves. BIKEast, an affiliated Bicycle User Group in the Eastern Suburbs, must also be a stakeholder as the project progresses. BIKEast members have worked hard over many years to advocate for better conditions for active travel. Please do not hesitate to contact Bicycle NSW for any further assistance required at this stage.

Yours faithfully,



Sarah Bickford

Active Transport Planner
Bicycle NSW



Peter McLean

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Bicycle NSW

ⁱ Cycleway Design Toolbox: designing for cycling and micromobility. Transport for NSW.

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2021/Cycleway-Design-Toolbox-Web.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Transport for NSW. 2022, April. Eastern Harbour City Strategic Cycleway Corridors.

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2022/strategic-cycleway-corridor-eastern-harbour-city-program-update.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Sydney Green Grid, Central District. Tyrrell Studio, 2017.

<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/resources/ga/media/files/ga/plans/sydney-green-grid-plan-4-central-district-2017.pdf>

^{iv} Transport for NSW. 2022, Nov 18. Sydney Gateways Active Transport Strategy. <https://media.caapp.com.au/4ifluy.pdf>

^v Bayside Council. 2023, Feb 2. Bike Plan.

<https://haveyoursay.bayside.nsw.gov.au/82154/widgets/390457/documents/251349>