



The Project Manager
TNSW

Dear Sir,

Beecroft Station Upgrade

The Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust, as a representative of the residents of Beecroft and Cheltenham, supports the concept of disabled access to Beecroft train station. However the Trust strongly requests that the following matters are fully considered before any final determination is made.

The existing pedestrian ramp in Wongala Crescent.

The critical issue for the Trust is the proposal to remove the existing ramp and replace it with a series of steps. The Trust believes it is essential that a ramp be retained instead of the proposed steps. The subway under the train line and ramp functions as an important link for local residents moving between the eastern side of the train line to the western side where the shops are located. It is important to stress that it is not just train commuters who use the subway and ramp.

A ramp offers greater versatility for a wider variety of commuters as well as local residents. If steps are constructed instead of a ramp many people with items such as wheeled suitcases, children with bikes or shoppers with trollies, would be forced to use the lift when they would normally be comfortable using the ramp. Increasing the use of the lift will create congestion around the lift and end up delaying people in their movements. A ramp is more practical than steps and offers quick efficient pedestrian movement.

A lift should be used by those who genuinely need to use it. Not by those who would normally would not use a lift. A ramp provides an attractive alternative to many people who do not want to use a lift. Steps do not provide that option to a significant number of these people.

The existing ramp is about 3 metres wide and the proposed pathway appears to be considerably less wide. Serious consideration should be given to retaining the wide ramp-path, because when the train commuters arrive the existing ramp should be able to provide room for people to pass each other. A ramp provides that option, while steps do not. In fact steps, like a lift, will become congested very quickly when people with minor disabilities, don't have the time to queue up to use the lift but are forced to gingerly use the steps and hold on to the hand rail. As a consequence steps will slow commuters down and can quickly become congested. This occurrence can be witnessed every day when commuters use the existing platform steps to the subway. A ramp in Wongala Crescent avoids a repetition of this type of congestion.

Preliminary investigations indicate that it may also be possible to construct a disabled ramp in Wongala Crescent and thus remove the necessity to install the lift in Wongala Crescent completely. This option must be explored as well, as it would be considerably cheaper to construct and operate than a lift. Also any such investigation must consider the possibility of relocating the transformer, inconveniently positioned by the ETTT project in the middle of the landscaped area. Relocating the transformer to achieve a better outcome may be cheaper than constructing a lift. Note also that all cost benefit analyses should take into account not only construction costs but also ongoing maintenance costs.

Another option that has been raised is installing a separate subway under the rail tracks parallel to the existing subway, specifically for wheelchair access. This subway would be about 6 metres south of the existing subway with access where the rubbish are located, directly opposite the proposed platform lift. The second subway would exit where the Wongala Crescent lift is proposed to be located. This option completely avoids interfering with the existing ramp. The stumbling block is obtaining the necessary approval for such a novel but practical solution.

The Trust has discussed the possibility of retaining a ramp in Wongala Crescent with Hornsby Council's staff and believe all options have not been fully explored. The Trust strongly encourages TNSW project team to continue these discussions with Hornsby Council staff to achieve an optimum long term access solution. The Trust is also available if our input is required. The Trust has many professionally qualified residents who could provide valuable input into any discussions.

Signage surrounding the ramp in Wongala Crescent

There is a significant amount of signage in the vicinity of the ramp, erected as part of the ETTT freight train project. It is imperative that all the signage, including the children's art work and the history sign, are reinstated as part of any reconstruction. The Trust recommends that the project liaises with Hornsby Council so the local community are engaged in this exercise.

Kiss and Ride west side of Wongala Crescent

Residents support a kiss and ride but recommend one on both sides of Wongala Crescent. One good suggestion is for the proposed taxi rank be used as a kiss and ride as well. Not many taxis use the existing rank but the Trust expects demand for kiss and ride will increase with the disabled access.

The temporary works compound

There is some confusion over its location. TNSW staff have indicated that the compound will be in the Wongala Crescent commuter car park. The REF indicates it will be located on the eastern side of the rail line behind the noise walls. A compound in the commuter car park is likely to cause significant inconvenience to commuters. This needs clarifying and the public needs to be informed of the location of the compound.

The disabled parking proposed in the Sutherland Rd car park

The two disabled parking spaces are proposed to be relocated about three car spaces away from the corner where the existing disabled space is now. There may be a reason for this relocation but it should be checked, as it appears to be an awkward location in front of and close to the rubbish bin compound.

Footpaths on railway land along Sutherland Rd.

There has been many complaints about the condition and suitability of the footpaths leading to the subway on the eastern or Sutherland Rd side of the station. This should be investigated and addressed where appropriate. Liaison with Hornsby Council staff is highly recommended.

In summary, the proposed loss of the ramp on the eastern side of the train station in Wongala Crescent is a significant concern for the local community that has the potential to create long term inefficiencies for pedestrians. If there is some way of retaining a ramp and also satisfying the necessary disabled access requirements, the local community would be very appreciative.

Regards
Ross Walker

President
Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust

9th November 2018