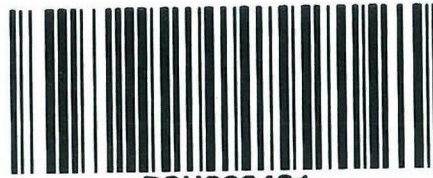




STEP Inc

Community-based Environmental Conservation since 1978



PCU033401

4 May 1012

Major Projects Assessment,
Department of Planning and Infrastructure,
GPO Box 39,
Sydney NSW 200

Dear Sir

Re: Submission to the EIS 1 for the NWRL Project relating to the Cheltenham Intermediate Services Facility. (Application No: SSI-5100)

STEP Inc is a community based environmental group with a membership exceeding 400, most of who are based in the Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai area of Sydney. STEP supports the development of public transport and is in favour of the construction of the North West Rail Link.

STEP would however like to make specific comment on the two options under consideration for permanent access to the Cheltenham Intermediate Services facility. These are:

1. Directly on and off the M2 requiring new on and off ramps from the motorway, or
2. On and off Kirkham St on a new road through bushland to the proposed site.

STEP strongly favours the first option. The second option, namely constructing a new road through the bush from Kirkham St to Cheltenham Oval, will significantly impact bushland which is, and always has been, in good condition. This bushland was in fact gazetted as a reserve over one hundred years ago and remained fully intact until 1995, when the southern edge near Devlins Creek was taken for the building of the M2, and currently it's widening. STEP believes that it would be a tragedy if more of this quality Blackbutt Gully forest was to be lost for the building of yet another road, particularly where other access options exist.

A recent survey of the area by botanists from the Australian Plant Society identified a list of over 100 species of native plant on site and some to the area to the west. *Persoonia laurina* and *Trochocarpa laurina* were found and both are uncommon in the area.

This area of bushland is important to the local community and is well used by bush walkers, dog walkers and cyclists. It is one of the nicest bush tracks in the area as it goes through such good quality bushland. It would be difficult, probably impossible, to offset a similar area of bushland in such good condition and certainly not in the area of Becroft and Cheltenham.

STEP and its members urge you to adopt option 1, namely access directly in and off the M2.

Yours sincerely

Barry Tomkinson
Vice President.

