

12 May 2012

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects
Major Projects Assessment
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Fax – (02) 9228 6355

Re: North West Rail Link – Environmental Impact Statement 1 (SSI-5100);

I have been a resident of Castle Howard Road for over 20 years and I am opposed to the construction of the NWRL egress facility at Cheltenham Oval/Netball Courts. The Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts are the main sporting/recreational facility in Beecroft and Cheltenham. They are extensively used by Beecroft, Cheltenham and Epping residents and four local schools. The location of the proposed Egress facility between Castle Howard Road and the Cheltenham Netball courts will visually and financially impact on the homes along Castle Howard Road. We have paid premium prices to have access to an existing railway. Our homes are not only devalued by the expanding of the M2 but now by the proposed NWRL Egress facility.

The Egress facility between Epping and Cherrybrook stations could be built at Beecroft Scout Hall which is closer the mid way point of between Epping and Cherrybrook. There is an existing dirt road which has an entrance opening of approximately 40m x 20m wide at Kirkham Street. The Egress facility at Beecroft Scout Hall is further from residential homes and would only slightly impact approximately 5 properties. In comparison Castle Howard Road will have an immediate impact on 37 residential properties. Minimal vegetation loss would occur on the existing dirt road between Kirkham and Beecroft Scout Hall. Access to the Scout Hall facility can be gained via Wehnam Street and existing dirt track heading east towards Kirkham Road. This option would be cheaper and the loss of vegetation would be minimal.

Having lived in our home at Castle Howard Road for over 20 years we have used the immediate facilities at Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts and surrounding bush land as adults and now as parents of two children aged 14 and 15 years old. When my children were toddlers I took them to the playground equipment which is located south of the Netball courts. As toddlers they learnt to ride a push a long car at the netball courts and as young children learnt to ride their bikes, scooters, billy carts and to skip using a skipping rope. They have both played for Beecroft Soccer club and practiced their soccer and tennis techniques against the brick wall that is on the southern side of the netball courts. They have rolled down the grass on the hill south of the Netball courts and have spent countless hours playing on and around the netball courts.

Now as young teenagers their interests have changed but they still utilize the netball courts. My son uses his RC car and rides his skateboard on the netball courts. My daughter still enjoys going to the playground equipment with her friends and playing a casual game of tennis with her friends. As a family we go for regular bush walks together and walk our dog through the surrounding bush land.

Both my children attended Epping Heights Public School and have regularly participated in physical education classes on Cheltenham Oval and the Netball Courts as well as participating in cross country races in the surrounding bush land. They are now in High School and still practice for their cross country events in the surrounding bush land and regularly go for mountain bike rides.

Cheltenham Oval/Netball Courts provides the following activities for the surrounding community.

- Soccer (Under 6 to over 45's)
- Cricket
- Cricket Nets (used for both cricket and baseball training)
- Netball
- Netball Courts are used by:
 - Toddlers learning to ride push along cars.
 - Young children learning to ride their bikes for the first time.
 - Adults and children for playing recreational tennis.
 - Children playing hand ball.
 - Children riding skate boards.
 - Children riding scooters.
 - Children learning to rollerblade.
 - Children playing with RC cars.
 - Children using remote control toys.
- Play ground equipment at the bottom of the Netball courts is utilised by children 7 days per week.
- Fitness and recreational facilities.
- Dog Walking.

Cheltenham Oval/Netball Courts are used by:

- Beecroft Residents
- Cheltenham Residents
- Epping Residents
- Cheltenham Girls High School
- Beecroft Primary School
- Epping Heights Primary School
- Arden Anglican Primary
- Arden Anglican Senior School

Bush land between Castle Howard Road and the M2 is extensively used for:

- Bush walking
- Running
- Mountain bike riding
- Dog walking
- Provides a short cut/access point for Cheltenham Girls students residing in Beecroft and Epping on the south side of the M2

Increased Traffic during the construction of the Egress at Cheltenham Oval/Netball Courts.

Boronia Avenue and Oaklands Avenue are feeder streets to Castle Howard Road. These streets do not have curb and gutters. Instead some driveways have culvert pipes and many residential cars parked on the side of the road. At times there is not enough room for two cars to pass each other.

Castle Howard Road has approximately 40 residential houses on the north side. The south side of Castle Howard Road is predominately bush land which encompasses Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts, play ground equipment, Cricket nets and 4 residential houses. Castle Howard Road is a narrow road with some sections only allowing for one car. Castle Howard Road has no pedestrian foot paths leaving pedestrians and mothers with prams no alternative but to walk on the road. Beecroft Primary, Epping Heights Primary and Cheltenham Girls High School all use the Cheltenham Oval/Netball court facilities. These schools walk on the road to access the sporting facilities.

Castle Howard Road and its feeder streets Boronia and Oaklands Avenue are not designed for large volumes of traffic. The NWRL should avoid these residential streets during the construction stage of the NWRL egress.



Castle Howard Road – narrow road with no pedestrian foot paths.

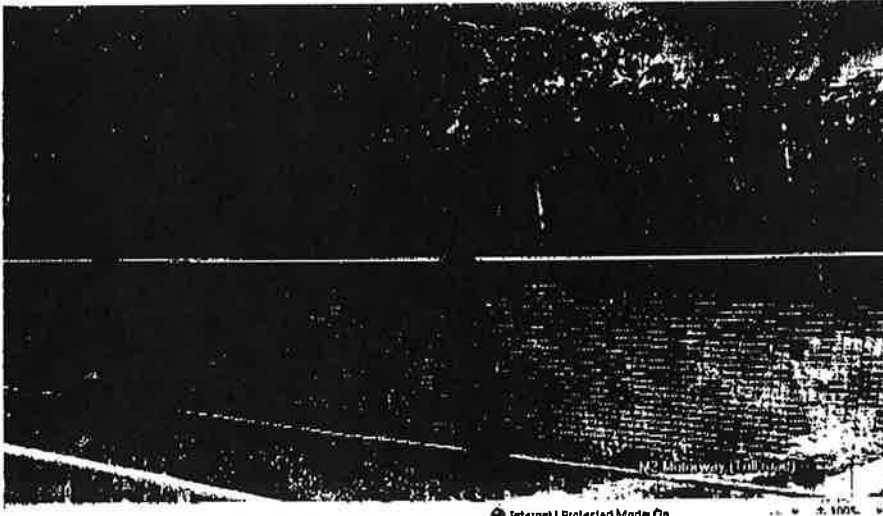
Light Vehicle Access along Murray Easement.

I am strongly opposed to the clearing of trees along the Murray easement to provide an access road for light vehicles off Castle Howard Road to the Egress construction site. The loss of vegetation would have a negative impact on the surrounding residential homes and will devalue properties along Castle Howard Road. The light vehicles will only have to pass 4 residential homes to gain access to the construction site. This will have far less impact than building a road and clearing more vegetation. The NWRL should completely avoid using residential roads in this area to access the construction site of the Egress facility.

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Beecroft Scout Hall is closer to the half way point between Epping and Cherrybrook stations and has an existing dirt road entering from Kirkham Street. Widening the existing dirt road will have less impact on residents. Looking at the maps it appears only 5 properties will be affected. Vegetation clearing can be minimized by accessing the scout hall via Welham Street and exiting via the dirt road heading east onto Kirkham Street. This option would be cheaper, affect less residential homes and would minimise vegetation loss.

In contrast the clearing of vegetation for the Haul Road from Kirkham Street to Cheltenham Netball Courts will have a disastrous visual impact on Castle Howard Road residents as well as the residents living in Epping and Beecroft on the south side of the M2. Approximately 37 residential homes along Castle Howard Road will be affected by the clearing of native trees and vegetation for the Haul Road. Most of these houses are built at the top of the valley. Clearing the trees for the Haul road will not only make the M2 more visible but will also amplify the noise from the M2.



Dense bush land that would be lost for the Haul Road.

Building the Haul Road in the Netball court location will destroy a large number of substantial gum trees, grass trees and residents will lose existing bush walking tracks.

Widening the current dirt road from Kirkham Street to Beecroft Scout Hall and gaining access from Welham Street is a far more viable option.

Shaft Evacuation

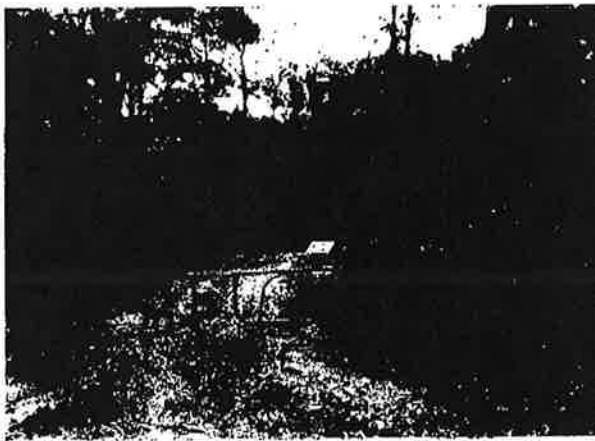
I strongly oppose the shaft evacuation and acoustic shed being so close to residential homes. If the Egress facility goes ahead in the Netball court area it should be located near the M2. The current location in the EIS is only metres away from 4 residential homes on the south side of Castle Howard Road. Residential homes on the North side of Castle Howard Road are set on the high side near the top of the valley. These homes will be visually impacted by the Egress facility.

To avoid devaluing the properties on Castle Howard Road I believe the Egress facility should be built near the M2 NOT near residential homes.

Beecroft Scout Hall

Having lived in the area for over 20 years we have been through the previous EIS for the proposed NWRL, I have attended previous community information meetings and discussed the Egress facility with the Engineers and Designers. All NWRL staff present at those meetings advised that the most desirable location for the egress facilities would be at the half way point. They also advised that the international maximum allowance for an egress was no more than 3kms from a railway station which was based on safety for rail commuters in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Beecroft Scout Hall is located closest to the half way point between Epping and Cherrybrook. There is an existing dirt road that can be accessed from Kirkham Street. Slightly widening an existing road for the use of haulage vehicles is far more desirable and has less impact on bush land in comparison to clearing untouched bush land from Kirkham Street to Cheltenham Netball Courts.



Entry from Kirkham to the Beecroft Scout Hall

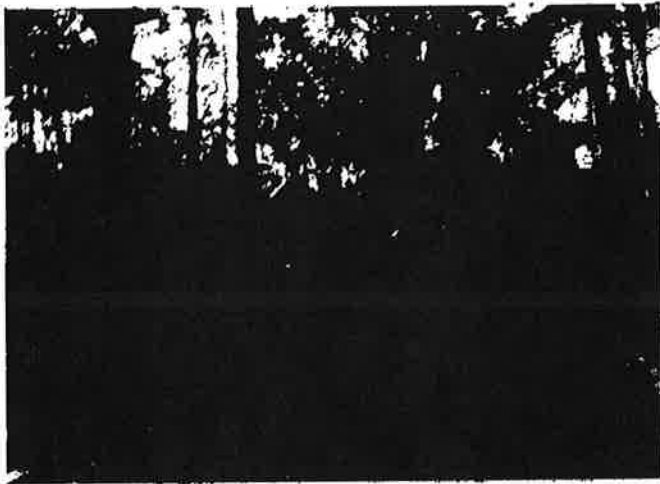


Dirt Road to Beecroft Scout Hall

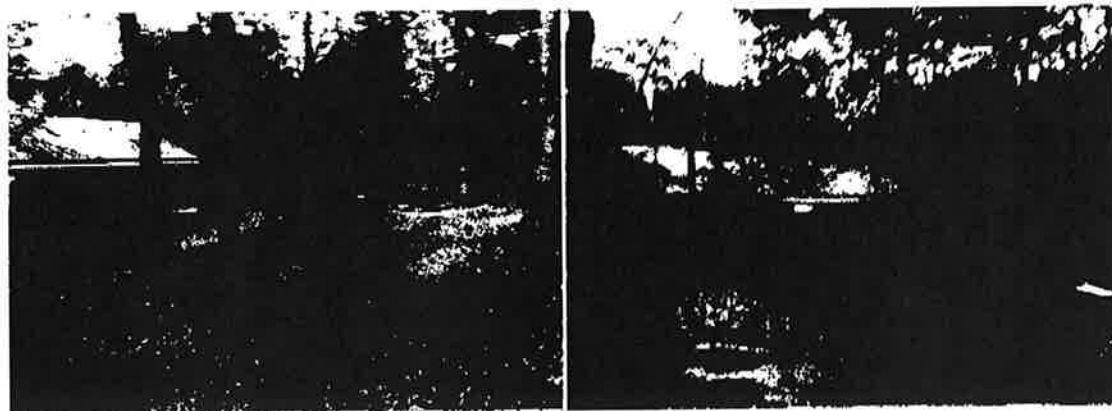
Beecroft Scout Hall can be accessed at the end of Welham Street. Welham Street could be opened to the Scout Hall location providing Emergency vehicles two access points i.e. the existing dirt road entering from Kirkham Street and Welham Street which is wide road feeding directly onto Beecroft Road. In comparison Castle Howard Road, Boronia and Oaklands Avenues are all narrow roads and further from main arterial roads with heavy pedestrian usage.



Welham Street near the scout hall looking up to Beecroft Road.



Pathway looking from Beecroft Scout Hall to the bottom of Welham Street.



Beecroft Scout Hall is a poorly maintained facility with adequate area surrounding the scout hall to accommodate the Egress facility. Replanting of native vegetation can be undertaken with minimal impact on the native animals.

The Beecroft Scouts have meetings for girls and boys aged between 11-15 years old on Thursday nights from 7.30pm to 9.30pm meeting during the school terms. Beecroft Cubs have meetings for girls and boys aged between 7.5 -11 at the Scout & Guide Hall, The Crescent Beecroft on Tuesday from 7-8.30pm.

There is no reason why Beecroft Scout Hall should lose their facility permanently. A new scout hall could be built next to the Egress Facility at the completion of the construction stage. The new scout hall could act as an undercover evacuation area for injured and evacuated commuters. Access to both Kirkham and Welham Street are in close proximity.

The Egress facility between Epping and Cherrybrook should be built at the Beecroft Scout Hall based on the following:

- Beecroft Scout Hall is closer to the mid way point between Epping and Cherrybrook.

The Cheltenham Oval/Netball Courts are approx 1.8km from Epping Station. Further from the desired midway location, offering a ratio of 1.8km to 4.2km between Epping and Cherrybrook.

The Egress Facility is a service facility serving two main purposes. Firstly, access for maintenance staff to access the NWRL between Epping and Cherrybrook's. Secondly and most importantly its main function is to evacuate commuters in the event of an emergency. We can't predict when or where an emergency could take place on the underground rail. Therefore to maximize commuter safety Beecroft Scout Hall, situated closest to the Epping/Cherrybrook midway point would be the most desirable for commuter safety.

- Beecroft Scout Hall is only used by Scouts aged 11-15 years old on a Thursday night. In comparison Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts which are used by Beecroft, Cheltenham and Epping Residents, Beecroft Primary School, Epping Heights Primary School and Cheltenham Girls High School.

The scout meetings that are held once a week at the Beecroft Scout Hall could be relocated to the Scout/Guide Hall at the Crescent Beecroft during the construction of the Egress facility. The Scout/Guide Hall at The Crescent is located approximately 500m from Beecroft Scout Hall and it would not be a major inconvenience to relocate weekly meetings during the construction stage of the Egress facility. The new scout hall could be rebuilt during the construction stage of the Egress facility and could act as an undercover facility for commuters in the event of an emergency evacuation.

In comparison Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts have facilities for soccer, cricket, cricket nets, netball and playground equipment. Young children to adults play netball, casual tennis, bike ride, bush walk, practice at the cricket nets, use the playground equipment and walk their dog in the area that is deemed as a construction site for the Egress facility.

Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts is the main sporting facility servicing Beecroft, Cheltenham and Epping. The only other sporting facility is Booth Park on Sutherland Road Beecroft. Booth Park is a small oval that can only be used for mini soccer and cricket games for very young children. It has very limited street parking and is located on a relatively busy road. The Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts is the only sporting facility that can accommodate sports for children and adults and has recreational playground equipment with soft landings for young children.

Beecroft Primary School has over 800 enrolled students, Epping Height has over 350 enrolled Students, Cheltenham Girls has over 1100 enrolled student and Arden Anglican school and are schools that use the sporting facilities at Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts for PE classes. Epping Heights Primary School uses Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts and surrounding bush land for their cross country events.

The loss of the Netball courts, playground equipment, cricket nets and walkways during the construction stage would heavily impact residents, sporting groups and local schools that use the area deemed for construction. The loss of these facilities would be up to 3 years and affect hundreds if not thousands of people.

Population growth in Beecroft and Cheltenham has increased in recent times. With limited housing available in the Sydney metropolitan area there has been an increase of dual occupancy housing developments throughout the Beecroft and Cheltenham area. In particular there have been several new multi storey units built in Beecroft and a new development proposed for approximately 51 units between Hannah and Copeland Roads Beecroft. These developments increase population in the immediate community and have put pressure on sporting and recreational areas. For this reason Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts area should not accommodate the Egress facility. The egress facility would not affect any sporting facilities if it was located at the Beecroft Scout Hall.

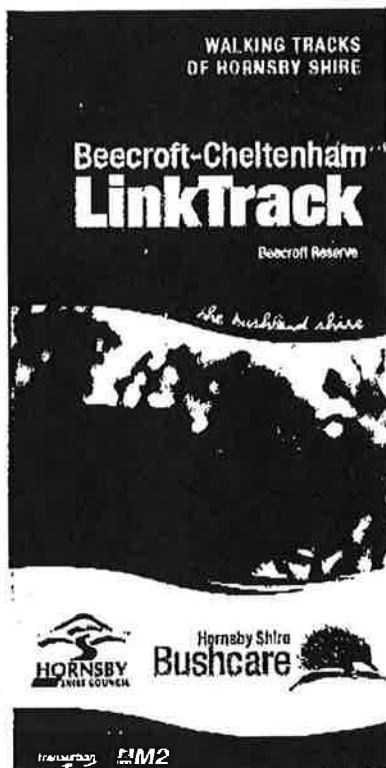
The Cheltenham Oval/ Netball court surrounding area has recently been reduced by the widening of the M2. This area is not large enough to accommodate an Egress facility without taking away recreational space from an ever growing community.

- There is an existing dirt road from Kirkham Street to Beecroft Scout Hall involving minimal vegetation loss by widening the dirt road. The entry location to the dirt road has an area which is approximately 40m x 20m. This provides a safe and wide entry to and from the Scout Hall. Access can also be gained from Welham Street to accommodate incoming vehicles to the Egress construction site at Beecroft scout hall and these vehicles can exit via the current dirt road and minimize vegetation loss. This would eliminate the need for a two way road.

In comparison untouched native bush land would have to be cleared from Kirkham to the Netball Courts. This would visually impact residents on Castle Howard Road and residents residing on the south side of the M2 in Epping and Beecroft.

- Widening the current dirt road from Kirkham Street to Beecroft Scout Hall would not impact native animals as much as clearing the a Haul road from Kirkham Street to the Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts. The bush land between Castle Howard Road and the M2 currently has no roadways passing through it. Clearing vegetation for a Haul Road would heavily impact native animals. Currently this area is home to numerous reptiles, possums, native birds such as lorikeets, gang gang cockatoos etc and has a community of 5 bush turkey's.

Widening the existing dirt track from Kirkham to the Beecroft Scout Hall would not have as much of an impact on native animals as minimal vegetation would need to be removed.



As shown on this brochure bush land in Beecroft and Cheltenham have Gang Gang cockatoos. Bush clearing should be minimized to preserve their habitats.

- The Beecroft Scout Hall location is further away from houses and would only affect approx 5 residential houses. In comparison the Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts location would have considerable impact on 37 houses. Four of these residential houses are only a few metres away from the proposed Egress facility.
- At the Beecroft Scout Hall vegetation loss would not be close to residential properties. In comparison to the Cheltenham Oval/Netball Courts where vegetation loss is within close proximity to residential homes. The removal of vegetation between the four homes located next to the netball courts, Murray easement and Haul Road will have a dramatic effect on the residential homes along Castle Howard Road as well as destroy habitats for wildlife.
- Beecroft Scout Hall has limited community members using the scout hall facility.

In contrast the Cheltenham Oval/Netball Courts is heavily used by Beecroft, Cheltenham and Epping Residents. The location of the proposed Egress between the Netball courts and the 4 residential homes on the south side of the Castle Howard Road forms part of the Beecroft/Cheltenham Link Track which is accessed by local residents of Beecroft, Cheltenham and Epping for the purposes of dog walkers, running, and bike riding from Kirkham Street to Cheltenham Oval.

The area for the proposed Egress facility is removing valuable play ground area that is used by young children while their siblings play soccer, netball and cricket.

The track on Murray easement is a busy thru fair for residents and families to access the oval, netball courts, playground equipment and cricket nets. This track is a popular alternative to Castle Howard Road which is narrow and has no pedestrian foot paths.

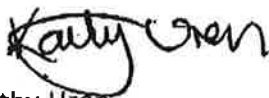
There is a well used walking track that is accessed by Cheltenham Girls Students that live in Beecroft and Epping on the other side of M2. This track runs from Kirkham Street and passes the west side of the Netball courts along the Murray easement walking track. The track is used as a short cut to Cheltenham Girls High School.

In conclusion, having lived in the area for over 20 years, I am fully aware of the facilities and use of these facilities in the Beecroft/Cheltenham area. I am opposed to the proposed location of the Egress point at the Cheltenham Oval/Netball courts. This area is heavily used 7 days per week not only by residents living in Beecroft, Cheltenham and Epping but also four surrounding schools. The area proposed for construction encompasses the Netball courts, brick wall for practicing tennis and soccer skills, cricket nets, and a playground which has a soft landing. The netball courts are not only used for netball but also accommodate numerous activities as mentioned above. A couple of years ago Hornsby Council spent a considerable amount of money resurfacing the netball courts. The loss of these facilities during the construction stage which may be up to 3 years would heavily impact the residents and four local schools. The vegetation loss from the construction of the Egress facility, haul road and access road along Murray Road easement would affect approximately 37 residential homes on Castle Howard Road and residents on the south side of the M2.

The Beecroft Scout Hall location is a more viable option. It is closer to the half way location between Epping and Cherrybrook stations and further away from residential homes. The scout hall is only used by a small group of scouts aged from 11-15 years old on a Thursday from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. These meetings could be relocated to their other facility which is located only 500m away at The Crescent Beecroft. No other sporting/recreational activities are undertaken at the scout hall and community impact would be minimal. The scout hall has two entry points, an existing dirt road from Kirkham street which has an entry clearance of approximately 40m x 20m available and Welham Street which directly feeds into Beecroft Road. A new scout hall could be rebuilt next to the Egress facility which could be used in the event of an emergency. Vegetation loss would be minimal and replanting native species could be carried out.

The Egress facility between Epping and Cherrybrook should be relocated to the Beecroft Scout Hall.

Yours sincerely



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