

Dear Panel,

2nd December, 2022

I am writing in respect to the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2, Application Number SSI – 10035. Most specifically, my interest is in the Camellia to Rydalmere options as expressed in Chapter 5.4.2 of the EIS.

My particular niche is in the industrial land to be acquired under the current EIS (expressed as ‘option 1’). It appears that, on the whole, the ‘Camellia foreshore to Rydalmere Option’ (expressed as ‘option 3’) is better at balancing community stakeholders and expectations.

I believe a general principle of limiting industrial acquisitions where possible should be adopted. This is sensible, forward looking planning policy.

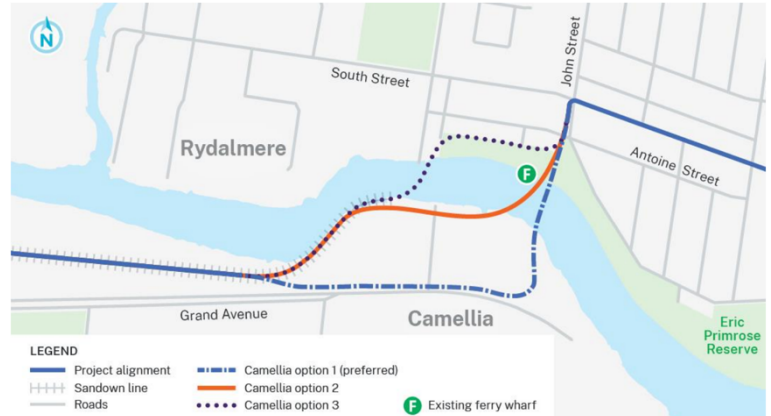


Figure 1 - The options for the Camellia-Rydalmere light rail connection, as shown in Figure 5.11 (Chapter 5.4.2) of the EIS.

The first consideration is the impact on local workforces where industrial acquisitions occur. Industrial zoned land is ever shrinking in Sydney. One only needs look at the redevelopment of Wentworth Point, or Melrose Park, in the last decade to acknowledge the industrial footprint of Sydney is diminishing. Of course, all acknowledge the need to find room to house an ever-growing population, but the forethought seems to end there. Where should these residents find work? The backbone of Western Sydney employment can be found in industrially zoned land surrounding the area, whether it be Camellia, Silverwater, Rydalmere or elsewhere. With very little industrial land available, re-location for industrial businesses inevitably ends much further West. Businesses not only suffer here, but the workers forced in longer commutes are impacted by a transport policy that purports to make transport easier... The workplaces and workers who find employment locally should be borne in mind before industrial land is so willingly acquired. Option 3 purports to significantly reduce industrial property acquisitions, and so it is Option 3 that should be adopted.

The second consideration is the increased financial cost of industrial acquisitions as opposed to residential acquisitions. Option 3 eliminates the need to acquire the western, industrial, side of John Street, as well as much of Grand Avenue which was slated for acquisition under the current EIS. Industrial acquisitions obviously present a greater burden for the public purse: business re-location costs, damage to business costs, new fit out costs etc are uniquely the product of forcing industrial businesses out. Those re-location costs are higher for businesses, as opposed to residential residents or tenants, given the cost of moving stock, machinery, the need for specialised buildings etc.

In addition, industrial property is worth more per square metre than residential land. For instance, a quick search of realestate.com.au brings up a 734 square metre house for sale (19 Dorothy Street, Rydalmere) proximate to John Street with an asking price, as at December 2nd, of \$1,490,000. 1 Kirby Street, Rydalmere, of approximately 500 square metres, is for sale on realestate.com for \$1,350,000. 80 and 82 Patterson Street, Rydalmere – houses typical of

those proposed for acquisition under the preferred Option 3, are a total 1,868 square metres, with a total proposed sale price on realestate.com of \$2,600,000.

Industrial sales figures are harder to acquire, but in September 2021, 52 John Street was sold based on a building area of approximately 450 square metres, for \$2,230,000. The industrial zoned land at 60 and 58 John Street present more valuable lots than 50 – 52 John Street, whether due to newer construction and better condition at 60 John Street, or more valuable and useable land area at 58 John Street, and much more expensive acquisitions accordingly.

That simple comparison would put the residential land at 19 Dorothy Street at \$2,029 per square metre, 1 Kirby Street at \$2,700/sqm and 80 – 82 Patterson Street at \$1,391/sqm as opposed to \$4,955/square metre for the industrial land.

The public purse, already stretched by this project, should be kept in mind when the project is made to choose between residential and industrial acquisitions, particularly where government held residential land is on offer on the eastern side of John Street.

The third consideration is the amount of stakeholders impacted by proposed acquisitions. Option 1, due to an increased amount of industrial acquisitions, would, in general, displace a larger amount of stakeholders than Option 3. It is obvious that most acquisitions of industrial property results in two stakeholders per lot being displaced: a property owner, and a business tenant. Those property owners are burdened with the acquisition process and bureaucracy, burdens the 2022 Transport Committee Report on Land Acquisitions outlined as strenuous, stressful and causing net disadvantage to victims. Where such acquisitions can be limited, that option should be pursued – that is Option 3.

In addition, the acquisition of such a high number of business tenants leads to uncertainty of business re-allocation, the difficulty of finding replacement premises in such an industrial landscape where tenants on pre-existing leases are financially better off than those seeking to begin a new lease, inevitably on much higher rates per square metre.

Finally, displacing so many industrial businesses is much more than simply a few property owners: it is a displacement of anywhere from 10 – 20 workers per property, who face unemployment or re-location as a direct consequence of Option 1. The government held land on the eastern side of John Street, Rydalmere, presents a much better option with much fewer stakeholders impacted by the acquisition of property, a process in and of itself which should be avoided at all costs.

I believe it to be in the community's interests to follow Option 3 – the Camellia foreshore to Rydalmere connection, and would call upon the EIS to be modified accordingly.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Mills', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Phillip Mills