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19th November, 2012.

The Manager,
North West Railway EIS2 Review Comments.
Transport for NSW
NSW Department of Transport

In response to your invitation for comments on the EIS2 Statement for the North West Rail Line I submit the following:-

[Please Note: I used the post rather than E-mail only because my e-mail connection is, at present, unreliable.]

I note in the Chapter 1 review of the history of the development of the proposal for the NWRL that until June 12 this year the Government supported a 'simple extension of the existing Suburban System'. This meant the existing double deck trains would be used and the supporting publicity showed the latest version of them travelling along the proposed elevated section. This plan to build an integrated extension was also the basis of information circulated to obtain community reaction for the proposal.

The document then circulated to explain the results of the community survey and confirm what the Government was planning to provide was entitled 'A Twenty year Plan for Sydney's Transport Future' and included, as well as the NWRL, the introduction of a 'rapid transit style' second tier railway amongst other matters. Strangely, the Government, in this document, took the opportunity to change the NWRL from a 'simple extension of the existing Suburban System' to being part of the proposed 'Rapid Transit System'. No explanation was given to justify this change apart from a number of general claims but certainly no supporting facts.

EIS2 conforms to the relevant Acts in describing the changes to the natural and built environment in the area of the Epping to Rouse Hill extension but provides no information on any changes to the environment on the station platforms or elsewhere at the stations from Chatswood to Epping as indicated as being necessary in other information circulated concerning this Line. In fact, this EIS would apply equally to the earlier simple extension and the rapid transit proposal except for the few references to the type of rolling stock to be used.

Environmental Impact Statements usually apply to natural and built environments but new railway lines carrying passengers have one additional environment to be considered and that is the environment in which the passenger is carried! Usually a study of this is not necessary as the type of train proposed is not changed. For the current study, a relative major change is proposed from using a suburban double deck carriage to a rapid transit type carriage.

It is concerning that the general tone of EIS2 and the parallel publicity in News Releases and the other documents available in the NSW Library on the Website make claims that a single deck rapid transit type of train is more suited to the rail transport requirements of the North Western suburbs than the existing double deck suburban trains.

EIS2 makes the following claims to support the proposal to use single deck trains on the NWR Line:-

- A more frequent service [up to 20 trains per hour or 3 minute headway] will be possible. Double deck trains, fully loaded, already travel through the City tabled at 3 minute intervals, 20 per hour and the Minister is planning to increase this frequency above 20 per hour!
- The proposed train will travel faster and compares a theoretical running time with suburban train running deliberately slowed to allow for unplanned delays. [These will also certainly occur on the NWRL] This

claim will only be proven when all the offers by the design, supply and operate tenderers are received and analysed and compared against a 'Waratah' type double deck train by simulation over the planned curve and gradients of the NWL route.

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- It is claimed passengers will have quicker entry to and exit from the proposed train but the publicity drawing of the proposed single deck standing at a station clearly has only two double doors per carriage, despite the textual claims that the proposed train will have three wide double doors! This artist's impression looks distinctly like a drawing of a modern version of the original steel single deck rapid transit cars built for the Sydney Suburban System from 1925 from which the double deck cars evolved!
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- Claim is made the interior of the proposed carriage will provide better customer facilities. Apart from the artist's impression of the interior of the carriage and the statement the train will consist of 8 cars, there is very little factual information available to prove this. The artist's impression shows the usual world standard design of a low seating numbers to floor space ratio layout with a small number of rows of four across spartan type seating, longitudinal tip-up seats to increase standing room and a car body of unspecified width. Such carriage layouts are usually supplied where the maximum journey time is around thirty minutes. Where the maximum journey time will be around an hour, as on the NWL when it is extended into the City, a suburban style car with a higher seat to floor space ratio is usually specified to maximise the number of seats provided to provide the best practical accommodation..
- The suburban seats are usually more comfortable and are designed to allow standing passengers to lean on and grab the aisle seat end to gain stability while travelling. Also, the design of the suburban car usually provide partitions and waist level bars to improve the conditions for standing passengers. The use of overhead grab handles the full length of the car for the standing passengers cannot be claimed to provide better comfort.
- It is stated a crush load of 1,200 -1300 passengers [customers] in peak hours will be carried in an eight car train whereas the existing double deck train has a similar or higher rated crush load capacity with at least 20% extra space to do it! It would be expected that the planned expected density, or tentative car layout plans would be given to justify this claim.
- Another aspect not explained in any way is how the rapid transit proposal will fit into Chatswood station. Across the platform passenger transfer is stated but how will the trains be handled? Will the existing single terminal road be adequate to reverse them? Will a Suburban type train be able to use the same tracks in an emergency? What changes will have to be made to start the second stage of an extension into the City?

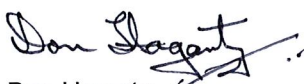
Based on the above reasoning I claim EIS2 is inadequate to justify the proposed form of transport, rather the EIS justifies the argument that the earlier proposal for a simple extension to the existing Suburban System is the right system to be followed. The building of a separated rapid transit railway from Chatswood under the City via St Leonards and Crows Nest areas to a suburb beyond the City will become a necessity in the not too distant future.

The least that must be done now for the NWL is for the Government to build the basic structures, including the tunnels to the same technical standards that were used for the Chatswood to Epping Line and specify the single deck carriage bodies conform to the same external dimensions as the old Sydney Suburban single deck car [Railcorp's Wide Electric Rolling Stock Outline]. This would allow present or future use of either type of train as is considered most suitable at the time.

Also, at a time when all avenues of financing the building of the NWL line are difficult, building the line as a simple extension to the present must surely be the cheapest option and be the most responsible use of taxpayer's funds.

Thank you for reading this rather long list of Comments.

Yours faithfully,


Don Hagarty.