

**North West Rail Link, Environmental Impact Statement 2 (EIS 2)**  
**Submissions to EIS 2. Traffic arrangements at Cherrybrook Station Precinct.**

This submission explains my concerns and objections to the traffic arrangements in NWRL EIS 2 as they relate to the Cherrybrook Station precinct in general, and, in particular, Robert Road being utilised as a "Feeder Road" with increased traffic flows by way of buses and general traffic.

**Issues of Concern – this submission.**

1. **Traffic signals.** The number of pedestrian commuters walking to Cherrybrook station from the south side of Castle Hill Road who would benefit from permanent traffic signals at a Glenhope Road pedestrian crossing is expected to be very small. But every motorist using Castle Hill Road could expect a delay at these traffic signals. Replacing the Glenhope Road traffic signals with a pedestrian overpass into the station precinct would allow every pedestrian to safely cross Castle Hill Road at any time with no delay at all for the motorists. After the construction phase, traffic signals will remain at the intersections of Castle Hill Road with Robert Road and Castle Hill Road with Glenhope Road. Therefore, along Castle Hill Road, there will be 4 sets of traffic signals in a distance of 1.2km (at the intersections with County Drive, Robert Road, Glenhope Road, and Edward Bennett Drive) that will cause additional delays and increased frustration for motorists with the potential to create road rage.
2. **Vehicle entrance to station precinct.** EIS 2 indicates that planners intend to create vehicle entrances to the station precinct from Robert Road, Franklin Road and from Castle Hill Road. Page 22 in EIS 2 states that the *'The new design incorporates a realignment of Robert Road and the new station access road to give **priority to station access from Castle Hill Road and to reduce the potential for "rat-running" on residential streets**.'* "Rat-running" in Robert Road is a certainty IF vehicular access is created from Robert Road. The only way to ensure the safety of both pedestrians and local resident traffic using Robert Road is to **NOT ALLOW** vehicular access from Robert Road to Cherrybrook station.
3. **Robert Road a bus feeder route.** EIS2<sup>1</sup> indicates that planners still intend to use Robert Road as a feeder road for buses to enter the station precinct from the north and those buses would enter and exit the station precinct via Robert Road. This is extremely concerning and indicates that the planners have given absolutely no consideration to the safety and quality of life of the residents of some 265 residential blocks living along Robert Road and its feeder roads. In addition, it indicates that the planners decided to completely ignore the rational concerns raised, and sensible alternatives offered, by members of the Robert Road and feeder roads community in their numerous submissions to EIS1. The medium density housing developments branching off Robert Road (Arundel Way, Louise Way, and Oliver Way) all have limited or no car parking space other than their own garages. Overflow and visitor parking from these 'Way' developments must, of necessity, all use Robert Road – presently a quiet and safe road for parking.

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<sup>1</sup> NWRL Technical Paper 2: Operational Traffic & Transport Management Plan Part 1, p. 54

It is pertinent and necessary to reiterate many of the **rational concerns and sensible alternatives** offered by local residents back in May 2012 as, clearly, those concerns have remained ignored in EIS2.

- Traffic density along Robert Road has already reached the point where, in 1999, traffic authorities installed 'left-lane-in / left-lane-out' road control at the Castle Hill Road/Robert Road intersection in order to limit traffic flow down Robert Road and to improve safety at this intersection.
- Robert Park is well located at the quiet intersection of Dalkeith Road and Robert Road. This park is unfenced and contains a fenced child's playground. An increase in commuter traffic along Robert Road will jeopardise the safety and tranquillity of this well used park space.
- Garbage collection along Robert Road occurs any time up to midday on Tuesdays. With normal legal street car parking along Robert Road and a slowly crawling garbage truck there will be no room in this narrow street for 16 commuter buses per hour to pass a garbage truck. However, garbage collection along Castle Hill Road is always complete by 6am on Tuesday mornings in order to have minimal impact upon the morning commuter traffic along this arterial road.
- Robert Road is currently suitable for light traffic only – the road surface is already cracking from the weight of garbage trucks and similar sized vehicles. Robert Road would need to be widened and upgraded in order to accommodate a frequent commuter bus service – an unnecessary expense since suitable bus routes already exist. EIS2 apparently does not plan to upgrade Robert Road north of the station and indicates that buses will have to make do with Robert Road in its existing condition except for reduced parking. This shows scant regard for the safety of local residents.
- Bus drivers no doubt prefer the safety of wide arterial roads to the stress of weaving a twisting rat-run through minor narrow back streets with the high risk of side swiping parked vehicles or the possible obstruction by oncoming vehicles.
- EIS2 indicates that the preferred traffic management strategy is to discourage 'rat-running on residential streets'. Diverting all Cherrybrook station buses along Robert Road is inconsistent with this policy strategy.
- County Drive was constructed to be a four lane arterial link road between New Line Road and the M2 at Carlingford. The M2 entrance at Carlingford was never built. County Drive, at the Castle Hill Road intersection, is six lanes wide (2 lanes north and 4 lanes south with a dedicated left turn lane to head eastwards along Castle Hill Road to Cherrybrook station). County Drive, for much of its length, is artificially choked down to a single lane in each direction (supposedly as a speed control measure) following an extremely poor decision by Hornsby Shire Council and was against the protests of the majority of local residents. County Drive and Castle Hill Road have been built to accommodate heavy vehicles.
- During morning peak traffic time, the great majority of vehicles driving south along County Drive either turn right onto Castle Hill Road in the direction of Castle Hill, or continue over Castle Hill Road and travel down Highs Road. Only a small number of vehicles turn left on Castle Hill Road in the direction of Thompsons Corner. There is no morning peak traffic congestion between County Drive and Edward Bennett Drive so buses would have a free run from the County Drive-Castle Hill Road intersection to the Cherrybrook station.
- County Drive could easily and cheaply be re-lined to dual lanes in each direction (between Castle Hill Road and New Line Road) to improve its traffic capacity with other measures being employed for speed control. Buses to Cherrybrook station could then proceed along County Drive, make use of the dedicated left turn lane into Castle Hill Road and proceed to the station and using an ingress lane off Castle Hill Road into the station precinct. This

would provide the safety of wide arterial roads without the dangers of weaving around narrow back streets.

- The junction of County Drive and John Road already poses a problem for large buses now as there is no set-back and buses have to occupy both lanes of County Drive when approaching the corner southbound so as to keep enough room on their left to negotiate the corner without colliding with either westbound traffic in John Road or the power pole on the corner. More buses making this turn would only exacerbate the problem. A neighbour was actually involved in a collision at this corner as a consequence of a bus making a wide turn. The same problem exists at the even tighter intersection of John Road and Robert Road. Buses turning right from John Road into Robert Road will consume the entire intersection leaving no space for other vehicles.
- EIS2 indicates that traffic authorities consider that County Drive has reached saturation capacity based upon the current configuration of the County Drive/Castle Hill Road intersection and vehicle counts from November 2011. The Level of Service at this intersection is classified as E (vehicle delays of 57 to 70 secs) with a Degree of Saturation being greater than 1.00. Whilst the data is no doubt accurate, the cause of delays at this intersection and possible remedies have been ignored; in addition, these measurements were made whilst County Drive was artificially choked down to a single lane in each direction. Most of the traffic travelling south along County Drive towards Castle Hill Road queues excessively to use the two right turn lanes westwards into Castle Hill Road. Traffic cannot reach the through lane to Highs Road or the left turn lane eastwards into Castle Hill Road because County Drive is single lane despite the roadway being wide enough for dual lanes. If County Drive was relined to two lanes southwards from New Line Road to Castle Hill Road with no parking, then buses bound for Cherrybrook station would experience free flowing conditions to the station ingress from Castle Hill Road. EIS2 has rejected this bus route option (Section 8.1.7) on the basis that the service is weakened along John Road and Neale Street. Commuters from these streets are within walking distance to the station and/or to bus stops in County Drive, Franklin Road and the new station bus interchange!
- EIS2 (Section 8.1.7, page 61) gives the rationale for the proposed bus route, quoted below.

### ***Station Access Rationale***

*The rationale for the preferred access arrangement is as follows:*

- 1. It will minimise diversion of existing bus routes and avoid routing buses along Castle Hill Road, which would increase congestion and lengthen journey times for existing bus passengers as well as those accessing Cherrybrook station.*
- 2. The proposed bus diversions via Robert and Franklin Roads to the station precinct will actually increase the catchment area of existing services and enhance accessibility generally.*
- 3. It will maximise safety and accessibility to and from the station precinct for both pedestrians and vehicles, minimising pedestrian movements across Castle Hill Road and allowing adequate sight distance for vehicles to turn safely into and out of Castle Hill Road.*
- 4. It will protect traffic flow efficiency along Castle Hill Road whilst equitably balancing traffic change across the local road network.*

Point 1 would not be a problem if County Drive was relined as explained above. Castle Hill Road is free flowing eastwards from County Drive and does not clog up in the morning peak period until east of Edward Bennett Drive.

Point 2 that diversions along Robert and Franklin Roads increases the bus route catchment is a ridiculous claim and ignores the fact that a new bus interchange is

being created at the station. Commuters living along Robert and Franklin Roads are within walking distance to Cherrybrook station and existing bus stops. Cherrybrook station will become a new bus interchange, i.e. commuters will walk to the station to catch both trains AND buses.

Point 3 is equally true if buses proceed along County Drive and Castle Hill Road to the station entrance.

Point 4 is utter nonsense. Whilst the proposed bus route does leave the traffic flow along Castle Hill Road unchanged, the traffic change across the local road network is clearly **NOT** equitably balanced if **ALL** the buses are diverted along the same two roads – Robert and Franklin Roads.

Not only are these four points for the EIS rationale very weak, they are most uninformed, contain no substance and have been made with a blatant disregard for the safety of residents living along Robert Road and its feeder roads. In addition, diversion of bus routes along Robert and Franklin Roads is contrary to the proclaimed traffic management strategy of discouraging 'rat-running on residential streets'.

#### **Recommendations for Cherrybrook station precinct.**

1. After the construction phase is complete, the Glenhope Road traffic signals should be replaced with a pedestrian overpass into the station entrance.
2. Commuter bus routes to Cherrybrook station should use County Drive and Castle Hill Road.
3. County Drive should be opened to its full width to fully utilise its traffic capacity.
4. At the station precinct, an ingress lane off Castle Hill Road should be constructed for bus and car entry to the station.
5. No bus feeder route along Robert Road.
6. No change to Robert Road north of the station precinct.

I declare that I have made no political donations in the previous two years.

Yours sincerely,



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