

**To: Director, Major Projects Assessment Dept. of Planning & Infrastructure, NSW Government**

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**From: Adam Markus, 76 Sutherland Road, Beecroft NSW 2119. 2/12/12**

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**Re: Application number SSI-5414**

**Statement in objection to the proposal:-**

The planned NWRL tunnels to be built should be large enough to accommodate the current double deck passenger trains to allow for the full integration of all trains, whether they be single or double deck, into the current rail system. This is to obviate the plan's stated resultant outcome of the need for train passengers travelling to, or from, the city via Thornleigh and Cheltenham having then to connect with an additional two trains at Epping and Chatswood to complete each journey. The present operating and seamless, 'one trip, one train' commuter passenger network system must not be changed as a consequence of building the NWRL connection, via Epping and Chatswood, to the city.

**Reasons for objecting to the planned proposal:-**

1. The thousands of regular daily passengers who reside in the suburban areas between Thornleigh and Cheltenham and who rely on the current rail system when travelling to and from the city via Epping and Chatswood, will be heavily penalised with loss of time having to make a total of three train connections, rather than just the current one, if the SSI-5414 plan proceeds. Undoubtedly, also, at peak travelling times, this would greatly increase the current time required to travel to and from work when compared to the current, seamless transport option. Additionally, it will also limit the available seating space available on the single deck trains when changing from a two deck train to a single deck.

**The additional time taken to make those two new connections at Epping and Chatswood will, most likely, be between fifteen to twenty minutes for each trip to the city. That is, potentially, on average, losing a minimum of between thirty and forty minutes per day, in the event of the connecting trains not arriving/departing as scheduled per timetable. That result will have a major negative financial impact on productive work time lost by the thousands of workers who daily use, and rely upon, the current system when travelling daily to, and from, the city. The compound effect of that will also, obviously, flow-on to a major financial loss/impact on the State and National economy as well.**

**The EIS2 for the project does not cover the additional passenger congestion that will occur at Epping when the Government's planned additional 4,000 unit high-rise residential apartments will be built there in the coming years, along with the ones also planned for Beecroft and Pennant Hills. When considered in conjunction with 1. above, the compound impact of that alone in regards to additional passenger congestion at Epping and Chatswood stations alone will be devastating when having to board or leave the trains.**

- 2. If the planned SSI-5414 development goes ahead then, based on 1. & 2. above, will the cost of passenger rail fares be adjusted down for current city commuters from Thornleigh to Cheltenham to the city so as to compensate them for the additional time, passenger crowd congestion and loss of available seating space when having to, daily, at peak hours especially, change trains three times (and six times on a return trip) to the city via Chatswood?**

**Also, the SSI -5414 does not assess the probability of current regular/daily train passengers switching to driving vehicles to work, or wherever, when the reality of their time lost when switching trains, as detailed above, is realised and compared to other transport options. Such a change would further add to the current, unacceptable, high levels of road traffic being experience.**

**For example, too, if such train passengers needed to commute to say Bondi Junction from either/between Thornleigh and Cheltenham, then they'd have to connect with four trains to travel a total of approx. 30 kms for their journey; then another four to return, making a total of eight trains per day – that's a simple average of 7 kms per each train per day! Also, that would add, based on a layman's assessment, almost an additional one hour per day to the travel time per train passenger, compared to what is currently experienced.**

- 3. The SSI-5414 has not addressed the high probability of passenger trains being delayed on their timetables due to the need for the time necessary for additional high numbers of passengers to board and/or alight when changing trains at Epping and Chatswood, especially at peak hours. The result of reality will have a major negative, compound, impact on the efficiency the of arrival and departure of train times on the NWRL, which will then also, obviously, flow-on and delay all other passenger trains then operating along other lines within the city's rail network.**
  
- 4. The SSI-5414 has made no assessment of the impact there will be on the increasing numbers of the ageing and disabled members of our population who also need, and rely upon, rail transport to commute to the city (and perhaps beyond) via Thornleigh and Cheltenham rail link. When travelling currently the connection and journey is seamless, and only requires one connection for each journey. If/when the planned new system is introduced then they will have to alight and then board two additional trains at both Epping and Chatswood; and then repeat that on their return journey. Additionally, they will also have to confront the circumstances of having to deal with greater passenger numbers who are also, then, having to change trains, as well as them, then, having the need to further compete to secure a seat on more overcrowded trains.**

5. The SSI-5414 project was not, from our local community's perspective, adequately publicised by the Government's responsible Planning Dept., to allow for their consultative input. By example, the Government's planned Third Freight Line upgrade between Thornleigh and Epping, as recently announced, included amongst other things, a number of public presentation forums by the planning staff of that project. It is disappointing to note that this did not occur with the NWRL project.

If the project is to go ahead as originally stated and planned by the Government then our city of Sydney is, in my opinion, headed towards Third World standards of public transport; and then it won't be long before it will be just as quick to travel by bicycle, camel or rickshaw, when aligned with the resultant, multi-change/connect, more congested, impractical and inefficient, NWRL SSI-5414 planned passenger transport system.

C.C.

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