

SUBMISSION REGARDING NORTH WEST RAIL LINK EIS STAGE 2 PROJECT SS1-5414

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects

By email: plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

Submission by:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our Contacts:

[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]
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Background

We are residents of Cheltenham in the Hornsby Shire. The proposal detailed in EIS Stage 2 (**EIS2**) for the North West Rail Link (**NWRL**) will remove our direct rail link to the CBD. It will also increase our travel times to and from work every day and will require us to catch 3 different trains to access our work places, rather than the single direct route we now enjoy.

EIS2 makes no consideration of the negative impacts that the proposal will have on train commuters from areas around Cheltenham, Beecroft, Pennant Hills, Thornleigh and Normanhurst stations (**'Northern Line Customers'**). The proposal will force these commuters to change trains twice to get to the CBD. For this reason, we object to the proposal. We note that we wrote in August 2012 to the Honorable Gladys Berejiklian MP in this regard and have received no meaningful response to our concerns.¹

Our concerns are heightened by the fact that there is no current proposal for a second harbour crossing to connect the proposed new single deck trains to the city. Indeed, we understand from documents associated with EIS1, the NSW Government's Transport Master Plan, and from information given by Transport NSW Project Directors at a presentation to Engineers Australia dated 23 October 2012 that there is no funding allocated for a second harbour crossing and that this vital further stage of the project is not likely to be delivered for at least 20 years.

¹ On 17 October 2012 we received a letter from John Ajaka MLC which did not address our concerns but rather inadvertently acknowledged that the requirement to change at Epping and Chatswood would not *"suit all customers"*.

Reasons for Objection:

Disruption to Northern Line Passengers is Contrary to Project Objectives.

EIS 2 states that the objectives of the NWRL are to *“ensure customer needs are met through provision of a safe, high quality, integrated and affordable transport service”*. Removing Northern Line Customers’ single, efficient and direct route to the CBD is entirely contrary to this objective. Forcing these customers to change both at Epping and then again at Chatswood will increase disruption as well as travel times. Those Northern Line customers travelling to the CBD are very unlikely to get a seat at peak hour, particularly on the proposed single deck trains which are likely to be full by the time they reach Epping from Cudgegong road.²

Nor is it in line with the above objective to suggest that Northern line Customers should all Change at Epping and attempt to access the CBD via the Strathfield line. Such a route has a longer travel time³, particularly for customers wishing to commute to Town Hall and Wynyard, where the majority of CBD workers alight. Northern Line customers wishing to alight at these stations need to change trains at Central for another city circle service as Northern Line trains travelling via Strathfield terminate at Central.

A further objective of the project is to *“deliver a transparent service that has been informed by engagement with communities and stakeholders and demonstrates evidence based decision making”*. The decision to run single deck trains on the NWRL was made after the exhibition of NWRL EIS1.⁴ Since that time there has been very little engagement with communities that will be affected by the impact it will have on the Northern Line. Indeed, all that has taken place is one community information session held in late November 2012, mere weeks before submissions are due, at the Epping Club. Considering the detrimental affect the proposal will have on Northern Line residents, such minimal consultation is grossly inadequate and offensive to voters in the area. It is also contrary to the abovementioned stated objective.

We also note that Transport NSW carried out passenger surveys at Cheltenham station in or around early October 2012. Those surveys contained a number of questions covering various issues. However, there was no question addressing the impact the NWRL proposal would have on Cheltenham customers’ daily commute. Such an approach can hardly be described as ‘transparent’.

EIS2 Does Not Address Concerns of Northern Line Customers

² Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Project Director, Customer Strategy and Planning, North West Rail Link, Transport for NSW – response to question from the floor at presentation to Engineers Australia function dated 23 October 2012.

³ Ibid

⁴ EIS2 Chapter 1, timeline on pages 1.6 - 1.7. See Also Annexure ‘A’

The Executive Summary of EIS2 states that the aim of ‘community consultation’ prior to EIS2 was to *“record all issues raised”* and *“take into account issues and suggestions during the preparation of the EIS”*.

We raised the concerns regarding the disruptions that will be caused to Northern Line customers on several occasions prior to the completion of the EIS2. We were advised by a Place Manager of the NWRL Project that we could raise our concerns at any time and they would be taken into account.⁵ These concerns were raised as follows:

- Written correspondence to Gladys Berejikian MP, Minister for Transport dated 21 August 2012,
- Verbal and written Correspondence with Cecilia Densham, Place Manager – Cheltenham, NWRL from August 2012 – October 2012,
- Completed the ‘North West Rail Link Survey’ on 3 October,⁶
- Concern raised at public forum with Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Project Director, Customer Strategy and Planning, North West Rail Link, Transport for NSW at Engineer Australia Function on 23 October 2012,
- Letter to the Hon. Greg Smith MP, member for Epping dated 24 October 2012⁷, and
- Meeting with Hon Greg Smith MP, Member for Epping on Thursday 1 November 2012 at his offices in Epping.

Despite this, EIS2 does not record nor address our concerns. In fact EIS2 completely omits any consideration of the impact the proposal will have on Northern Line customers. While EIS2 provides ‘Indicative Travel Times’ for NWRL customers travelling on the proposed line to Macquarie Park, Chatswood, North Sydney and Wynyard, no ‘Indicative travel Times’ are provided for how the changes under the proposal will affect the Northern Line customers who will have to catch three, rather than one, train to access North Sydney and the CBD.

By failing to consider these issues, the authors of EIS2 have ignored responses from the community and proceeded on a basis that does not take into account the concerns of relevant stakeholders: a large number of existing rail customers. The NWRL proposal under EIS2 will inconvenience a large number of these existing rail customers and should not be approved.

NWRL ‘Project Justifications’ are Incomplete and Incorrect

EIS2 states as one of the *“project justifications”* that the NWRL would provide a *“high capacity rail link between suburban regions and busy inner city areas using single deck trains”*. This statement is incorrect. There is no funding allocated, nor any current proposal for a second harbour crossing that would enable *“busy inner city*

⁵ See Annexure B – Email from Cecilia Densham, Place Manager dated 4 October 2012

⁶ See Annexure D

⁷ Annexure C

areas” to be accessed by single deck trains. To the contrary, we have been advised that such a proposal is likely to be at least 20 years in the making, if it eventuates at all.⁸

Contrary to the project justification statement quoted above, EIS2 documents a proposal that would deliver all customers to Chatswood, where they would all then be required to change onto existing North Shore line trains to access North Sydney and the CBD. Current delays in the network between Chatswood and North Sydney are felt most prominently around Wollstonecraft and Waverton. Dumping a large number of passengers at Chatswood and forcing them all onto North Shore trains will not alleviate these delays. Rather, it is likely to cause greater congestion, increased crowding and longer delays for those customers wanting to travel from Chatswood into the CBD.

Some transport experts have stated in the media that the proposed interchange at Chatswood is unlikely to cope with the expected numbers and that in peak hour, customers alighting the proposed single deck trains are likely to have to wait for two or three crowded North Shore trains to pass before being able to board a train to cross the harbour bridge.⁹

A further justification for the project contained in EIS2 is that it will result *“in significant travel time savings for travel from many areas of the North West area to the Sydney CBD and Macquarie Park”*. Again, this statement ignores the concerns of existing customers on the Northern Line and the detrimental impact (and increased travel times) that the proposal will have on these customers as well as customers along the Epping to Chatswood Rail Link who wish to travel to the city.

For these reasons EIS2’s so-called justifications should be rejected.

EIS1 Did Not Include the Full Scope of the Project

Page 1, Chapter 3 of EIS2 notes that EIS1 was placed on public exhibition up until May 2012. The announcement regarding the proposal to use single deck trains was made after the submissions for EIS1 closed in June 2012 in the Sydney’s Rail Future document. Accordingly, EIS1, which was supposed to detail *“major civil works”* and to address *“environmental assessment requirements”* was lacking a vital detail about the design of the proposed NWRL – the single deck component. As a result, not only were stakeholders not properly informed at the time that EIS1 was on exhibition, EIS2 is based on a flawed and incomplete document (EIS1) that did not take into account the full scope of the proposal.

The NWRL Proposal is Inconsistent with Part 1 of the DUAP Integrating Land Use and Transport ‘Guidelines for Planning and Development’

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Dr Dick Day and Dr Paul Mees in articles by Jacob Saulwick, Transport Reporter, Sydney Morning Herald from June 2012

Principle 1 of DUAP's guidelines headed: 'Concentrate in Centres' states that best practice is achieved when *"public transport can directly penetrate the core of centres"*. The NWRL will impact Northern Line customers as follows: customers who currently have a direct link to the CBD (i.e. a direct link to the 'core') will be required to travel on three different trains to *"penetrate the core of the centre"*. As such, the proposal is clearly contrary to the above principle.

EIS2 Does not satisfy the requirement of s75P(1)(a) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

EIS2 does not demonstrate an *"appropriate and justified level of consultation with relevant stakeholders"*. This is particularly so in relation to the concerns of Northern Line customers. In particular with respect to the concerns of Northern Line customers, there has been no *"description of how stakeholder input has been considered in decisions on design and/or mitigation"* regarding the proposal to run single deck trains on the NWRL.

There is No Detail as to the Frequency or Capacity of Trains from Chatswood to the CBD

Chapter 6, page 22 states that *"customers from the NWRL would be able to simply cross the platform at Chatswood to board a train on existing rail networks to the city. During peak periods a train would arrive every three minutes from Chatswood to the city"*. This statement is ambiguous. It is not clear whether the author is stating that a train from the NWRL would *arrive* every three minutes at Chatswood. One would expect that if the author was making a statement about trains going from Chatswood to the CBD at peak hour that s/he would have spoken of trains *"departing Chatswood"* to the city at this time.

In any case, there is no certainty for commuters needing to travel from Chatswood to the city as to:

- How frequent trains departing Chatswood to the city will be,
- Whether they will still be affected by the same delays that are currently experienced around Wollstonecraft and Waverton, or
- Whether the trains will have sufficient space on them to carry the large numbers of passengers alighting the proposed single deck NWRL trains and boarding a North Shore train to the city.

No 'Comfortable Environment'

Chapter 6 of EIS2 addresses the need for a "comfortable environment" for commuters.¹⁰ It is expected that by the time the single deck trains originating at Cudgegong Road reach Epping there will only be standing room left available. That means that all customers boarding from Epping (including Northern Line customers

¹⁰ Chapter 6 page 6.19

who have had to alight at Epping) are likely to have to stand for the duration of their journey to Chatswood. It is also likely that all those customers needing the travel onto the city will board a North Shore line train that is at capacity during peak hour meaning that those customers will also be forced to stand for that further segment of the trip. Total travel time from Cudgegong Road to the city will be almost an hour. For Northern Line customers, having to change twice is likely to increase their travel time to the city to over 45 minutes. The likelihood of crowding on the single deck and North Shore trains means that customers who wish to use their travel time to work or red will be prevented from doing so as they will have to stand for the majority of their journey. Such a scenario is not only uncomfortable but unproductive. For example, many existing Northern Line customers use the time on their daily commute to work on laptops or ipads. Changing trains and standing for the majority of the journey will prevent them from doing this and will mean longer hours at the office.

Negative Impact on Lifestyle and Family

For Northern Line customers, the disruption of changing twice and inevitably longer travel times will also mean leaving home earlier to get to work and arriving home later, cutting out precious family time from customers who currently enjoy a fast, single journey.

Increased Traffic in Northern Areas

Forcing Northern Line customers to travel on three (potentially crowded) trains to access the CBD is likely to turn these customers away from rail altogether. Minister Berejiklian's statement to the media that customers around this area could drive to Cherrybrook and catch a train from there¹¹ is nonsensical and backwards. It defies logic to remove an existing direct rail link to the city and require customers to instead drive several kilometers out of their way (and backwards) to access an alternative link. Rather than doing this, customers are more likely to avoid rail altogether and drive to work. This will increase traffic congestion to the CBD.

Summary

For the reasons outlined above, we object to the NWRL project as outlined in EIS2. It is not necessary to inconvenience existing rail users in order to provide rail access to new areas. If the NWRL is to be built, it should be built properly with a direct link to the CBD, without inconveniencing existing City Rail customers on other lines.

Yours faithfully,

■ "Depending on where they live, customers in the Beecroft and Pennant Hills area also have the option to catch the new rapid transit trains on the north-west rail link from Cherrybrook station." Gladys Berejiklian, MP: Sydney Morning Herald Article.

Annexure A

From: Densham, Cecilia
[mailto:Cecilia.[Densham@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Cecilia.Densham@transport.nsw.gov.au)] **Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2012 12:16 PM **To:** [REDACTED] **Subject:** Submission regarding North-West rail link proposal

Dear [REDACTED] The scope changes from Heavy passenger to Rapid Transit single deck came about after EIS1 was on exhibition so no topical sessions regarding timetable changes and route from Epping to Chatswood were discussed. We will be having specialist information available during the EIS2 exhibition, I will be able to give you more details on this as we get closer to the exhibition date. Regards Cecilia

Annexure B

From: Densham, Cecilia

[mailto:Cecilia.Densham@transport.nsw.gov.au] ☐ **Sent:** Thursday, 4 October 2012 2:45 PM ☐ **To:** [REDACTED] **Subject:** RE: Submission regarding North-West rail link proposal

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your email dated 02/10/12

You may remember during our phone conversation on 20th August that I mentioned you could comment any time on the project and, whilst the official submission period had passed for EIS1, there would be another opportunity to provide comment and feedback during EIS2 (Environmental Impact 2) exhibition.

The announcement for EIS2 is imminent, I will email you once the announcement is made to inform you of information sessions, dates and times. This will give you an opportunity to meet and discuss your issues with some of the project team experts.

I suggest we meet once this information is available for comment.

There is a large amount of planning taking place right now about all aspects of the project, including the interchange at Chatswood.

It is appropriate that this level of planning occurs so that we can address any issues before the North West Rail Link is opened.

The North West Rail Link is stage three of the Government's Sydney's Rail Future plan – stages one and two include significant improvements to the wider Sydney rail network to allow for more customers.

This includes significant capacity improvements at the Chatswood interchange. These improvements will be made before the North West Rail Link comes online.

The project team is also working hard to continue planning for Chatswood and make sure this interchange operates efficiently when the North West Rail Link opens.

[REDACTED], I urge you to attend an information session, it will certainly give you a broader understanding of this long awaited project.

Kind Regards,

Cecilia Densham

Place Manager | North West Rail Link □ Transport for NSW

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Ph 02 82656077 M 0478407152

T 1300 788 245 or 1800 019 989 F 02 8265 6401

www.northwestrail.com.au

Annexure C

See attached Letter dated 24 October 2012 to Greg Smith MP

Annexure D

Thanks for completing the survey.

Your responses are listed below for your personal records.

YOUR TRANSPORT: Which of the following transport options do you use in a typical month?

Train

Which of these modes would you use most often?

Train

YOUR DAY TO DAY TRAVEL: What is the purpose of most of your travel?

Work

NORTH WEST RAIL LINK:
The NSW Government has announced it will build the North West Rail Link, a train line from Epping to Rouse Hill. It will have new stations at Cherrybrook, Castle Hill, the Hills Centre, Norwest and Kellyville. Before today how much have you seen, read or heard about the North West Rail Link?

A little

ABOUT THE PROJECT:
Which of the following do you believe would be the main benefits of the North West Rail Link?

It will relieve some pressure of Sydney's public transport

Other, please specify

As a resident of Cheltenham, I am concerned the project is detrimental to existing customers at stations between Thornbury and Epping. It will deny us our direct route to the city, increase travel times and cause more of us to drive.

Are there any concerns you have about this project? (Please take some time to tell us about them).

Other - please specify

As a resident of Cheltenham, I am concerned the project is detrimental to existing customers at stations between Thornbury and Epping.

and Epping. It will deny us our direct route to the city, increase travel times and cause more of us to drive.

Thinking about the North West Rail Link Project, what would you like to know more about?

How residents at stations between Thornleigh and Epping are being factored in (if at all).

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTRE (FOR THOSE WHO HAVE VISITED THE CENTRE):
How would you rate your experience at the Community Information Centre?

What did you like best about your visit to the Community Information Centre?

What could we do to make the Community Information Centre better?

KEEPING IN TOUCH: How would you like to receive more information about the North West Rail Link Project?

Radio/Television
Email
Stories in local and metropolitan newspapers
Advertisements in the local and metropolitan newspapers
Community meetings
Brochures in targeted areas

ABOUT YOU: Which locality do you live in?

Cheltenham

What age group are you?

25-34

THANKS FOR HELPING US! Please enter your email details here so we can provide updates from time to time:

Thanks again

The Hon. Greg Smith, MP
Suite 303
Level 3 51 Rawson Street
EPPING NSW 2121

URGENT

24 October 2012

Also by Facsimile: (02) 9877 0405

North-West Rail Link Proposal – Detrimental to Residents in Hornsby Electorate Request for Meeting

Dear Hon. Mr Smith MP,

I am a resident of your electorate from Cheltenham. I write on behalf of other residents to express the concern of a growing number of residents in the Epping electorate regarding the government's proposed North West Rail Link ('NWRL').

Part of the NWRL proposal is to replace the existing Epping to Chatswood line with new single deck trains which will terminate at Chatswood. This will greatly inconvenience voters from your electorate, specifically residents of Cheltenham, Beecroft, Thornleigh, Normanhurst and Pennant Hills ('Hornsby/Epping residents'). These residents currently enjoy a single direct train route to the CBD (via the northern line through Epping and Macquarie Park). The governments' proposed single deck train line will force residents to catch three trains to access the CBD. They will have to change first at Epping (to a single deck train) and then again at Chatswood (back to a double deck train) to cross the Harbour bridge.

We are very disappointed by the government's decision to run single deck trains on the NWRL, particularly as this component of the proposal was not exhibited in the first EIS. Removing our direct train route will severely inconvenience Hornsby residents by increasing change-over and travel times. Ironically, it is likely to force more cars onto the roads in our area. It will also drive down property prices in the electorate.

I have spoken to Transport NSW's Cheltenham contact person, Cecilia Densham about this on numerous occasions. I have also written to the Honourable Gladys Berejiklian who has not constructively responded to these concerns but has instead told me to await a second EIS. Yesterday, I attended an Engineers Australia function at which Mr Tom Gellibrand (Deputy Project Director, Customer Strategy and Planning, North West Rail Link, Transport for NSW) spoke about the project. Mr Gellibrand confirmed that the NWRL will inconvenience residents from your electorate by forcing them to change trains twice to access the CBD via Chatswood. Mr Gellibrand also explained to me that this issue had been "considered" and that unfortunately there are some "winners and losers" as a result of the NWRL. The "losers" are clearly the residents of the Hornsby/Epping electorate.

I request an urgent meeting with you to discuss this issue. In particular, what steps are being taken to protect the interests of Hornsby/Epping residents in respect of the NWRL?

I look forward to hearing from you. I can be contacted at work on [REDACTED] and by email: [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,
[REDACTED]

CC: Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust & Pennant Hills District Civic Trust