

Robert Ghisla

39-47 Robert Rd

Cherrybrook NSW 2126

1-12- 2012

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects

Major Projects Assessment

Department of Planning and Infrastructure

GPO Box 39

Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: SUBMISSION RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT 2
NORTH WEST RAIL LINK / PROPOSED CHERRYBROOK STATION**

As a resident of Robert Rd for a period exceeding 25 years I am very concerned with the safety implications and other serious issues which will arise if Robert Rd is to be considered to be an option for major road access to the recently re-located Cherrybrook railway station

I strongly object to the proposed use of Robert Rd Cherrybrook as major access for buses to the proposed NWRL Cherrybrook Rail station

The use of Robert Rd as a main access corridor for buses to serve the proposed Cherrybrook railway station for will result in a very significant permanent loss of amenity and quiet suburban quality of life to the local community

BACKGROUND

In mid 1987 Hornsby Shire Council released a study titled the *Cherrybrook Precinct Plan*. The plan had been prepared, together with the accompanying Local Environmental Plan (LEP 63) with significant input from a number of consultants, and its purpose was to provide a subdivision and road hierarchy to serve as a blueprint for the orderly development of this largely undeveloped portion of the Hornsby Shire.

COUNTY DRIVE WAS DESIGNED AS A DIVIDED MAJOR ROAD, INTENDED TO HANDLE LARGE VOLUMES OF TRAFFIC

Within this abovementioned plan, County Drive was earmarked to be the main carrier for vehicular traffic from the northern region of the suburb, to Castle Hill Rd in the south. The then existing roadway connections between Castle Hill Rd in the south and New Line Road in the north, ie, Franklin and David Roads were to be terminated or modified to discourage “rat run” opportunities. Edward Bennett Drive, intended to provide an additional traffic connection link between Castle Hill Rd and New Line Rd was constructed with similar pavement width as County Drive. It was constructed in the early 1980’s, and though it has sufficient width to accommodate two lanes in each direction, it remains surprisingly unconnected to New Line Rd at their common easterly intersection point

Even though a significant 25 metre wide corridor was created for the construction of County Drive, it exists today primarily as a single lane congested roadway because of seemingly illogical recent usable lane reduction changes implemented by Council

The vast majority of properties fronting County Drive are situated on land holdings of 700 or more square metres, with ample long driveways for respective onsite parking opportunities, yet the residents of 8 metre pavement width Robert Rd , with allotments in the region of 500m² or less in area are forced to defend the NWRL proposal to restrict parking / stopping on their road to facilitate bus access?

ROBERT ROAD WAS DESIGNATED TO CONTINUE AS A NARROW WIDTH LOCAL CARRIER

Robert Rd was designated to continue as a narrow width local carrier within the abovementioned plan. It was to be terminated with a cul-de-sac design at its southern extent, to prevent through traffic to Castle Hill Rd. This cul-de-sac configuration was modified some time later as the newly formed Ashford Rd, which runs parallel to Robert Rd to the west, also underwent a design modification to prevent direct access from Dalkeith Rd to John Rd, with safety concerns as the issue identified by Council. The partial closure of Ashford Rd re-directed the significant number of residents in Dalkeith Rd, Dunraven Way, Rochford Way, Mirium Cl, and Zulfi Pl onto Robert Rd , and for this reason, the intersection of Castle Hill Rd and Robert Rd became a “Left in, Left out” intersection to facilitate the increased traffic flow

PUBLIC SAFETY

Robert Rd is a narrow road with a pavement width of approx 8.0 metres. To enter Robert Rd from John Rd, long wheelbase vehicles such as buses have difficulty in negotiating the tight radius curve in a safe manner. On a number of previous occasions, where serious road accidents caused the closure of Castle Hill Rd and subsequent diversion of traffic into John and Robert Rds, the level of traffic chaos generated by larger vehicles entering and exiting Robert Rd from John Road created confusion and gridlock as these vehicles were forced to utilise lower gears to ascend the steep initial “blind” section of the road, generating unacceptable noise and exhaust pollution.

The majority of the existing properties in Robert Rd have been constructed in recent times at minimal allowable setbacks to front boundaries. Hornsby Shire Council has in place a 9 metre minimum front setback requirement for any two storey portion of a residential housing application, reducing to a setback of 6 metres for any single storey portion of the dwelling. In interests of achieving an attractive home design with adequate street appeal, the vast majority of homes fronting the western side of Robert Road, particularly those north of Dalkeith Rd, have double garages which have been constructed at the abovementioned 6 m minimum set back. Many of these properties have steep, downward sloping driveways due to the area’s undulating topography

There presently exists no provision to enter and exit these properties in a forward direction with a motor vehicle. To reverse a vehicle up a very steep grade, across a heavily utilised pedestrian footpath, onto a busy road is a hazardous situation which should be avoided

Property no 16-24 Robert Rd has undergone recent subdivision approval for 15 new allotments and the works are due to begin shortly. Other larger properties in Robert Rd have similar development potential and will significantly increase the number of residents residing on or adjacent to Robert Rd, and who will also suffer the negative impacts associated with parking restrictions and high levels of traffic flow

Robert Park, located on the corner of Robert Rd and Dalkeith Rd is very heavily patronised by parents with small children. It is conveniently located and is located at considerable distance from other similar parks in the area. The proposed large increase in traffic flow along Robert Rd will reduce the safety of small children accessing this park

PROPOSED NO STOPPING / NO PARKING RESTRICTIONS FOR ROBERT RD

The estate type properties on the eastern side of Robert Rd have been constructed to provide frontage to their respective main estate roads, and are generally situated on small allotments in the region of 300m² in area. The proposal to prohibit street parking/ stopping in Robert Rd will undoubtedly create ongoing maintenance trades and services parking headaches for these property owners, as there was no Development Application requirement from Council for these properties to accommodate on-site visitor or trades and service parking within their grounds due to the availability of convenient and abundant street parking on Robert Rd. The operation of waste collection service vehicles will also create a dangerous and hazardous situation when undertaking collections from these Robert Rd multi housing estates due to the large volume of estate waste bins to be serviced.

The proposed parking restrictions will similarly impact on other Robert Rd residents who presently rely on street parking for visitors, lawn care and other service contractors, and overflow parking for the occasional extra car

DECLINE IN PROPERTY VALUES

There is no doubt that properties with direct frontage to Robert Rd will suffer a decline in valuation relative to other similar properties in the locality. As the holder of a full Real Estate Licence with significant local market appraisal knowledge for a period exceeding 30 years, experience has taught me that properties located on busy car and bus usage thoroughfares, which are lacking in street front parking, will always sell comparatively at a lower price than those properties of the same type which are not similarly affected. The affected properties are less attractive to purchasers and usually require a longer marketing period to achieve a sale

LOSS OF STREET TREE CHARACTER

The northern, and other verges of Robert Rd were beautified some years ago with the planting of very attractive trees of the Golden Robinia and other similar varieties. These street trees have now developed arching canopies which form a stunning cascade of approximately 3 metres of overhang, covering Robert Rd. In the years to come these trees would significantly contribute to the creation of a positive ambience and subsequent desirable street appeal to enhance the Robert Rd precinct.

The trees would require disfiguring, ongoing severe pruning, or complete removal if No parking / No stopping restrictions were adopted along Robert Rd to facilitate bus access

ROBERT RD UNSUITABLE FOR BUS, PASSENGER CAR, PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRAFFIC

The residents of Robert Rd and surrounds accept that, as an offset to the benefits of local rail availability, they must also accept a share of the increase in traffic flow and congestion, but the use of Robert Rd as a bus corridor, with accompanying parking restrictions is an example of ad hoc bad planning, producing negative long term impact as a result.

Robert Rd realistically will be utilised by a huge number of pedestrians and cyclists for station access. Given the impracticality of road widening to accommodate a higher level of vehicular traffic, coupled with the increased public safety concerns, it is surely evident that Robert Rd is unsuitable as a proposal for bus access to the railway station, and that major vehicular access to a such a long term infrastructure project, with the potential to display enormous growth in patronage, should be confined to existing major routes

BUSES SHOULD ACCESS CHERRYBROOK STATION VIA COUNTY DRIVE/CASTLE HILL RD

. The catchment for this station is likely to include the distant Dural, Arcadia and Kenthurst Regions as the access to the closer station Hornsby, traverses the treacherous Galston Gorge. It would follow that traffic from other areas should have main road access to a station of this type without creating unacceptable acoustic and congestion impacts on the local community

The preferred outcome for major bus and passenger car access to the proposed new rail station is via the existing route of County Drive and Castle Hill Rd. It is surely unreasonable and unrealistic to hold the view that County Drive remain a single lane roadway from John Rd to Castle Hill Rd in morning peak traffic flow periods following the implementation of the NWRL

CREATION OF AN ADDITIONAL SLIP/MERGE LANE FROM COUNTY DR EASTBOUND

There exists also an opportunity to create an eastbound additional slip lane along Castle Hill Rd from the County Drive intersection. Hornsby Shire Council restricted vehicular access to future properties fronting Castle Hill Rd within the planning instrument relating to the pre-development subdivision of this large undeveloped parcel of land to facilitate possible future road widening. In addition, the building line setback for these future properties was increased to 18 metres leaving adequate width to incorporate a bus only, or general traffic slip/merge lane to improve the function of this troubled intersection and facilitate station access. The replanted eucalypts which presently occupy part of this 18m setback area are of recent circa 1993 origin and were replacements for the original older growth eucalypt mix

which failed to survive the significant alteration to natural soil levels as a result of subdivision works. If the removal of any of these trees is necessary for the creation of the additional slip lane, offset replanting can be implemented for these young trees without difficulty.

Initially, the newly created slip/merging lane would extend to approx 400 metres in length, but in the future, the remaining three old growth locally native Blue Gums, which are located on Castle Hill Rd adjacent to Robert Rd, and highly unlikely to survive the subsoil hydrological changes associated with the revised shallow tunnelling depth, could be removed to facilitate a continuous bus only lane extending from County Drive to the Cherrybrook station with minimal effect on existing properties. County Drive, coupled with a newly constructed slip/merging lane on Castle Hill Rd is presently the best option to provide an acceptable and safe main road connection to the proposed station.

OTHER POSSIBLE OPTIONS TO REDUCE COUNTY DR/ CASTLE HILL RD CONGESTION

- (1) Prohibit east side morning peak period parking on County Drive between John Rd and Castle Hill Rd to double capacity of County Drive as was originally intended
- (2) Complete the intersection of Edward Bennett Dr and New Line Road to allow traffic from New Line Rd to access High's Rd via Coonara Ave through the existing signal controlled intersection, to reduce vehicle numbers accessing the County Drive / High's Rd intersection
- (3) Reconfigure the presently closed off southern end of David Rd, at its intersection with Castle Hill Rd to incorporate a "Left in / Left out" facility similar to the present Robert Rd design. Though not likely to produce any significant benefit alone, the small reduction in County Drive usage should allow a possible examination and adjustment of signal phasing sequence and timing to achieve a worthwhile improvement in the efficiency of the Castle Hill Rd / County Drive intersection.
- (4) Consideration should also be given to the installation of traffic signals at the abovementioned David Rd / Castle Hill Rd intersection to allow right hand turns from David Rd west into Castle Hill Rd. If this signal function was synchronised with the operation of the County Drive / Castle Hill Rd signal system, as is the case in many Sydney local traffic areas, traffic flow would be significantly improved

PARKING AT CHERRYBROOK STATION

The proposed reduction of available “park and ride” spaces for train travellers is also of great concern. The vehicular overflow from the designated rail parking facility at Thornleigh railway station saturates the local areas adjacent to the station. I personally have tried unsuccessfully to utilise this convenient Thornleigh railway parking area on many occasions. The proposed Cherrybrook station parking facility has similar capacity to that of Thornleigh and will be found to be inadequate within a short period of time. Commuters will always wish to drive and park at railway stations in extreme weather conditions. Parents of young train travelling school age children will always wish to park and wait for their child’s train at the station.

The proposed parking facility is clearly inadequate and expansion opportunities must be identified at this design stage to avoid future local area parking congestion

ACOUSTICS

NWRL residents are well aware of the massive existing backlog of infrastructure needed to facilitate the orderly growth of the state, and accept that the cost cutting measures necessary to deliver the NWRL ie, change to Metro system with associated savings in a significant reduction in tunnelling depth and tunnel bore diameter were necessary, but a major concern involves the likely impact of increased noise levels due to the revised minimal tunnel depth on property owners in close proximity to the station complex.

It is of significant importance that state of the art noise control measures are adopted during this planning stage to minimise the impact of ongoing traffic and rail operation noise.

As mentioned previously, as local resident of the Robert Rd area, I welcome the decision by government to implement the NWRL. I am certainly prepared to accept a reasonable change in traffic congestion, but the proposal to utilise Robert Rd as a major access route to the Cherrybrook rail station is completely unreasonable and must be rejected

Yours faithfully

Robert Ghisla

Authorised officer Vitone Developments Pty Ltd