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Department of Planning and Infrastructure

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects

Application number (SSI-5414)

Our Submission

This is a formal submission to state that I strongly object and oppose the proposed operational traffic management contained within EIS2. It is my expectation that you will consider my objections to the various points raised in EIS2 in regards to the strategy of the NWRL to move buses and commuter traffic accessing and leaving the Cherrybrook station into Robert Road and make a final decision based both on accurate assessment data of traffic operation around the Cherrybrook station together with the impacts on safety on the residents of these local residential roads.

My submission covers objections to operational traffic and transport to and from Cherrybrook station raised by EIS2 that will affect Robert Road.

1. NWRL strategy in regards to Operational Traffic & Transport (Technical paper 2 Operational Traffic & Transport produced by AECOM)

1.1 Chapter 7 Future road network operation, section 7.3.6 Strategic Traffic Modelling- NWRL Impacts, page 43 states "The effect of the NWRL project, with respect to the strategic road network……, is to reduce traffic flows on main roads in the corridor, as a result of transfers from car to train for commuter journeys'.

1.2 Traffic flow outside the immediate vicinity of the Cherrybrook station

1.3 Founding the proposed traffic operation management on past forecasts.

1.4 Preferred option proposed by EIS2 for bus movements to access Cherrybrook station

My objections to various items named above:

1.1 *The effect of the NWRL project, with respect to the strategic road network……, is to reduce traffic flows on main roads in the corridor, as a result of transfers from car to train for commuter journeys'.*

1. I question the overall validity of this strategy. The NWRL strategy is the founding base for which all traffic operations (car commuters and buses) around Cherrybrook station are proposed and is substantiated by the NWRL as the preferred option after consideration of various alternatives for operational traffic management in the Cherrybrook area.

The location of the various stations have been proposed to be adjacent to main roads, just as every other station in the rail network in Sydney. This strategy might be based on attempts to lighten the traffic volume on main roads as volumes of traffic are expected to rise as the northwest areas of Sydney expand. However with the existence of various stations along the North West there should be the simultaneous expectation that the volumes around the main roads linking the northwest to the city will also be lighter in load as a result of the operation of the Northwest rail service beginning in 2021. Therefore the strategy fails to substantiate adequately the need for to move the traffic load into local roads. That is, the volume of traffic will be lighter as a result of the implementation of the rail service. Commuter rail stations are built near or on main roads in order to ease the access of commuters to the stations.

However, with this strategy in mind EIS2 forecasts that for Cherrybrook station at least, there will be– '*a modest increase in eastbound traffic in Castle Hill Road in the vicinity of the station (3%); and an increase in westbound traffic on Castle Hill Road approaching the station (15%), but substantial increases in local access streets, particularly from the north (150% - though this is on a base of very low levels of traffic) section 7.3.6 Strategic Traffic Modelling- NWRL Impacts, page 44.*

One hundred and fifty percent (150%) is a exceedingly high level in view that EIS2 forecasts that Robert Road is to carry on average 700 traffic daily within the 4 peak hours (morning and afternoon, see Table 6 Cherrybrook station – Roads summary page 47). Therefore with the expected 150% increase in traffic on Robert Road will yield approximately 1750 cars in peak hours (4 hours overall) = 435 cars /hour = 7cars /min = 1.1 car every 10 seconds. And this is without taking into account the buses which the EIS2 proposes to be on an average of 16 buses per hour one way i.e. a rate of 1 bus every 2-3 minutes to use Robert Road.

I strongly oppose this strategy:

1. This is just an unreasonably high level of traffic for road such as Robert Road. Robert Road is considered by council to be designated as a local road. However this classification (local road) of Robert Road

is questionable. This needs to be addressed as the level of traffic a road can carry is determined by attributed to the road.

Please refer to: Environmental Assessment No. 2 Technical Paper: Construction Traffic and Transport Management - prepared by AECOM Attached to EIS2. Refer page no.28, stating

'*Franklin Road, Robert Road and Glenhope Road are all local roads with priority junctions at Castle Hill Road. Adjacent to the site Franklin Road and Robert Road are narrow two lane pavements****. Robert Road is a narrow road of approximately 8.5 metres which provides only a single traffic lane if vehicles are parked on both sides of the road****. Franklin Road provides kerb and gutter on the western side of the road with a narrow two lane pavement (approximately 7.5 metres wide) and narrow unsealed shoulder on the eastern side of the street. Glenhope Road provides two traffic lanes and parking lanes adjacent to the kerb although no edge marking is provided.*

Robert Road residents have engaged the services of a civil engineer who has informed us that the Robert road width provided in EIS2 is incorrect. The actual road width of Robert Road is a 7 metre carriageway width. The classification for such width is as Cul-de-Sac or Access road (it is not very specific), NOT a local road. Robert road has been referred as local road by Hornsby shire council (refer chapter 9, section 9.5.2) as per Ausroad (National Association of Roads and Traffic Australia which is the national body for road standards). Local Road is classified as two way lane with 2 parking lanes allowed and width a carriageway width of 9 m. Robert road does not fit this category.

The civil engineer concludes in his report to Robert road residents that: EIS2 is void in this aspect. All analysis undertaken by consultant AECOM whether intentionally or unintentionally are based on wrong carriageway width, this includes LINSIG analysis. Also Robert Road is classified wrongly as LOCAL Road.

Robert Road as is, is not able to handle such load of traffic without impacting severely on road width restrictions which in turn impact on the residents.

To prevent repetitive reading, Please see our suggestion for traffic flow at the end of this response as it also includes references to the other points addressed below.

2. Cherrybrook station is the only station in the NWRL to be built within a residential area. This is obvious when the number of residential demolitions required to allow for sufficient space for a station to be built in Cherrybrook reaches 28 of the 60 demolitions that have to take place in the whole of the NWRL network. The impact on the residents

has been huge. Whilst all other stations are positioned in semi industrial/shopping areas this is not the case with Cherrybrook station. Therefore access to the station becomes problematic as the station is directly surrounded by residences. We can appreciate that EIS2 has attempted to solve this huge problem whilst attempting simultaneously to keep with the NWRL strategy. However, Cherrybrook station is indeed an exception to the rule. The immediate surrounding roads are not classified to be able take the capacity of traffic proposed by EIS2. EIS2 valiantly attempts to substantiate their reasoning for moving traffic into local roads with quite a number of weak points that are discussed further in my objection. Significantly, there is a better alternative which although do not conform with the NWRL strategy *in keeping commuter traffic and buses off the main roads into local roads*, would lessen the impact that traffic movements are expected to occur on the local area. Such alternative proposes the use of County Drive and Castle hill road for accessing the station. The traffic report commissioned by residents of Robert road shows traffic (http://www.saverobertroad.com/page10.html) without a doubt that the assessment reported in EIS2 in regards to increased congestion of Castle Hill road *if the station traffic access is NOT moved to local residential roads* **is completely unfounded as it is not supported by the current data on traffic movements**.

1.2 Traffic flow outside the immediate vicinity of the station

EIS2 proposes commuter traffic and buses to Cherrybrook station to be moved to local roads ie Robert Road, Johns road, Franklin road however, EIS2 does not address what happens in terms of operational traffic movements and impacts of such traffic after leaving Robert Road. This information needs inclusion in the study.

Currently the proposed approach is based on traffic flowing from the North via County Drive and left into Johns Road followed by right into Robert Road and onto the station. With the main load of traffic North of the Cherrybrook station having the need to return to point of origin whether commuter cars, kiss and ride or buses, there will be the need to consider the impact of such movement on the intersection of Johns Road and Robert Road and Johns road and County Drive.

EIS2 proposes that by accessing Robert Road for traffic movement into and from the Cherrybrook station will decrease congestion from north leaving traffic on castle hill Road as well as turning north bound traffic from castle hill Road onto County drive in the afternoon peak. However, in reality what is being done here is that the congestion has just moved from a main road able to handle high traffic volumes to local roads not able to handle high traffic volumes. With County drive being restricted to a single lane this makes accessing County drive even more difficult from the intersection turning right into County drive from John's Road. Since residents of north of Cherrybrook station access Cherrybrook via Edward Bennet, through Neale, Franklin and

down Johns Road (mostly because the traffic signals at County Drive do not favour a right turn into County Drive (we have had on a number of occasions at least 2 complete light changes without the right turn green signal indicating a right turn into County drive from Castle hill road coming on)), we can expect the development of congested local roads at the intersection of Robert Road (1.1 cars /10 seconds plus a bus every 2-3 minutes) and Johns Road and then at Johns Road into County drive.

Such congestion will:

1. Reduce resident safety as there is no pedestrian crossings in these 'local' roads, there is limited appropriate pedestrian pavement space
2. Create substantial delays for residents of Roslyn place and Ashford road from accessing Johns Road. These residents have no other way out of their street but through Johns road should they want to access Cherrybrook north.
3. Place at risk the safe operation of dropping off and pick up children at the Kindalin childcare centre that opens directly onto Johns road.

1.3 Founding the proposed traffic operation management on past forecasts.

EIS2 clearly acknowledged the fact that "the traffic modeling analysis in this report was undertaken using earlier demand forecasts" Chapter 8, proposed stations and precints, section 8.13 Estimated traffic generation in 2021, page 46., and that supplementary analysis of future proposals may be required

We strongly recommend that appropriate traffic assessment be carried out based on current traffic flow activity and the analysis and forecasts interpreted by experts in the field. The conclusions reached by EIS2 for using Robert road for all traffic movements (commuter cars, kiss and ride and buses) are not supported by current traffic data measurements. For instance, EIS2 indicates that County Drive is already considered congested (F level in peak times) and the addition of buses and other traffic travelling to the station will congested even further. What EIS2 fails to include is that the left turn for traffic from County drive into Castle hill road is virtually considered an A level because of the minimal amount of traffic turning left into Castle hill road at peak times. The congestion on this road relates only to the right turn at county drive and into castle hill road. Please see the independent traffic report requested by Robert road residents (http://www.saverobertroad.com/page10.html)

With two lanes on County drive open to traffic each way (restricted at this point) there would be no reason for the traffic generated by the Dural, Glenorie, Cherrybrook travelling towards the Cherrybrook station via County drive to congest at what should be considered an A level left side of the Castle hill /County drive intersection whilst decreasing the congestion that now occurs for traffic turning right at County drive onto Castle Hill.

It is indeed worrying the fact that two days prior to EIS2 public viewing, road counters were placed on Johns Road, Robert Road and Franklin Road. It is not known what organization ordered that an assessment of traffic flows on these local rods be made. However, this immediately raises the suspicion that the conclusions reached by AECOM in EIS2 for use of Robert Road for the purpose above are questionable and that appropriate assessment is indeed required. The residents of Robert Road have enlisted the services of an independent traffic measurement assessment to carryout an assessment on the level of traffic flow on Robert road, Johns road and the potential for the traffic flow from the north of Cherrybrook (Dural,Glenorie etc) to access the station use County drive.

For brevity I include a concluding excerpt from the report titled:

Traffic study of proposed development of NWRL Cherrybrook station and impact on Robert rd.

This traffic management plan is prepared by Inco Traffic Management on behalf of the residents of Robert road, Cherrybrook.

DISCUSSION

As mentioned, the major arguments/assumptions for using Robert road as the main feeder road to the station seem to be that County Drive and Castle Hill roads cannot be used as the main feeder route to the station because:

a) There is a need to maintain bus stops along John Road, and

b) The intersection of County Drive and Castle Hill road is already saturated with traffic so buses cannot use County Drive.

c) Robert Road is well below is traffic capacity and can handle far more traffic.

These arguments do not stand up to analysis.

a) There is no need to maintain bus stops along John Road.

- Bus stop 1 is within 20 metres of County Drive and Bus stop 2 is barely used. Further Stop 2 is only 250 metres away from bus stop 1.

b) The intersection of County Drive and Castle Hill road is not saturated with traffic.

c) Robert Road is at traffic capacity and cannot handle far more traffic.

1.4 Preferred option proposed by EIS2 for bus movements to access Cherrybrook station

EIS2 offers a number of options for bus access to the Cherrybrook station. We strongly oppose any option that proposes the use of Robert Road as a route for accessing and leaving the station. Included in these are:

Alternative 1 and the preferred option stated in EIS2 using both Robert and Franklin Roads.

EIS2 states as the main disadvantages to alternative 1 and others where Robert Road is used:

1. *Minimise diversion of existing bus routes*

response – Residents can still access to these buses via county drive. The two stops on Johns road are 20 and 250m from County drive. Presently a number of residents at the top of Robert road nearest to Castle hill road walk 400 m down Robert Road to catch the bus service that stops at Johns Road. Such diversion is unlikely to impact existing bus routes when there are only two stops within walking distance of one another. Anywhere in the immediate area north of Cherrybrook station residents are within or less than 400 metres reach of a main road and therefore a variety of access to bus stops in those roads. These include:
County drive - from Johns Road and Patu close,
New Line road - from Franklin road, Myson Drive, Edward Bennet, Valda and Victoria roads.

This point made by EIS2 regarding diversion is very weak.

2.*Increase congestion on Castle Hill road*

response: The traffic assessment conducted by an independent service demonstrates that there is very little traffic turning left into Castle hill road from Country drive at peak hours with the bulk of traffic turning right from County drive to castle Hill road. The road is purpose built to handle such traffic. Modifications to open two lanes each way and better management of traffic light signal changes /slipways to the left onto Castle hill road would ease any such congestion should it develop.

3*. Lengthen journey times for existing buses passengers as well as those accessing the station*

response: the distance covered in County drive to reach Cherrybrook station location is the same as if travelling in Johns road and Robert Road. The fact that Robert road can not handle such large volumes of traffic would indicate that more time will be spent on negotiating Johns road and then Robert Road where extra care will be required as buses will have to pass each other as well as give way to commuter traffic.

This EIS2 argument regarding lengthening times for passengers is weak.

4. 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.

response: how so, as the same routes are expected and residents on Robert road and nearby streets will walk to the station. This EIS2 argument is weak.

5. 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.

response: Modification of pedestrian access by way of building a pedestrian bridge is the only way to obtain absolute safety in Castle hill road. Adequate sight is provided by the proposed set of traffic control light at the intersection of Robert and Castle hill road.

I would like the Director, Infrastructure Projects to please review the data, consider our objections and consider the better option of maintaining our local roads free of high volumes of traffic to access the Cherrybrook station. A number of possibilities exist that should be reconsidered. For example:

1.There is the possibility to open up a bus lane only on County Drive in either direction during to cater solely for buses that need to access the Cherrybrook Station, thereby avoiding the potential for buses to get "gridlocked" in peak hour traffic.

2. Slip ways from Castle hill road left directly onto the station for continual traffic access. Safety has been raised as an issue for pedestrians. A number of pedestrian crossing exists such as the one proposed. For example: The intersection of Lane cove road and Waterloo road right in front of the Macquarie park station. Lane cove road is a 3 lane main road, yet a pedestrian crossing is installed at this slipway road into Waterloo road.

3. Anyway one looks at it, safety in crossing Castle Hill road for accessing the station can only be assured if a pedestrian bridge is erected.