

MICHAEL KNIGHT NEWS RELEASE



Minister for Public Works and Services
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New South Wales

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M2 SPECIAL ACQUISITION POLICY ABOLISHED

The State Government today announced it had abolished the M2 Special Acquisition Policy in a move that could potentially save the State hundreds of millions of dollars.

The previous Coalition Government, under the then Transport Minister Bruce Baird, devised the M2 Special Acquisition Policy to allow the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) to buy certain properties that were purchased prior to March 1987 and that are adjacent to the M2 or separated from the M2 by a narrow, low volume road.

None of these properties were required for the construction of the M2. After acquisition by the RTA, they would be resold by the RTA to new owners. The difference between the price paid by the RTA and what it was sold to the new owner for would be picked up by taxpayers.

Mr Knight said this policy was unprecedented and gave people living near the route of the M2 a better deal than people living in other parts of Sydney and New South Wales.

"Up until its introduction - no road project in this State had such a policy. Bruce Baird, in an effort to keep his constituents and those of his Liberal colleagues happy he introduced the Special Acquisition Policy," he said.

"There was in effect, a rule for people living near the route of the M2 and another rule for people living elsewhere.

"The Liberals buy-out of these people has already cost the State \$5.2 million, up to a further \$4.5 million worth of acquisitions are underway and, in the case of the M2, it threatened to blow-out by a further \$5.4 million.

"This policy had to be stopped now. It could have cost the taxpayers of New South Wales hundreds of millions of dollars because people could have asked for it to be applied on every other road project throughout the State.

"In addition, bungling by the previous Coalition Government on the M2 has cost taxpayers an extra \$105 million over and above what they said it would cost.

"The financial arrangements surrounding the M2 are a disaster created by Peter Collins and this Government is doing its best to put an end to the blowouts," Mr Knight said.