

Full Under Cover Car Parking at all Stations

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects

Emailed to: plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

Please do not publish my address or phone number; my name is OK to publish.

Application name: Full Under Cover Car Parking at all Stations

Application number: SSI-5100

I fully support the proposal, with the following addition.

The main aim of the NWRL is to take cars off our roads. People will continue to use their cars and our roads until it becomes more convenient to use the NWRL than battle the traffic. Therefore, if we're going to invest in the NWRL at all, it MUST be made convenient and attractive to use.

My concern is the small number of car parks that the EIS contemplates (4,000 spaces spread over a number of stations along the entire line, with a number of stations not having any additional car parking at all – for those, you can just park in the streets). 4,000 car parks is vastly inadequate to make the NWRL attractive to use compared to driving to and from work.

The additional cost to the project of adequate car parking would leverage the spend (ie. get the most out of it) that must be allocated to the rail line anyway, so that the overall project investment provides more service (return) for the investment. The current NWRL proposal with inadequate car-parking is analogous to building a tollroad with limited on-ramps, thus reducing the vehicle numbers and the resultant return on investment. Or building a house without doors. It makes no sense.

I understand that the transport “model” being touted for people to access the NWRL is that each station is serviced by a combination of walking, bicycle, kiss & ride or local bus. That sounds nice in theory but does not stand up to pragmatic logic and reality. For the vast majority who are not within a couple of kilometres of a station, they will have a choice:

1. Work out the vagaries of bus timetables; walk to a bus stop and wait (in the weather); ride the bus on a tortured route through as many local streets as possible (to maximise the bus route's catchment); transfer from the bus to the train (hopefully under full cover); wait for the next train. And do the same again on the way home as well as jostling for space to catch your bus as the train disgorges its load. OR
2. Drive the car directly from home to the railway station; park the car in a secure, under cover parking station, walk under cover to the train station platform and wait for the next train. Similarly, relax in the comfort of your own car on the way home.

Hmmm ... Let me think about that for a nanosecond.

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Of course the vast majority of people, particularly those in the north-west who are wedded to their cars, will use their cars to get to the railway station (if not, travel the full journey in their car). People will not catch the bus – look at the white elephants that are the bus transit-ways – largely empty. You are never going to have enough bus coverage to attract people out of their cars to get them to the train station.

Each and every station along the NWRL must include enough car parking spaces for each of their catchments. Each car-parking station must:

- Be free to NWRL users (integrated ticketing, see below);
- Be large enough to hold peak numbers and be planned to enable expansion as required in the future;
- All spaces must be under cover (probably multi-storey) with state of the art parking-availability indicators (common-place in shopping centres now);
- Well lit, light, airy and designed for public safety;
- Properly configured to enable quick vehicular egress and avoid vehicle / people cross-overs;
- Secure: full CCTV coverage with centralised monitoring; gated with swipe egress as part of the train ticket, otherwise pay;
- On-site security personnel if necessary. We must not repeat the example of other railway stations that are havens for car thieves.
- Well-designed vehicular access to and from the car-parking station that integrates and flows with the surrounding streets and traffic, ie. easy to get into and out of the car-parking station.

Without adequate, fully integrated, state of the art car-parking, the investment in the rest of the project will be short-changed.

Just imagine the opportunity that presents itself here. Seamless transfer from home to car to train; all fully under cover, secure, clean, well lit, without the hustle and bustle of buses and multi-mode transfers.

We're 95% of the way there with the proposed NWRL. Now let's complete it with proper integrated car-parking so that the NWRL is fully utilised – not just partially as it would be without full car-parking.

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