

12 May 2012

Attention: Director, Infrastructure Projects
Major Projects Assessment
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Fax – (02) 9228 6355

Re: North West Rail Link – Environmental Impact Submission 12/5/12 (SSI-5100);

I object to the proposed location of the Egress facility at Cheltenham Netball Courts.

The Netball courts were obviously high class bushland once. This bush was cleared to give the community an asset which has generated enough community use to keep it and maintain it. It has recently been repainted at large opportunity cost to the Council.

Although deemed a netball court it also provides endless opportunity where a large open, flat level concrete area is required without the fear of danger and chemical caused by cars. I frequently use the netball court myself and enjoy watching the community harmoniously participating in the following areas:

- Netball
- Tennis/racket ball
- Push bike riding. This is where my kids unleashed their training wheels.
- Beginner lessons for kids with wheels e.g. bikes, tricycles, push toys, skateboards, roller blades, scooters etc. You should see it on Christmas day.
- Remote control cars, helicopters and wasps.
- Puppy/obedience training (it's one of the few areas that can be fully enclosed in a medium size area).
- Brick training wall for one person training e.g tennis, soccer and catch.

This gives you a snap shot of some of the activities at the netball courts. I haven't included that while the netball courts are in use other members of the community are using the cricket nets (I've see some base ball pitching down there as well). Yes this was all bush land and it all exists amongst remaining bush land making a much sort after and well used amenity for the surrounding area. Just ask the mothers and fathers that chat and relax at the very expensive

soft floor play ground equipment and swing set. It's hard to find a time – seven days a week when it's not in use.

You're probably now wondering if the proposed location of the Cheltenham Intermediate Services Facility was such a good idea. Well having lived in the area for over 20 years I can assure you it will have a saddening and angry affect to a great many people that live in the area, exceeding the 11-15 year old scouts that use their 2nd facility on Thursday nights between 7.30pm and 9.30pm once a week, 30 – 40 times per year instead of using their 1st facility located at the Beecroft Scout and Guide Hall on the Crescent.

The mistake becomes clearer when we consider that 37 houses will have a visual impact due to the bush land being cleared instead of 5 houses with the Scout Hall option as can be seen in the current EIS provided.

Now some local knowledge kicks in. Having bought into the area over 20 years ago my love of Devlins Creek has not changed but my activities have so I think my view covers a fairly wide spectrum of the available uses for the area concerned. I have started out fitness jogging, moved onto technical mountain bike riding with my son and countless bush walks both night and day with my wife and daughter. My pet dog gets a fair go as well. The busy area for community recreational use is at the Cheltenham oval, netball courts and the bushland between the oval and Kirkham Street. Once I cross Kirkham Street to the Scout Hall I find there is little community use. My dog Bob knows this because he gets let off the lead – no dogs, no people.

I have no degree in Ecology so I can't tell you if it's more important to the environment to save a Black butt in a preference to an Angophora or Angophora over a Terpentine (all gum trees) but I'm sure the Gang Gang Cockatoo's can. That distinctive cry that the Gang Gang makes gives their species and location away. No one can help but look to the direction and enjoy the beauty of the red headed black cockatoos of which I once counted five at Devlins Creek. Their home is located towards the netball court midway between Kirkham Street and the netball court, directly in the path of the proposed haulage road of the egress devastation. I think they're one of the last colonies in Sydney. They certainly held a lot of importance when the M2 went through and were spared. However, it's the unusual things that make a bush venture interesting and my voyage between the netball court and the scout hall has just one stretch of Xanthorrhoea's (i.e. grass trees or black boys). Some of them have double heads and again they're located in the 'Gang Gang' area mentioned above ear marked for devastation.

So, I would now like to re-evaluate moving the Service Facility to the Beecroft Scout Hall.

1. Less bushland would need to be removed. A recent visit shows that Welham Street could be extended to the scout hall to allow safe entry to the new facility. Trucks can then be loaded and continue on a one way circuit to Kirkham Street along the existing road used to access the scout hall. This road can be widened with little impact on the vegetation. This option would be far cheaper as well. The area west of Kirkham Street already has a 40m x 20m area that would allow safe exit to Kirkham Street. This would allow a "waiting" area to allow heavy haulage entrance to Kirkham Street.

2. My experience shows that entering the bush towards the Scout hall is far easier than entering the bush towards the netball courts.

It's the line of sight that dictates this. The scout hall entrance is at the top of the hill allowing clear line of sight for oncoming traffic. The netball side is at the bottom of the hill creating impaired vision and down hill braking for traffic in the case of emergency.

3. If we look at recreational bush walking we lose the only viable track on the netball side where as alternative tracks are available at the scout hall side.
4. The scout hall side has far less impact on residential properties.
5. The existing access to the scout hall allows for less vegetation loss. The multiple existing off shoots allow for overtaking of heavy vehicles, waiting bays, amenities etc. The beauty of temporary facilities is that they allow building in close proximity to trees without damage to sub terrain.
6. Relative minimal destruction of vegetation can be re-grown without impacting residential properties.
7. Light vehicle access can also be gained via Welham Street.
8. Entire project is further from residential properties thereby reducing potential construction impacts.

9. A scout hall can be rebuilt and double as a temporary hospital in the event of a disaster.
10. The scout hall is the fair location. No one at Cheltenham/Beecroft wants the NWRL Egress Facility but if it has to go ahead then should go where the Engineers want it – at the 3km point.
11. Summing up – the scout hall location provides:
 - Less vegetation loss
 - Cheaper and easier
 - Less visual impact
 - Less residences affected
 - Less impact on residences that are affected.
 - Further from residences
 - Less loss of community facilities
 - Complies with max 3km Egress therefore safer.
 - Less people to deal with during construction and in the event of an emergency i.e. Beecroft Soccer/Cricket
 - Possibility of rebuilding scout hall and using as an emergency undercover mustering location or temporary hospital.

In conclusion I genuinely feel that the better location for the Cheltenham Intermediate Service Facility would be at the Beecroft Scout Hall as decided by ALL Engineers spoken to at the NWRL meeting approximately 4 years ago. However, if the pros and cons for each location are considered equal then we must take into account the internationally recognized maximum distance for egress points to be 3km's, right in the middle of the 6km stretch between Epping and Cherrybrook. The Epping Scout Hall is the closest site to the mid point of the tunnel between Epping and Cherrybrook. Taking into consideration the people that are going to use this facility in measure of safety are you prepared to make these people endure and extra 1.2km of staggering to reach the egress point to survive in an emergency?

Yours sincerely



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