

Submission on EIS for North West Rail Link.

From: Mr Michael Depalo

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## **Cheltenham residents in favour of the NWRL**

Cheltenham is a small suburb at the edge of Hornsby shire dominated by freestanding dwellings in a bushland setting. The suburb is flanked to the North by the main Northern Rail line and to the South by the M2 with Beecroft Rd, slicing through the centre bringing commuters from Northwest Sydney to the commercial hubs of Macquarie Park and the city. Residents of Cheltenham welcome the proposed Northwest Rail Line which will assist in removing significant numbers of cars from the already choked arterial roads.

In response to the EIS for the proposed North West Rail Link I wish to raise the following concerns especially in regards to the proposed air vent and construction site proposed to be located at the site of the existing Cheltenham Netball Courts, adjacent to Cheltenham Oval on Castle Howard Rd.

### **Reduced Amenity and Increased Risk**

Firstly I wish to draw attention to the current use of the netball courts by many local schools including Beecroft Public, Cheltenham Girls, Arden Anglican College and Epping Heights and by local sporting clubs including Beecroft. As a parent with a young daughter in the Beecroft team I know first hand that the courts are used throughout the week for training and competition. If the courts are removed players would have no option but to travel to Pennant Hills courts some 5km away. For many parents dropping off and picking children up from training this would mean travelling along congested Beecroft and Pennant Hills Rds at peak hour, putting addition traffic on the roads and increasing the risk to these families of an accident.

There is no valid reason to demolish the netball courts other than for the convenience of the contractors to access an already cleared and leveled site. An alternative location for the construction compound and air vent can be found on land adjacent to the courts or as identified in the EIS a range of other options could be considered that would offer equivalent utility to the project without reducing the amenity to the local community.

### **Local Safety and Environmental Damage**

In order to remove spoil from the Cheltenham site the EIS proposes either an haulage access road through the bush onto Kirkham St or an alternative access via the M2 motorway.

Notwithstanding the opposition to the current location of the worksite. I note that the plan for access to the site via the M2 is a safer option that keeps large haulage vehicles off local streets during the construction phase and provides easier and more direct access for emergency vehicles to the site should they be required. Access via local streets not designed for heavy vehicles would result in increased risks to local residents and damage to roads which would need to be repaired at additional cost to local government.

Construction of a haulage road through the bushland reserve adjacent to M2 would destroy a significant amount of Blackbutt bushland which was gazetted as a reserve some 100 years ago and was recently regenerated by the local community and is currently showing significant regrowth including grass trees and rare ground orchids. The bushland provides habitat for a number of rare birds including the Tawny Frogmouth and the Powerful Owl. The bushland also acts as a buffer to

the M2 mopping up significant amounts of carbon dioxide and other exhaust pollution. Destruction of bushland simply for a haulage road is unconscionable.

#### **Utility of air vent and emergency exit**

Based on the plans presented in the EIS the proposed Cheltenham netball court worksite, emergency exit and air vent and is not ideally situated as it not equidistant between Epping Railway station and the proposed station at Cherrybrook. It would seem more logical to move to a site further along the proposed route. I note there is a significant amount of un-used and degraded land underneath the elevated roadway of the M2, adjacent to Chilworth Reserve. Access to the location could be obtained by off-ramps from the M2, it would limit the destruction of bushland associated with other options such as Beecroft Reserve and the Scout Hall, would not result in a reduction of amenities or for the local residents and keep heavy vehicles off local streets.

#### **Community support for NWRL**

The Cheltenham community supports the development of the Northwest Rail Link but not at the expense of local utility and reduced safety and seeks the government's understanding in this matter.