

The Director, Infrastructure Projects

E: plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au

Re: Application number SSI-5100
North West Rail Link, Environmental Impact Statement 1 (EIS 1)
Submission to EIS 1. Traffic arrangements at Cherrybrook Station Precinct.

This submission forms the basis of my concerns and objections to the traffic arrangements in NWRL EIS 1 in general, and, in particular, Robert Road Cherrybrook being utilised as a "Feeder Road" with increased traffic flows by way of buses and general traffic.

From reading the EIS 1 and attending one of the well organised community information briefing sessions, my initial impression of the NWRL project is that the size of the project and the scale of the civil engineering during the construction phase is much larger than the community was initially lead to believe. In addition, not only is this project two decades late, the site proposed by NWRL for Cherrybrook Station is, in my opinion, quite inappropriate given that its proposed site is in the middle of a quiet, residential area. However, I do accept the need for a rail link to the city in the Cherrybrook area.

Information from Community Briefing Sessions

At the community information briefings, in addition to the construction phase information (EIS 1), NWRL staff offered planning information regarding the operation of Cherrybrook station (to be further detailed in ESI 2). In particular, the following information was given:

1. *Car parking spaces.* Cherrybrook station will have only 400 car parking spaces.
2. *Traffic signals.* For the construction phase, traffic signals will be erected at the intersections of Castle Hill Road with Franklin Road and Castle Hill Road with Glenhope Road. When construction is complete, the Franklin Road signals will remain in order to provide a controlled exit route for station traffic onto Castle Hill Road. Apparently, the Glenhope Road signals, being opposite the station entrance, will also remain to provide a pedestrian crossing point near the station entrance. Therefore, along Castle Hill Road, there will be four (4) sets of traffic signals in a distance of 1.2km (at the intersections of County Drive, Glenhope Road, Franklin Road and Edward Bennett Drive).
3. *Robert Road a bus feeder route.* NWRL staff indicated that planners intend to use Robert Road as a feeder road for buses to enter the station precinct and those buses would exit the station precinct via Franklin Road and onto Castle Hill Road.
4. *Vehicle entrance off Robert Road.* NWRL staff indicated that planners intend to create a vehicle entrance to the station precinct off Robert Road and NOT off Castle Hill Road.
5. *Expected patronage for Cherrybrook station.* NWRL staff indicated that approximately ten buses each morning and evening might be expected to use Robert Road for station access. Local commuter buses carry up to 45 passengers, so that 10 bus loads of commuters plus 400 car park spaces plus a few pedestrian commuters indicates that Cherrybrook station would cater for approximately 850 to 900 commuters each morning and evening. [In my opinion, this figure seems way too low to justify constructing a railway station and leads me to wonder why projected patronage figures have not been researched.]

Issues of Concern – this submission

- 1. Traffic signals.** The number of pedestrian commuters walking to Cherrybrook station from the south side of Castle Hill Road who would benefit from permanent traffic signals at a Glenhope Road pedestrian crossing is expected to be very small. But every motorist using Castle Hill Road could expect a delay at these traffic signals. Replacing the Glenhope Road traffic signals with a pedestrian underpass or overpass into the station precinct would allow every pedestrian to safely cross Castle Hill Road at any time with no delay at all for the motorist.
- 2. Cherrybrook station patronage.** Figures for the expected patronage at Cherrybrook station are unavailable and so estimates will have to suffice.
 - Average CityRail patronage. The number of CityRail passenger journeys in 2010-11 was 294.5 million servicing 307 CityRail stations (RailCorp Annual Report 2010-11, p22). Assuming most passenger trips occur on week days and are evenly spread across all stations, then the average number of passengers per day per station is 3,690. Cherrybrook station could expect this number of commuters daily.
 - North West Rail patronage forecast. A number of patronage forecast estimates for the whole of the North West Rail line were made for the Department of Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Part B, Chapter 5, p5.9, 2008) that estimate the total number of passenger trips to be in the range of 15 to 24 million per year. Again, assuming most passenger trips occur on week days and are evenly spread across all 8 NWRL stations, then the expected number of commuters for Cherrybrook station could be in the range of 7,200 to 11,500 passengers per day.
- 3. Traffic density at Cherrybrook station.** With only 400 car parking spaces at Cherrybrook station (catering for approx. 400 commuters) plus a few pedestrian commuters but a patronage forecast of several thousand commuters daily, then many commuters will have to arrive by bus or park their cars in the streets adjoining the station.
- 4. Robert Road a bus feeder route.** On a street directory, Robert Road may appear to be a potential entry point for buses entering the station precinct, but local knowledge shows this to be a very unsound, totally unnecessary and unsafe proposal.
 - Currently no buses use Robert Road since the road is only 7 metres wide.
 - There are 265 residential blocks along Robert Road and its adjoining side streets that must use Robert Road as their access street. For comparison, the wider Franklin Road services only 90 residential blocks.
 - Traffic density along Robert Road has already reached the point where, in 1999, traffic authorities installed 'left-lane-in/left-lane-out' road control at the Castle Hill Road/Robert Road intersection in order to limit traffic flow down Robert Road and in an attempt to improve safety at this rather blind intersection. This intersection continues to be hazardous for two main reasons. Firstly, when turning left off Castle Hill Road into Robert Road, drivers must proceed with extreme caution as drivers are not able to see oncoming traffic moving up Robert Road towards Castle Hill Road until they are in the process of turning into the street. Secondly, given that there are, almost always, parked vehicles on either side of Robert Road, vehicles travelling up Robert Road towards Castle Hill Road need to move to the centre of the road to get through, thereby placing themselves directly in the path of oncoming traffic turning left off Castle Hill Road onto Robert Road. In my opinion, it would be far safer if the Castle Hill Road end of Robert Road was to be completely closed, thereby converting this end of Robert Road to a cul-de-sac.
 - Robert Road is so narrow that when cars are parked on opposite sides of the road, only one other car can pass through at a time. Residents and users of Robert Road already appreciate the caution required when navigating through the road in its

current state, including the need to regularly give way to oncoming traffic. The only way to increase the width of this carriageway would be to remove the pedestrian footpaths and/or resume people's property. This would completely destroy the ambience of Robert Road and the real estate values of the area. The idea of resuming property, and/or decreasing or removing the footpaths (which would be expensive and dangerous to pedestrians), will destroy the quiet landscape of the road; for Robert Road residents, this is definitely not an option.

- Robert Park is located at the quiet intersection of Dalkeith and Robert Roads. This park, which is constantly used 7 days a week from morning to night by children of all ages, is unfenced and contains a small fenced children's playground. Parents who bring their children to the park by car necessarily park in either Dalkeith or Robert Roads. Any increase in the current commuter traffic along Robert Road will greatly jeopardise the safety of this popular and well used park.
- Branching off Robert Road are several medium density housing developments (Arundel Way, Louise Way, Oliver Way and Cherry Haven Way) that all have limited car parking space. Overflow and visitor parking from these 'Way' developments must all use Robert Road – presently a quiet and relatively safe road for parking.
- Garbage collection. Garbage collection in this locality occurs early on Tuesday mornings. Garbage collection along Castle Hill Road is always complete by 6am on Tuesday mornings in order to have minimal impact upon the morning commuter traffic. Garbage collection along Robert Road occurs any time up to midday on Tuesdays. With normal legal street car parking along Robert Road and a slowly crawling garbage truck there will be no room in this narrow street for commuter buses to pass a garbage truck.
- Robert Road is currently suitable for light traffic only – the road surface is already cracking from the weight of garbage trucks and similar sized vehicles. Robert Road would need to be widened and upgraded in order to accommodate frequent commuter bus service – an unnecessary expense since suitable bus routes already exist.
- Properties along Robert Road and adjoining streets would experience property devaluation, increased traffic noise and decreased air quality due to an increase in vehicle emissions (both petrol and diesel) if a commuter bus service was to frequently pass along Robert Road.
- Bus drivers no doubt prefer the safety of wide arterial roads to the stress of weaving a twisting rat-run through minor narrow back streets with the high risk of side swiping parked vehicles or the possible obstruction by oncoming vehicles.


5. Bus friendly roads already exist. Bus routes currently use the adjoining streets of County Drive, John Road, Franklin Road, Neale Avenue, Edward Bennet Drive and Castle Hill Road, all of which are 10 metres wide or more. NWRL staff suggested that traffic authorities felt that County Drive had reached saturation capacity. This is certainly not the reality.

- a. County Drive was constructed to be a four lane arterial link road between New Line Road and the M2 at Carlingford. However the M2 entrance at Carlingford was never built. County Drive, at the Castle Hill Road intersection, is six lanes wide (2 lanes north and 4 lanes south with a long dedicated left turn lane to head eastwards along Castle Hill Road to Cherrybrook station). During morning peak traffic time, the great majority of vehicles either turn right onto Castle Hill Road in the direction of Castle Hill, or continue over Castle Hill Road and travel down Highs Road. Only a small number of vehicles turn left on Castle Hill Road in the direction of Thompsons Corner.

- b. County Drive, for much of its length, is artificially choked down to a single lane in each direction (as a speed control measure) following an extremely poor decision by Hornsby Shire Council and against the protests of local residents. County Drive could easily and cheaply be re-lined to dual lanes in each direction to improve its traffic capacity with other measures employed for speed control. Buses to Cherrybrook station could then proceed along County Drive, make use of the dedicated left turn lane into Castle Hill Road and proceed to the station precinct with an ingress lane off Castle Hill Road into the station precinct. This would provide the safety of wide arterial roads without the dangers of weaving around narrow back streets.

Recommendations for Cherrybrook station precinct:

1. After the construction phase is complete, the Glenhope Road traffic signals ought to be replaced with a pedestrian underpass or overpass into the station entrance.
2. Better forecasts of Cherrybrook station patronage ought to be obtained and used to reassess the size of the 400 parking spaces planned for Cherrybrook station.
3. Commuter bus routes to Cherrybrook station should use County Drive and Castle Hill Road.
4. County Drive should be opened to its full width to fully utilise its traffic capacity.
5. At the station precinct, an ingress lane off Castle Hill Road ought to be constructed for bus and car entry to the station for traffic heading east along Castle Hill Road in the direction of Thompsons Corner.
6. No vehicle access or entry to the station precinct should be possible from Robert Road.
7. Convert Robert Road into a cul-de-sac (at the Castle Hill Road end) for the safety of local residents, to prevent traffic incidents, and to prevent the build-up of traffic in an unsuitable local street.
8. No bus feeder route should be sanctioned along Robert Road.



Carla Bosch
13 Louise Way
Cherrybrook, NSW, 2126
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Email: CarlaBosch@bigpond.com