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Our Reference: M2-O0079

22 May 2012

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

The Director,

RE: North West Rail Link Environmental Impact Statement 1

The Hills Motorway Limited (THML) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the North West Rail Link *Environmental Impact Statement 1*.

This submission focuses on the Work Site 2 - Epping Decline and Work Site 3 - Cheltenham Intermediate Services Facility as they sit within or adjacent to the Hills M2 motorway leasehold.

The construction of the North West Rail Link will provide a complementary transport option to the Hills M2 in meeting the needs of the growing population of Sydney's North West. THML recognises the importance of an integrated sustainable transport network balancing the role for private motor vehicles, public transport, freight transport and active transport. THML supports renewed investment in public transport infrastructure, and acknowledges the criticality of appropriately planned and operated public transport to the optimal functionality of the transport network.

• **Background**

THML is wholly-owned by Transurban. The motorway provides the major transport link to Sydney's northwest and services around 100,000 motorists and 27,000 bus patrons each work day. The motorway is currently undergoing the \$550 million Hills M2 Upgrade project, scheduled for completion in early 2013.

Transurban is an international toll road owner, developer and operator with interests in Australia and the USA. The Group is focused on the long-term management of toll roads to achieve the best outcomes for government partners, the community and investors.

In Australia, Transurban has ownership interests in five Sydney motorways and CityLink in Melbourne:

- Hills M2 (100% owned and managed);
- Lane Cove Tunnel (100% owned and managed);
- Eastern Distributor (75% shareholder and managed);
- Westlink M7 (50% shareholder);
- M5 South West (50% shareholder); and
- CityLink - Melbourne (100% owned and managed).

Transurban is committed to partnering with the NSW Government to identify and develop innovative, integrated transport infrastructure to address increasing urban congestion and improve the productivity of the freight network.

- **Work Site 2: Epping decline**

The proposed Epping Decline work site is currently deemed to be part of the Hills Motorway Trust leasehold. THML has no objection to this land being excised by the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) from the motorway leasehold should it be required by the North West Rail Link Project.

We note and support the comment in the EIS for the cycleway to be maintained throughout construction. The cycleway forms part of the alternative cycle track that was built for cyclists while access to the Hills M2 was restricted due to the Hills M2 Upgrade works. Maintenance of the alternative cycle route is a requirement of that upgrade.

The alternative cycle track is a safe alternative to riding on the motorway. THML and Transurban continue to hold reservations of the safety of cycling on motorways, alongside a high speed environment.

- **Work Site 3 – Cheltenham Intermediate Services Facility**

The North West Rail Link's proposed Work Site 3, the Cheltenham Intermediate Services Facility, lies adjacent to the citybound carriageway of the Hills M2, east of Kirkham Street.

The EIS states that two options are currently being investigated for heavy vehicle access and egress to this site: one option being directly on and off the citybound carriageway of the Hills M2, requiring new on and off ramps from the motorway approximately 180 metres east of Murray Farm Road Bridge (also known as Kirkham Street Bridge) and the other option is directly from Kirkham Street via an access road to the site.

For safety reasons, THML does not support the option to use the citybound carriageway of the motorway as the heavy vehicle access point to the site. THML has concerns about the ability of trucks and other heavy vehicles to accelerate and decelerate safely at this part of the motorway between Murray Farm Road Bridge and Beecroft Road Bridge.

When the Hills M2 Upgrade project is completed in early 2012, three lanes and a breakdown lane will be in operation at this location on the motorway and the sign posted speed will be returned to 100km/h.

Heavy vehicles would be required to move into the breakdown lane at least 600 metres before the proposed entry point to decelerate from 100km/h to a speed capable of turning into the site. Similarly upon egress, heavy vehicles would need a distance of at least 600 metres to accelerate to a speed enabling a safe merge into the 100km/h general traffic lane.

Another complication to these heavy vehicle movements will be the presence of cyclists in the breakdown lane. While cyclists have been temporarily banned from the motorway due to the M2 Upgrade works, the Hills M2 Project Deed requires cyclists to be permitted to ride in the breakdown lane upon completion of the work in early 2013.

THML believes that the risks to cyclists posed by heavy vehicles should be subject to review by a road safety auditor.

On this basis, THML supports heavy vehicle access to the site from Kirkham Street as the preferred access and not via the Hills M2 Motorway.

- **Bushland revegetation**

Since 2008, Transurban and THML has worked with the Hornsby Shire Council under the Devlins Creek Community and Environment Project, which is a four year sponsorship agreement with Hills M2 for bushland regeneration and weed eradication activities in the Hills M2 Corridor.

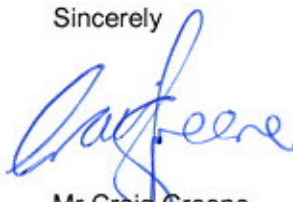
Since the commencement of the partnership, \$92,000 has been provided to support Hornsby Council activities in the Devlins Creek area including:

- Bush regeneration and noxious weed removal
- Tree planting
- Support for local Bushcare volunteer groups
- Remediation and upgrade works along the Beecroft-Cheltenham Link Walking Track.
- Signage and promotional brochures about the new walking tracks and the Bushcare program

THML notes the potential impact of the proposed Cheltenham service facility in the vicinity of this regeneration work. THML and Transurban are interested in pursuing long-term opportunities with the North West Rail Link project team for the regeneration of this site post-construction.

THML looks forward to ongoing engagement with North West Rail Link project team and further opportunities to comment on the project. Should you wish to discuss any of the matters included in this submission or with further regard to the Hills M2 Motorway, please contact Mr Peter Colacino, Head of Public Affairs NSW, on (02) 9254 4926.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Craig Greene'.

Mr Craig Greene
Head of the Hills M2
The Hills Motorway Limited