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

19<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Dear Director,

North West Rail Link  
Environmental Impact Statement 1  
SS1 – 5100  
Franklin Road Station, Cherrybrook

This submission is from the West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association. The comments made are specific for Franklin Road Station, and the impact that the construction work will have on the residents of the West Pennant Hills Valley.

The West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association supports the development of the North West Rail Link. However, it is extremely likely that once any type of construction work begins, that there will be an increase in traffic through the West Pennant Hills Valley. The West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association looks forward to working with the project team in a pro-active manner to mitigate the negative impacts that this period will impose on our neighbourhood.

The North West Rail Link will form a vital part of the public transport network of greater Sydney, especially if/when it links into the Richmond Line. All comments are made with the objective of ensuring the best possible outcome for local residents and commuters.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Whalen

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Transport Representative: WPHVPA.

The North West Rail Link  
Environmental Impact Statement 1  
Application no: SS1-5100

Submission by:  
The West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association

19<sup>th</sup> May 2012

### **The West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association:**

The West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association (WPHVPA) has been a constant supporter of the North West Rail Link for many years. We believe that its construction and implementation is vital to the economic development of both the north west sector and the greater Sydney region.

The West Pennant Hills Valley (WPHV) is an area within The Hills Shire Council, bounded by Castle Hill Road to the north, the M2 in the south, Pennant Hills Road to the east, with Bidjigal Reserve and Excelsior Creek forming the western boundary.

### **Background:**

While this submission is in response to the North West Rail Link Environmental Impact Statement 1 (NWRL: EIS1), the issues need to be addressed in conjunction with NWRL: EIS 1 to ensure that the construction process does not impede potential solutions.

These issues have been raised previously at earlier consultation meetings, but the information provided in the technical papers does little to reflect that the points were considered. Discussions with technical staff present at the Castle Hill Information Centre would also reflect that view.

### **Increased Traffic Through WPHV:**

As soon as building commences on the 2 sets of traffic lights required on Castle Hill Rd to allow access for the construction traffic, traffic flow through the WPHV will increase. When construction commences, there is a projected timetable of 10 months for the station itself, and 12 months for tunnel work. Consequently, we believe it would be reasonable to state that there will be a significant increase in traffic flow through the WPHV for over 2 years.

The technical papers state that a **“very minor increase in degree of saturation”** would be expected at existing intersections ie Castle Hill Rd/County Drive/Highs Road. We believe that this seriously understates the impact that will occur. Currently, this intersection experiences a low LoS, with the morning peak performance described as an E. Due to congestion problems at Thompsons Corner (intersection of Castle Hill Rd and Pennant Hills Rd), the volume of traffic able to traverse Castle Hill Rd drops from 0700hrs onwards.

The greater the volume of traffic on Castle Hill Road (even if its just the buses bringing in the construction workers from their off site parking), the increased time delay due to the use of extra traffic lights at Glenhope Rd and Franklin Rd, the slower the traverse time, the more drivers that will turn south on Highs Road to avoid that delay. Even now, drivers have acknowledged leaving Castle Hill Rd at Highs Rd, driving through the WPHV, exiting at Aiken Rd or Oratava Ave, to then head north along Pennant Hills Rd!

With 2 sets of traffic lights and a very significant number of trucks needing ingress/egress to the construction site north of Castle Hill Rd, traffic movements along Castle Hill Rd will be delayed throughout the whole day. This means that not only will there be increased congestion through the WPHV during the peak periods, but throughout the day, as drivers seek to avoid the delays on Castle Hill Rd. They

know that the time required to traverse Castle Hill Rd will be increased, so will take their chances through the WPHV. This will apply to traffic heading both north and south.

In the technical papers, the location for the off site storage of spoil had yet to be determined. Whether that is east or west of the construction site will have a huge bearing on how the traffic will flow along Castle Hill Rd.

Should the spoil site be located to the east of the Franklin Rd construction site, the Glenhope Road traffic lights will require an extensive right turn bay which would require widening of Castle Hill Rd at that point. Should the timing of the right turn phase to allow timely access for the trucks at Glenhope Rd be problematic, it might be necessary to be supplemented by a similar configuration at the Franklin Rd lights.

**There can be no doubt that when construction work begins, the volume of traffic using the WPHV as a “rat run” during peak periods will significantly increase, exacerbating the current levels of congestion and gridlock. It is equally certain that once construction work begins, there will be an increase in traffic flow throughout the day.**

**The WPHVPA is requesting your support in seeking viable solutions to mitigate the negative impact that construction work will have on the residents of the WPHV. As this impact will occur immediately, it is imperative that planning be commenced now.**

#### **Pedestrian Access:**

Minimal consideration appears to have been given to the impact of pedestrians/cyclists seeking to cross Castle Hill Rd to access the station. Discussion with the Transport of NSW consultants revealed that it is anticipated that the pedestrians/cyclists would cross during phased signaling at the traffic lights (final location of same yet to be determined). We believe that it would be more appropriate to have an overpass.

While some traffic movements would be coordinated with the pedestrians crossing phase, due to the nature of the road and traffic requirements, it is anticipated that the pedestrians would have a significant wait. We are concerned that pedestrians will cross through moving traffic, as occurred on Old Northern Rd, with those inherent dangers. Having a divided road would not suffice, as pedestrians would just head for the break provided by the traffic lights.

This will be a problem, no matter where the traffic lights are located.

Ease of access from the south of Castle Hill Road for both pedestrians and cyclists will increase the appeal of using the Franklin Road Station, and negate the need to drive to the station precinct.

#### **Glenhope Road:**

It has not been confirmed that the traffic lights at the Glenhope Rd/Castle Hill Rd intersection will be maintained once the construction phase is completed. Should the traffic lights remain, extended work will be required along Glenhope Rd north of Glenridge Rd. Road widening, footpaths, marked lanes and parking, bus bays/bus

stops, kiss and ride facilities, access for the 2 child care facilities.....all this would need to be accommodated, and it would be appropriate to have the work completed prior to the opening of the Franklin Road station.

While the majority of the workers will be parking off-site, it is likely that there will still be some contractors who will park in the surrounding local streets, of which Glenhope Rd would be one. Unfortunately, that would constitute a hazard to local traffic and users of the child care facilities as the street is unmarked and not that wide.

### **Planning Objectives:**

**In planning for the patronage of Franklin Road Station, it is vital that the traffic flow along Castle Hill Rd be maintained.**

To facilitate this, every effort should be made to ensure that bus bays/bus stops, kiss and ride facilities and pedestrian/cyclist access can be provided without impacting on traffic flow on Castle Hill Rd. This means that most commuters could be dropped on the south side of Castle Hill Rd, then utilize an overhead walkway to cross to the station. This would minimize the amount of traffic requiring access **across** Castle Hill Rd.

If planned in a commuter friendly manner, it will also reduce the number of cars from the south that will require to cross Castle Hill Rd, and park in the station precinct.

Options:

Shuttle buses that circulate within the WPHV and adjacent suburbs:

1. Loop through Carlingford just south of the M2 but north of North Rocks Rd, come through the southern sections of WPHV, access Pennant Hills Rd using either Eaton Rd or Aiken Rd, north on Pennant Hills Rd and left onto Castle Hill Rd.
2. Loop through the middle and northern sections of WPHV and exit onto Castle Hill Rd via Coonara Ave.

North bound on Pennant Hills Rd to Castle Hill Rd in the morning peak is usually a clear run. A bus stop at Mt Wilberforce Lookout would facilitate a pick up for commuters from the Thompsons Corner area, before continuing along Castle Hill Rd to drop passengers at a bus bay close to the overhead walkway on the south side of Castle Hill Rd. The buses would return through the WPHV to repeat the process.

Commuters would be encouraged to walk or drive to a bus stop within their own neighbourhood and catch the shuttle bus.

Should the shuttle bus not meet the needs of commuters, a kiss and ride could be considered. For this to be successful, there needs to be a safe drop off area and a safe/efficient means of returning to the point of departure, or continuing a journey.

It is surprising how the kiss and ride movement has increased at the Carmen Drive shops, Oakes Rd, for the M2 commuters. However, as the area was not designed for this, it has brought its own set of problems. With proactive planning, these could be prevented by having a location suitable to support access to the Franklin Rd station. It would be anticipated that should the Glenhope Rd traffic lights remain, that this

street could provide such amenities, so that drivers could then access Castle Hill Rd to continue their journey, or have a roundabout/turning area to return directly into the WPHV. There should also be a kiss and ride area along Castle Hill Rd so that drivers can drop passengers close to the overhead walkway.

**The dominant priority should be to have as many commuters as possible accessing Franklin Rd station without requiring traffic on Castle Hill Rd to stop.**

**Declaration:**

Carol Flanagan, president and executive member of the WPHVPA has made a political donation totaling about \$2000 to the NSW Greens over the past 2 years.

**Conclusion:**

The North West Rail Link will form an essential part of the Sydney's infrastructure network, and it is vital that it becomes operational. The West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association would like to work with Transport for NSW and The Hills Shire Council to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved for local residents and commuters.

Margaret Whalen  
Transport Representative: WPHVPA