



The Hills District Historical Society Inc.

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NorthWest Rail Link.
Major Projects Assessment,
Department of Planning and Infrastructure,
G.P.O. Box 49,
SYDNEY. 2001.

via fax – 9228 6355

Attention: Director, NorthWest Rail link. (SSI-5100)

In respect of the E.I.S. (1) the following comments are made, whilst supporting the railway in its aims – to provide a badly needed and important transport link for the north-western area, ie. the Hills district, some of the contents of the E.I.S. are not well thought through and need much more planning, more specifics to address a wide range of issues and concerns as it affects the proposed stations at the Hills Centre (ie. The Castle Hill Showground), Arthur Whitling Park at Castle Hill, the railway as it travels past Mungerie House to Rouse Hill station, and also in the vicinity of the Kellyville station near Samantha Riley Drive.

The historic and very much local icon – traditionally, socially, and culturally, the **Showground** will be immensely impacted not just during the construction period of the **Hills Centre station** but at the completion of the project.

These issues and concerns must be addressed to minimise the adverse impact for the good of the community, not the least the Castle Hill and Districts Agricultural Society, and the many users of the various aspects of the Showground all year round on a fulltime basis as well as those members of the community who use it only occasionally such as for casual bookings for the many pavilions.

Whilst it is acknowledged that proposed re-alignment southwards has a lesser impact on the showground arena, there are numerous other facilities (pavilions and the like) and areas that will be severely impacted whilst construction is occurring and even later, that will be irreversibly changed or impacted.

This damage will constrain and restrict the running of the Annual Show which is in its 127th year.

This is an immense disappointment to the community, and the wider context of agricultural pursuits across the region.

Issues :

Access and egress –

the showground and all its activities is hampered without a full and proper access point from Carrington Road similar to what is in place at the moment. Currently there is no vehicular access from Showground Road, (*contrary to comments made on p.46*) only an occasional egress point in the vicinity of the Cattai Creek (McDonald's bridge) utilised at times of major events.

This does not serve the estimated 30,000 users of the Showground each month regularly.

2.

There MUST BE a direct vehicular access point to all parts of the Showground from Carrington Road to substitute for the Doran Drive entrance. Failure to do so will deny all those users proper and safe access.

The E.I.S. indicates an access point at Showground Road (is this to be at Cattai Creek), which surely must be approved by Roads, Transport and Police authorities.

It is unclear whether the access point is to be a permanent one or only for the life of the construction period.

Showground Road as a major arterial road is already at capacity level within the immediate vicinity of the Showground and to have heavy haulage vehicles and equipment entering at such an unsafe position at the bottom of two steep inclines/declines or hills would be unacceptable.

It is a fraught with potential disaster.

Parking –

the current users of the Showground rightly have an expectation of being able to park within the grounds. The proposed haul road will severely impact on the amount of space and present safety concerns in the vicinity of the dog lawns and rings, as well as to the whole of the cattle section and sheep shed and ring.

To have heavy trucks moving about and the inherent dust and other aspects in this area will diminish the extensive canine activities that for so long have been enjoyed by so many people. These are social and recreational activities that will have to be curtailed which is unfair and unacceptable.

The equine industry population have the right and also expectation that they will be able to continue a lengthy association with what is deemed an important venue in equine activities – ie. In showjumping circles Castle Hill Showground is deemed to be one of the best arenas, attracting large numbers and is viewed by many to be even better than the Sydney Royal Show venue. To continue these world-class activities means that there needs to be proper access and parking facilities for horse floats and trucks, as well as stables.

The cattle rings, sheep rings and horticulture pavilion all have inherent traffic and parking aspects which also must be serviced.

The three days of the Annual Show all have different programs each day with the requisite delivery and pickup of exhibits by vehicles as well as those owned by attendees who set up displays and run particular sections of the show.

This same Horticulture pavilion is used each week night by martial art groups which adds another requirement in the supply of parking spaces.

The very popular and well attended Pavilion Theatre utilises many parking spaces and therefore must be provided for as well as a competent and adequate entry from Carrington Road.

The various night time sporting activities (football, athletics, martial arts and dance groups) all need a satisfactory entry from Carrington Road without impairment.

Likewise the many day-time activities, such as Computer Pals, seniors groups, art classes and the like need a safe entry and with associated parking.

The restricted parking will present problems at the Annual Show, given that spaces for staff and the 500 volunteers that conduct the show, as well as exhibitors, operators and sponsors, delivery vehicles and the like will have to be curtailed or other options supplied.

There does not appear to have been offered any other option to resolve this concern for patrons of the Showground.

The E.I.S. does not mention in detail the proposed multi-level carpark on the site of the current council depot (operations centre) and its size. Is this structure to eventuate and when?

3.

Castle Hill station – Arthur Whitling Park –

This central community open space, whilst appearing to be not listed on Heritage registers, contains artefacts of significance on various aspects.

It is vitally important that the current objects, ie. all the railway artefacts are stored appropriately whilst decisions are made as to their final placement. All too often, these precious and irreplaceable icons are “misplaced” when insufficient attention and recording detail is given to the arrangements.

It would be appropriate that this organisation can assist in this process, given their involvement and interest in such matters, as well as the Council.

Likewise, the iconic war memorials need the same respectful treatment, as they serve as a link to social historical ties, as much as infrastructure does.

It is noted that there is recognition of the existing park's landscape. It would seem appropriate that there must be a park-like setting left after construction to recompense for what has been deemed the central “common” of what was the historic village that was Castle Hill.

All too often, modernism replaces what was the beauty of a ‘green open space’.

Skytrain (viaduct) aspect as it affects Old Windsor Road (historically The Hawkesbury Road)

Generally, this is not deemed acceptable given the presented visual appearance and its impact on the historic nature of Old Windsor Road environs, specifically in the Samantha Riley and White Hart Drives vicinity and the Caddies Creek alignment as well as in the vicinity of the Stanhope Farm area. The E.I.S. makes mention of various sites of historical artefacts which would be better dealt with if there was an underground railway.

The unique value of these objects makes it imperative that the least form of interference or construction would be the best treatment to preserve and protect these rare artefacts of early colonial life.

Given recent construction in this vicinity of the Transitway by the Roads and Traffic authorities, there has already been tremendous disturbance of this historic carriageway which now will augers for gross destruction of the existing archeological resources and artefacts and shows total disregard for retaining of the heritage factor and value.

It also shows no interest in preserving the “green and open space” values which are sadly greatly diminishing within this part of the Cumberland Plain or the Sydney Basin.

Mungerie House – Rouse Hill station

The proposed impact on the curtilage of this property is unacceptable and highly inappropriate especially given the recent restoration of this cottage.

Loss of vegetation by the removal of the few remaining trees for the sake of viaduct structures is also unacceptable.

The visual impact of structures across the front entranceway does present a most unpleasant vista and is therefore unacceptable.

Traditional settings such as what has been revived at this site should be preserved/conserved as aesthetic reminders (educationally and socially) of past times life in this locality and what history is about.

In CONCLUSION :

The E.I.S. does not address competently or adequately the requirements of the Castle Hill Showground, the Show Society or other users of the grounds.

It does not appear to recognise that this historic site is a hub for this community in many ways, and therefore should not have its lengthy history changed so much that it cannot proceed in the manner that it has been legally deeded and purposefully designed for and has an established record of. Show Societies have formed an important role within past and present agricultural communities across this state as well as the formed cultural and social bonds that are the by-products of these affiliations. This should not be eroded by changing for the worse the premises maintained by large numbers of committed citizens and exhibitors for such purposes.


To not address the needs of the Show Society in what is required to operate the Annual Show effectively is not acceptable.

The E.I.S. does not set out what arrangements would be put in place to replace the extensive cattle area facilities, the Horticulture (and Martial Arts) Pavilion and maintaining the current status quo for the Dog section areas.

The E.I.S. does not recognise what efforts and what arrangements have to be implemented in continuing to run the traditional Annual Show when some 30,000 visitors attend.

To make the comment (p.29) that impact would be relatively unaffected by the works is flawed.

Yours faithfully,



Elaine White.

Vice-President/Publications Officer.

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COPY: MP for Castle Hill – Dominic Perrottet.
 MP for Baulkham Hills – David Elliott.
 MP for Hawkesbury – Ray Williams.