

Tracy Bellamy - Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Proposal. Application number SSI 5132

From: "Robert Mikhail - Gmail" <robert.h.mikhail@gmail.com>
To: <plan_comment@planning.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 5/11/2012 4:13 PM
Subject: Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Proposal. Application number SSI 5132
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NSW Department of Planning
 The Director - infrastructure Projects

RE: Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Proposal. Application number SSI 5132.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I, Robert Mikhail of 86 Beecroft Road, Beecroft, NSW 2119 object to the Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Proposal in its current form. There are elements of the EIS that do not address the impact to my residence and community. It will impact on my health and damage the fabric of the Beecroft Cheltenham Heritage Conservation Area. The issues that need to be addressed are;

Noise

- There is no Government Regulation for noise and pollution from trains. It is understood that the NSW Department of Planning is not responsible for the operation of the freight service but it is unacceptable to provide passage of more trains without a definitive plan to reduce the noise levels. This is one Government body saying that this is another Government body's responsibility leaving the community trapped in the middle and worse off.
- Freight operations need to be regulated to protect the community. This must extend to cover the maintenance of the freight rolling stock, which seems to be the biggest noise culprit– flat wheels, axial alignment, wheel alignment, lubrication etc. This will not only reduce the level of noise but reduces the wear on the existing infrastructure.
- One of the premises for proceeding with this project is that it will reduce the amount of road freight, which in itself sounds like a good thing. The question is though why would you transfer freight from roads to rail when road freight is a properly regulated mode of transport, while rail appears to have little or no control with regards to noise and pollution.
- There is no guarantee that any of the remedies provided with the EIS will have any improvement to the noise levels. If such improvements will return the noise levels to an acceptable level then why have they not been effective to date?
- The rail dampening, lubrication of the rail flange and rail head have had no improvement, yet the increase in the freight that the project will bring about comes with only a promise to do something about the issue. We need a guarantee that the noise levels will be returned to safe levels.
- Once the third track is operational and the noise mitigation strategies fail then what is the recourse for residents. It will be all too late.
- Dealing with the current noise caused by wheel squeal will go a long way toward offering to deal with the noise as a result of increased freight services and settle the issue of noise once and for all.

Construction Noise

- Construction noise covered in the EIS does not consider the constant beeping that train drivers will have to make every time they pass a worksite. As part of the current track side protection, the protection officers for each worksite are required to indicate to the train driver by raising their hand that they have seen the train. The driver acknowledges back that he has seen the worksite by beeping. This happens with every train, in both directions, all day and all night and on every day the work is continuing.
- The EIS does not mention the issue and therefore does not address the approach taken to deal with the continual beeping during the construction period.

Pollution

- The EIS does not address the known health issues in the community resulting from increased rail freight namely coal dust from uncovered wagons and diesel particulate matter, a known carcinogen.

Heritage

- There has been inadequate assessment of the project's impact on the fabric of the Beecroft Cheltenham Heritage Conservation Area (HCA).
- The plan given for Beecroft Railway station Precinct is vague. The relationship to the trees, playground and original 1895 platform located south of the present station is not shown. A fourth track is shown on the eastern side.
- The plan does not include urgently needed lifts to allow disabled access at Beecroft Station.

- Beecroft Station Gardens have a heritage listing with Hornsby Council but the impact on them has not been adequately addressed. No arborist's report is given for the trees which will be removed.
- The proposed redevelopment of Cheltenham Station shows no regard for the HCA. The visual impact of the proposed 13m high glass and steel concourse is totally unacceptable in this HCA.
- No evaluation has been made of the type of engineering structures and aesthetic finishes which are suitable and compatible for a HCA. This includes retaining walls, embankments, revetments and culverts. Shotcrete is not an acceptable finish in a HCA and this should be addressed in the EIS.

Vegetation

- The EIS is relying on vegetation to lessen the impact of the project on heritage houses and the fabric of the HCA whilst depleting and failing to restore and replenish the vegetation in the rail corridor.
- Depletion of the vegetation has an impact on the amenity of residents immediately adjacent to the corridor.
- Existing vegetation will not reduce the noise impact. A thicket 30m deep is needed to reduce noise by 1dB.

Reduction in Road Traffic

- Claims that the project will reduce road freight are not substantiated. As total freight increases, road freight will also increase. A study published to support another piece of public infrastructure states that "rail is unlikely to meet the future inter-regional transport task even if major rail infrastructure upgrades occur". - SKM report F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Study, April (2004).

I ask that you protect our community and insist that these issues are addressed before proceeding.

Robert Mikhail