

5 November 2012

Director
Infrastructure Projects
Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Project SSI5132
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

cc Greg Smith SC MP, Attorney General and Member for Epping
cc Cate Faehrmann MLC

RE: Environmental Impact Statement of Proposed Third Track

The complexity and density of the EIS lodged at the Epping Library required almost an Engineering degree to comprehend, but I was able to extract some conclusions from this lengthy document which I would like to challenge.

We own and live in one of two townhouses at 1/7 Kandy Avenue, Epping, 2121, one block west of the existing railway line. According to the EIS, the impact of the construction of the third track and the bridge that will span the M2 will have "moderate" impact on residents west of the construction, those living in Kandy Avenue and Edensor Street. How this future impact can be predicted with such proud certainty amazes me. The noise, air pollution and visual impact of the freight trains which are already using the existing track, usually in the night when we are trying to sleep, is already more than "moderate", as is increasing traffic, air and noise pollution from Beecroft Road and M2.

When we moved back to Epping from the Central West of NSW, we did so reluctantly, mainly due to my husband's health needs, post stroke, the relative isolation of our property at Mount David, and to be closer to our children and grandchildren. Since then, we have been subjected to ongoing impacts of the M2 upgrade for the past two years, now almost complete, although the bridge at the bottom of our street is still to be removed, sitting rather comically and rakishly suspended in mid air, an ugly eyesore.

Now the construction of the third freight line, and another bridge, is to commence, for another estimated three to four years, and simultaneously, somewhere underground, the construction of the Northwest rail link will begin. The proposed third line, as with the existing lines, will not be muted at the bottom of Kandy Avenue by any protective shield such as a natural and protective cutting which would place the trains below ground level and thus minimize noise and visual impact. The assumption seems to be that those of us who live west of the railway line do not warrant due consideration or regard for our depleted amenity, increased and serious impacts on our health and lifestyle, and most probably a lessening of our property values. **All of this construction has impacts which cannot be underestimated by the authors of the EIS whose task is to please the powers who have engaged them to support the proposal, not to honestly appraise its deficiencies, or seriously evaluate real human health and other negative impacts.**

We are fully aware of the extremely dangerous and serious traffic problems on the Pennant Hills Road which we try to avoid whenever possible. It is, however, incredibly simplistic to think that all the owner-operated trucks and transport companies now carrying freight on the north - south corridor of the F3 and Pennant Hills Road onto and off the M2-M4 and Cumberland Highways will magically stop when the third freight line is constructed. These trucks are the livelihood of their owner-operators, many of whom go into considerable debt to purchase their rigs for a very competitive trucking industry.

I do not think that moving huge volumes of unidentified, possibly dangerous and toxic freight along major transport corridors through densely populated areas is either imaginative or a long term solution to Sydney's transport problems which are considerable. They are not likely to improve by this Commonwealth and State government funded, and politically motivated initiative, orchestrated by persons who do not live in the area and view the situation from a theoretical and mechanical perspective, rather than the human impacts on residents. Decisions are made carelessly from on high.

If Government Ministers, politicians and professional public servants making decisions which impact on the rest of us, actually lived in the areas affected by their policies and outcomes, I believe we would have very much more considerate and sensitive planning, and a more amenable city in which to live. By anybody's estimate, Sydney is morphing from a once beautiful and enjoyable place to live, to a dirty, noisy, gridlocked nightmare for the majority of its citizens, other than the very wealthy and privileged whose financial situation enables them to escape from the ghastly environment developing around us.

The physical and mental health implications are nowhere in evidence in your Environmental Impact Study, nor the ongoing sense of disempowerment and frustration that many of us are feeling. Few residents even bother to respond to your invitations to do so because most people realise what a sham most of these EIS reports are. The decisions have been made, and no-one in power is genuinely interested in those of us for whom the construction will just be part of an ongoing nightmare of dirt and noise.

Please do not insult my intelligence by sending any reply based on patronizing platitudes aiming to rationalize a situation which will seriously impact us and our neighbours. In no way will it be of "moderate" impact. From once being a pleasant place to live, Epping is now undoubtedly the dirtiest and noisiest place we have ever lived. Unfortunately, our options for escape are severely limited by our current limited means and the physical and financial costs of relocation to a cleaner, quieter and well serviced location.

Yours sincerely,

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