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**Northern Line Freight Corridor North Strathfield to
Thornleigh 2015 to 2028.**

Dear project team,

I was somewhat sceptical in respect to the expenditure that would be involved in the above project particularly when the present number of freight train paths is apparently coping, with delays, to the present level of freight movements on the northern line. However if the predicted increase does occur in the next decade then additional line capacity for freight services will be required. I am sure many expert opinions from both consignors and operators have been forthcoming and on the whole the proposals presented have a great deal of merit. I would like to offer some additional comments which if the money can be found should be considered.

Whilst a State Rail employee for forty five years I did have a great deal of input relating to the Wollongong Electrification and the extension of the East Hills line to Glenfield Line. Unfortunately, particularly in the latter case, funding did not allow for the proposed Quadruplication of the East Hills Line beyond Kingsgrove, which of course has now taken place at a considerable higher cost than could have been achieved in the 1980's. I therefore offer the following viewpoints on the present proposals.

North Strathfield Junction Underpass.

- (a)** Will the existing connection from the Down suburban line to the Down relief line be maintained for the use of City Rail services during peak hour or at times of disruption.
- (b)** That the New and Existing Up relief line be upgraded and extended (beyond where the freight underpass starts) under the M4 Motorway and Parramatta Road bridges to connect with the Up Main Northern Line clear of the existing turnouts to the Up North Suburban; this would allow peak hour use by intercity services, allowing extra train paths between Rhodes and Strathfield..

C I would hope the high speed turnouts are maintained between Concord West and Rhodes to allow an additional route to be available at times of service disruption. I am aware that these turnouts have been the source of numerous speed restrictions since their installation and thus ongoing costs may exceed their usefulness.

Additional Down Freight Line Epping to Thornleigh.

_ Again my suggestions would add additional costs to the project but as with all new infrastructure, some could be achieved at reasonable cost during the projected construction period. I believe the real advantage of this project is to have freight services further advanced towards existing bottle necks (eg. Parramatta River Bridge, Epping, Hornsby) to allow greater use of the Off Peak corridors. The frequency of Central Coast services in the A.M and P.M peaks allow little room for additional freight usage.

(a) The claim that the slow movement of freight services on the heavy Grades is as valid for the Down Line as it applies to the Up Line. Up freight services descending from Thornleigh to the Parramatta River do so normally under regenerative braking or controlled air braking at a slow speed comparable to Down freight services. This obviously is necessary due to the length and tonnage being hauled. Therefore the provision of a fourth track for Up freight services between Pennant Hills and the M2 motorway would be highly desirable. Already much of the earthworks are in place on the Up side of the existing Main line as are available on the Down side of the Main Line.

(b) Obviously the provision of track as outlined in (a) would cost big dollars, which are probably not available, I note however that substantial reconstruction is required at Cheltenham and Pennant Hills stations thus it could be wise to alter the design to allow for additional portals on the Up side of these stations, as well as at Pennant Hills Road, Chapman Avenue, and Cheltenham Road overbridges. This expedient expenditure would certainly prove of long term benefit if either there is a necessity for more Freight Movements or commuter services (particularly from the Central Coast) in the future.

Perhaps these suggestions have already been considered and costs have prohibited them being pursued. I however wish all those involved every success with this project.

Yours faithfully,

R.Boyd.