

Director

Infrastructure Projects

Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Project

2-10-12

SS1 5132

Dear Sir Madam,

I am writing in regard to my concerns about the above project. I have lived here for 31 years and have never complained about railway noise (except detonators all night when I had a new baby). However I feel that this proposal is ill conceived without due consideration to the local environment.

Of recent years the number of trains has increased, the trains are incredibly long and the noise-particularly from the wheel squeal- has dramatically increased. Originally and for most of my time here, there was NO wheel squeal. Is it because the concrete sleepers were installed which is the reason given by a long term Railway employee of some repute? BEFORE this line is even considered this problem MUST be eliminated. The document "Northern Sydney Freight Corridor Program. Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Program" dated January 2012 states that" existing properties adjacent to the railway already experience noise levels above the overall trigger levels in IGANRIP. In fact last November I was in my back yard working (and feeling fine) when a huge train came through. The train itself was bad enough but the wheel squeal was unbearable. Even with my fingers in my ears as hard as possible I experienced extreme nausea (I have been polite). After the train went through I was fine. Why should this happen in my own yard?

I realize that we have to look to the future of the state but I do not believe that this will take trucks off the road as stated. The trains take too long and businesses still need trucks to move goods more quickly, door to door. (This is gained from personal experience).

In addition we will be subjected to additional construction pollution, diesel fumes as well as those projected by the F3/M2 link tunnel. My daughter and I are already not in good health and additional stresses on our systems will be most unwelcome. (Doctors reports can be obtained) In addition finding an alternative house to accommodate an adult daughter whose mobility is severely threatened and still allow her a private lifestyle is extremely difficult (We have adjusted our household to accommodate this.) Are we going to be forced to move and probably deal with financial loss to maintain a reasonable lifestyle?

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There is a danger of damage to the embankment immediately to the side of our house due to construction and water movement changes. This aspect has already impacted when the embankment "blew away" and left us with flooding, rock and mud through our yard and lower levels of our house. This was due to construction on the Western side of the railway and the stormwater drain goes under the rail and through the embankment slightly in front of my house. Records could be found within Railway files or I can direct you to the Manager who was responsible for dealing with this who is still in Railway employment.

Local schools such as Beecroft Public are already subjected to enormous noise pollution. Wheel squeal and noise from the diesel engines and rolling stock already are at a level which impacts on school life not to mention air pollution. What too of all the other institutions and amenities which will be further affected?

I also object to the FACT that even though these submissions are not due work seems to have started and a local retailer (Paving Plus) has been given notice of March next year. This has already crucified his business and I believe he will receive no compensation despite being given a longer lease. How can you justify the legitimacy of the submission/community opinion process when it is obvious that the decision has been made? I thought we lived in a democracy!!

If despite our submissions this project goes ahead I request compensation for loss of resale value. For other reasons I had several market opinions on my house earlier this year and feel that they were reasonable. If these estimates are not met on resale due to the railway noise I would expect compensation as I am not on railway land. In the meantime (I am in the high noise area according to the document presented at the last community contact session) I expect double glazing on all windows as provided to those affected by airport noise. In addition air conditioning will be necessary as we do not currently have it. This is essential if we can't open windows. For the yard we will need a noise barrier beside our house on the embankment.

Compensation should also be guaranteed for any damage incurred in our homes as a result of excavation work. This should be written agreement.

I feel that these are the minimum procedures needed but I would also like to see a reduction of or subsidy for electricity costs as we did not originally have to cover air conditioning. I am close to retirement and this will be a cost that I have not accounted for. I realize that this is unlikely but it would be fair.

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I have added a summary below but have written this letter from the heart. However I will finish with one incident and ask you to consider the lives of the people you are affecting by this decision. If I thought that the process had been transparent I may not feel the way I do but living here has lead me to be very cynical about the respect that the Railways have for the people near the lines. (In saying that many individual employees of the Railways sincerely do their best). When your young grandchildren cry with their hands over their ears and say that their ears "hurt" because a train goes by it breaks your heart .Will it be that they won't want to come to Nanny's house?

PLEASE consider this decision carefully. Understand that this process seems to be going ahead before public consultation has even been completed and understand that you are affecting peoples' lives and health.

[REDACTED]

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Summary

- 1. I do not believe that this line will take any trucks off the road for the reasons stated.**
- 2. The work appears to be a foregone conclusion BEFORE the submission process has even been completed. How can we believe that there is any transparency in the discussions? This shows a true disrespect for the residents affected.**
- 3. There is a danger of damage to the embankment immediately to the side of our house due to construction and water movement changes.**
- 4. There is a risk of building damage especially if blasting occurs.**
- 5. The 2012 document quoted above says that there may be contamination from particles and increased carbon dioxide during construction. Given the health of both my daughter and I this could have dramatic consequences to our health. In addition the increased diesel fumes from a greater number of trains after construction are likely to be detrimental.**
- 6. The project should be delayed until the MASSIVE problem of wheel squeal is solved.**
- 7. Legislation should be compiled to allow for freight trains to be subject to noise pollution regulations PRIOR to construction.**
- 8. All freight regulators should be required to have regular safety and noise checks as required in the trucking industry.**
- 9. This project has been undertaken without any real respect for those residents near the line in that noise mitigation measures have not been offered prior to construction. Consultation appears to have been a token gesture.**
- 10. Compensation and noise mitigation need to be factored into the costs and should be provided BEFORE construction as the noise levels are already deemed to be too high.**
- 11. Little regard seems to have been given to the impact on the myriad of bird life on the eastern side of the railway line.**
- 12. In an area where tree preservation is paramount it is inconceivable that so many trees will be removed, especially at Pennant Hills and Cheltenham.**

- 13. Has consideration and compensation been offered to those businesses along the line such as food shops and cafes at Pennant Hills which will be affected by pollution and noise?**
- 14. The document of 2012 above mentions the impact on schools etc. Little consideration seems to have been given to that.**
- 15. THIS PROJECT SHOULD REMAIN IN THE PLANNING STAGES UNTIL ALL THESE ISSUES (AND PROBABLY MORE) ARE DEALT WITH.**