

2.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Regional Context

Refer to Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

The M2 Motorway is a four lane dual carriageway which extends 21 kilometres from the intersection of Abbott Road, Baulkham Hills in the north-west, to Lane Cove Tunnel on the Lower North Shore. The shoulder, which provides an emergency and cyclist lane, also forms part of the Motorway. The M2 was opened to traffic on 26 May 1997 and forms an essential link in the Sydney Orbital motorway system.

Both the Westlink M7 and the Lane Cove Tunnel, recent high quality additions to the Sydney Orbital Network, contrast strongly with the older M2 which has a much lower quality of urban and landscape design. The quality of design is not only reflected in the appearance of the bridges, noise walls and retaining walls, but also in the vehicular travel experience due to the uneven road surface.

The current M2 Motorway does not take full advantage of its distinctive contextual setting. There is an opportunity through the functional upgrade of the motorway to capitalise on the bushland setting, through which the route passes, to improve the visual experience and provide a consistent and recognisable identity.



Photo 2.1 Aerial view of the M2 Motorway in its regional setting

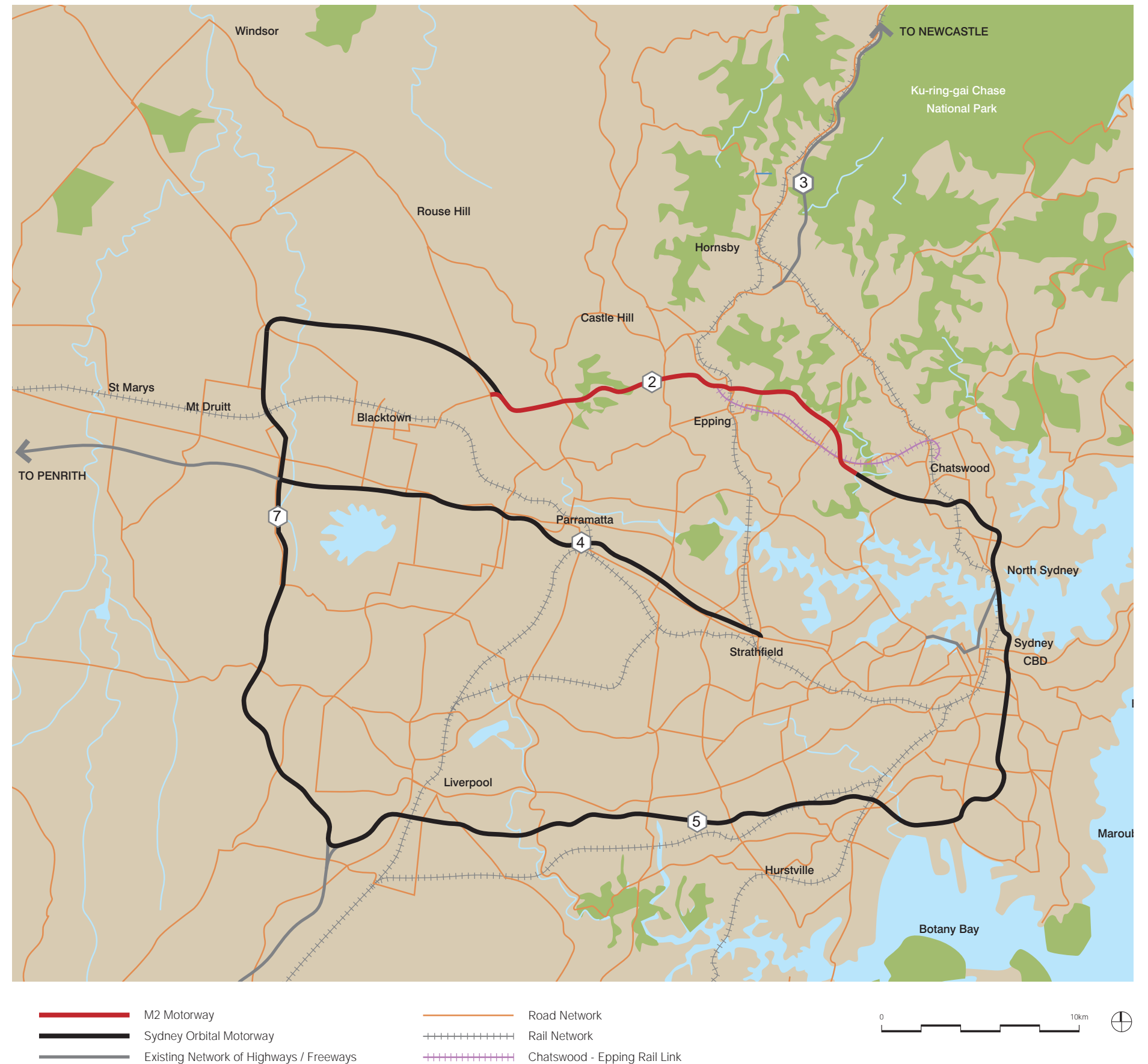


Figure 2.2 Regional Location

Contextual Analysis

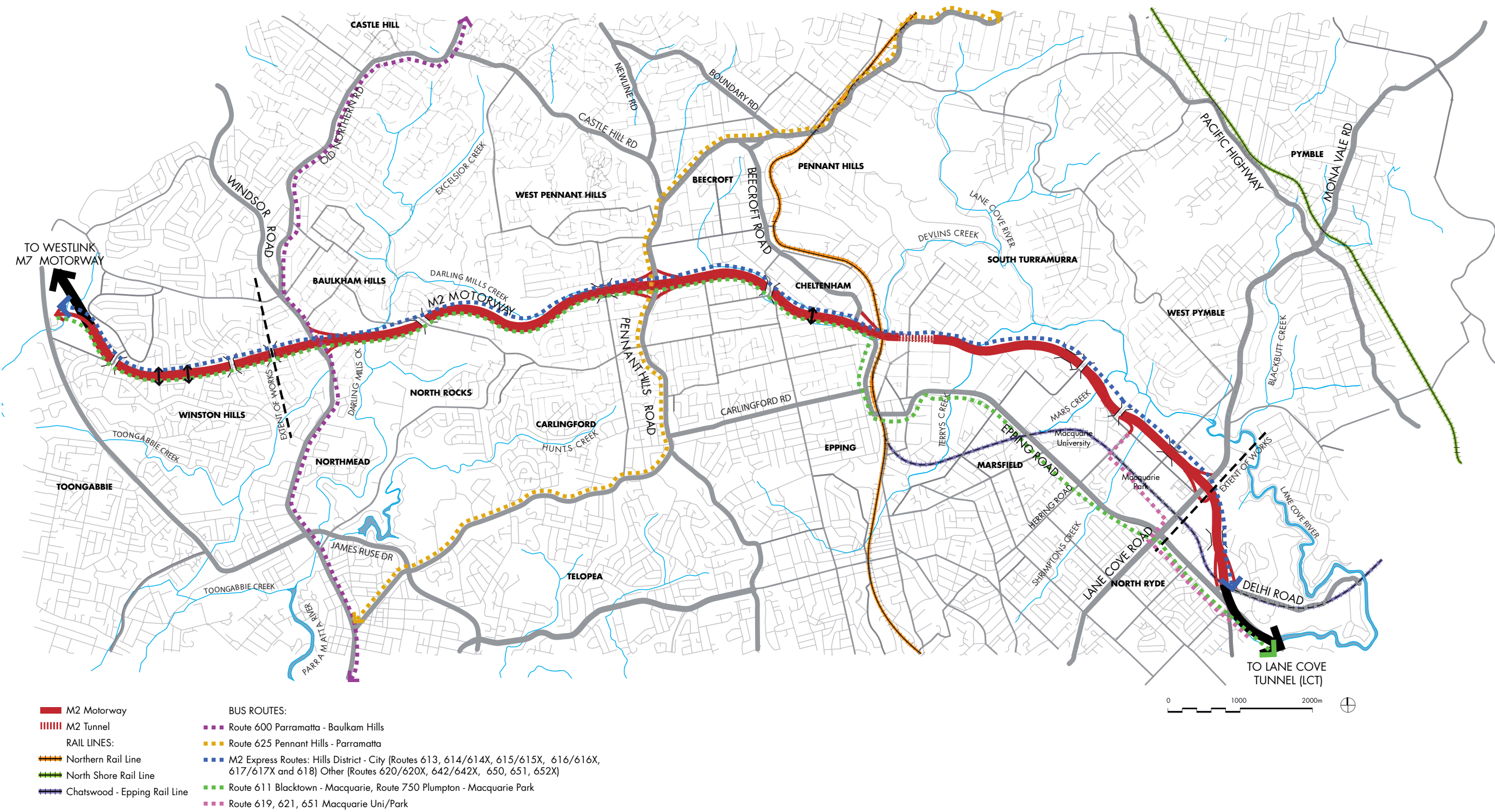


Figure 2.3 Public Transport Network

2.2 Local Context

Refer to Figure 2.3.

The M2 Motorway passes through Baulkham Hills, Hornsby and Ryde Local Government Areas (LGAs) and is in close proximity to Blacktown and Parramatta LGAs. The M2 Motorway passes predominantly through the urban development of the north-western suburbs of Sydney and the expanding commercial area around Macquarie Shopping Centre, Macquarie University and Macquarie Business Park. It was opened in 1997 to accommodate the transport needs of the growing population in these areas.

The north-western and central sections of the motorway are dominated by hilly land form and a residential built form character, resulting in a low scale suburban environment which is therefore not always evident to the travelling motorist. In the eastern section of the motorway, the topography flattens and the area close to Macquarie Shopping Centre, Macquarie University and Macquarie Business Park consists of large scale commercial and educational buildings which are visible along the edges of the corridor, as illustrated in Photo 2.2.

Connectivity with existing public transport networks are key functional attributes of the corridor. The Northern Rail Line crosses the motorway east of the Beecroft Road Interchange. The Chatswood to Epping rail line, recently opened, carries additional passengers to and from Macquarie University, Macquarie Park and North Ryde. It is estimated that this new rail line will increase the passenger movement and capacity requirements on the bus network which uses the M2 Motorway. Currently a two-lane eight kilometre busway (between the eastbound and westbound carriageways) operates along the M2 from Windsor Road to Beecroft Road and utilises bus stops in the median of the motorway, as illustrated in Photo 2.3.



Photo 2.2 Macquarie Business Park and Lane Cove National Park



Photo 2.3 Public bus stop in the median of the motorway at Carlingford