

28 Chorley Ave.,
Cheltenham,
NSW 2119.
26th October 2012
Thirdtrackrailline01

Director – Infrastructure Projects,
Epping to Thornleigh Third track Project – SSI 5132,
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure,
GPO Box 39,
Sydney, NSW 2001.

Submission regarding proposed, Epping to Thornleigh Third Track Project – SSI 5132.

Dear Director,

This proposed track running through the Cheltenham Beecroft area is in a closely developed residential area, and as we understand from Clause 6.2, page 34 of the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor Strategic Review Report (SRR) dated July 2012 Ref. 2010143 there has not been any financial assessments made for loss of local amenities, property values and for noise mitigation and other problems in the department's selection of the the preferred option.

We believe there should be a financial assessment of these points before any final decisions are made to proceed further. However what follows here are suggestions for your consideration/ review.

1. Alternative to the Epping to Thornleigh Third Track as presented in the SRR dated July 2012.

Key dates revolve around a start date of early? 2013 and a four year construction period to finish in 2016, with an approximate cost of \$520 million for 6 kilometres of track!

From the SSR Clauses 3.1 and 4.5 it is expected that future transport requirements on the northern line may need evaluation beyond 2028, when "Container traffic is anticipated to increase by almost four times" that is just 12 years later. (Assumed to mean total numbers for both rail and road traffic)

If a main thrust of this work is to substantially move more goods traffic on the eastern states from road to rail, driven by competitive cost forces, taking into account the above anticipated forecast growth, then within 12 years there will have to be major changes to what is now proposed. There is a risk that by 2028 or before, the completion of the present proposal may be seen as inadequate or misdirected capital expenditure.

The comparison of four years to construct and a possible re-evaluation 12 years later leads one to put forward a possible alternative which could be completed in less time and for less capital.

We leave the effectiveness of this alternative for your assessment and operational constraints.

Suggestion,

Delete the SSR third track proposal in total and install a holding/passing loop between Thornleigh and Normanhurst stations for north bound trains. Clause 1.3, page 5 of the SSR notes the lack of adequate passing loops on this line.

The available distance is about 2.1 kilometres, with part of this track having an assisting down grade for travelling north beyond Thornleigh station.

The rail track in this section of line has benefits in lower cost construction and less residential and local amenities issues to be addressed. It avoids track turn outs and construction costs and delays required when passing Cheltenham, Beecroft and Pennant Hills station buildings with the new pedestrian accesses. It also avoids the cost of the new rail bridge over the M2 motorway. It is likely that the cost estimate for this alternative proposal will be more accurate than the SSR proposal, due to the deletion of many interfaces in the work.

2. Cheltenham Station – Suggested changes - only if proposed SS Review proceeds in present form.

Suggestion,

Retain the advantages of the present access system – Save capital costs.

The plans for Cheltenham station shown in the SSR page 18 list *“new upgrade to include a new pedestrian foot bridge. stairs and lifts”*

However the existing station access design is simple and very user friendly on three counts.

- a) There are no steps to reach both platforms from the two street approaches and thus is easily accessible to wheel chairs, strollers and the like and the elderly.
- b) Annual access maintenance costs are very low! Reliability is very high!
- c) The present system can easily handle the 400 girls(check) who leave the Cheltenham Girls school every afternoon at about 3.20 pm, five days a week and embark on the 3.29 pm up train to Central. Refer to Photo No.1. This photo shows less than the normal load usually taken because of the absence of Year 6 students at this time of the year. The morning student arrival load peak is probably not as high.

In the event that the project proceeds with a third rail line between Epping and Thornleigh as in the SRR, access to the platform for passengers travelling north could be achieved by using the existing pedestrian way on the Cheltenham Road vehicle bridge as the start of a new graded descent. This is the same access used in the afternoon peak load mentioned in “c” above.

The starting point can be seen marked in photos No.2 and 3 below in line with the relevant road bridge stanchion. This assumes that the present road bridge and stanchions will remain. The existing structure appears to allow for a third track on the south western side which cannot be used with the SSR scheme.

If this suggestion is feasible, the existing user access advantages of the Cheltenham station will be maintained with substantial savings in construction, operation and maintenance .

In any event, the design chief engineer must visually observe the particulars of the afternoon exodus of the students in the peak rush onto the Cheltenham up platform and allow for same in any move away from the present status quo. And only at a time when the full student enrollment is attending school.

The use of stairs and lifts as now proposed, will be a movement handicap for all commuters onto the platform.

1. Beecroft platform access – Help the commuters.

It has been a surprise to local train users and some of the department staff employed at the October 2012 local public exhibitions that the SRR makes no proposal to improve access to the Beecroft station platform. The photo No.4 below shows the only passenger access as a 32 step stairway. Not suitable for the elderly, persons with babies, strollers and the like.

We are well aware of the lack of funds to cover the many catch ups in the NSW transport system but this omission sends a sharp reminder to local Beecroft commuters as to where they stand in this transport review alongside road transport.

Irrespective of the outcome of the SSR this anomaly should be removed. Why propose to have two lifts at Cheltenham where they are not essential and none at Beecroft? Use the savings from Cheltenham Station and fix the Beecroft handicap.

Hoping you can make some use of these suggestions,

yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. Magnussen', written in a cursive style.

W.Magnussen



Photo 1. Cheltenham Station 3.27 pm 22/10/2012. looking north west.
Commuter numbers shown are less due to Year 6 students absence at this time of the year.



Photo No 2.

Cheltenham Station looking north west.
Position of start of down ramp from
road bridge walkway to north bound train
platform.

Line of ramp to platform for north bound only.



Photo No 3. Cheltenham Road Bridge. Looking north west.
Cheltenham Station pedestrian bridge crossing is on the near side in this photo.

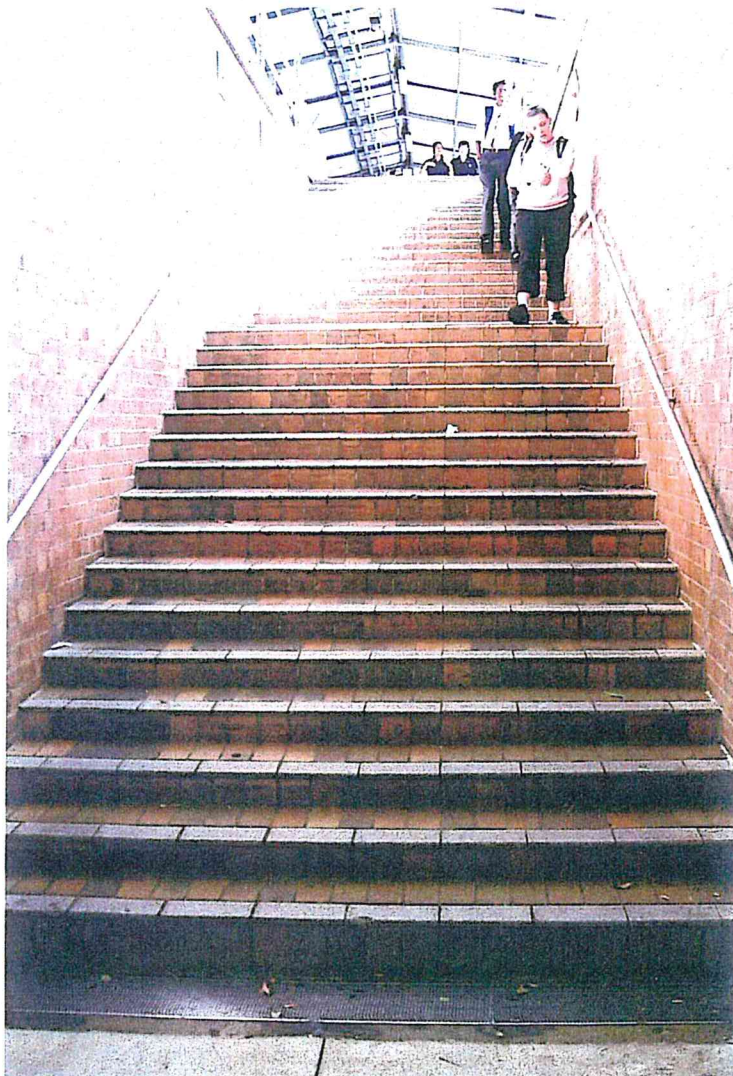


Photo No 4. Beecroft Station

The only access to platform, a total of 32
steps with safety landing at halfway

