

Submission

No 15

INQUIRY INTO THE UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS

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Date Received: 23/02/2012

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22.2.2012

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INQUIRY INTO UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS

The terms of reference for the inquiry should include:

- 1) Consideration of increasing the capacity of the existing rail network through construction of additional ground level tracks within, and adjacent to, existing rail corridors.
- 2) Whether development above and adjacent to rail corridors would prevent or restrict the construction of additional ground level tracks within, and adjacent to, existing rail corridors.
- 3) Stating that any income generated should be dedicated to funding future rail infrastructure.

The utilisation of rail corridors, the air space above rail corridors and the land adjacent to rail corridors for property development are opposed. Our reasons are as follows:

Development within, above and adjacent to the rail corridor would prevent future expansion of the rail network through construction of additional tracks at ground level.

Construction of additional tracks at ground level is much cheaper and quicker than the alternative of constructing additional tracks underground.

Disadvantages of tunnelling:

- * It is much more expensive.
- * Construction time is much longer.
- * Environmental impacts associated with a huge amount of spoil to be disposed of.
- * More infrastructure is required e.g. lining of tunnels, ventilation.
- * The Sydney rail network is spread out over a large geographic area. It is not feasible to run trains long distances through tunnels.
- * Underground rail networks in overseas cities are confined to a smaller geographic area than Sydney's rail network.

* Long journeys underground would be very unpleasant for rail commuters.

* Access for maintenance of long tunnels would be more difficult.

* If rail accidents or incidents such as train breakdowns occurred in long tunnels, it would be difficult for rescue services to access and evacuate passengers or injured people.

Support structures for development of air space above rail corridors would prevent construction of additional tracks at ground level.

Support structures for development above the rail corridor are vulnerable to being damaged during train derailments, with potential for collapse of buildings onto the rail corridor and significant loss of life. The support structures for the existing development above the rail corridor at Hurstville have similar potential for damage during a train derailment as in the 1977 Granville rail disaster.

New development on land adjacent to rail corridors, especially residential development, should be required to be set back from the rail corridor boundary. State Planning Legislation should facilitate the following:

* To make provision for future essential rail infrastructure which should take precedence over facilitation of private development.

* To allow for the possibility of acquiring land immediately adjacent to rail corridors for construction of additional tracks.

High rise residential buildings have been constructed right to the rail corridor boundary at Rockdale and in the vicinity of Strathfield, preventing future widening of the rail corridor. Developments like these should not be permitted in the future.

* To prevent development close to the boundary of the rail corridor on private land which could restrict construction of additional rail tracks on vacant rail corridor land between existing rail tracks and the corridor boundary e.g. due to residents' objections to adverse impacts on amenity.

The terms of reference should state: "generating income for funding rail infrastructure projects" instead of..."funding future infrastructure projects". The current wording allows the possibility that income generated could be spent on road infrastructure.

Historically NSW State Governments have been spending far more on roads than on rail. To resolve Sydney's severe road congestion the State Government needs to allocate the bulk of funds for new infrastructure to new rail infrastructure, not new road infrastructure.

Provision should be made within rail corridors where possible and on land adjacent to rail corridors for continuous off road shared cycleways/pedestrian paths. Benefits include:

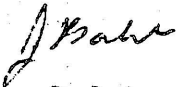
* Reduction in car usage and road congestion.

* Improving connectivity of communities.

* Providing an environmentally sustainable, safe and convenient way for people to travel to employment, education and shops.

* Improvement in air quality and community health.

Yours sincerely,



Jean Baluk
Secretary, Central and North Miranda Precinct Residents' Association
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