

**Submission  
No 108**

## **THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR**

**Name:** Ms Sarah Green

**Date received:** 15/10/2008

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The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St Sydney NSW 2000

15 October 2008

### **Submission to Inquiry into Transport Needs of Sydney's North West Sector.**

I write to draw attention to the need for the NSW Government to take seriously the need for more efficient and effective public transport infrastructure in North Western Sydney.

By way of background I'm a young professional who has lived in Western / North Western Sydney my whole life. I currently live with my husband in Winston Hills and commute from Baulkham Hills to work in North Sydney 5 days a week.

I have been doing this commute via the Hillsbus Route 612 service for 3 years now, only to experience increasing difficulty in the "daily strain" to get to & from work. Hillsbus have, I believe, attempted to address the obvious increases in patronage demand for bus services from North West Sydney to Sydney CBD, North Sydney / Milsons Point & Macquarie Park. However, any regular bus commuter along this transport corridor would attest to how buses are failing to meet the ever increasing demand. At the end of this submission I have attached a list of examples of how these services are failing to meet my needs & undoubtedly the needs of thousands of other commuters.

I am a huge supporter of getting vehicles off Sydney's congested roadwork, however if it wasn't for the exorbitant M2 & Lane Cove Tunnel toll costs, I'd be joining the traffic jam & driving to work. But I estimate this would cost me over \$3000 a year in tolls alone. On top of that would be parking, petrol, and additional maintenance costs; at least \$10,000 per annum, just to travel 20 – 30 km to & from work. For a young professional with a sizeable mortgage, this is simply not a viable option.

This is my major criticism of the state of transport in my local area; residents don't have a lot of viable options to choose from. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Sydney, people rightly expect more. Another option for me would have been to use the Parramatta to Chatswood rail link; if only the Parramatta to Epping link hadn't been abandoned by the State government.

In my relatively short lifetime I have witnessed firsthand the growth of North Western Sydney, from farm land into a sea of roofs stretching all the way to Rouse Hill. By all means, government should compile the data, but the thousands of residents in the

area can attest to how transport infrastructure in the area has been and continues to be severely neglected.

It's unscientific, but if you look at City Rail's network map, there is a clear link missing in the North Western sector. Forget the metro line, the North Western Sydney is long overdue for a heavy rail line. More road transport such as buses and the white elephant Bus T-Ways are simply not the answer to providing an efficient public transport system in this large area of the Sydney metropolitan area.

The implications of not improving the transport infrastructure are staggering and scary to contemplate. With projected population increases in North Western Sydney and the ever increasing cost of parking, petrol & tolls, capacity restraints on the already insufficient Hillsbus services will only worsen; local traffic will only worsen without improvements such as an underpass at the intersection of Windsor & Old Northern Roads; House values will suffer; and residents will face real restrictions on their ability to choose where they work & visit in Sydney. This last point is most concerning of all & nothing short of an embarrassing state of affairs in Sydney in 2008.

Unless meaningful action is taken by the NSW Government, this state of affairs will only worsen. And more Northern Sydney residents will join the mass exodus of residents from NSW.

Political preferences aside, the very hardworking people of North Western Sydney deserve a much better deal.

Sarah Green

Cc: The Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister of Australia

Nathan Rees, MP, Premier of New South Wales

David Campbell, MP, NSW Minister for Transport

Clr Larry Bolitho, Mayor of Baulkham Hills Shire Council

Barry O'Farrell MP, Leader of the NSW Opposition

Gladys Berejikian MP, NSW Shadow Minister for Transport

Wayne Merton MP, Member for Baulkham Hills NSW

Comfort Delgro Cabcharge Pty Ltd

## **Attachment: Hillsbus Service Issues re. M2 Bus Services**

**Unlike the Route 610 / 615 City services, there is no Route 612 Express Service to North Sydney.**

Even with the introduction of the Lane Cove Tunnel & the dedicated bus lanes on Epping Road, the trip from The Hills to North Sydney is taking longer than ever, because this service stops at most bus stops (in order to accommodate only a few passengers) along Epping Road at North Ryde, The Lane Cove interchange at Longueville Rd Lane Cove, and all the way down the Pacific Highway from Lane Cove to North Sydney.

**In the afternoons in particular, there appears to be an increasing number of Sydney Buses commuters jumping on to the 612 service at North Sydney or Crows Nest, only to go so far as Lane Cove.**

This in part impacts Hills passengers who board the 612 at St Leonards, who are often left behind by buses already full to capacity between Milson's Point and Crows Nest.

**The spread of route 612 services is restrictive.**

In particular in the morning peak, where the last morning bus departs the Hills District before 8:30am, and in the evening peak, where the last bus has left North Sydney by 6:30pm. Despite their other limitations, at least the city bus services run throughout the day and late into the evening.

**Even if passengers are lucky enough to be able to fit onto a bus, seats are often not available.**

Whether a CBD or North Sydney service, it is an incredibly long journey on a bus to have to travel whilst standing. And the variations between high speeds in bus lanes (where they're available) and slow speeds in normal lanes also make standing quite dangerous.

**Buses are constantly overcrowded, travelling with more than the stated safe maximum capacity.**

Often passengers are yelled at by Officials at bus stops (especially at the M2 Pennant Hills Rd stop) to move down to the back of buses where there are no real aides to hold on to, so that passengers can be jammed into the front of buses up against the front door. I ask: who will accept responsibility when there's a major accident involving mass injuries & probably fatalities when there's a major accident involving one of these dangerously overloaded buses? It's not a question of if this kind of a disaster will happen; it's a question of when.

**Unlike with wholly government funded public transport & Travel Ten tickets, there is no availability of discounted ticketing for full fare paying passengers who commute 5 days (or less) a week.**

Hillsbus passengers are now able to purchase a weekly ticket which provides for a 20% discount....but passengers would need to travel 7 consecutive days for this discount to deliver any value. The vast majority of passengers on Hillsbus services would not commute 7 days every week, so there is virtually no value in the weekly ticket & certainly no incentive for more people to get out of their cars to use public transport instead.

**There is insufficient car parking near main bus stops for M2 buses.**

From Winston Hills I have to drive to Baulkham Hills to catch my bus. There is a small parking station near my bus stop, but it's completely full by 6:45am most days. I feel for residents in the surrounding streets who then have to put up with traffic and parking congestion on their front doorstep; and that's where Council hasn't already installed parking restrictions.

Thousands of North West Sydney commuters battle these pressures, every workday, every trip to work & every trip home. After a while these pressures can really start to take a toll.

I have a very busy & demanding job, but the hardest part of my day is easily the daily grind to & from work.

*Sarah Green*