

THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR

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**Submission to
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 - NSW Legislative Council.**

**Subject - Enquiry into the
Transport Needs of Sydney's North West Sector**

The committee of the Kellyville Ridge Community Association has met and unanimously agreed on the content of this submission and instructed me to submit it for your consideration. The committee consists of ten (10) local residents, 7 male and 3 female, covering a 40+ year span in age groups.

Preamble

Kellyville Ridge is a relatively new suburb formed from that part of Old Kellyville located west of Windsor Road and totally contained within the City of Blacktown boundaries. It is a "bedroom suburb" with very little commercial content (one fast food, a licensed premises and a service station). Since the formation of the new "The Ponds" suburb which absorbed portion of Kellyville Ridge, our suburb contains currently approximately 1600 established dwellings and units which will grow to approximately 2600 when fully developed. At present rate of development this is likely to be in 3 to 5 years.

Kellyville Ridge Community Association has a financial membership representing approximately 6.25% of established households. The Association is non-party political and works for the best outcomes for the suburb and its population at large. Every resident, member or not, may seek the Association's support on issues relating to Kellyville Ridge.

We believe most of the content of this submission would be valid comment for our adjoining and near suburbs of Stanhope Gardens, Newbury, The Ponds, Glenwood, Rouse Hill, Beaumont Hills and the outer west portions of Kellyville. Some possible outcomes could also be valid for the more eastern and southern parts of the Hills District.

Our submission is made with the knowledge that funding infrastructure requirements in the next decade, at least, will be a challenge. Also, that available road space in the city may restrict additional bus services of any real volume.

Issues

1. Inadequate public transport to the city.
2. Inadequate and unacceptable time/cost access to the north (Central Coast and Newcastle).
3. Continuing broken promises on delivery of transport infrastructure.
4. Failure to establish common objectives and workable plans with the Federal Government.
5. Inequitable and unfair treatment by the State Government relating to road tolls.

Issue 1

Inadequate Public Transport to City

Our area requires fast, reliable and frequent public transport to and from the city, KR to the city in less than 60 minutes (maximum). At half hour intervals throughout the day (6 days a week minimum), 6am to 9pm.

Currently, at times, this is achieved by bus via the M2 (traffic permitting) but only with a peak hour over crowded service. A dedicated bus lane along the entire length of the M2 continuing even nearer to the city and increasing service load capacity would be necessary to achieve any sense of lifting this peak hour service above "lame duck" standard. The alternative, via T-way to Parramatta then train to the city, depending on connections, can take up to 2 hours. Park and ride access to the city by train is severely restricted by inadequate car parking at western line rail connections. This is a near impossible option during the day.

As an illustration demonstrating the lack of cohesive transport options from Kellyville Ridge to the CBD using the <www.131500.info> website's travel planner we looked at a trip from Merriville Rd, Kellyville Ridge (the centre of K.R. - the software actually took this as the intersection with Conrad Rd) to the GPO in the city (centre of the CBD), with an arrival time at each hour of a week day. For simplicity we collated "option 1". Option 1 is the trip that leaves the latest possible for your intended arrival time, not necessarily the fastest trip (although in all cases there were only a few minutes between this trip and the fastest, if in fact it was not the fastest). The results are tabled in Attachment B.

The table in Attachment B shows no available service for three hours (midnight, 1am and 2am). In addition, there are a further four hours (3am, 4am, 5am and 6am) which only offer the one service arriving in the city at 2.07am. Effectively this is six hours without a service. There are a staggering 14 different routes given, with only two direct services (616 to the city). It is clear that our area is lacking in direct or even consistent services to the CBD and commuters must cobble together a way to get to the CBD. Depending on the time of day, commuters may need to travel via Blacktown, Kings Langley, Baulkham Hills, North Rocks, Westmead, Kellyville, Castle Hill or Redfern.

No service was under an hour (walking time is included). No service ran over two hours, although from departure to an appointment at the requested time will, at times, run over two hours. The average time exceeded 90 minutes. The CBD is probably one of the easiest places to travel to on public transport from our area. To travel elsewhere in Sydney is significantly more difficult and time consuming.

This is a "NOW" problem of magnitude with no solution in sight. Delayed completion dates (years not months) and no starts to work on various and ever changing State Government rail projects, originally designed to be completed by 2010, leave a legacy the area must endure under great suffering and hardship. The unacceptable situation that now exists is a testament to the lack of foresight, planning and attention that has been given to intergrated development of our area of Sydney. None of these projects, if started today, can prevent the overburden of the already choked road network in north-western Sydney that will occur before 2015, given the area's current development rate. Must we wait for gridlock?

Thinking outside the nine dots is required to introduce at least temporary pain easing solutions immediately. Some possible options that should be considered are:

- (i) Extending regular express Rouse Hill to City bus services along the T-way and M2 throughout the day and evening. Regular and reliable is the key. Park and ride facilities exist on the T-way and are currently under utilised.
- (ii) Utilise the soon to be introduced heavy rail service Epping to the City via Chatswood by running express trains stopping only at Chatswood that are timetable matched to the bus service proposed in (i)

above. These buses could now be terminated at Epping. The shorter bus route would require less buses and drivers. We frequently hear from the Ministry of Transport that commuters do not want services requiring a transport mode change. Properly planned and executed transport mode interchanging is a world-wide way of life and very acceptable, especially compared to no solution at all. Intergrated ticketing is a very necessary part of such a solution. All short to medium term options are likely to include multiple modes of transport (or use of multiple routes of the one mode of transport) and, like the e-tag has done for toll roads, an integrated ticketing system would speed up travel times and ease congestion significantly. It is essential the government fast-track the tender and implementation process of the long overdue electronic ticketing system.

The Department of Transport, Hillsbus and Busways should immediately implement weekly ticketing on all North-West T-way services (currently only available on M2 services) as a short term measure to increase efficiency.

(iii) Set aside the NW metro project as a longer term plan and, as soon as practical, extend the heavy rail from Epping in stages to Castle Hill, then Norwest Business Park, then Rouse Hill. Continue with the Bus services as outlined in (ii) modifying the inner terminus location as the rail extends.

(iv) On the assumption that the current rail clearway project will provide extra capacity on the Blacktown line, run fast services to the city (less than 60 minutes) along the Richmond line providing express running from Blacktown to the City. This option will require a serious park and ride facility at the proposed new Schofield's train station. We consider that this station should be additional to, and not instead of, the existing Schofield station given the residential development plan in place for this general area.

(v) Get completely outside the nine dots if the assumption of (iv) is valid and build immediately the outer end of the already planned but discarded north-west heavy rail from Rouse Hill to Norwest Business Park, linking from here to the Richmond line along the M7 corridor, joining just north of Marayong station. Under utilised park and ride facilities already exist at the proposed Burns Road station site. On the assumption that Norwest Business Park will eventually be heavy rail linked to Epping, this option, longer term, offers the possibility of an alternate rail link to the city from Penrith via Castle Hill and Epping.

A possible alternative would be to build a new line from the proposed new Schofields rail station to Rouse Hill following the general alignment of Schofields Road including stations servicing The Ponds, RHTC and Rouse Hill Village. Both these options are relatively short lines with less construction difficulty.

As an aside, we note Perth's system of rail corridors down the centre of the motorways as a prudent use of transport corridors.

Our area's public transport situation needs urgent attention. We implore the State Government to address this issue immediately.

Issue 2

Inadequate and unacceptable time/cost road access to the north

(i.e. Central Coast and Newcastle)

It is quite evident that there is a very serious security and commercial risk exposure with the concentrated locations of existing transport crossings of the Hawkesbury River linking Sydney to the Central Coast and Newcastle. We have often experienced the chaos when the Pacific Hwy is closed for several hours because of fires or accidents. Think about the consequences if the Brooklyn road bridge and/or rail crossings were unavailable for extended periods. What would happen if they were taken out in an

event such as sabotage or an earthquake.

Sydney has alternate options to the south (Pacific and Hume Hwys) and to the West (Great Western Hwy and Bells Line) but only one real option to the Central Coast and Newcastle, the State's second largest population. We acknowledge the existence of the Putty Rd (the WWII military connection) however this is less than a valid alternative route to Gosford and the Wisemans Ferry has severe capacity limitations.

The proposed tunnel duplication of Pennant Hills Rd does nothing to address the above issue, very little to address the ever growing Sydney traffic problems and absolutely nothing to assist our fast growing NW area. Travel from our area to the north would generally join Pennant Hills Rd from Boundary Rd. Ultimately, an alternative crossing of the Hawkesbury, further west, will be required and will not only considerably reduce the load on Pennant Hills Rd but will reduce the through traffic loads on much of the Hills district and outer north west areas. One only has to look at the difference the brilliant M7 has made to the greater western part of Sydney. The M7 needs to be continued north from Dean Park now as the alternative to duplicating Pennant Hills Rd. This would achieve wider benefits for Sydney as a whole. We also note with interest that the investigation process leading to the decision to support building the Pennant Hills Rd tunnel relied heavily on the Sinclair Knight Mertz modeling predictions. We view this with great caution as the SKM study used in the decision process to build the Northwest T-way, predicted after completion, in the first year, traffic volumes along Windsor/Old Windsor Rds would reduce by 33%. With the North-West T-way now a year old the reality is an increase in traffic on Windsor/Old Windsor Rds. So much for the modeling predictions.

We are of the opinion that when actual travelling speeds, for no reason other than traffic volume, fall below the designed allowable speed limit, the road is loaded. When the slow down is continuous for 10 to 15 minutes or more, the road is overloaded and travel efficiency is impaired and travel costs and pollution increase to unacceptable levels. This currently occurs twice a day on the M2 to the point where, on sections, 24 hour reduced speed limits have permanently been imposed. The proposed Pennant Hills Rd tunnel connection will do nothing to relieve this issue but our alternative proposal below will.

We have looked at the options that were considered as alternatives to the currently favoured Pennant Hills Rd tunnel and see that this has been canvassed and discarded which we suspect was based on projected cost and not because it was not the best solution. Cheap is not good or wise. We ask that it be looked at again for the greatest benefit, not the cheapest. For what it is worth, we offer some extended thinking to what has been published on the subject in the attached sketch map (attachment A)

Proposal (see Attachment A)

Our proposal recommends constructing map legend items, 1 & 2 ASAP. This would greatly relieve the load on Pennant Hills Rd, plus it would remove all through and Western Sydney traffic travelling to and from north of the Hawkesbury, out of many other Sydney link roads. We also propose all heavy haulage be required to use this route (the exception being journeys with origin or destination only serviced by Pennant Hills Rd/F3 south of the Hawkesbury). On completion this option would reduce the travel time from Gosford to Western Sydney by at least 45 minutes even if the Pennant Hills Rd tunnel was to be built.

Map item 3, the dual carriage highway, which could be delivered later, would remove Sydney-New England Hwy traffic from the F3, thereby extending its servicable life as a 2 lane carriageway north of Wyong as well as providing an alternative strategic route. This item recognises that both east and west existing links from Cessnock to the New England Hwy may need upgrading.

Map item 4, is only proposed as an alternative to map item 2, if item 2 is impractical.

A very positive advantage of the M7 is that it does sustain traffic at design speed limits and meets its objectives. This proposal would also meet this standard of travel.

It is not too late to rethink this subject. We encourage the State Government to do so and to involve the Federal Government in the strategic impact of this direction. Proposed map items 1 and 2 would/should become part of the Federal Government's National Highway. This alternate route north is required now to relieve the unacceptable traffic loads on the roads of north-west Sydney and reduce the travel time to the north for all of western Sydney including the south-west.

Issue 3

Continuing broken promises on delivery of transport infrastructure.

Both Federal and State Governments have a long track record of transport infrastructure plans that either don't materialise or miss target completion dates, not by years but decades. We cite -

The Eastern Suburbs railway.

The duplication of the Hume Hwy. On completion of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, in the 1960's, Utah Constructors offered to build a toll expressway from Melbourne to Sydney before they returned to the USA. This was refused because "we could do it quickly and cheaper". More than 40 years later it is still not complete.

The National Hwy Project, duplication of the entire Pacific Hwy, is progressing, but decades late on promised dates.

Extension of the M4 to the City, not to mention about the selling of the land corridor.

There are many more, but the one specifically affecting our area is the non delivery of the long promised NW railway.

The public are FED UP. Just DO IT and DO IT NOW.

Set aside the plans for the recently and hastily proposed Metro and just keep on building the heavy rail. This project has well advanced planning and site work could commence almost tomorrow. Get the Federal Government to invest in this URGENT infrastructure project.

Have the Parliament expressly forbid promotional expenditure on proposed projects. The expenditure, such as that spent recently on the proposed Metro, is a total waste and offensive to tax payers. It is our tax money and must be redirected to actual infrastructure construction spending. It is inexcusable to argue Government needs to advertise in this way. Government has a free option for this, it's called the "News Media".

Issue 4

Failure to establish common objectives and workable plans with the Federal Government.

Party politicking and State versus Federal politicking wastes time and money. When agreement can't be reached quickly and amicably between the two Parliaments on planning and funding infrastructure or any other subject, then simply put, we are over governed. Where this occurs one layer of Government should be removed from that particular process.

A good start would be to establish a NSW Major Project Infrastructure Fund locked to specific purpose. The Federal Government should, as well as the State Government, contribute funding and by statute both governments be able to be satisfied that the use of this funding is locked to agreed specific purpose and project timetables.

Please put the NW Rail Link on top of the project list.

Issue 5

Inequitable and unfair treatment by the State Government relating to road tolls

Discrimination against citizens of the North West exists. State Government toll subsidies for the M4

and M5 are not justifiable without similar treatment available to all Sydney.

Residents of our area pay tolls of \$0.56 for M7, plus \$4.40 for M2, plus \$2.69 for Lane Cove Tunnel, plus \$ 3.00 for Harbour Crossing to travel to the city. Total toll \$10.65 with no subsidy available. Compare this to the M4 toll to the City of \$ 2.75 less subsidy or the M5 toll to the City of \$3.80 less subsidy. (Toll costs quoted from the website <http://sydneymotorways.com/rta_map.html>)

The extension of a toll subsidy for the north-west is required immediately to end this immoral discrimination by the State Government against a selected portion of NSW citizens. However, we are not asking for a subsidy but prefer to end the discrimination by removing the M4 and M5 subsidies and redirecting this money to the proposed NSW Infrastructure Fund.

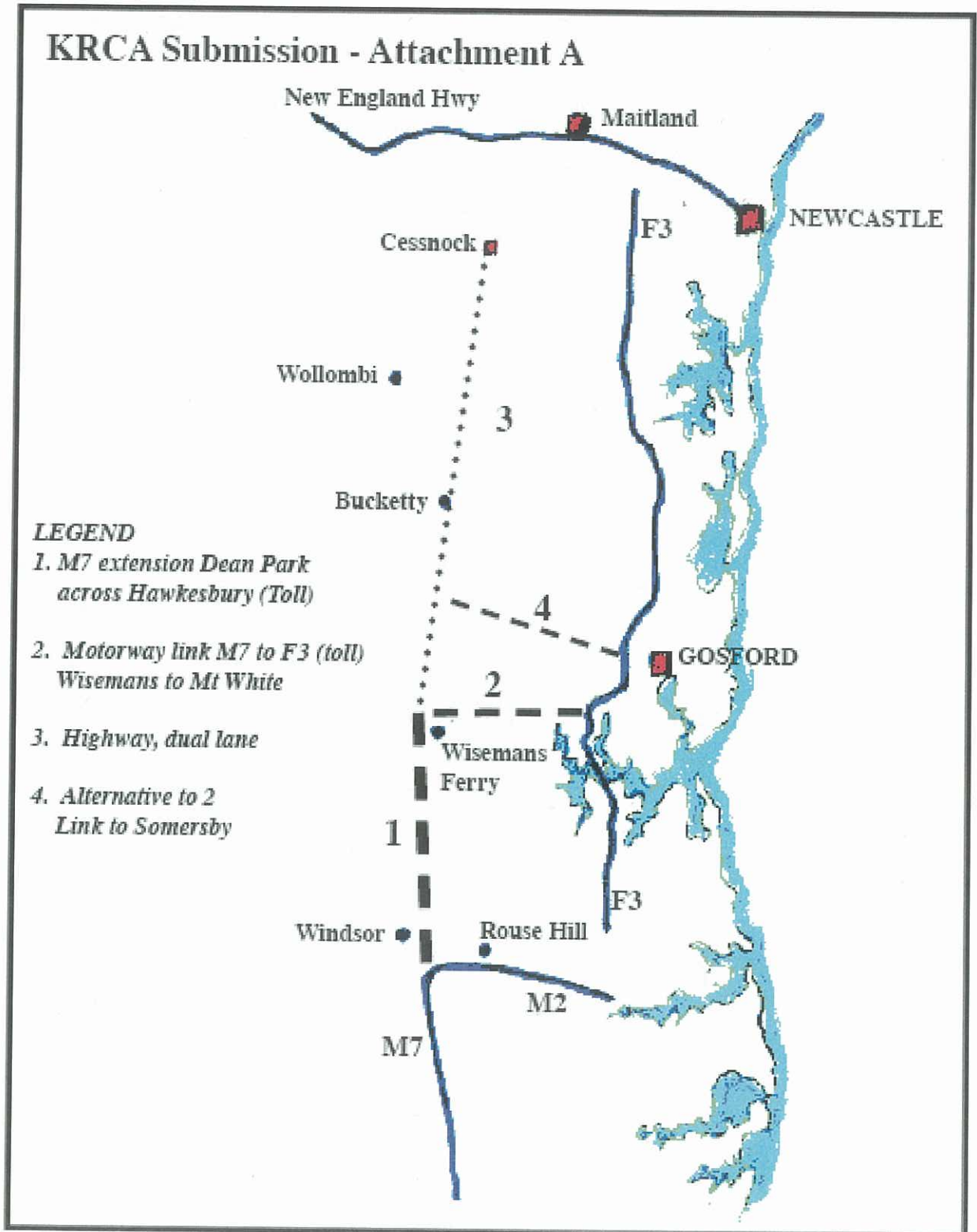
Summary

The State Government is expanding and developing the north-west of Sydney at a rapid rate and has been doing so for some years past. It has failed miserably in providing the transport infrastructure required to support such development, particularly in the issue of reasonable connection to Sydney CBD. This has, and will, continue to impose an unacceptable, stressful and heavy cost and time loss burden on the citizens of the area. Absorption limits of these burdens by the areas population have been reached. Substantive action to rectify this must occur immediately. We ask this review to conclude and forcefully recommend the State Government take immediate real action to address the issues.

Thank you.

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KRCA - Attachment A



KRCA - Attachment B

KRCA Submission - Attachment B

Request arrival time	Departure	Actual Arrival	Duration	Route
1:00:00 AM	No Service			
2:00:00 AM	No Service			
4:00:00 AM	12:09:00 AM	2:07:00 AM	1:58:00	T75 to Blacktown Station, N70 to Town Hall
5:00:00 AM	12:09:00 AM	2:07:00 AM	1:58:00	T75 to Blacktown Station, N70 to Town Hall
6:00:00 AM	12:09:00 AM	2:07:00 AM	1:58:00	T75 to Blacktown Station, N70 to Town Hall
7:00:00 AM	5:23:00 AM	7:38:00 AM	1:18:00	616 to York St, Near Barrack St
8:00:00 AM	6:20:00 AM	9:58:00 AM	1:53:00	T65 to Abbott T-way, 611 to M2 Busway & Barclay Rd, 610 to York St Near Barrack St
9:00:00 AM	6:20:00 AM	11:54:00 AM	1:31:00	T63 to Westmead Station, Train to Wynyard Station
10:00:00 AM	6:20:00 AM	11:54:00 AM	1:31:00	T63 to Westmead Station, Train to Wynyard Station
12:00:00 PM	10:23:00 AM	1:54:00 PM	1:31:00	T63 to Westmead Station, Train to Wynyard Station
1:00:00 PM	10:23:00 AM	3:47:00 PM	1:53:00	T63 to Westmead Station, Train to Wynyard Station
2:00:00 PM	12:23:00 PM	5:34:00 PM	1:18:00	616 to York St, Near Barrack St
3:00:00 PM	1:00:00 PM	7:51:00 PM	1:37:00	T63 to Merriville T-way, T75 to Blacktown Station, Train to Wynyard Station
4:00:00 PM	2:14:00 PM	9:51:00 PM	1:38:00	T75 to Blacktown Station, Train to Wynyard Station
5:00:00 PM	2:14:00 PM			
6:00:00 PM	4:16:00 PM			
7:00:00 PM	5:39:00 PM			
8:00:00 PM	6:14:00 PM			
9:00:00 PM	6:52:00 PM			
10:00:00 PM	8:13:00 PM			
11:00:00 PM	8:53:00 PM			
12:00:00 AM	No service			

Minimum Travel time
 1:10:00
 Maximum Travel time
 1:58:00
 Average Travel time
 1:36:09
 Different routes
 14