

Supplementary  
Submission  
No 48a

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

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## NW Sector transport related matters

The North Shore Times today reports that the Chatswood Transport Interchange developer CRI Chatswood is now in receivership. While this apparently will not affect completion of the transport component of the CTI, it does raise questions of the PPP model used due to the number of major NSW PPP projects (e.g., CCT, LCT, Airport Railway, Chatswood-Epping Rail Line) with financial difficulties for the developer or major cost over-runs to Government. The risk contingency for future projects must be rising dramatically.

For the CTI project, my understanding from talking to the workers on site is that there are still unresolved scope and design issues with this project in the vicinity of Albert St and Thomas Lane due to poor planning by the RTA. Despite being next to a major telephone exchange, no site investigation was undertaken to check information provided by Telstra. Construction crews found much of what they were told about services was rubbish.

It very much appears government agencies only take local impact seriously when there is a government MP complaining.

If a detailed design for the full project was available to the public at 1:50 scale as part of a real community consultation process before PPP contracts were let, the functionality of the projects and local impact could be much improved.

Developers are being asked to bear risks on the outcome of government process as these projects advance. For example, the RTA this year looked at buying more land for the CTI project but found property resumptions had already pushed the boundary back to the face of the building.

It appears to me the planning and design of major transport projects is rather cursory despite the vast volume of material produced by consultants. It appears functional objectives are identified and the PPP partner is selected on the basis of how much money they offer government (the losing bidder on the LCT offered \$350M). The design documents commissioned by government departments and therefore the environmental impact statement are for guidance only.

Motorway and railway users barely notice the local environments they travel through, yet the local environment is everything to the people living next door to a piece of infrastructure. At present, the local environment is compromised by the desire for a quick start on construction, often for political reasons, and what is left in the budget/or budget overrun as construction draws to a close.

Most of the planning and design work for a major project should be designing the local environments. Construction should not start until the local environment design is finalised down to the last plant and the project is sequenced to reduce local impact.

At present, to this civil construction engineer, the process seems to be to get in quick, create a big mess so it looks like something is happening, than tidy up at the end for as cheap as possible.

We need a good neighbour policy for all development work. If all development work, including utilities, was carried out on the basis that it was taking place in the developers personal backyard, impact would be minimised.

Unless a person has the resources to bid for PPP, there is presently no way to find out what is really being tendered. All project documents are confidential. The public can only know what a ministers office is prepared to release. The budget laws are part of the problem. Ministers get a lump sum for all activities carried out in their portfolios. The only real accountability is the 4-yearly elections.

Government development projects should all go to a parliamentary enquiry before a law is passed approving the project as is done with major projects in the UK. Only then should tenders be called.

I could give a list of poor local outcomes for the Gore Hill Freeway, CTI and Chatswood-Epping Railway, but the words would hardly convey the message. I invite the Committee to spend a few hours in Artarmon and Chatswood on a guided tour to understand the unexpected local impact of these three projects.

PS The NSW Parliament should get an Australian or English Dictionary for its website. There is no excuse for Parliament's website dictionary to be using American English.