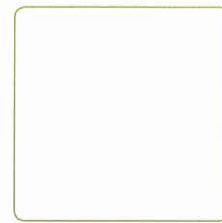


**Submission
No 155**

THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR

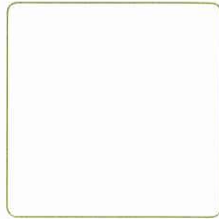
Organisation: Baulkham Hills Shire Council
Name: Mr Dave Walker
Position: General Manager
Date received: 17/10/2008



15 October 2008

RECEIVED

17 OCT 2008



Ms Beverley Duffy
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4
Legislative Council
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Our Ref: 34955508

Dear Ms Duffy

**SUBMISSION TO UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY INTO TRANSPORT FACILITIES IN
THE NORTH WEST SECTOR**

I refer to the Inquiry currently being undertaken by Standing Committee No. 4 under the Chairmanship of the Hon Jenny Gardiner, MLC and I have pleasure in enclosing Council's submission to the Inquiry, which was adopted by Council at its meeting on 14 October 2008.

I seek the Committee's detailed consideration of the matters raised and ask that Council's representatives be afforded the opportunity to address the Committee in its hearings on these matter.

Should you require further information in relation to Council's submission or parts thereof, please feel free to contact Council's Group Manager-Corporate Development, Ray Fabris on 9843.0105.

Yours faithfully

Dave Walker
GENERAL MANAGER



**SUBMISSION TO UPPER HOUSE INQUIRY
INTO TRANSPORT FACILITIES
IN THE NORTH WEST SECTOR**

**FROM: BAULKHAM HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL
 P O BOX 75
 CASTLE HILL NSW 1765**

Introduction

Submissions have been invited by The Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC, Chair of the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 (GPSC4) before 17 October 2008, regarding an inquiry into the integrated transport needs for Sydney's North West Sector. Baulkham Hills Shire Council was informed by way of report to the Ordinary Meeting on 14 October 2008.

The 2006 ABS Census data shows that the Baulkham Hills Local Government area accommodates a daily total of 88 000 workers travelling both in and out of the Shire. Only 4% of these workers use the limited public transport options available, and with a further 100 000 people moving into the area in the next 20 years under the State Governments' Housing Strategy, the transport situation will be catastrophic.

Submission

Over the last 20 years Council has continuously advocated for improved public transport options for residents of this Shire. With the support of various organisations such as Local Chambers of Commerce, WSROC and the NRMA, a limited number of transport improvements have been completed.

In 1996 the M2 Motorway was opened including dedicated bus lanes from the Windsor Road interchange to Epping. These bus lanes have become

the most important strategic transport corridor to the city and patronage has accelerated rapidly, clearly showing that residents of the North West Sector will use public transport.

In 1998 the State Government released *'Action for Transport - 2010'* which was the first integrated transport plan for the metropolitan area with 'guaranteed forward funding'. This document included the following infrastructure items that directly impacted on the North West Sector:

- 1. North West heavy rail link - Epping to Castle Hill (2010)**
- 2. Bus Only Transitways - Blacktown to Castle Hill (2009)**
- Rouse Hill to Parramatta (2010)
- 3. Cross regional bus services that incorporated six strategic routes**
- 4. Arterial route upgrade - Windsor Road/Old Windsor Road corridor**
- 5. M7 Motorway - Sydney Orbital (2006)**

In 2004 the Windsor Road/Old Windsor Road carriageway upgrades were completed with the Rouse Hill to Parramatta T – Way and a section of the Blacktown T-way opened in 2005. The M7 motorway also opened shortly thereafter. During the last three years a number of minor bus priority measures have also been completed or at least commenced on State roads in the Northmead, Carlingford and Baulkham Hills business districts.

However much of the critical transport infrastructure items listed above remain unfinished and according to some reports, may be in considerable doubt.

The Committee is urged to examine the priorities and costing of specific infrastructure works which are the responsibility of the NSW Government, but especially the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Growth Centres Commission, to ensure their adequacy and timely delivery.

- **The inequity of the M4 and M5 toll Cashback System which discriminates against residents of the North West Sector.**

These two tollways have operated for many years with the Cashback system in place, offering the opportunity for residents of the western and south western suburbs to reduce the financial burden of transport costs in their employment, despite the availability of rail and bus options for travel. No such system has ever been available to workers in the north west who now pay up to four separate tolls every working day. The suggested value of this inequity has been estimated at over \$70 M each year, a financial penalty of around \$4 000 per worker using the tollways.

- **The provision of a heavy rail or Metrolink service to Castle Hill by 2015 and Rouse Hill by 2017;**

In one form or another, the State Government has been promising a rail link for the Northwest for over a decade. The term "*fully funded in our Forward Plan for Transport*" is regularly used by various Ministers but never fulfilled. It is now possible that this primary transport project will once again be delayed or possibly deleted from all funding scenarios. Not only must the rail link to Rouse Hill be implemented as a matter of urgency, but the ultimate extension further into the North West development area towards Vineyard must be investigated with a reservation set aside to allow land use planning to continue.

- **The siting of works depots in the north-east corridor for construction of the Metrolink, and the proposed stabling area;**

Council acknowledges that a stabling facility must be built along any proposed rail link, however there are enormous concerns at the recently announced location in Bella Vista adjacent to an existing residential area. This proposal does not conform with Council's vision for the Bella Vista area.

- **The protection of developer contributions (Section 94) for future service provision within Baulkham Hills Shire;**

Section 94 contributions that will be collected by Council within the North West Growth Centre must be handed over to the State Government. There is concern that funds collected for new transport infrastructure within the new release areas will be used in locations that will not benefit those who have contributed. Council has been providing infrastructure funded by Section 94 contributions under its Capital Works Program to ensure a timely roll out of infrastructure as identified in the plans. There are genuine concerns that the State Government will not effectively release Section 94 funding when this Council needs to build local community infrastructure.

- **The proposed distribution of State infrastructure levies through the Growth Centres Commission to the North West Sector, as compared with their overall expenditure proposals, and the adequacy of the provisions intended;**

The list of capital works developed by the Growth Centres Commission, and funded through developer levies, highlights an intent to build over 95% of major transport works such as main roads and bus priority facilities in the Blacktown Council area, even though the Regional Shopping Centre is in Rouse Hill, together with

a large section of the existing and future residential population of the Northwest Sector.

- **The inequity of proposed State and Regional road re-classifications;**

Approximately four years ago the Minister for Roads created an independent State and Regional Road Re-classification Review Panel to investigate submissions from Local Government concerning the arterial and sub-arterial networks across NSW. There has been no further information since that time despite the fact that the Minister initiated the investigation to resolve significant funding issues of predominantly rural Councils including Baulkham Hills. The justification for reclassifying several roads in this Council area such as Norwest Boulevard is without doubt, particularly as an offer was made by Council to take over a section of Seven Hills Rd in return. However the RTA have now taken control of a rural two lane bitumen track called Schofields Rd at Rouse Hill, and it is significant to note that this route is within Blacktown Council.

- **A second crossing over the Hawkesbury River allowing a link between the F3 at Kariong and the M7 at Dean Park to relieve pressure on Pennant Hills Road, and the Pacific Highway Underground road link between the F3 terminus at**

Wahroonga and the M2 at Carlingford by constructing a tunnel under Pennant Hills Road;

In concurrence with Council's current resolution regarding this link, our submission pursues the reservation of the 'Type C' link between Kariong and Dean Park (*F3 To Sydney Orbital Link Study - SKM - 2004*) as a major transport corridor of 100m in width to not only support road transport options, but also to support the future provision of a fast freight and passenger rail link from the north to the greater western Sydney region. The NSW Government wants the current Federal allocation of \$130 M spent on investigation and planning of a 'Type A' link running as a tunnel under Pennant Hills Rd, however Baulkham Hills Council requests that this funding be primarily focussed on the "Type C" proposal. It is understood that Hornsby Council has resolved in similar fashion to pursue a 'Type C' corridor.

- **Completion of the North-West bus T-Way from Blacktown to Castle Hill;**

'Action For Transport - 2010' was a much heralded plan for relieving many access issues in our area. That plan called for T - Way construction between Rouse Hill and Parramatta, and a further T - Way from Blacktown to Castle Hill. It is of great concern that

this plan was curtailed at the boundary between Blacktown Council and Baulkham Hills Council, with the missing section not only unfunded, but now down graded as a future T - Way.

- **Connection of the west facing M2 ramps at the Windsor Road interchange at Baulkham Hills;**

When the original EIS for the M2 Motorway was released in 1992, the Windsor Rd Interchange was to have access in all directions. The west facing ramps were deleted from the project when construction began, however it was thought that these ramps could be installed as part of the M7 Motorway construction. Despite many submissions from Council, the State Government refused to endorse a proposal to have the work done at that time, with disastrous traffic consequences on the Norwest Business Park, which now suffers from daily access constraints. While there are indications that the RTA and Transurban are moving forward with this project, there is no official confirmation or exact time frame.

- **Upgrade and widening Burns Road and Memorial Avenue linking Windsor and Old Windsor Roads at Kellyville &**
- **Widening and upgrade of Showground Road from Old Northern Road to Carrington Road at Castle Hill;**

The upgrade of these two State Roads will complete the original proposed T – Way mentioned above to Castle Hill. These roads carry in excess of 40 000 vehicle movements each day, and should have been upgraded to dual carriageway over a decade ago by the RTA. Council has negotiated several improvements with various developers along the routes, and has also included significant intersection upgrades in the Section 94 Developer Contribution Plan for the Balmoral Release area, even though State Government Guidelines suggest these plans should not include new infrastructure on State Roads. Council has done everything within it's power to have work committed, but there is no commitment from the State.

- **Creation of an underpass at the junction of Old Northern Road, Windsor Road and Seven Hills Road, at Baulkham Hills;**

Council acknowledges that there are two significant bus priority projects under construction at this location that will remove delays for bus services travelling to Parramatta and to the Sydney CBD. However the RTA needs to investigate and fund an ultimate grade separation at this junction as the adjacent development of commercial, retail and residential land will soon curtail any opportunity to accommodate improved access conditions. Council has had to develop it's own road concepts in this location, even

though responsibility rests totally with the State Government through the RTA.

- **Commuter car parking facilities at major transport nodes**

There are four distinct locations along major bus routes that attract extensive commuter car parking. These locations are Castle Hill and Baulkham Hills CBD's, and the Oakes Rd and Barclay Rd bus stops along the M2 Motorway. There are four other locations along the M2 and along Old Windsor Rd that have very limited commuter parking facilities that are regularly full and overflowing. Council has regularly brought this demand before the RTA and the Ministry of Transport with little success. The lack of designated parking for commuters wanting to use bus services, provides no incentive to change travel mode and results in extremely adverse safety and amenity conditions along our local roads.

- **Upgrade of major intersections along Seven Hills Road and Old Northern Road including -**

- 1. Baulkham Hills Road and Seven Hills Road, Baulkham Hills**
- 2. Cropley Drive and Seven Hills Road, Baulkham Hills**
- 3. Arthur Street and Seven Hills Road, Baulkham Hills**
- 4. Galston Road and Old Northern Road, Dural**

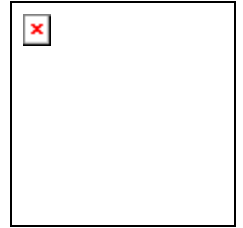
5. Glenhaven Road and Old Northern Road, Glenhaven.

Council has again been required to produce Route Development Strategies on these State Roads because the RTA have not placed any priority on planning for future needs along the corridors. Various intersection treatments including those shown above have now been designed and costed at Council's expense. In some cases the funding will be incorporated into our Forward Plan because there is no expectation that the State will ever provide the funds.



Councillor Sonya Phillips

Mayor of Baulkham Hills Shire



MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGO: 10am 5 December 2007

CASHBACK BRIBES DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE HILLS

The State Government will pay out \$680 million in refunds to motorists using the M4 and M5 tollways by July 2008, while imposing a \$4,000 annual surcharge on north-west motorists forced to use the M2, Lane Cove Tunnel and Harbour Bridge.

The Mayor of Baulkham Hills Shire Council, Cllr Sonya Phillips, today accused the State Government of discriminating against Hills residents who are car dependent because of a lack of will to provide heavy rail links years ago when planners forced new home sites to open in the Shire.

"Faced with inadequate public transport, and burdened by higher mortgage payments than elsewhere in Sydney, we are the bunnies in the spotlight as interest rates rise higher.

"The Cashback refunds to western Sydney motorists lucky to live in Labor electorates is nothing short of bribery. We don't count in the eyes of the Labor State Government because they assume we are all white collar workers living in affluent Liberal heartland.

"The Census figures show more than 50 per cent of our work force are in blue collar occupations, including thousands forced to use the M2 daily to travel elsewhere to work," Mayor Phillips said.

The Cashback scheme introduced in 1997 returns all but the 10 per cent GST component on tolls covering the M4 and M5 to motorists from south-west Sydney.

Current Cashback arrangements will continue until 2010 on the M4, and 2023 on the M5, although toll operators can gain concessions by undertaking additional works, as occurred with the M5 contract.

From Baulkham Hills, tolls charged one way to the CBD are \$4.40 (M2), \$2.55 (Lane Cove Tunnel) and \$3 (Sydney Harbour Bridge).

"Based on a 48 week working year our motorists travelling to the city and home are up for \$16.90 per day, \$84.50 per week, \$338 per month, or \$4,056 per year. And that's after tax payments.

"By contrast an M4-M5 comparable user pays \$1.20 daily, \$6.00 weekly, \$24.00 monthly and \$288 annually based on a 48-week working year.

“On top of that, we pay 52 cents a litre in excise and GST while the State Government refuses to upgrade state-owned roads such as Showground Road in Castle Hill, for example, claiming it doesn’t have the money.

“Shire homebuyers have larger mortgages and only one in 10 homes are rented out.

“The 2005 median house price in Baulkham Hills Shire was \$552,000, and 38 per cent of our residents are paying off mortgages.

“I can’t say the Liberal Opposition has gone out of its way to promise relief either, but they have been out of government for more than a decade after poor management of the M4 and M5 construction contracts which led to Cashback,” Clr Phillips explained.

“The State Upper House needs to hold a public inquiry to restore equity to all motorists, especially as more tollways are planned for the future.

“We are discriminated against. Cashback is a tax subsidy while our toll payments are a double tax slug. You can’t get a clearer case of discrimination,” Clr Phillips said.

On top of the \$590 million already paid out to M4 and M5 concessional motorists, Cashback will refund a further \$97 million in 2007-08, and \$102 million in 2008-09.

“When will this all end?” How many billions will Cashback cost?” Clr Phillips queried.

CASHBACK REPAYMENTS FOR M4 AND M5 MOTORISTS (ACTUAL)

1996-1997	\$10,882,000
1997-1998	\$24,242,000
1998-1999	\$30,454,000
1999-2000	\$36,209,000
2000-2001	\$42,450,000
2001-2002	\$55,520,000
2002-2003	\$65,980,000
2003-2004	\$72,500,000
2004-2005	\$78,317,000
2005-2006	\$81,800,000
2006-2007	\$92,000,000 (budget estimate)
2007-2008	\$97,000,000 (budget)
2008-2009	\$102,000,000 (budget)

Source: Roads and Traffic Authority

Interviews: Mayor Phillips Tel: 0412 143 680

-ENDS-

For further information about this media release, contact Michael Ross, Baulkham Hills Shire Council’s Senior Communications Consultant on 0416 406 960