

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

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**Submission from Ryde Business Forum  
on NSW Parliamentary Inquiry to be chaired by the Hon Jenny Gardiner MLC  
(GPSC4)**

Ryde Business Forum (RBF) is a not-for-profit business association with around 130 members located in the City of Ryde and surrounding districts. RBF is making this submission on behalf of those members and their employees.

RBF is also an umbrella Chamber of Commerce for the Ryde and surrounding areas and represents six Chambers of Commerce and their members – an additional 200+ companies – in this submission.

**Traffic on our roads**

There are around 12,500 businesses in the City of Ryde. While a percentage of people travel to work at those businesses by public transport, the majority, we believe, drive to work.

An example is the increasing number of employees coming to Ryde from the north west – eg Baulkham Hills Shire Council (BHSC) area, whose population is expected to increase by 100,000 by 2020.

Data from the 2006 Census showed that approximately 4,400 people commute into Ryde from the BHSC area. We assume that a high percentage of these people drive. There is a bus service on the M2 which would assist those working in the Macquarie Park area in particular so we can estimate that a percentage of commuters use the bus. Buses on the M2 are usually very full in peak hour. Overfull buses could inhibit commuters from using them.

We can also assume that of the approximately 8,000 commuters who go from BHSC to the Sydney CBD, a number choose to drive through the City of Ryde rather than pay extra tolls to go via the Lane Cove Tunnel and Harbour Bridge, as LCT revenue is less than initially projected.

So we may have a maximum of 12,400 cars from the north west alone on the roads in Ryde on a daily basis, which is a worst case scenario. Some will use public transport, some may car pool and some will stay on the toll roads to go to the CBD. Whatever the percentage of the 12,400 commuters that use roads in the City of Ryde, this number will undoubtedly rise as the population grows in the north west and Macquarie Park develops further.

Of course this does not take into account commuters coming to and through the City of Ryde from the west, east, south and due north, and population growth in Ryde itself. North Ryde/Macquarie Park - home to biotech, IT, research and electronics corporations - is NSW's second biggest CBD outside Sydney and is growing exponentially. Infrastructure needs to be in place or planned to cater for that growth as this area is significant to NSW's economy.



The peak hour situation in the North Ryde/Macquarie Park area is already untenable and likely to get worse. One of our members has stated it takes 45 minutes to drive his delivery van from Cox's Road, North Ryde, into the heart of Macquarie Park (ie Waterloo Road) between 8am and 9am. Outside peak hour that run should take around 5-7 minutes.

### **Public Transport in and to Ryde**

Public transport in and to the Ryde area is not convenient enough to encourage users; because of the inherent traffic problems buses cannot always run to time. Here is an example:

If a commuter wished to take public transport from Denistone to Talavera Road Macquarie Park, to get to work by 9am, the quickest service takes 48 minutes according to the timetable – either using a connection of three buses or firstly walking almost a kilometre to Eastwood railway station to catch a direct bus. Our commuter would probably elect to drive his way through the back streets to get to work in Macquarie Park, assuming his company was able to allocate him a parking spot.

One of our members, Shayne Dumbrell, has noted in particular that bus services between Lane Cove and Ryde could be streamlined by using the Lane Cove Tunnel, cutting up to 20 minutes off bus journeys between the two locations. For people living in adjoining Hunters Hill Municipality who wish to commute to North Ryde, this would be a boon as current best bus times for this 8km journey are 40 minutes and many services go via a Lane Cove connection with up to two changes of bus. Mr Dumbrell's comments are available as Appendix 1 to this document.

Lack of commuter parking at train stations is another issue keeping people on the roads. Commuters will not walk kilometres to catch the train, especially if carrying heavy briefcases. If parking is available at train stations, people will use the trains rather than be stuck in traffic.

Commuters still doubt the ability of trains to keep to their timetables; reliability issues with the Sydney rail system over the last few years have probably discouraged a significant percentage of users unwilling to either a) often be late to work because of delayed trains or b) get up significantly earlier to catch an earlier train.

Female commuters in particular can be reluctant to use public transport, especially in the winter months when darkness falls early. They are more susceptible to attack than males, particularly if they are laden with equipment such as laptop computers.

The recent proposal to remove guards from trains raises a serious safety issue; if it goes ahead it is likely less people will feel inclined to use trains as a transport means, particularly female commuters.

Shiftworkers are often unable to use public transport as it does not run around the clock. An example is Optus which employs 6,000 people in Macquarie Park and supplies commuter buses at its own cost to make up for the shortfall in public transport availability. The Chatswood-Epping Rail Link will assist the majority of Optus shiftworkers when it opens.



The Chatswood-Epping Rail Link will be a boon to commuters working in the North Ryde/Macquarie Park area. However, without the construction and fulfilment of the North West Metro and its interchange at Epping, the Rail Link will not reach its true potential. Commuters will still drive in from the North West, and park in residential areas around train stations such as Epping and Carlingford. This is just shifting the problem, not fixing it.

People cannot be forced to use public transport. However, if it is made attractive, cheap, convenient and reliable enough, more commuters will embrace it.

#### **Possible solutions**

Providing a cashback system for the M2 and other toll roads in the north and north west will encourage people to use the toll roads for through traffic and may free up Lane Cove Road and Victoria Road for local motorists during peak hour. Regular commuters on the M4 and M5 are eligible for a cashback rebate. Not providing a similar rebate for commuters in the north is viewed by people in Ryde as discriminatory.

For employers, employees and residents in Ryde **the North West Metro is a vital step in freeing up our roads**, particularly Lane Cove Road and Victoria Road. It will provide a fast alternative for locals to commute within Ryde and to the Sydney CBD and will provide employees from Sydney's north west a very viable and speedy alternative to driving to work in Ryde. Without the Metro our traffic problems will only get a lot worse.

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