

Submission  
No 113

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

**Name:** Ms Claudia Graham

**Date received:** 16/10/2008

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21 October 2008

General Purpose Standing Committee No 4  
Parliament House,  
Macquarie St  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: North-West Sydney Sector Transport Inquiry**

I have been living in the Hills area for 23 years. In 2001, as a result of the poor service provided by Westbus and the lack of public transport in the area I, in conjunction with The Hills Community Aid and Information Service Inc., called a public meeting to give voice to our concerns. About 100 people attended and expressed their discontent at the state of public transport in our area. Due to their strong wish to improve public transport in the Hills area, several community members offered to work together on a regular basis to address the issues raised and the Hills Transport Action Group (HTAG) was formed. I was elected Chairperson. As a result of our work services improved at Westbus, although I cannot comment on their present service as I was working closer to home and hence have not been using the service regularly.

Although we were mainly addressing the Westbus problems there was community backing for rail services to the area.

Due to my involvement with HTAG I became aware of concerns in the community. One point that was raised in the HTAG meetings was that the people in this area pay the same taxes as everyone else in the city yet we do not receive the same public transport services as other areas. This is unfair. Furthermore, the cost of travelling to the city by car on the Tollways is very expensive and, unlike other citizens in Sydney, who use the M5 and M4 motorways, we do not receive a refund for travel on the M2 Motorway. Utilising the Tollways to the city and back costs \$17.10 return, if going to the airport another \$5. This is very expensive! Yet if travelling during rush hour, especially in the afternoons, traffic moves very slowly and there are extremely long queues, which can stretch all the way back to the beginning of the M2. This is certainly not value for money.

There are another couple of issues I would like to mention about the M2. One is that the bus lanes stop at Epping, so that buses crawl along the motorway at the same slow pace as cars in rush hour. The other is that it is very frustrating to travel at speeds of 80 or 70km/h on the return trip from

the city at all times. Maybe when there is a lot of traffic it is understandable for safety reasons but not at times when there is light traffic. I think a better idea would be to have variable speed limits so that when traffic is heavy the speed limit is lower but at other times the speed limit is increased.

Another issue that was raised by community members was limited choice in jobs due to the time it takes to get to the city or other areas of Sydney. At present I am facing the same problem, as I am looking for a job and the length of time it takes to get into the city prevents me from applying jobs there. However, if the metro were built, as was proposed, I could get into the city in 20-30 minutes. This, in turn, would give me the opportunity to apply for a greater variety of jobs.

One of the changes that Westbus introduced as a result of hearing what the HTAG members had to say was a late night bus service at weekends, especially to cater for young people. Last year I took one of these late night buses and found out that the service was very well used, with young people having to stand, as there were not enough seats. No doubt younger people would welcome a metro service, too.

Last week I decided to catch the train to go to a show in the city with my 86-year-old father. We parked the car in Beecroft and took the train. On the way back we saw the train leave as we got to the platform. There was no other train for another half an hour. Had there been a metro this would not have been a problem because another train would have arrived a few minutes later. As it was, we returned to Beecroft after midnight.

Needless to say, the metro would have environmental advantages, too.

Interestingly, third world cities such as Mexico, Caracas and Santiago de Chile have metros. If third world countries can afford to provide metros, I cannot understand why Sydney should not be able to afford a metro, too.

Recently I visited both Santiago and London, where I envied them for the ease of getting around due to their metro services.

For the above reasons I am strongly in favour of a metro to the Hills area and beyond and I urge the committee to consider a metro link for the North-West sector.

Yours faithfully,

Claudia Graham