

THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR

Name: Mr Patrick do Rozario

Date received: 13/10/2008

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4
Parliament House
Maquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

13 October 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Transport Needs of Sydney's North-West Sector (Inquiry)

I refer to the above Inquiry currently being conducted by the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 ("GPSC4") and the GPSC4's call for submissions in the context of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

This submission is lodged on behalf of me and family, as members of the community of Ryde City. I have lived and commuted to work in Sydney CBD for approximately the last 12 years. Prior to living in Ryde City, I lived in Gladesville for over 25 years and commuted to work in Sydney CBD for over 13 years. Both Ryde and Gladesville are within the Inner North Subregion and are both proposed as possible North-West Metro stations.

Furthermore, I own rural acreage property (currently zoned Rural 1c) in the Baulkham Hills Shire locality of Glenhaven since 1990, approximately 18 years. It is my intention to knock-down the existing old house and build a substantial dwelling in the next few years for me and my family to reside. Accordingly, the transport needs of this area in the North-West Sector is of paramount importance to me and my family.

I also refer to Councillor Sonya Phillips' (former Mayor of Baulkham Hills Shire Council) "Open Letter to the Community" dated 18 September 2008¹ wherein she urges Community members to make submissions dealing with specific issues covered by the GPSC4's Terms of Reference. Councillor Phillips also elaborates on many key matters and issues pertinent to the Inquiry as well as the interaction between the Community, Baulkham Hills Shire Council and the NSW State Government and its related Authorities and Bodies. I shall re-visit some of these matters and issues later in this submission.

This submission is lodged for consideration by the GPSC4.

TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR

The former Iemma-lead NSW Government's latest and most significant transport infrastructure proposal in the North-West Sector was the North-West Metro Link. This Metro Link replaced the North-West Rail Link Proposal.

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<http://www.baulkhamhills.nsw.gov.au/IgnitionSuite/uploads/docs/Community%20Invitation%20to%20%20make%20submissions%20to%20Parliamentary%20Infrastructure%20Inquiry.pdf>

The plight of the current Rees-lead NSW Government's disastrous financial and budget position has been well publicized by the press and the NSW Government has announced a mini-budget in November 2008 seeking to address some aspects of its financial position and plans. It is understood that capital infrastructure spending proposals involve significantly large expenditure and may, under the forth-coming mini-budget, be either delayed or perhaps cancelled. Notwithstanding the NSW Government's poor financial position, it is hoped (moreover expected) that, transport infrastructure proposals that continue to be pursued under the forth-coming mini-budget will be decided upon on the basis of need, fairness and equity relative to *all* community members rather than just political favoritism and political party lines.

North-West Metro - Proposal in Brief²

I am, overwhelmingly, in favour of the North-West Metro Link in particular, as well as the overall framework of the various projects associated with the Sydney Link proposal. This is particularly so as the North-West Metro Link is to replace the Anzac Line Metro proposal that was meant to deliver the necessary transport and infrastructure relief needed in our Inner North and North-West Subregion.

The **North-West Metro** (previously the **North-West Rail Link** and **Anzac Line**) is a proposed metro line which will run from the north-western suburbs of Sydney, to the Sydney CBD. It will be undertaken by the NSW State Government as part of the larger SydneyLink initiative and will connect Epping with Rouse Hill and the Sydney CBD.

The line was part of the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program (MREP). Before the change to a metro line, the MREP previously included the South-West Rail Link, North-West Rail Link and the CBD Rail Link. The MREP was intended to provide links between the major new growth and employment areas of the metropolitan region. With the combination of the North-West Rail Link and the Anzac Line, the North-West Metro would serve the growing population in North-west Sydney and provide public transport connections to a number of important centres including the Epping, Top Ryde, Pyrmont, and the Sydney CBD.

The North-West Metro will be the first metro line built, with other possible future metros including lines to the west and south east. The Metro Link project is a series of major transport projects which also includes the South West Rail Link and the M4 Extensions³.

For myself, as a resident of Ryde City, the Anzac Line proposal by the NSW Government had direct relevance. The **Anzac Line** was a proposed metro railway line connecting the City of Ryde and inner west of Sydney, Australia with the eastern suburbs. Officially, the line was simply an option being "actively explored by the government." On 18 March 2008, the line was integrated as part of the North-West Metro and the future South East Metro. The project was expected to take around 10 to 15 years to complete.

² North West Metro at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_West_Metro 09 April 2008

³ <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news/sydney-link.html>

The line was announced in September 2007 alongside plans to postpone construction of an underground link between Redfern and Chatswood. The line would operate as a metro, with frequent-running, high-capacity, single-deck trains. This would mean that services using the line would operate separately from the rest of the metropolitan rail network, CityRail, which is a commuter rail system using double-deck carriages. The line would cut citybound journey times from Drummoyne and Maroubra travel by as much as one third.⁴

Representations supporting the North-West Metro Link

The North-West Metro Link ought to be the NSW Government proposal that *actually* eventuates to relieve the transport problems of residents and business people along the ANZAC Line (through the various proposed Metro Link stations such as Pymont, Drummoyne, Gladesville, Top Ryde and Epping) and then on to the Baulkham Hills Shire localities and Growth Centres of the North-West Subregion.

The NSW Government's history in providing transport relief to the above areas is far from impressive and not consistent. Whilst it is conceded that the Hills M2 Motorway, which was completed and open to the public in May 1997, was a major transport infrastructure to the North-West suburbs, there has been little actual delivery of further transport infrastructure to those areas since then. Moreover, the Motorway served to crystallize the already overwhelming reliance on the motor vehicle as the primary method of transport by the residents and business people in the North-West subregion.

In November 1998, the then NSW Minister for Transport referred to a 7 kilometre rail extension to link Epping to Castle Hill which was to be completed at a cost of \$360 million by 2010, being part of the "Action for Transport 2010". Some 4 years later (March 2002), the Minister recycled his earlier Press Release and announced that the Government was to build a 19 kilometre rail link from Epping to Mungerie Park at Rouse Hill via Castle Hill, to be completed at a cost of \$1.4 billion and by 2010.⁵

In June 2005 a "new" North West –CBD–South West Rail Link was announced as part of an \$8 billion rail extension combining the largest public transport infrastructure project ever seen in Australia to provide a continuous rail link between Rouse Hill and Castle Hill in the North-West, the global economic corridor centres from Macquarie and Chatswood to North Sydney and the Sydney CBD, and Leppington and Campbelltown/MacCarthur in the South West.⁶

Since these announcements, there has been little actual *concrete* results that have eventuated on the above North-West Rail Link, despite a public exhibition (including a call for submissions/comments) on the North-West Rail Link Proposal concluding as recently as 6 August 2007.⁷

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anzac_railway_line%2C_Sydney

⁵ <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/PARLMENT/hansArt.nsf/V3Key/LA20020313037>

⁶ <http://www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au/dev/uploads/paper/transport/ACTION-1.1.1.html>

⁷ http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/mediareplan/mr20070629_574.html

In relation to the transport problems of residents and business people along the ANZAC Line, through the various proposed Metro Link stations such as Pymont, Drummoyne, Gladesville, Top Ryde and Denistone East ("ANZAC Line suburbs"), there has been little infrastructure improvements over the decades despite greater housing and commercial densities within the localities occurring during the period. This has resulted in an increase in population in the localities as well as the number and frequency of transport journeys within and from those localities.

Whilst it is recognized that the ANZAC Line suburbs are serviced by a government bus service, the bus system is far from optimal and consistently has great difficulties coping with ever-increasing population and transport journeys. Without any direct access to rail transport within the ANZAC Line suburbs, greater reliance on the motor vehicle has resulted and this causes great strain on the roads system, particularly leading to Sydney CBD. It is not uncommon, in peak hour for a 10-13 kilometres trip to take well over an hour by government bus and, outside the transit lane, 90 or so minutes by other motor vehicles.

Clearly, given the above situation and parameters, an alternate transport system is required. This is particularly required in view of the increase in population and commercial enterprises/ activity that are projected over the next decades. In the years to 2031, it is estimated that the Inner North will have a further 30,000 dwellings and 60,000 employment capacity⁸. It is acknowledged that the Inner North Subregion includes more localities than the localities referred to above as the ANZAC Line suburbs. Nevertheless, population and commercial projections for the ANZAC Line suburbs are still quite considerable (eg additional housing for Ryde and Hunters Hill has a target of 12,000 and 1,200 extra dwellings respectively⁹).

1. Key benefits

I agree with the benefits put forward by the NSW Government,¹⁰ summarised as follows:

- The proposal is a new transport system that runs separately from the CityRail network and the road network - making travel fast, efficient and reliable (a stand-alone system not impacted by delays on other systems).
- Fast – fast trains, easy to jump on and off, reducing delays and where passengers would be able to switch easily to and from existing bus and rail services via transport interchanges.
- Frequent – a train every few minutes.
- Green – an energy efficient public transport alternative to private car use, reducing green house gas emissions.
- It would free up road space for commercial transport and reduce congestion for those who must travel in private vehicles - like tradespeople.
- The North-West Metro will provide benefits for users of the CityRail network by attracting some existing rail commuters to the new line. This will reduce

⁸ "Inner North Draft Subregional Strategy", July 2007, Department of Planning at p. 5, Introduction

⁹ "Inner North Draft Subregional Strategy", July 2007, Department of Planning at p. 63, Housing

¹⁰ <http://www.sydlink.com.au/site/page.cfm?u=49>

crowding on the existing Main West, Richmond, Main North and North Shore rail lines.

- It would provide exciting opportunities around new metro stations - revitalising centres and boosting local business and job opportunities.
- It would improve access to the CBD as well as other centres (including the North Sydney to Macquarie Park corridor in the context of promoting Macquarie Park as Australia's leading Business park¹¹), cutting travel times and promoting a better work-life balance.

2. Concluding representations

- a) Travel distances - The proposed metro line has been widely condemned because the distance from Rouse Hill to the City exceeds normal limits based on overseas practice. The direct distance between Heathrow to the centre of London is about 24 km. The direct distance from Sydney city to Castle Hill is about 28 km and its probably another 4 km onto Rouse Hill.

A comparison of Metros (that is “**rapid transit systems**” around the world - commonly called metros, subways, elevated railways, rapid rail, or underground railways) around the world¹² indicate that the proposed 28 kilometre distance is short when compared with other systems around the world (eg Hong Kong (MTR), opened in 1979 and has a distance of 175 kilometres, Seoul Subway, opened in 1974 and has a distance of 287 kilometres and Stockholm Metro, opened in 1950 and has a distance of 105.7 kilometres).

Accordingly, it is submitted that the distance argument is not a valid argument for rejecting the proposal.

- b) In terms of a “Metro” rail service versus the previous North-West Rail Link “heavy rail” system, a new metro rail service has a number of distinct advantages such as:
- i) The prime mover carriages will run on AC current. The existing electric heavy rail system runs on DC power which is outdated and requires frequent power booster to overcome electrical losses in the overhead power lines. In the early days it had to be DC because there was no way of controlling the speed of AC electric motors.
 - ii) The track gauge and carriage size of the metro service will be smaller in comparison to heavy rail which will mean , (a) lower capital costs (ie smaller tunnels and carriages etc), (b) cheaper maintenance and (c) a more energy efficient transport system.

The Metro System proposal has considerable merit and is more likely to get up because it will be cheaper to implement and operate. Most large cities have a

¹¹ See Source: *Inner North Draft Subregional Strategy, at p.1 - Centres & Corridors Inner North Key Directions*, NSW Government Department of Planning, dated July 2007

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_rapid_transit_systems

metro rail system which complements the heavy rail network and this proposal merely bring Sydney in line with international practice.

- c) The North-West Metro Link is a major public transport initiative of the NSW Government in Sydney's North-West. In the next 20 years, 12% of Sydney's anticipated residential growth is expected to occur in this area of the city. More than 140,000 new residents will live in the area by 2026, in addition to the already large existing population. The North-West is the area of Sydney most heavily dependent on cars; 85% of people in Baulkham Hills currently travel by car.¹³ If a viable alternative is not found, this dependency on the motor vehicle will continue to add strain on the traffic flows within and through the ANZAC Line suburbs.
- d) Figure 2 below is a map of the existing Sydney Rail System. From only a casual observation, it is patently obvious that there is a lack of Rail Network System servicing the Inner North and North-west Subregions of Sydney.



Figure 2

- e) The above population figures and estimates are based on the NSW Government's "*City of Cities: A Plan for Sydney's Future* which was released in December 2005"¹⁴. Recent analyses and projections have cast doubts on the adequacy of those figures and estimates as being as much as one-third under-estimated. The Metropolitan Strategy estimated that the city would need an extra 640,000 dwellings by 2031 but a co-author of the report now says up to 876,640 will be needed.¹⁵ Given that the North-West Sector is a major growth

¹³ <http://search.live.com/images/results.aspx?q=Sydney+Rail+Network+Map&mkt=en-au#focal=6687fcf0f440d497ef3454b2382f62e4&furl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.urbantransport-technology.com%2Fprojects%2Fsydney2%2Fimages%2Fsydney4s.jpg>

¹⁴ <http://www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au/dev/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=28&languageId=1&contentId=-1>

¹⁵ <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/squeeze-for-homes-worse-than-targets/2008/10/01/1222651172350.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

area cited in the report, it follows that there would be significantly extra population now expected within the Sector. Accordingly, transport and transport infrastructure planning needs to be analysed in this context.

f) Former Mayor, Councillor Sonya Philips' "Open letter to the Community" issues. I support the matters raised by Councillor Phillips' and re-iterate some of these as follows:

- i. On balance and on a relative basis to other Sector's within Sydney, the North West Sector has received *inadequate* infrastructure and, in respect of what infrastructure that has been received, the infrastructure has to date not been on a basis of need. Moreover, there has been "systematic discrimination" because of the anti-labour bias of State electorates in the North-West Sector. Conversely, discrimination has occurred during the past reigns of Liberal-National Coalition Governments too, because they directed essential funds to marginal seat requirements;
- ii. The matter of "systematic discrimination" and unfairness also manifests in respect of the cashback system in operation covering the M4 and M5 tollways, a subsidy scheme *not* in operation covering other tollways traveling to and from the North-West Sector, especially on the M2 tollway;
- iii. The provision of a metro rail or heavy rail service to Castle Hill by 2015 and Rouse Hill by 2017. Notwithstanding the current NSW Government's crisis in leadership and financial position, the \$12 billion North-West Metro proposal should be retained or re-examination of the benefit due to the State's current fiscal situation of the earlier proposal for a \$4 billion heavy rail link between Rouse Hill and Epping; and
- iv. Underground road link between the F3 terminus at Wahroonga and the M2 at North Rocks by constructing a tunnel under Pennant Hills Road dedicated road reserve.

Conclusion

It is submitted that the above comments and representations serve to highlight the need to provide timely, efficient and reliable transport to the Inner North and North-West Subregions in general and the ANZAC Line suburbs and Baulkham Hill Shire localities and the North-West Growth Centre specifically.

It is a matter of *necessity and urgency* rather than casual interest and endeavour that a transport solution is found and implemented given the factors and context mentioned above (eg significant existing population with substantial population and employment increase projections in the next few decades, little existing efficient or reliable public transport alternatives and the overwhelming reliance on motor vehicles as the principal manner of transport). Against this background, the North-West Metro Link offers a realistic and viable solution to the problems existing in the ANZAC Line suburbs, Inner

North Subregion, Baulkham Hill Shire localities and North-West Subregion. Accordingly, I thoroughly endorse the proposal and support its ideals and initiatives.

Notwithstanding the current NSW Government's crisis in leadership and financial position, the \$12 billion North-West Metro proposal should be retained or re-examination of the benefit due to the State's current fiscal situation of the earlier proposal for a \$4 billion heavy rail link between Rouse Hill and Epping.

On the matters of "systematic discrimination" and the lack of fairness and equity of the cashback system in operation covering the M4 and M5 tollways and not tollways pertinent to the Northern West Sector, the GPSC4 is urged to investigate and substantiate these claims so that remedial measures can be recommended for adoption by the Government so as to act as a basis of compensation and restatement of equity to the members of the North-West Sector.

Yours faithfully

Patrick do Rozario