



Transport
for NSW

Project Overview Submissions Report

North West Rail Link

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Executive Summary

The North West Rail Link is a priority transport infrastructure project for the NSW Government.

Public submissions were invited on the North West Rail Link's *Project Overview - July 2011*. This Submissions Report provides an overview of issues raised by the community, industry and business groups and local government in their submissions.

184 submissions were received in response to the *Project Overview*.

About 73% of submissions were from members of the public. Key issues raised included: traffic, parking and public transport; the current route alignment and station locations; land use planning; construction practices and timing; and communications and consultation.

During the submissions period, more than 2,000 people received further information about the North West Rail Link – whether by visiting the Castle Hill Community Information Centre, by attending one of eight community information sessions held across the North West, or by phone and email.

There will be further opportunities for public submissions as the project progresses.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The North West Rail Link (NWRL) is a priority transport infrastructure project for the NSW Government.

The NWRL will deliver regular rail services over a 23 kilometre addition to the CityRail network from Epping to Rouse Hill in north west Sydney – linking the region with more than 300 other CityRail stations.

Bus, pedestrian and cycling access facilities will be provided at all stations, and approximately 3,000 park and ride spaces are proposed.

The NWRL will give residents a more reliable public transport alternative, making journey times to the city quicker and also reducing bus congestion in the Sydney CBD.

In July 2011, a *Project Overview* was exhibited for public display and comment. The *Project Overview* outlined the many years of assessment work and community consultation associated with the NWRL, including the proposed alignment and station locations approved in the 2008 concept plan. It also included new stations at Cherrybrook, Castle Hill, The Hills Centre, Norwest Business Park, Kellyville and Rouse Hill as well as recent changes to the project which included an extension beyond Rouse Hill to a train stabling facility at Tallawong Road and a proposed future station at Cudgegong Road.

2 Community Involvement

2.1 Call for public submissions

Stakeholders and the community were advised of the public display and the call for submissions via:

- Letterbox dropping of a community newsletter in August 2011 to properties in the study area;
- Notification to registered stakeholders and community members via email;
- Posters at the NWRL community information centre;
- Request for submissions online at www.northwestrail.com.au;
- Community information sessions;
- Individual meetings with government agencies, peak bodies, special interest groups, relevant Members of Parliament and councils;
- Copies of the *Project Overview* made available at local libraries, councils and Community Information Centre;
- Posters advertising the *Project Overview* and inviting submissions displayed at local libraries and councils; and
- Advertisements in local newspapers.

Submissions were accepted from 21 July 2011 to 16 September 2011.

The *Project Overview*, which provides detailed information on the history and current status of the NWRL project, was available at the information sessions and online at www.northwestrail.com.au.

Community and stakeholder feedback has helped the project team better understand community views and confirm the rail corridor alignment and station locations. This feedback will be integrated where feasible into the concept design.

Following this step, the project will progress into the detailed design phase at which time further consultation will continue with stakeholders and the wider community.

2.2 Community information sessions

Eight community information sessions were held to display the *Project Overview*. Members of the project team were available to meet with the community and answer questions. Feedback forms were provided to the community to capture issues and comments.

Dates and venues of the community information sessions are outlined below in Table 1.

Table 1 - Community information sessions

Date	Location
Thursday, 21 July 2011 4pm – 8pm	Vinegar Hill Memorial Community Centre Rouse Hill Town Centre
Thursday, 28 July 2011 4pm – 8pm	North West Rail Link Community Centre Castle Hill
Thursday, 4 August 2011 4pm – 8pm	Cherrybrook Uniting Church Cherrybrook

Date	Location
Thursday, 11 August 2011 4pm-8pm	The Epping Club Epping
Saturday, 13 August 2011 12pm – 4pm	Vinegar Hill Memorial Community Centre Rouse Hill Town Centre
Saturday, 20 August 2011 10am – 2pm	North West Rail Link Community Centre Castle Hill
Saturday, 27 August 2011 10am – 2pm	Cherrybrook Uniting Church Cherrybrook
Saturday, 3 September 2011 10am – 2pm	The Epping Club Epping

2.3 Stakeholder briefings

Briefings were held with a number of government agencies, peak bodies, special interest groups, relevant MP's and councils within the project area.

- Briefings with peak bodies including:
 - IPA
 - TTF
 - Sydney Chamber
 - NSW Business Chamber
 - Committee for Sydney
 - Urban Taskforce Australia
 - Engineers Australia

- Briefings with special interest groups including:
 - Bicycle NSW
 - NSW Commuter Council
 - Bike North
 - NSW Taxi Council
 - Housing Industry Association
 - Bus NSW
 - EcoTransit Sydney
 - NSW Taxi Drivers Association
 - Pedestrian Council of Australia

- Briefings with local interest groups including (but not limited to):
 - Castle Hill Showground Committee
 - West Pennant Hills Valley Association
 - Castle Hill and Hills District Agricultural Society

- 10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney Limited
- Hills Transport Working Group
- Computer Pals for Seniors
- Hills District Kennel & Training Club
- Country Women's Association
- Kellyville Ridge Community Association
- Epping Civic Trust

- Briefings with local MPs :
 - Member for Hawkesbury
 - Member for Epping
 - Member for Riverstone
 - Member for Baulkham Hills
 - Member for Castle Hill
 - Member for Parramatta

- Briefings with senior local government officers and Mayors at:
 - Hills Shire Council
 - Parramatta City Council
 - Blacktown City Council
 - Hornsby Shire Council
 - Hawkesbury City Council

2.4 Website

The project website was updated to include the *Project Overview* document and to provide stakeholders and the community with information on the dates and times of community displays. The website also provided information on how to make a submission.

2.5 Advertisements

Advertisements were placed in the following local newspapers to advise the community of the call for submissions and details of the public displays:

- Hills Shire Times
- Hills News
- Rouse Hills Times
- Hornsby Advocate
- North Shore Times
- Northern District Times
- Blacktown Advocate.

2.6 Submissions Received

A total of 184 submissions were received as a result of the public display of the *Project Overview*.

Table 2 below outlines the breakdown of submissions. (Note: more than one submission may have been made by a group/organisation/individual).

Table 2 - Submissions received

Source of Submission	Number received
Individuals	133
Councils	9
Interest group/organisations	31
MP's	4
Businesses	7
TOTAL	184

A comprehensive list of submissions received from councils, interest groups, businesses and government is included in Appendix A.

2.7 Methodology for reviewing submissions

Submissions were accepted from 21 July 2011 to 16 September 2011.

Each submission was analysed and issues raised were recorded on a submissions database. Individuals who sent submissions have not been identified in this report. A summary of key issues raised (issues with the highest record of interest) have been included with responses in section 3.0. Other issues raised are outlined in section 4.0.

3 Responses to key issues

3.1 Overview of key issues

From the 184 submissions received, around 19% of respondents directly stated their support for the project, along with 5.4% who stated their conditional support. Generally, more than one issue was raised in each submission.

Of the total number of issues raised, approximately 33% suggested some level of modification to the proposal and almost 18% of respondents raised issues in relation to traffic, parking and public transport.

Issue categories were developed based on previous project consultation and in relation to the most recent changes to the proposal. Each issue category was supported by a series of sub issues to ensure thorough analysis of submissions.

The key issue categories and statistics for each are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Key issue categories

Issue Category	Section where addressed	No times issue was raised	% of total issues raised
Modifications for consideration	3.2.1	166	33.46%
Traffic parking and public transport issues	3.2.2	88	17.74%
Route alignment	3.2.3	84	16.93%
Project justification	3.2.4	62	12.50%
Land use planning	3.2.5	27	5.44%
Construction practices and timing	3.2.6	20	4.03%
Communication and consultation issues	3.2.7	13	2.62%

Issues raised throughout this consultation period will be used to inform the detailed design process and will continue to be addressed during the environmental assessment process.

3.2 Key issue discussion and responses

3.2.1 Modifications for consideration

This category encompasses community feedback regarding modifications to the proposed project scope.

<p>Issue</p> <p>Connections to future/existing rail network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion for the NWRL to connect to the Richmond Line. • Suggestion to make provision for a connection to future rail developments e.g. Epping to Parramatta Line. • Suggestion to make provision for an extension of the line to Schofields/Mt Druitt.
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Response

The NWRL is the key public transport project for Sydney's north west and is designed to serve the region as it grows.

More than 200,000 extra people moving into the North West Growth Centre over the next 40 years, taking the region's population above 600,000.

In 2007, the draft North West Subregional Strategy (Action NW D1.1.2), prepared by the Department of Planning identified the need to investigate options to extend the planned NWRL beyond Rouse Hill Town Centre, possibly connecting to the Richmond Line, and to protect a future corridor if appropriate.

As the NWRL has been developed, options for extending transport beyond Rouse Hill Town Centre into the North West Growth Centre area have also been investigated. These options have included heavy rail, "metro style" rail extensions, bus transitways and increased park and ride spaces on the NWRL.

The assessment of these extension options has concluded that there is merit in extending the NWRL beyond the Rouse Hill Town Centre to provide a new station with park and ride facilities of up to 1,200 spaces west of Windsor Road. This would reduce traffic demand on Windsor Road, for commuters driving to work, and those driving to Kellyville Station (which is a park and ride station location proposed for the NWRL). It would also allow for the establishment of a long term train stabling facility compared with only a temporary stabling facility approved as part of the earlier scheme.

The short to medium term benefits of extending the rail line beyond a park and ride station are outweighed by the significant additional cost to the project.

As a result of the options evaluation, further investigations were completed to refine a corridor within the North West Growth Centre for future design development and investigation.

These studies did not demonstrate the same benefits as the Schofields Road extension for rail corridors beyond Rouse Hill Town Centre to Riverstone, Vineyard or Box Hill due to higher cost, impact on existing development, impact on the Rouse Hill Regional Park and more topographical constraints than the Schofields corridor.

Transport for NSW is investigating long term corridors for extension of the NWRL and protection in the North West Growth Centre. The investigations will consider suitable alignments in order to protect and secure the land/corridors required to meet the needs of the future North West Growth Centre residential and worker populations North and West of Rouse Hill.

With regards to future rail projects and connections, the NWRL will allow for the construction and operation of the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link.

Issue**General route alignment**

- Suggestion to move the alignment to service a higher density as there are concerns that the proposed alignment does not service the needs of commuters in West Pennant Hills, Carlingford and Baulkham Hills.
- Request for the general alignment to better service the needs of the business and retail hubs to ensure maximum patronage.

Response

During the development of the NWRL concept prior to the year 2000, a range of alternatives were analysed. Further assessment of alignment options began in 2000, including four potential bus transitway alignments, with the same alignments used to assess light rail. In addition, nine heavy rail alignment options were assessed.

The current proposed alignment is preferred as it meets engineering and strategic planning requirements, minimises environmental impacts and integrates with expected land use development activity.

Over time, station locations have also been reviewed using patronage forecasts and other factors to identify seven preferred station locations, reduced from a list of 20 alternatives (including two stations at Highs Road and Koala Park that were replaced by one at Cherrybrook). The selected stations offer the best response to factors including patronage potential, prominence, ease and cost of construction, environmental impacts, land availability and rail operations.

Between 2005 and 2006, an analysis of 142 different alignment options, sourced from previous work and submissions received from the general public, were assessed. These 142 alignment options were reduced to 41 through specialist assessments, using a variety of transport modes. Further assessment of patronage demand and operating and capital costs concluded with a preferred option for a heavy rail connection between Epping, Castle Hill and Mungerie Park (slightly west of Rouse Hill).

A number of additional alignment options (including different station locations) have been assessed since 2006. An additional mode – metro rail – was introduced in 2008 and a new selection of alignment options was introduced to cater for this. A similar alignment to the one defined early in the planning process was adopted considering constructability, cost, social and environmental impacts and benefits, distance and other determining factors.

Since March 2011, the alignment and station locations are being reviewed and where possible, improved.

Issue

Station locations

- Suggestion that Hills Centre Station be either relocated or removed from project due to impact on Castle Hill Showground, particularly the clubs/groups which frequently use the grounds/facilities.
- Suggestion for Norwest Station location to be reconsidered/moved closer to residential area.
- Concern Cherrybrook Station location is not appropriate due to lack of accessibility for the local community and congestion impacts therefore a more suitable alternative is sought.
- Request for an additional station near Thomson's Corner to service general work commuters, retail hubs and tourists visiting local attractions such as the Koala Park and Cumberland Forest.

Response

Hills Centre Station

The Hills Centre Station location is considered a vital link for park and ride and access to the Showground precinct and surrounding employment and residential hubs.

Transport for NSW is committed to maintaining everyday activities at the Showground and ensuring reasonable access is retained during construction. Considerable construction management planning is yet to be undertaken on the Hills Centre Station and this planning will identify various mitigations measures to ensure impacts on the Showground and surrounding land users are minimised. Investigations are currently underway on design refinements to reduce impacts on surrounding land users and to create a better urban outcome to ensure the most effective design and benefits for users while maintaining current practices at the Showground. Consultation with Baulkham Hills Shire Council and other stakeholders regarding the station will be ongoing.

Norwest Station

The current Norwest Station location provides good access to local centres, business hubs and residential areas to north and south of the area. It is acknowledged that sufficient walking and cycling connections

need to be investigated which is part of the precinct planning work being undertaken to ensure maximum connectivity for residents and commuters. A second station within the Norwest Business Park is being considered.

Cherrybrook

The Cherrybrook Station location is appropriate given it is at the core of surrounding suburbs such as Pennant Hills, Beecroft, West Pennant Hills, Castle Hills and Baulkham Hills. The relatively high level of growth already experienced within this area could be stimulated further with the development of the station, in particular the provision of medium/high density housing options immediately adjacent to the station on undeveloped land increasing the station's catchment. It is acknowledged that access to Cherrybrook Station needs further investigation however ongoing precinct planning aims to resolve these concerns. Traffic impacts and associated congestion will also be considered further both during precinct planning and construction management planning.

Thompson's Corner

An additional station such as Thompson's Corner has been considered however a station at this location would be very deep (below ground) and therefore difficult to access. As a result, accessibility for transport modes other than walking would be limited or not available. There are more effective and accessible station location options in the area therefore Thompson's Corner will not be investigated further.

3.2.2 Traffic, parking and public transport issues

This category addresses issues raised in relation to commuter facilities such as car parking and general responses in relation to station/network accessibility and planning for other transport connections.

Issue

Accessibility

- Statement that the station designs and locations should offer easy access for all modes of transport, including pedestrians, cyclists, bus travellers and private vehicle commuters.
- Suggestion that stations be made easily accessible to cyclists by incorporating a off-road and on-road network within each station catchment. This access should be clearly marked.
- Call for station locations to link into the existing and future bus network to make rail more accessible for multiple transport mode users.
- Consideration should be given to how existing bus connections will complement the new stations/services to provide the most benefit to the region and reduce impacts.
- Request for new rail stations to link in with existing alternative transport networks and timetables for services.
- The rail line and station locations should be considered as part of a network of interchanges connecting alternative transport modes, including bikes.

Response

All station and interchange facilities would comply with easy access standards and guidelines.

The following general principles of station/interchange functions and design would be applied in further developing and assessing other transport connections:

- *Separation* – separate transport modes and traffic for safety and efficiency, to minimise conflicts and provide clear safe access and egress, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.
- *Modal integration* – ensure facilities and transfer for bus, cycling, walking etc are as close together as possible to minimise transfer distance and time for users.
- *Modal priority* – interchange design should favour the most efficient and sustainable access modes and position facilities to encourage walking and cycling, followed by bus, taxi, kiss and ride followed by park and ride.
- *Integration with surroundings* – integrate transport interchange facilities with their surrounding so they are not a barrier to passenger movement (especially pedestrians and cyclists) and, where possible, are designed for people not vehicles.
- *Quality* – best practice is to aim for quality passenger waiting lounges, integrated into main street settings.
- *Compactness* – develop compact interchanges which are safe with more efficient facilities which fit well in urban settings.

Connections to other transport modes from each station are being considered in more detail throughout the precinct planning process. Consultation will continue with other transport providers to ensure connectivity and frequency of services compliments the NWRL.

Issue

Commuter parking and facilities

- Concern that the proposed car parking spaces for commuters will not be sufficient for the amount of patronage as most stations will only be accessible by car. Areas of particular concern include Epping and Norwest Business Park.
- Concern that congestion on motorways and local roads will increase due to commuters accessing the station car parks/facilities and requests for mitigation measures.
- Concern regarding impact on private residential and business parking areas due to increased demand for commuter parking around stations and overflow parking e.g. parking nearby the Showground.
- Consideration should be given to adequate bike parking and storage designed to meet the relevant Australian Standards.

Response

Park and ride will be an important access mode for NWRL stations. According to 2006 transport data, on average 16% of CityRail travellers park a car at the station, travel an average of 7 km to the station and park on average 300 metres away from the station.

Park and ride can be suitable in the short-term, when land use densities are low and feeder bus services are not operating at capacity. However there are also a number of issues with commuter parking that need to be considered when determining a park and ride strategy. These include:

- Park and ride can generate additional traffic movements (concentrated during peak periods) and impact local amenity;

- Park and ride can reduce the patronage on local bus services by diverting existing public transport users to private vehicles;
- Park and ride is the least efficient of the interchange access modes as each car space generates around 1.2 trips per day on the rail network and is occupied all day. It is expensive way to provide for rail patronage;
- Parking is costly to provide (particularly for multi-deck structures), typically costing between \$5,000 and \$25,000 per space and takes valuable land which could be used for more beneficial purposes. Most commuter car parks lie largely empty on weekends unless associated with other nearby weekend activities;
- Large park and ride facilities can introduce or impact personal safety and crime, particularly where there is little activity and surveillance outside peak periods.

Demand for park and ride varies strongly between stations, from little or no formal commuter parking provided to greater need at outer stations with high quality services. At outer stations, park and ride travel distances can also be double the average.

The impact of park and ride on road networks also needs to be considered. If park and ride encourages a shift from car driving in a corridor (which is the case for the North West sector), then it may have little impact. However, localised traffic impacts can be high where train frequency is low and commuters can experience long delays when exiting car parks.

The case for providing around 3,000 park and ride spaces for NWRL is strong. However, the distribution of those spaces across the designated park and ride stations on NWRL is still to be determined and will be informed by precinct planning work and work around strategic station options.

As outlined in section 3.3.2, station/interchange functions and design would be applied in further developing and assessing other transport connections such as access/facilities for cyclists. Bike facilities and access will be designed to meet relevant Australian standards.

3.2.3 Route alignment

Issues raised in relation to the proposed route alignment, including comments regarding stations location and rail corridor (tunnel) are considered under this categorisation.

Issue

Station locations

- General requests for Samantha Riley Drive and Cudgegong Road to be included in original scope instead of being provisional.
- Suggestion for stations to be located near business and retail hubs to enable maximum accessibility.
- Consideration should be given to station design and location to create optimum interchanges with other transport modes and business areas.

Response

Samantha Riley Drive and Cudgegong Road are being investigated to be included in the project scope, rather than being provisional stations. Further assessment are being undertaken to assess the viability of including these stations which would cater for future expected growth in the currently undeveloped Greenfield area of the North West Growth Centre.

All proposed stations have been chosen with consideration of their proximity to connecting transport modes, local business and retail hubs as well as residential areas or areas of expected growth. Further station

design developments will be undertaken in 2012 to achieve optimum results in relation to accessibility and other transport connections.

Issue

Rail corridor

- The proposal should take into account the following key rail corridor links and/or extensions
 - Link between Castle Hill Shopping Centre and Hills Centre;
 - Link between Castle Hill and Beecroft;
 - Integration with the Epping to Parramatta Rail Link; and
 - Link between Castle Hill, Carlingford and Parramatta.
- The proposed rail corridor should be extended beyond Rouse Hill to Richmond.

Response

The NWRL will provide an important, fast and reliable link between Castle Hill and Hills Centre servicing retail hubs, business centres, residential and future growth areas. A further linkage between Castle Hill and Beecroft is not identified as a priority in Metropolitan Strategy therefore this will not be included in the project scope.

The corridor for the Parramatta to Epping rail link will be safeguarded for the future however an alternative direct link to Parramatta is not considered appropriate and is therefore outside the NWRL project scope. The NWRL will allow for the construction and operation of the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link in the future.

Transport for NSW is investigating long term corridors for extension of the NWRL and protection beyond Rouse Hill. The investigations will consider suitable alignments in order to protect and secure the land/corridors required to meet the needs of the future North West Growth Centre residential and worker populations North and West of Rouse Hill. At this stage, an extension beyond Cudgegong Road (in Area 20) is not part of the project scope.

3.2.4 Project justification

This issue category encompasses issues and questions raised in relation to project funding and/or expenditure as well as requests for investment in other transport alternatives (outside of the project scope).

Issue

Funding and expenditure

- Questions raised with regard to expenditure and public benefit and ongoing cost implications for the state.
- Suggestion for joint funding from both the state and federal governments.

Response

The NWRL project is a priority transport infrastructure project for the NSW Government. The NWRL aims to meet the current and emerging transport needs of North West Sydney and improve access to jobs and services for people living in the North West, as well as delivering substantial transport, economic, environmental and community benefits for the city's North West, Sydney and New South Wales.

The project is being developed in line with standard practice for Transport for NSW, which includes a project definition phase, followed by further development, delivery and construction phases. The project definition phase includes completion of an outline business case (a comprehensive document presenting the reasoning behind the proposed alignment, station locations and project in general).

To date, the preliminary analysis supports the case for change – the requirement to make a major investment in a transport project in order to achieve objectives that are important to New South Wales (and Australian) governments. These objectives would not be achieved without this investment, which has been shown through progressive planning and assessment to be the best way of achieving the governments' wider economic, environmental and social aims, whilst accommodating the growth of North West Sydney in a sustainable way.

The business case will be further developed in 2012.

An application will be made seeking funding for the NWRL from Infrastructure Australia however the NSW Government is committed to delivering the project with or without Federal Government assistance.

Issue

Other transport alternatives (outside of project scope)

- Opportunity to review/reform the Transitway and other related public transport systems.
- Consideration should be given to other transport alternatives, such as upgrading motorways, increasing ferry services and improving the efficiency and regularity of the Sydney bus services.
- Concern that the Parramatta to Epping Link is yet to be constructed.

Response

Parramatta Transitway will be an important feeder to new rail stations at Rouse Hill and Kellyville, as will future Transitways and dedicated bus lanes for other rail stations associated with the NWRL. However, Transitway offers a different public transport task that complements rail.

The NWRL will be part of an integrated transport network for Sydney. The development of that network in a strategic transport plan is currently underway in Transport for NSW. The plan is taking into account the NWRL and the options for operating the rail network once the new rail line is in place and is operational. This strategic planning includes consideration of motorways, other public transport and the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link and their operational capabilities in term of frequency, capacity and linkages.

The corridor for the Parramatta to Epping Rail Link will be safeguarded for future and the NWRL will allow for the construction and operation of this link in the future.

3.2.5 Land use planning

This category considers comments and responses regarding future land use planning in relation to the project.

Issue

Land use

- Concerns that the proposed line does not adequately support identified future growth areas.
- Requests for further investigatory work regarding the integration of the alignment in relation to land use planning.

Response

The NWRL will help achieve the goals in *NSW 2021 – A Plan to Make NSW Number One*.

A critical project objective for the NWRL is to ensure customer needs are met by providing an integrated and affordable transport system that links existing communities and new growth areas in North West Sydney with jobs and services beyond. The project specifically supports the North West Growth Centre, major centres at Castle Hill and Rouse Hill, the future local centre at Kellyville, and the specialised centre and Norwest Business Park.

The NWRL may encourage both the strengthening of existing centres and the development of new centres within the Corridor. The key land use opportunities stemming from the NWRL are being investigated. In 2012, a broader land use strategy responding to the NWRL will be developed with key stakeholders and will include examination of Government owned land in the vicinity of stations and potential benefits across the project of promoting responsible development around stations.

3.2.6 Construction practices and timing

These issues relate to comments received regarding construction staging and timing and property/business access during construction.

Issue

Access

- Concerns access to the Castle Hill Showground will be severed or significantly impacted during construction.
- Calls for access to be maintained to all properties and businesses along the route alignment at all times during construction.

Response

Transport for NSW acknowledges the communities concerns regarding impacts to the Showground and its users during construction. Every effort will be made to ensure reasonable access is retained and Transport for NSW is committed to maintaining everyday activities at the Showground during construction.

Access to property, business and community facilities is a key consideration in mitigating construction impacts.

A construction methodology is currently being developed and will be described in Environmental Impact Statement, including mitigation strategies, to be released for public comment in 2012.

Issue

Staging and timing

- Calls for construction to commence and the line to be commissioned as soon as possible.
- Concerns expressed that the project will be further delayed, particularly given the complexities involved and the project's track record.
- Suggestion to commission each individually constructed section upon completion rather than waiting for the project to be completed in full.

Response

Following Government decisions regarding the scope of the project and the delivery strategy, the project team will present updated material to Government towards the end of 2012. Key dates around construction and commissioning will be announced at that time.

3.2.7 Communication & consultation issues

This category considers issues raised with regard to future communication material and consultation activities.

Issue**Future consultation**

- Requests from the community and stakeholders for consultation to continue and for the process to be fully inclusive and transparent.

Response

Community engagement will be a primary factor in the project's development. Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian has identified the importance of ensuring people are fully informed and can have input before decisions are made.

There will be ongoing opportunities for the community to have its say about the NWRL including exhibition of the Environmental Impact Assessments in 2012.

4 Other issues raised

4.1 Property impacts

Issue

Property acquisition, depreciation and compensation

A small number of concerns were raised with regard to properties that are/may be directly impacted by the current proposal and that there will be no similar or equivalent relocation options available. Indirect impacts on surroundings land users in relation to property depreciation were also raised as a concern. Calls for hardship/compensation offers, particularly for not-for-profit organisation/groups, were also requested in order to reduce expected financial implications resulting from project impacts.

Property issue fact sheets are available from the project website or the Information Centre.

- It is acknowledged that construction of the NWRL will affect some properties.
- The Environmental Impact Assessment will identify potential construction impacts and possible mitigation measures to reduce the impact on affected properties.
- We will work closely with affected property owners to understand their needs and concerns. Where possible we will put in place measures to address these concerns.

4.2 Visual amenity

Issue

Operational visual amenity and urban design

A diminutive number of submissions raised the issue of green space, particularly around the Castle Hill Showground area, being significantly reduced as a result of the project. This was raised as a concern as current green and/or open space along project area is limited and it is expected this will have negative visual impacts on surrounding suburbs. There were also requests for urban planning to compliment the surrounds using practical and innovative designs.

Visual amenity and urban design will be addressed as part of the design process and documented through the environmental assessment process.

4.3 Noise and vibration

Issue

Construction noise and vibration mitigation

Construction noise and vibration mitigation measures were also raised as a priority. In particular, tunnelling vibration impacts were addressed as a concern.

- The Environmental Impact Assessment will identify potential noise and vibration impacts, and management measures.
- We will work closely with potentially affected property owners and tenants to ensure they understand what to expect and the measures we are putting in place to manage noise and vibration.

5 Conclusion and next steps

Ongoing community feedback and technical studies on the updated proposal for the NWRL will help clarify the alignment and stations locations.

Consultation will continue throughout detailed design and for life of the project.

Upcoming consultation opportunities will include the public display of two Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) which are expected to be available in early and mid 2012. At this time, the community and stakeholders will again have the opportunity to comment on construction and operation issues. The planning assessment process is expected to be completed by early 2013.

Appendix A

Group name	Submission made
Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parramatta Council • Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils • Blacktown City Council • Hawkesbury City Council • Blue Mountains City Council • Ku-ring-gai Council
Government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDA Sydney • RailCorp
Interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castle Hill Showground • Computer Pals for Seniors • EcoTransit Sydney • Castle Hill Players • Country Women's Association • Castle Hill Art Society • Hills District Kennel and Training Club • Northwest Flyball Club • Bike North • Bicycle NSW • Pets on the Park • OK Caravan Corral • Commuter Council • Hills Transport Working Group • Budokan Judo Club Inc.
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney Hills Business Chamber • Hills Transport Working Group • Norwest Association • Winten Property Group • GTP Group • APP Corporation • Norwest Commercial and Industrial Real Estate

Group name	Submission made
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="485 250 879 280">• International Property Group<li data-bbox="485 297 863 327">• Sydney Business Chamber
MP's/other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="485 349 815 378">• Member for Riverstone<li data-bbox="485 396 799 425">• Member for Davidson<li data-bbox="485 443 767 472">• Member for Epping<li data-bbox="485 490 863 519">• Member for Baulkham Hills<li data-bbox="485 537 839 566">• University of Wollongong