

# *Camden Residents' Action Group*

*Incorporated*

*Camden – Still a Country Town*

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1<sup>st</sup> June 2018

To whom it may concern,

## **Re: Objection Proposed Corridor for Outer Sydney Orbital (M9)**

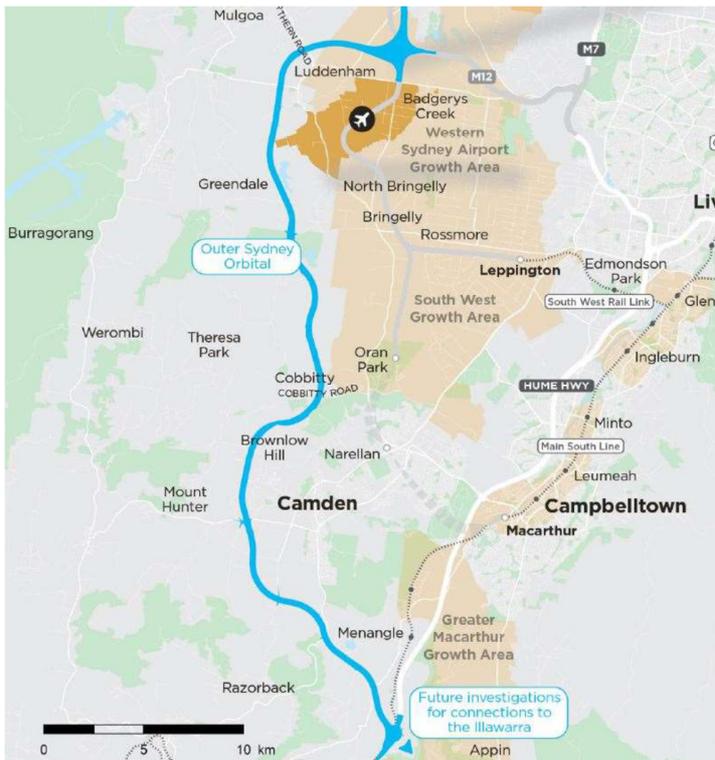
We strongly object to the proposed corridor for an eight-lane motorway and two lines of freight rail which was announced by the NSW Government on 26 March 2018. It significantly impacts the welfare of communities in the Macarthur region, their way of life and the heritage and environment that are distinctive hallmarks of the area's sense of place.

Inexplicably it seems that ordinary citizens are not regarded as key stakeholders, being left out of consultation that apparently took place between 2014 and 2018. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) states that community groups were consulted between 2015 and 2017. Although a long-standing community group founded in 1973 that represents the views of many in the community we were not consulted, nor do we know of any that were.

We object to the concept of a transport route that must result in many significant negative outcomes to highly valued farmland, the environment, biodiversity, community health, livelihoods and family homes. The concept must be questioned given the broad essentially economic brush of the SEA. Only three alternatives to the corridor were considered, all ruled out on economic grounds rather than through a sensitivity analysis and balancing of social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. Many would argue strongly that the option of investment in public transport required much closer investigation.

It is generally accepted that improved means of transport is needed and that Badgerys Creek Airport is more likely than not to be built (as it has bi-partisan support at the Federal level). However, many people for instance do not accept the premise of the SEA that the population of Western Sydney should or will inevitably grow by 50% by 2036.

The Guiding Principles and ratings presented in the SEA are not presented as evidence based; it is extremely unlikely that the community necessarily agrees with assumptions underlying them. This is evidenced in the Greater Sydney Commission's original SW District Plan which was based on consultation and community input. Reasons, other than economic convenience, for obvious omissions, such as Cobbitty as a village to be avoided, are not provided. Although economic activity that creates jobs is important, as is ease of commuting, the community is very careful about any trade-off with the quiet enjoyment of what it most values, its scenic landscapes, rural amenity and heritage. Tunnelling, that may mitigate some of the adverse effects is ruled out on economic grounds, rather than taking into account the very significant social and environmental costs of the proposal, which in any case also have consequential indirect economic costs.



The delineated route is perhaps one of the most destructive possible as it damages established villages, food production within the Sydney basin, heritage areas and items and sensitive areas of flood plain.

The route devastates the beautiful and historic town of Cobbitty and Ellis Lane and Grasmere are similarly affected yet it bypasses large tracts of developer owned land. It skirts much too close to culturally and historically important heritage items and areas.

As the route of the proposed Corridor route was guided by the Principles that are not founded on community consultation and seem to serve a choice of the cheapest route, it is not surprising

that the community is shocked by it. Western Sydney is not, and should not be regarded as, an easy dumping ground for industry, pollution and general unliveable noise and ugliness that the rest of Sydney does not want in its neighbourhoods.

The SEA does not properly address and weigh up the likely impacts on human well-being, food production, community cohesion, health, landscape, environment and heritage value of the areas through which it is proposed to be built.

The Guiding Principles should result from thorough research into community values, or, logically, build from previous community engagement and the work of the original SW District Plan. The Principles then can be applied to arrive at acceptable transport alternatives including improved public transport. The history and experience of cities around the world tell us that infrastructure in the form of massive roads, which soon become congested, are not the answer to Sydney's transport problems. As well as being scars on the landscape they are noisy, polluting and contribute heavily to the greenhouse effect.

The reasons for our objection are further detailed below:

## **LACK OF NOTIFICATION, CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION**

### **Community Participation in the Corridor Decision**

Although TfNSW is a public service supported by community taxes, the general community has been left out of a process that resulted in this very significant and seemingly random line on a map.

Only households in the blue corridor were notified of the proposed corridor. Those who have become aware share information from their research and support each other through social media. The community should not have to find out for itself the details of the proposal and spend their valuable free time on setting up a dedicated Facebook page and Website and continually updating them. Many affected people only heard of this major imposition on their lives and communities incidentally through social media.

Surely information is available within TfNSW that could easily have been provided upfront and transparently. Information should have been provided initially rather than creating more uncertainty and anguish than necessary (assuming the necessity of the corridor and its siting).

Although people who are to be more directly impacted outside the blue line are now aware of the proposed corridor, the wider community remains ignorant of the impacts to be expected from the corridor plans although the region will be changed adversely and irrevocably.

The news of the corridor came as a great shock to residents and little time has been allowed before submissions are due to absorb its ramifications and impact on family plans and finances. The community deserves to be consulted, have input and be party to the decision.

Discriminatory treatment of ordinary hard-working individuals compared to large economic organisations and developers needs to be redressed.

### **Meetings and Follow Up**

TfNSW has provided poorly presented, inadequate information at its few community meetings and questions raised remain unanswered.

## **Compensation**

Many have built their dream family homes in the area to have those dreams shattered. Some are still in the early stages of planning their homes or in the midst of building and are cruelly left devastated and floundering.

Timing of compensation is crucial as those affected need to revise their thinking on how and where they are to raise their families.

The eight lanes and freight line will be a very major blight on the landscape, also creating noise and air pollution, which will collectively devalue people's homes by billions of dollars but only those within the corridor itself have access to any compensation, and that well into the future. As well as having their life plans devastated there is no specific detail provided about timing of compensation based on "market value", which is undefined, for compulsory acquisitions.

Many properties will be affected, especially those adjacent to the proposed corridor and those affected by the yet to be explained on-off ramps and subsidiary work, but they will not be compulsorily acquired. Compensation for the owners has not been addressed and they seemingly have no recourse and no means of gaining compensation for the negative consequences to lifestyle and property value.

## **HERITAGE**

The area through which the proposed corridor is drawn is highly significant in Aboriginal and European history. This is well documented, including within legislated LEPs and Local and State Heritage Listings. The Macarthur region is known as the birthplace of the nation's wealth and is highly culturally significant in the post-European settlement story of NSW and Australia. It is sought after to provide settings for domestic and international films. It is an educational and tourism asset for current and future generations as it stands, especially being close to Australia's largest city.

However, the corridor is drawn through or very close to heritage items such as Camden Park, Denbigh, Brownlow Hill, Cawdor School and Church and Cobbitty's St Paul's Church and Rectory and through generational homesteads and farms from colonial times. Heritage areas and items that are locally listed are given low or no priority in the Guiding Principles. This is not culturally acceptable or reasonable given that the process involved for a community applicant to achieve listing of an item or area at State or Commonwealth level is long and difficult and subject to the prevailing politic climate. At the end of the process a listing decision can be based on resources made available to the responsible government department to follow through, rather than inherent merit and cultural importance to the community.

## AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH

Surveys<sup>1</sup> indicate that on a range of measures the health of residents in South Western Sydney is poorer than for NSW as a whole. It is well known that the area has high rates of lung cancer, asthma and respiratory problems due to the geography of the Sydney Basin which traps and condenses particulates, pollution and smog.

The impact of the proposal on human well-being and health-care costs needs to be assessed. The corridor proposal does not attempt a cost-benefit analysis of even the economics of the additional pollution that it would cause. Above all the environment needs to be healthy and liveable.

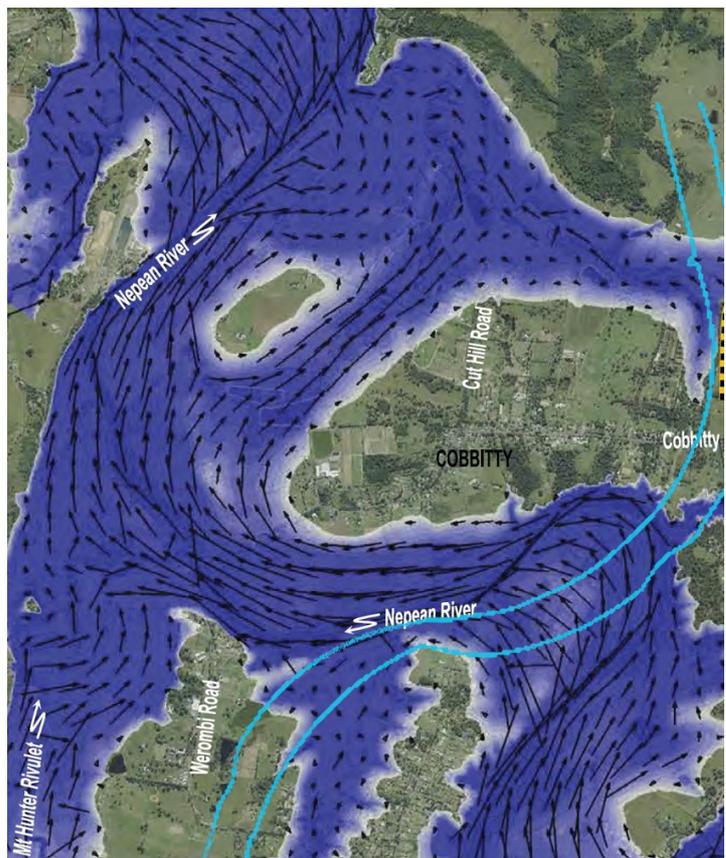
## FLOODING IMPACTS

A rigorous flooding impact assessment, taking into account local knowledge, needs to be undertaken into the effect on the floodplain of such a massive structure, including impacts on floodways, waterways such as the Nepean River and flooding of properties.

For instance, the Camden Council flood maps suggest that there is an angle of up to 180<sup>0</sup> of a large number of the bridge support pylons to the flood flow in the river just below Camden, (instead of the usual and required 90<sup>0</sup>). Information provided by the TfNSW itself suggests this may increase the height of a major flood in the future.

It is also understood that Wollondilly Council has not done a flood study. This needs to be undertaken before assessment of any route as local knowledge is that Razorback produces huge flows of water in a flood situation.

Acknowledgement of the Cawdor Valley floodplain seems to be omitted from the SEA. This valley has been fully inundated in the past and such events are more likely



<sup>1</sup>See

Deloitte Access Economics, Campbelltown City Council (September 2017) *Campbelltown Health and Education Precinct Vision and strategy*

South West Sydney Local Health District, NSW Health (2014) *Population Health Needs Assessment for the Communities of South Western Sydney and the Southern Highlands*

South Western Sydney Local Health District (2016) *Camden Local Government Area Health Profile*

in the future given the impacts of climate change. Consultation with community members and groups would have quickly provided information of this local lived-experience. The need for a potentially prohibitively costly viaduct over the Cawdor floodplain may have changed the recommendations of the SEA.

## **OTHER CONSEQUENTIAL OUTCOMES**

Much more information is also required about other potential consequences of the proposed corridor and the opportunity to participate in determining whether they are acceptable.

For instance

- Intended land-uses and zoning for land around the corridor
- How the local road network will be affected
- How the M9 would integrate with other transport infrastructure to ensure efficient movement of people and goods
- Noise abatement

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We refute the assertion in the Executive Summary of the SEA that

*This integrated corridor protection planning process has included extensive engagement with stakeholders and the community. This began between June and August 2015 to raise awareness of the strategic planning objectives and obtain information on constraints, opportunities and values that may influence recommended OSO corridor development within the OSO Study Area.*

The community was not engaged and it requires much more rigorous and preferably independently assessed information at the very least about the matters addressed in this submission. Much more research needs to be undertaken and each report made available for public input. Acceptable alternatives need to be established first which can then be assessed and compared strategically, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Only then should any decision be taken about the best way to accommodate the transport needs of Western Sydney, the Macarthur region and Badgerys Creek Airport.

Yours faithfully,



Glenda Davis  
President