

One of the homes
they're proposing
to demolish.



Save Leamington Avenue

saveleamingtonavenue@gmail.com

Save our homes

Meeting for residents & supporters

MONDAY 5TH JULY, 2010

FROM THE BEGINNING...

On 4 June the Sydney Morning Herald reported that Railcorp is considering resuming and demolishing a block of historic houses in North Newtown to make way for a controversial new 'City Relief Line' (attached).

At the same time an anonymous flyer was left our letter boxes which also warned of the threat to our homes (attached).

We have confirmed that that this is a real and imminent threat involving all of Leamington Avenue and several properties at the bottom of Pine and Holdsworth Streets. Up to 34 families face the heartache of possibly losing their homes and the amenity of the adjoining streets would also be destroyed. Leamington Avenue, along with Pine, Randle and Holdsworth Streets, form part of the historic Pines Estate Heritage Conservation area dating back to 1887.

WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR...

- In February 2010 the Government announced its 'Metropolitan Transport Plan' (MTP). The MTP includes a project known as the 'Western Express Project' (WEP). The WEP involves new express train services from Penrith and Richmond and new platforms being built at Redfern, Railway Square (near central), City West (near Town Hall) and Wynyard.
- The WES will also include a new 5km priority tunnel, known as the 'City Relief Line' (CRL). It is proposed to be constructed from Eveleigh to Wynyard and it is the alignment for this tunnel which poses the threat to homes in Leamington, Holdsworth and Pine Streets.
- On 12 March 2010 a Part 3A and critical Infrastructure Declaration was made in relation to the MTP.
- The Concept Plan for the North Eveleigh (Carriageworks Site) approved by Kristina Keneally on 16 December 2008 includes a plan identifying an 'Exclusion Zone' for future Railcorp Infrastructure (attached). This Exclusion Zone has an alignment which would have a direct impact on our homes.
- This route is also shown on a plan in a 2005 Railcorp Report 'Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program' (attached). That plan identifies 'Corridors for protection' in green, including Leamington Avenue and parts of Holdsworth and Pines Streets. This protection corridor coincides with the 34 homes identified for a 'construction site area' on the anonymous flyer (attached). Properties have already been acquired by Government in Little Eveleigh Street Redfern to facilitate the WEP and CRL.
- Transport NSW has appointed a Project Director (Chris Meale) and project team for this project. That team is currently undertaking detailed feasibility studies in respect of the WEP and CRL.
- The NSW Budget on 8 June 2010 identified funding for the WEP, including
 - a) \$1 billion to commence work on the WES (over 4 years starting this year)
 - b) \$30 million for design and planning for the WES (i.e. for current year).
- On 23 June 2010 TransportNSW left a flyer in the letter boxes of the affected homes (attached). THIS WAS THE FIRST COMMUNICATION RESIDENTS HAVE RECEIVED IN RELATION TO THE POSSIBLE THREAT TO OUR HOMES despite this threat being known to Government since at least 2005.
- This 'Community Update' provides no comfort to affected residents who are already experiencing immediate adverse impacts from this issue now being in the public domain. Examples include:
 - one owner with her property on the market was forced to cancel her auction last week;
 - other property owners hoping to put their properties on the market are now having to seek legal advice about what disclosures they are required to make to prospective purchasers;
 - two people have recently purchased properties in the street and are due to move in shortly – what is the value of their homes now?
 - a number of owners are undertaking major renovations – one has had to stop work mid way through as there is no guarantee that their build costs will be reimbursed in the event that the property is resumed;
 - there are owners who are about to lodge DAs with Council – should they continue with this?
 - And, most importantly, there are people who have lived in the street for a very long time who want to stay because they have become part of the local community.
- We have sought a meeting with the Premier and the Minister for Transport but both these requests have been refused.
- This is a real and imminent threat to homes in Leamington Avenue, Pines and Randle and Holdsworth Streets as well as the broader North Newtown area, including the beautiful Hollis Park.

TAXPAYERS' BILL

Failed Metro leaves \$93m hole

Andrew West
TRANSPORT

NSW taxpayers will pay almost \$100 million to compensate construction companies for their work on the failed CBD Metro.

The figure is in addition to the \$300 million that the lemma, Rees and Keneally governments spent on the project before the Premier abandoned it in February.

But the deal to pay \$93 million to companies including Leighton Holdings and Lend Lease does not include possible compensation claims from other big firms, including finance companies, consultants, project managers and small-business owners who were targeted by the Sydney Metro Authority.

The government released details of the \$93 million settlement in a one-page statement shortly before 6pm yesterday, too late for most television news broadcasts. But it is refusing to release the full report on compensation by the international accounting firm Deloitte, despite the Legislative Council passing a resolution ordering it to make the report public.

A spokesman for the Transport Minister, John Robertson, said the full report was "cabinet-in-confidence" and would be released "eventually".

Last night the Greens MP Lee Rhiannon, who pushed for the release of the full report, and the opposition transport spokeswoman, Gladys Berejiklian, speculated the cost of the metro could soar beyond \$500 million.

"Without the Deloitte report, no one can be confident that John Robertson's figure of \$93 million paid to five major construction tenderers is correct, or that there are not further big players which have sought compensation," Ms Rhiannon said.

"The Premier has defied a vote of the NSW upper house and withheld the release of this report to avoid embarrassment about the true cost wash-up from the failed CBD Metro."

Ms Berejiklian described the limited release of information as "an attempt by the Keneally government to cover up the extent of compensation owed by the taxpayers of NSW for Labor's



Uncertain future ... a row of houses on Leamington Avenue, Newtown, that RailCorp is thinking of demolishing. Photo: Dallas Kilponen

Rail tunnel plan threatens historic homes

JUST two months after the NSW government spared the heritage suburbs of Pyrmont and Rozelle by dumping the CBD Metro, another historic precinct is under threat from another controversial transport plan.

It has been leaked to the *Herald* that a block of historic homes between Leamington Avenue and Leamington Lane, Newtown, may be demolished so the government can build a \$4.53 billion CityRail "relief line" under Sussex Street.

RailCorp has confirmed that it has plans, dating back eight years, that would require the acquisition of properties for a "dive" that would allow trains to enter the new five-kilometre tunnel running from Eveleigh – a precinct between Macdonaldtown and Redfern stations – to Wynyard.

"Early work into a city relief line – essentially another rail

corridor through the city – suggested that the construction would require some properties in the Leamington Avenue area to be resumed," the rail agency wrote in an email to the *Herald*.

The *Herald* understands a 2002 report by Hyder Consulting, *MetroWest: Construction Site Investigation*, shows the

route under Pitt Street. But the Premier, Kristina Keneally, said in February she might reserve that corridor for future Metro trains.

RailCorp says it may not need the properties if it can use a government site at North Eveleigh for building the tunnel entrance.

"That work is continuing, with no final decisions yet made," the

from the proposed demolition zone, predicted another dispute with the government – in the seat of the Deputy Premier, Carmel Tebbutt, who is vulnerable to the Greens – if the plan proceeds.

"Look at what the residents and businesses in Balmain and Pyrmont had to suffer – speculation about their future for more than a year – because of the Metro, and it all came to nothing," she said. "It's extremely disappointing that this plan has emerged as the result of a leak and not through consultation with the residents."

The government says building the relief line on the western side of the city would bring passengers from the western suburbs into the city faster and relieve congestion at Town Hall and Wynyard but has so far refused to release the analysis to support its claim.

Andrew West

'It's extremely disappointing that this plan has emerged as the result of a leak.'

Louise Alley, resident

government would need to turn Leamington Avenue into a huge construction zone.

The neighbourhood would be spared if the government built its relief line between Redfern and Circular Quay, on an alternative

RailCorp email said, "As is the case with every major infrastructure project, the community will be given opportunities to have their say on the proposal."

One resident, Louise Alley, who lives in Holdsworth Street, metres

recklessness and mismanagement of the Rozelle metro".

The government released the details the same day it did a deal with the Shooters Party to weaken gun laws in NSW. In return, the Shooters Party voted against a motion to set up an inquiry into the metro funding scandal.

The Shooters Party wants to

allow children under 12 years to use air rifles at shooting ranges, remove the need to register or have a permit to acquire an air rifle, and halve the firearm disqualification period for those subject to an apprehended violence order from 10 to five years.

Mr Robertson is still fighting moves by the Greens and the Coal-

ition to release 15 boxes of documents about the metro, despite a ruling from the official mediator, the former chief justice of the NSW Supreme Court, Sir Laurence Street.

In September the government announced three consortiums had bid to construct the seven-kilometre metro between Central and Rozelle – including Thiess,

John Holland and Abigroup – while two, including Bovis Lend Lease, Bombardier and Downer EIDI Rail, had bid to operate it.

Mr Robertson said another accounting firm, KPMG, would "independently assess reimbursement for ... property owners and lessees".

with Brian Robins

LEAMINGTON AVENUE RESUMPTION WARNING LEAFLET – JUNE 2010

The unsigned leaflet below was distributed to residents in Leamington Avenue in early June 2010. It warned residents of State Government Plans which may lead to the resumption of land in Leamington Avenue at MacDonalddtown adjoining North Eveleigh.

Your House may be Resumed. Help Stop It!

You will not have heard about it because it's being kept a **secret by the NSW Government's Department of Transport and Infrastructure** – but your home may have been identified for compulsory acquisition. It appears that all the houses in Leamington Avenue (and either side of that) may need to be acquired and demolished to make way for rail corridor expansion required as part of constructing the Government's proposed CBD Relief Line. The map on the back shows the impacted properties. (Ref: **Hyder Consulting** report: "MetroWest – Construction Site Investigation", dated 17 January 2002, and extensive design work by **Aurecon** (formerly Connell Wagner))

Your house is in an area listed by the City of Sydney Council as a Heritage Precinct and all the properties affected by the project are considered by Council to contribute to the heritage value of the Precinct.

HOW DID THIS OCCUR?

The Government's proposed CBD Relief Line was first proposed in 1992 (then known as the MetroWest Project). It was abandoned as the Government's preferred option in 2003 after extensive analysis of alternatives indicated that building a new railway through the CBD would produce better results if located under the Pitt Street Corridor. This alternative was announced by Bob Carr in June 2005 (ref: Sydney Morning Herald, 3 June 2005). Importantly this alternative did not require the resumption of any homes in Leamington Ave.

But this Pitt Street route under the CBD was gazumped by the Metro Rail projects announced by the lemma and Rees Governments – and the planners in RailCorp were forced to dust off the only alternative they had left – the discredited plans for the MetroWest Alignment. It was then renamed the "CBD Relief Line" Project.

THE PROJECT WILL FAIL TO MEET ITS OBJECTIVES.

It has been stated that the CBD Relief Line Project will be required to allow the Government's proposed Western Express Services from west of Parramatta to run faster into the CBD, however, all the time savings are achieved west of Redfern and can be achieved on the existing tracks. Furthermore, the new line itself will not allow any additional trains to head towards the city, it will only get existing ones just a little further past Central. This connection to the Western lines was abandoned by State Rail in 2003 because the new line would be located west of Central and Town Hall stations and would not provide any congestion relief for passengers who interchange between train services at these two stations (a stated goal of the project).

The Government's policy of faster trains for Western Sydney can still be achieved without the CBD Relief Line and without the need to resume anybody's homes!

Now that the Government has postponed its plans for a Metro network until at least 2025 there is an opportunity for RailCorp to reclaim the vital Pitt Street route for the new line. This will also allow much needed extra trains from South West Sydney to run into the CBD on a route that will relieve interchange congestion at Central and Town Hall stations.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Ask your local member to ask the Minister for Transport and the Premier the following questions:

1. Is the CBD Relief Line necessary to provide faster trains into the CBD from Western Sydney or can these services be run without the proposed new line?
2. Will the CBD relief line on the western side of the CBD reduce the need for passengers to interchange at Town Hall and Central Stations or will it increase the overall need for passengers to interchange to reach their destinations?
3. Is it true that the Pitt Street route will allow additional services from South Western Sydney whilst also reducing the need to interchange at Central and Town Hall stations, and importantly – will not preclude the operation of faster Trains from the West?
4. Why might my home need to be resumed for the CBD Relief Line Project that has been shown to be incapable of increasing the rail network's capacity or reducing CBD station congestion?

Contact your State Politician and ask these questions – or contact **Andrew West** tonight, Transport Reporter at the Sydney Morning Herald, who would like to hear your views on the matter (**M: 0410 582 259**)





FIGURE 1. Bing Maps image (2010)

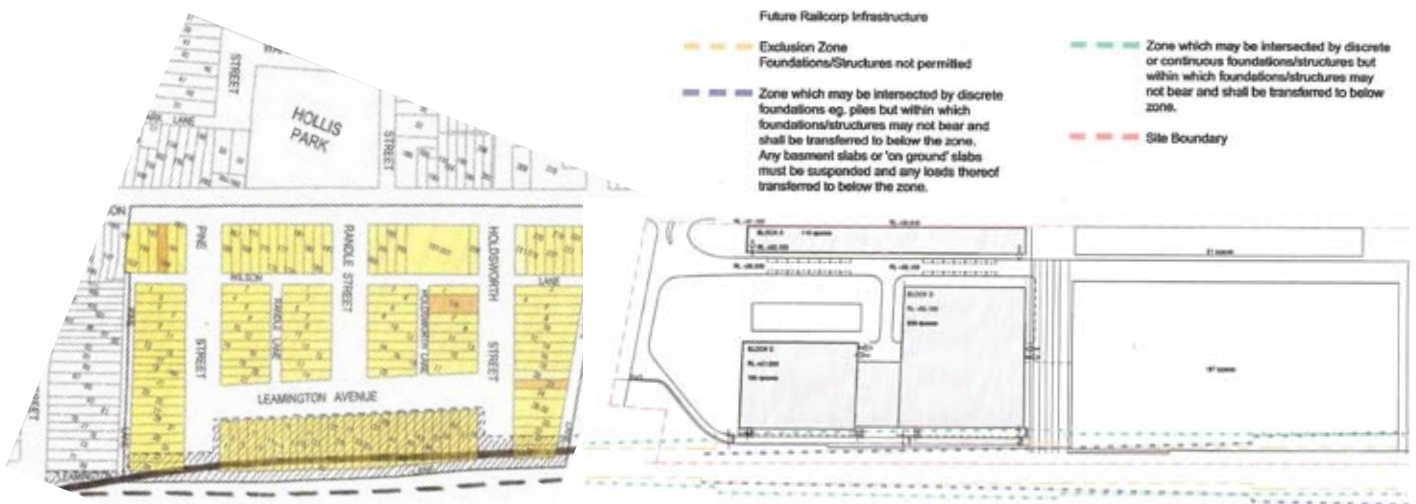
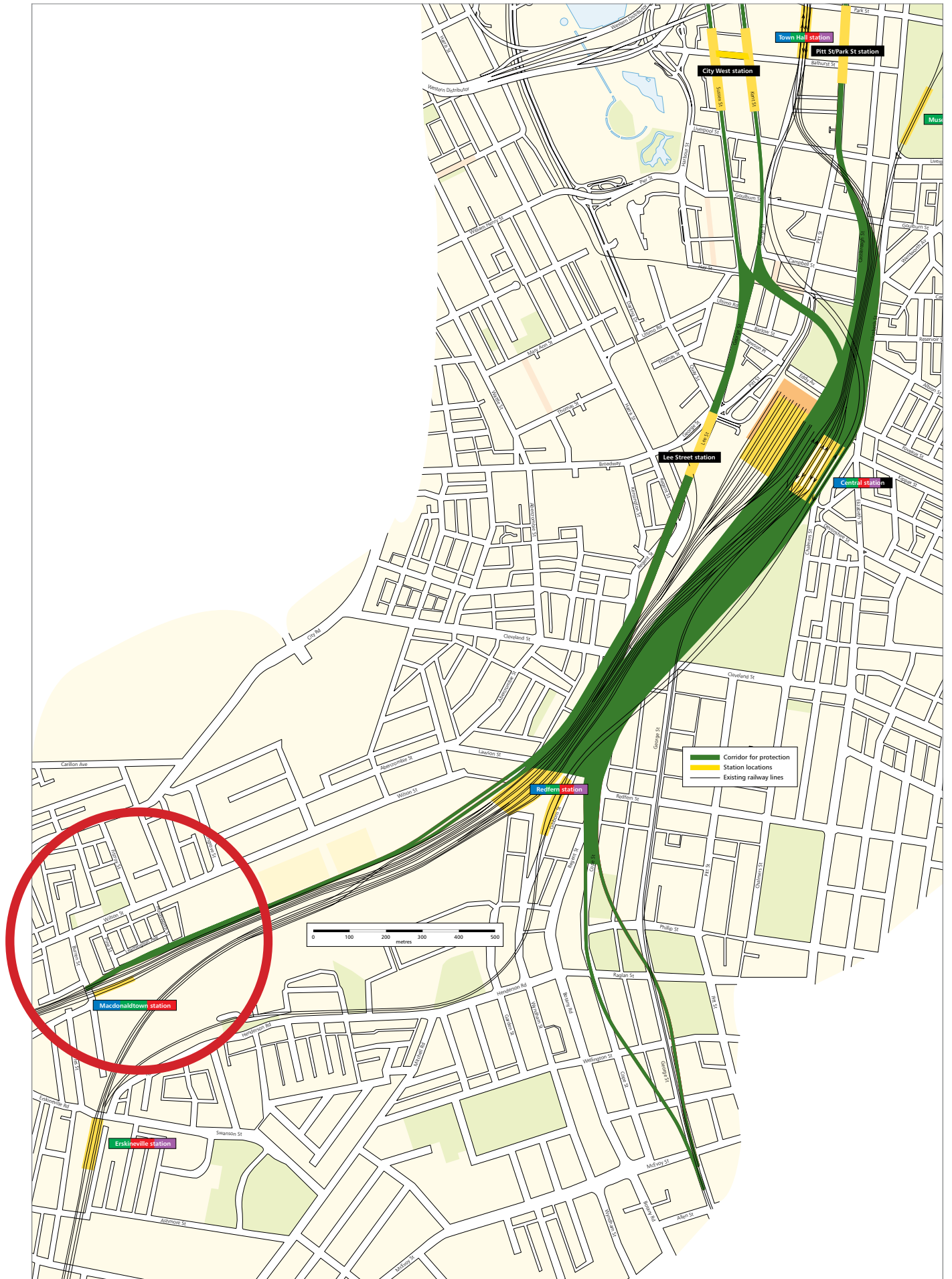


FIGURE 2. Hyder Consulting Report 'Metro West. Construction Site Investigation' 17.01.02

FIGURE 3. Revised Concept Plan – North Eveleigh. Approved by the Minister for Planning on 16.12.08

METROPOLITAN RAIL EXPANSION PROGRAMME

Metro Pitt and Metro West Indicative Corridors, October 2005





Community update June 2010

WESTERN EXPRESS RAIL PROJECT

Planning has started for the Western Express Rail Project, which was announced in the NSW Government's Metropolitan Transport Plan in February.

The finished project would enable express train services to run from Penrith and Richmond connecting directly to new underground stations from Redfern to Wynyard.

Building this new track would achieve a full separation of outer and inner western trains and allow faster and more frequent services to operate on the Western Express, as well as on the rest of the Sydney rail network.

This Community Update is provided to clarify some facts about the project.

The Western Express is a new project and no final decisions have been made about the route alignment. Extensive consultation will take place with the community before such a decision is made.

The project will include an underground tunnel that would start in the Eveleigh area. Determining the alignment of the tracks and how this tunnelling will be done requires very detailed engineering, geotechnical and other specialist investigations.

Transport NSW has just begun to look at the alignment and construction options. Every effort will be made to maximise the use of Government-owned land and minimise any impacts on private property. No decision about property requirements has been made at this stage.

Given the importance of the studies for local residents, the work to identify a preferred alignment in the Eveleigh area is being accelerated. Transport NSW understands that while this work is undertaken, there may be a period of uncertainty. Residents who feel they are impacted during this time are encouraged to contact Transport NSW to discuss their issues in more detail.

For the Western Express Project as a whole, a full Environmental Assessment must be prepared and approved. It must take into account all the implications of the proposed work. The necessary detailed studies and planning approval will take place during 2012.

Transport NSW will inform and consult local communities about the progress of the Western Express project. Information will be regularly posted and updated on the Transport NSW website www.transport.nsw.gov.au and the inquiries phone number is 1800 636 910.