

# Watkins: light rail extension is sensible, but ...

Inner West residents have shown tremendous support for the proposal to extend the existing light rail service from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill. And now, thousands of people want to know why it wasn't built years ago.

Leichhardt, Ashfield and Marrickville Councils have all voted unanimously in support of the extension and are committed to supporting the campaign. The three local state members — Verity Firth, Carmel Tebbutt and Linda Burney — have all said it's a good idea and asked the Transport minister John Watkins to make sure the corridor is reserved for public transport use.

The Greens think it's such a good idea they've started actively campaigning for it. The Liberal Party say they've always supported light rail and hundreds of businesses in the area are joining the campaign.

With so much support, you'd expect the state government to jump at the chance to finally do something that will please commuters. After all, the rail line is already there, there'll be no freight trains on it after December, Metro Light Rail says they already have the rolling stock to extend to Lewisham and it would only cost \$17 million to construct new stops for the first stage.

But in what can only be described as high farce, bureaucrats at the Ministry of Transport have advised the Transport Minister, John Watkins that the extension can't go ahead until after the Met-

ros are built. They claim the rail freight line *might* be needed to take away soil and rock — known as 'spoil' — from the tunnel excavations.

EcoTransit has received technical advice from transport academics Dr Garry Glazebrook and Dr Michelle Zeibots from the University of Technology, Sydney, both of whom attended the meeting with the Transport Minister.

"It's very common in Europe and the US to have time sharing arrangements for light rail with freight or other heavy rail trains on the same rail tracks," said Dr Glazebrook. "At the absolute most, there would be four freight trains per day needed to remove spoil. It would be very easy to time-separate the scheduling of light rail and freight services. That way there would be no excuse to hold up the light rail extension for ten years."

Dr Zeibots is asking European experts to provide advice on shared passenger and rail freight services. She believes that professionals in Sydney will benefit from the opportunities to learn from practitioners with operational experience.

"Stopping the productive use of this line is unthinkable. Especially when we



EcoTransit at Rozelle Markets collecting signatures to support the extension.

urgently need to find sustainable alternatives to petrol and diesel-based transport," Dr Zeibots said.

What has been made clear from this first meeting with the minister, is that there is very little stopping the light rail from being extended in the next few years.

"But we have to be prepared to fight for it," said Leah Mason, spokesperson for EcoTransit Sydney. "Now that we know where the politicians all stand,

EcoTransit will be turning up the heat of the campaign.'

A series of public meeting on the proposal will be held shortly after the local government elections on the 13th of September.

Members of the community are being urged to assist the campaign by contacting their local members, either by email, snail mail or in-person to tell them that this is the kind of project that they should support

# EcoTransit takes your letters to the politicians



Since the last edition of EcoTransit News, 3,500 people have signed letters of support. If you could build train tracks with these, we have enough for 1.5 kms of new light rail. With 18,000, we'll have a chain of letters as long as the actual line.

EcoTransit met with John Watkins on August 14.

At the meeting, EcoTransit outlined the merits of the extension, that it could be achieved quickly and at low cost. EcoTransit also raised the issue of extending concession tickets to light rail passengers in line with all other public transport operators and services in Sydney.

After presenting the proposal and letters of support to the minister, he said

"Verity, Carmel and Linda have asked me to investigate the possibility of excising the line from the Metropolitan Freight Network so that it can remain in RailCorp's control. I am happy to do this and have requested advice on available options,"

On the issue of extending ticket concessions to light rail passengers, the minister said, "In relation to ticketing Sydney Metro Light Rail is and has always been a self-supporting commercial venture. The Government is not currently proposing to subsidise the light rail operator for the fares and ticketing products it provides."

The Greens response was very different, with Lee Rhiannon saying, "The Greens support fare concessions for all forms of public transport, light rail is no exception."

"We see no difference between the concessions available to passengers on privately run public buses in Western Sydney and the situation of concession passengers on the current light rail service. The inference that the current light rail service is a *tourist service* should be challenged," Ms Rhiannon said.

Liberal shadow transport minister Gladys Berejiklian also supported the extension of concession tickets to light rail passengers.

When asked at a public meeting on climate change about the light rail extension, the Federal Minister for Transport and Member for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese said, 'they should never have ripped up the trams in the first place'. But then added that "the Inner West is already well serviced by public transport."

EcoTransit has requested a meeting with Mr Albanese and is still waiting to hear back from his office.

**EcoTransit News**  
Public transport solutions from EcoTransit Sydney • www.ecotransit.org.au • May 2008

## Next stop, Dulwich Hill

Let's extend the light rail service now!

Sydney is crying out for more public transport capacity and the...  
It's a no-brainer really. If the NSW Government committed to extension of the current light rail service to Dulwich Hill, the communities of Leichhardt, Haberfield, Summer Hill, Lewisham and Dulwich Hill would get an additional six kilometres of fast, reliable, public transport that's superior to existing petrol prices and never gets stuck in traffic.

The streets of the Inner West were designed for light rail...  
Under the Car and Bus...  
Leap in demand for public transport...  
In the face of...  
...are required...  
...to...  
...to...

Get behind the campaign today! Information and campaign tools at

# Taking the tram to Dulwich Hill ...

Plus a GreenWay corridor for cyclists, walkers and wildlife

We're fighting for the extension of the light rail service from its current termination at Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill station along the now almost disused Rozelle Goods line.

At very little cost, the LR extension would significantly boost public transport capacity in the gridlocked Inner West. We also want an integrated high-quality cycleway, a pedestrian path and native habitat restoration in the corridor, in line with the vision developed by the Friends of the GreenWay.

With peak oil driving up petrol prices and world oil supplies threatened by political tensions in the Middle East and Central Asia, Sydney needs every bit of non-oil-dependent public transport infrastructure it can get and light rail extension represents an extraordinary opportunity.

The six kilometre extension from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill would add 10 light rail stops to the existing 13. A complementary extension to East Balmain would add a further two or three stops and much-needed extra public transport capacity for the peninsula.

The extension would establish a vital orbital link between the Western and Bankstown heavy rail lines with interchanges at Lewisham and Dulwich Hill stations allowing new connections across CBD-

By GAVIN GATENBY, EcoTransit Sydney

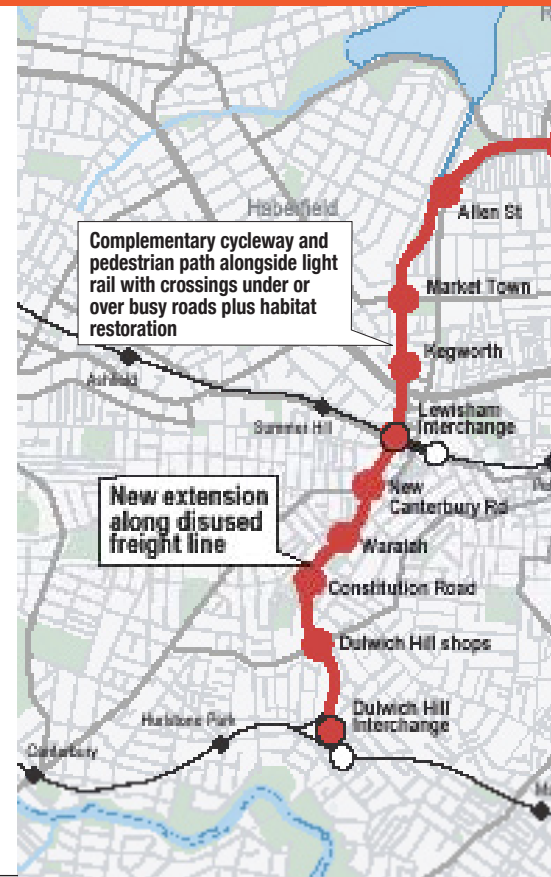
bound traffic. This will radically shorten public transport trip times and make employment centres in Sydney's west more easily accessible to inner-west residents. The line would also connect with existing bus services.

The extension would utilise the existing track and wiring of the goods line. Tram stop construction and light rail compatible signaling would be required as well as two additional light rail vehicles.

The whole project, including cycling and pedestrian facilities, can easily be completed for less than \$50 million – an absolute bargain by infrastructure standards. It would be a sustainable service that could be run on electricity generated from renewable sources, thereby

reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The provision of a safe, fast cycle route will encourage commuter cycling and free additional capacity on the public transport network.

We are seeking State and/or Federal funding for completion of the entire project (less light rail vehicle purchases). We believe the State Government should unambiguously reserve the Rozelle corridor for sustainable transport and environmental improvements, fast-track a design consultation with local government, community groups, the light rail operator, and other stakeholders, in conjunction with the GreenWay studies already underway. And it should complete the whole project by 2010.



## Thirty years of new light rail, 125 success stories

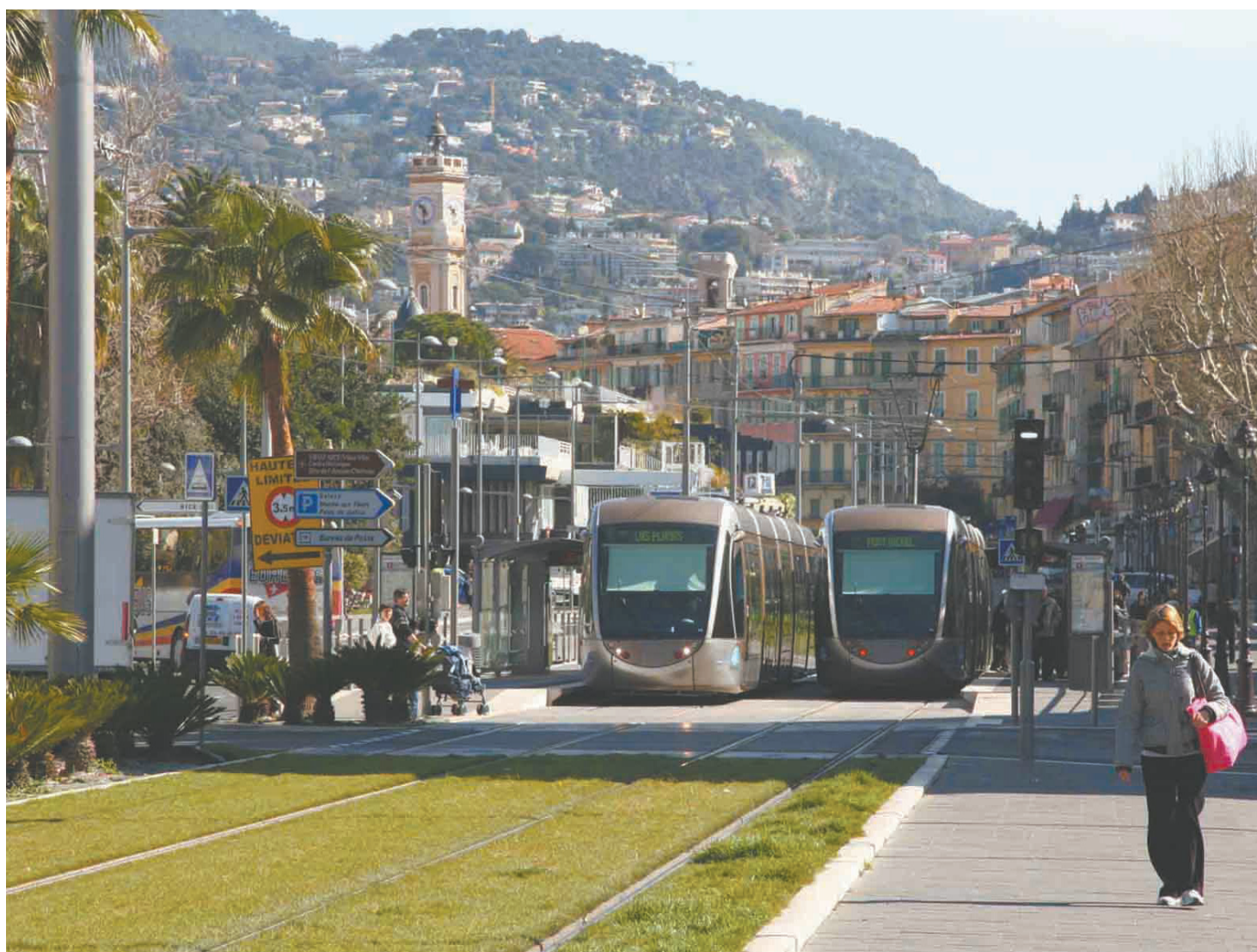
It is now 30 years since the Canadian City of Edmonton built the first new light rail system of the modern era. Edmonton, and the other, then new, light rail systems in Calgary and San Diego, were developed using advanced European tramway technology.

The success of these pioneers in car- and freeway-dominated cities in reclaiming the place of that most adaptable and economical people-mover, the electric tramway / light railway, has been confirmed repeatedly in the ongoing boom in light rail transit.

Since the 1980s the rate of construction of new light rail systems has increased. There are now 125 new systems operating globally with more being planned and built. The disruption to the urban fabric caused by heavy metro or motorway construction and light rail's ability to exploit disused railways has brought revitalization of neighbourhoods, rather than obliteration by demolition and gross overdevelopment. Unlike motorways, light rail contributes no local pollution in operation and noise levels are a fraction of those from road traffic.

In Australia, worn-out Melbourne railways to Port Melbourne and St Kilda were rebuilt as light rail in the 1980s and integrated with the large tramway system, improving service quality over the old railway. Recent tramway extensions to Bundoora, Box Hill and Vermont South are built to light rail standards. Adelaide has seen progress with its Glenelg tramway extended through the city, new easy-access light rail cars put in service, and plans announced to extend new lines into the suburbs along newly electrified suburban railways.

Overseas, car-loving France and the US have seen the biggest increase in new light rail systems with 17 now operating and six under construction in each country. Paris has embraced light rail since finding metro construction costs were no longer affordable, London has built an extensive new system centred on Croydon, and grid-



A modern light rail system in Nice, one of 17 systems now operating in France.

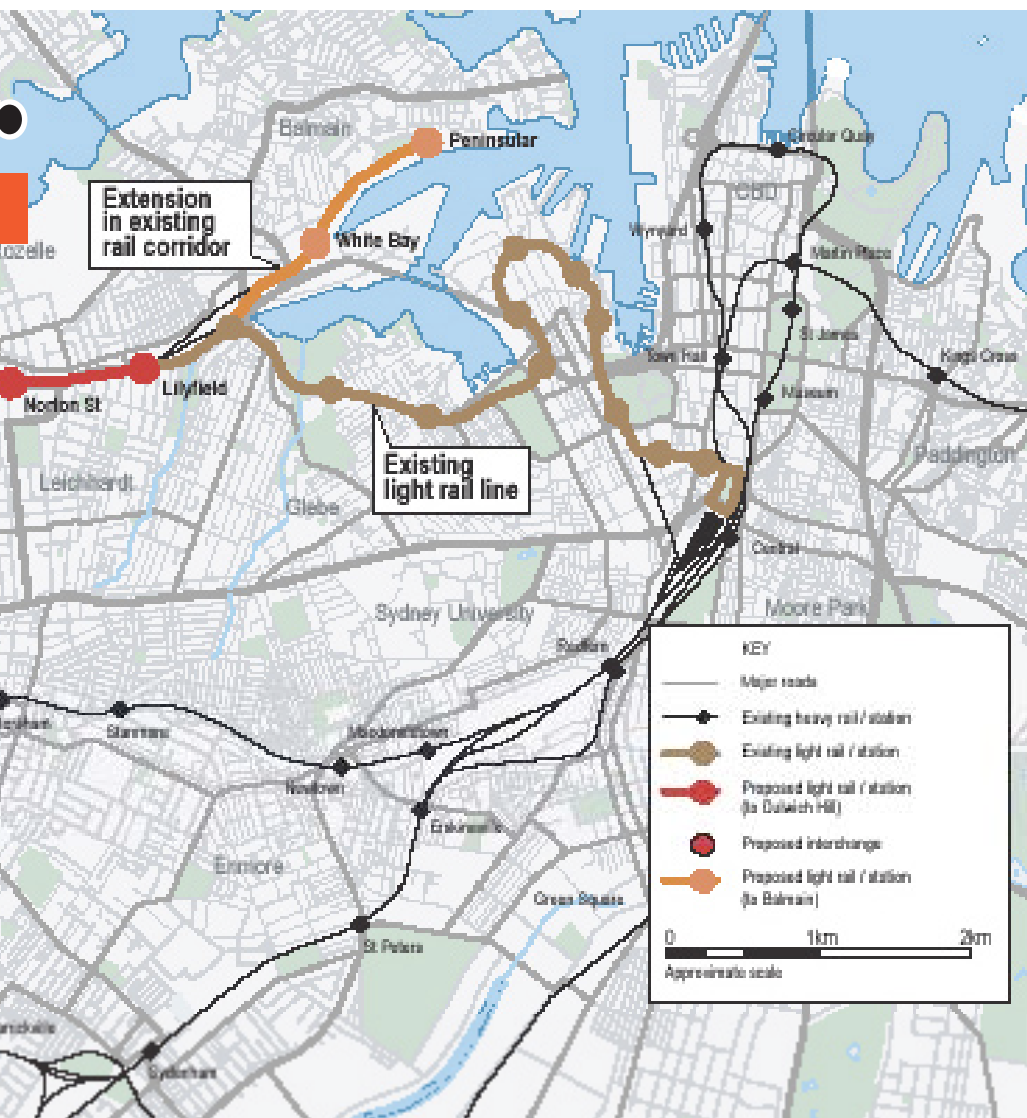
locked cities from Los Angeles to Istanbul have adopted light rail as an affordable and sustainable solution to road congestion. New road building overseas has virtually ceased and cities such as San Francisco have demolished long stretches of urban freeway at the same time expanding their light rail networks.

After the Second World War many cities threw away their public transport assets in favour of encouraging profligate use of motor vehicles. This led to urban sprawl,

pollution, traffic congestion, road death toll growth and vast waste from old tyres, and discarded cars. That experiment has clearly failed, and the time has come to provide the clean sustainable alternative of modern electric light rail before more good money is thrown after bad on failed, old, destructive blights like inner-city tollroads.

The cities that learned the lesson have embraced the solution – move people, not cars. Those that refuse to learn will choke on their mistake at great cost to all.

Thanks to Friends of the GreenWay, David Quinlan, Sandra Langtree, Greg and Pauline Valentine, Bruce Ashley, Roy Howarth, John Bignucolo, Davo the Map Man, Dr Garry Glazebrook, Dr Michelle Zeibots, Blue Collar Bohemian, Gabriel Haythornthwaite, Gavin Gatenby, Lee Hoffmann, Kate Kennedy, The Bower, The Curry Tree, Central Sydney Osteopathy, Leichhardt, Marrickville and Ashfield Councils, Wollie Creek Preservation Society, Ciao! magazine, Rozelle and Addison Road Markets, and a host of others for their support.



# The long road to integrated ticketing

When EcoTransit Sydney proposed the extension to Leichhardt Councillors, they immediately saw the benefits of both the line and the opportunity to start a fire under the simmering pot of integrated ticketing in Sydney.

Independent Councillor Maire Sheehan insisted that Leichhardt Council's motion to support the light rail extension should also include a request for State Government to extend concession tickets to light rail passengers. She was supported by ALP Councillor Robert Webb.

When a similar motion was put to Ashfield Councillors a week later, they also endorsed the view that concession tickets should be standardised across the system.

This issue was raised in the meeting with John Watkins on August 14. At that meeting, Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Transport, Joanna Quilty dismissed the community's request and said nothing would be done because the contract with Metro Light Rail did not allow for this.

In earlier contact with Metro Light Rail a spokesperson for Metro Light Rail indicated that they would be very happy to receive the same treatment as all other private operators in Sydney.

The current light rail service provides access for over 3.5 million passenger trips each year. With the extension to Lewisham this is expected to increase by well over a million. A further extension to Dulwich Hill could see passenger journeys increase by a further million trips.

When discussing the issue of ticketing with officers from the Ministry of

Transport it's been interesting to see that they think about this issue in terms of what it means for operators rather than passengers. They debate the issue in terms of whether or not they should give benefits to the light rail operator and miss the point that public transport service provision, irrespective of the mode, is about service to passengers.

The light rail services are the only public transport services where standard concession tickets do not apply.

Other justifications for refusing to treat inner western commuters with the same respect that is offered to everyone else in Sydney, include the claim that the light rail is "just for tourists". But the reality is that just over half of the trips taken on the service are for work or business and sixty percent of these commutes are made by people who live within a kilometre of the route.

To their credit, Metro Light Rail does understand customer service standards and has offered commuters concession fares. However, while their MetroCard and Metro GoldCard represent substantial savings for regular users, other commuters must purchase these tickets in addition to their regular tickets for the rest of the public transport system.

EcoTransit has not given up on this issue and will raise it again at their next meeting with the Minister. In the meantime, local residents are being asked to write to the Minister and their local members to fix this inequity.

# A FROGS freeway

Coming soon to a rail corridor near you?

In their Sydney Integrated Transport Strategy (SITS) the so-called "10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney" (FROGS) set out plans for a new freeway from Balgowlah to Bexley North via Mosman, North Sydney, East Balmain, Rozelle, Leichhardt and Dulwich Hill. A map published in SITS 2, makes it clear that this monstrous project would utilise the Rozelle goods line. At Dulwich Hill it would interchange with another proposed freeway along the north bank of Cooks River from Burwood to Mascot Airport.

EcoTransit Sydney pointed this policy out to all local and state government councillors and members.

In response, Leichhardt Council recently voted to withdraw its membership and asked FROGS to explain their position on the M4 East and light rail extension.

FROGS are now claiming their Transport Strategy was something put together by Chris Stapleton and that it isn't endorsed by FROGS.

Now that someone is scrutinising their material, they also claim they don't support the Lemna Government's M4East proposal – an underground freeway system costing in excess of \$10b. But they do claim that they support the light rail extension to Dulwich Hill because that is listed on the back of their Transport Strategy. However, they also list another freeway – the F6 – that would take out hundreds of homes on the same page. So does that mean they support that? Confused? Seems to us like a whole lot of slimy talk from the FROGS.

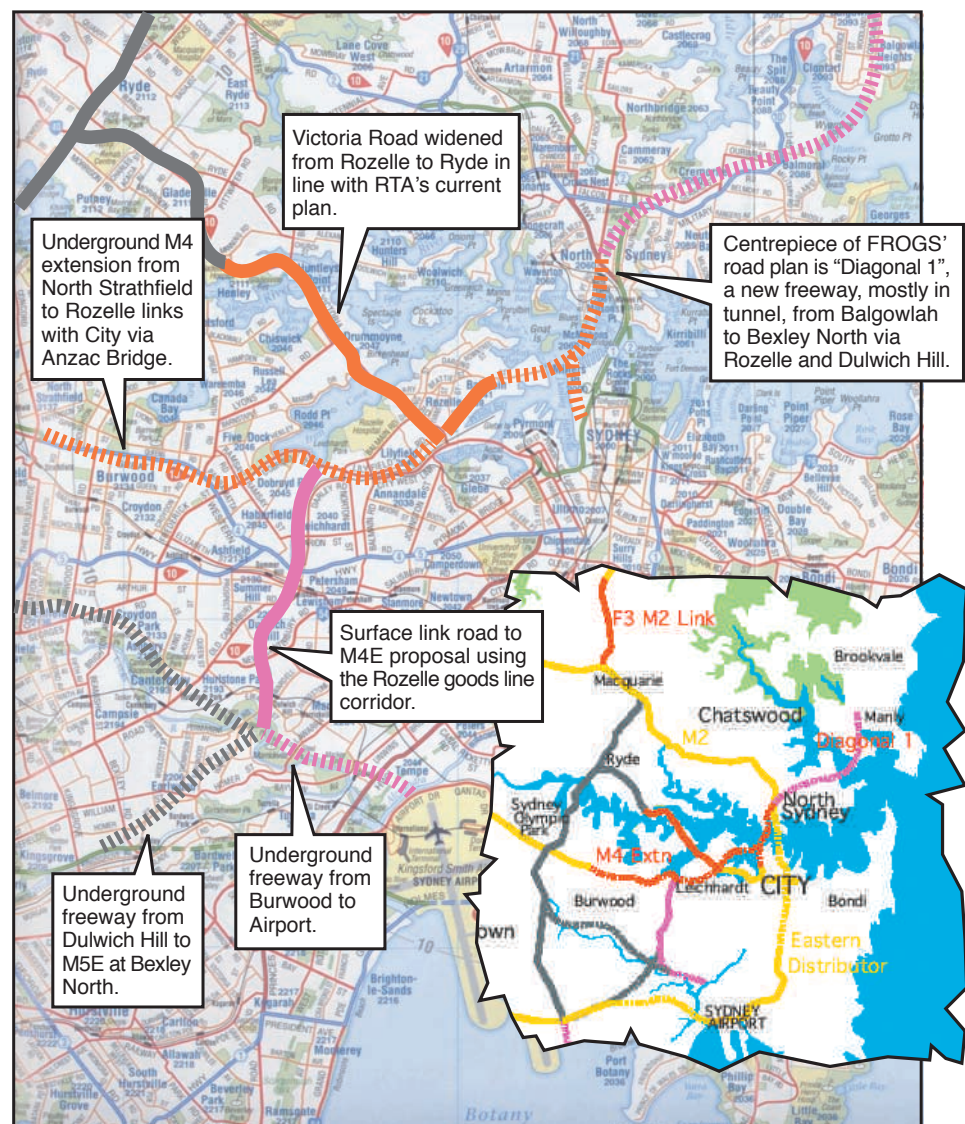
So who or what is FROGS? The group was originally spawned by Sydney University's Warren Centre for Advanced Engineering, an engineering think-tank notorious for its one-eyed advocacy of motorways and buses as the solution for Sydney's transport woes. It's key spokesperson has been Ken Dobinson, a retired senior RTA officer with



Targeted for a FROGS freeway: the Rozelle goods line passing through Dulwich Hill.

a long career of freeway-building behind him.

FROGS' members include big, powerful and very influential companies like Macquarie Infrastructure Group, Transurban, Boral, Caltex Australia, John Holland Group and Leighton Contractors.



To clarify FROGS ambitious road plans (inset, source: SITS 2) we've transposed their network of proposed freeways onto a larger map of Sydney. Solid lines indicate surface roads and broken lines roads in tunnel. The Rozelle goods line is shown as a surface road – a key link in "Diagonal 1", a freeway from Balgowlah to the M5E at Bexley North. The map also shows an M4 extension to the City via Anzac Bridge and a widened Victoria Road.

# Campaign Diary: fighting for a better transport future

**May 19** Launch of the light rail campaign with 17,000 newsletters delivered on the light rail and cycleway-proposal. Letters sent to all members of NSW State and Federal Parliaments and local councils.

**May 21** Addressed Leichhardt Precinct meeting.

**May 27** Leichhardt Council passed unanimous motion of support for the light rail extension and GreenWay. Council also decided to add a request to the state government to integrate Metro Light Rail into the system of fare concessions applying to private bus operators, and to withdraw Council's support for the

10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney (aka FROGS).

**June 10** Ashfield Council passed unanimous motion of support for the light rail extension and GreenWay. They too supported a request to the state government to integrate light rail into the fare concession system and to withdraw their support for the FROGS group.

**June 13** Deputation to Linda Burney, MP (Canterbury).

**June 17** Detailed presentation by EcoTransit and Friends of the GreenWay to Leichhardt Council (councilors and council officers responsible for

planning, infrastructure and traffic).

**June 23** Deputation to Carmel Tebbutt, MP (Marrickville).

**July 25** Deputation to Verity Firth, MP (Balmain).

**July 27** Stall at Addison Road Markets to collect letters of support.

**August 3** Stall at Rozelle Markets.

**August 5** Stall at Graydler Climate Change Forum.

**August 5** Marrickville Council's Development & Environmental Services Committee recommends

council support Leichhardt Council's initiatives and write to various stakeholders to build further support for the extension and the GreenWay corridor proposals.

**August 14** Deputation to John Watkins MP, Minister for Transport, delivers letters to the premier from over 3000 community supporters of light rail extension and the GreenWay.

**August 29** Meeting with City of Sydney transport officers to discuss light rail in the CBD and inner west network connectivity.

## Do your bit for the light rail campaign

### First ...

Sign this and post to:  
EcoTransit Sydney  
PO Box 630  
Milsons Point NSW 1565  
We'll deliver it to the Premier!

### And then ... you can do more!

Join our electronic campaign and send an e-card to politicians. Follow the links at:

[www.ecotransit.org.au](http://www.ecotransit.org.au)

Politicians notice **personal letters**, so your reasons for supporting the light rail extension, expressed in your own words, will make a difference. **To assist our campaign, please email a copy of your letter to us at:**

[lightrail@ecotransit.org.au](mailto:lightrail@ecotransit.org.au)

### Who to write to:

The Premier  
The Hon. Morris Iemma, MP  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Or email:

[thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au](mailto:thepremier@www.nsw.gov.au)

### and also...

The Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP  
Minister for Infrastructure & Transport  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Or email:

[A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au)

### Volunteer to help the light rail campaign

Street stalls and letterboxing are an integral part of any good community campaign. EcoTransit needs your help to keep the community informed of events as the campaign gains momentum.

### Become a member of EcoTransit Sydney

Becoming a member of EcoTransit Sydney enables you to meet like-minded community members and contribute ideas to our campaigns. Simply join online at

[www.ecotransit.org.au](http://www.ecotransit.org.au)

**Don't delay, do it today.  
And pass this on to a friend  
or neighbour!**

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For MJ.

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### Sustainable transport for Sydney

The Premier  
The Hon. Morris Iemma, MP  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Premier,

#### Light rail extension to Dulwich Hill

I am writing to urge you to extend the existing light rail service along the disused freight rail line from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill, and to provide complementary bicycle infrastructure along the GreenWay Corridor. This will:

- Provide, at very little cost, additional capacity to a public transport network currently struggling to meet rapidly growing demand in the face of rising petrol prices.
- Offer a sustainable transport service that can be run on electricity generated from renewable sources, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to dangerous climate change.
- Create a crucial cross-city service through the Inner West linking Leichhardt, Haberfield, Summer Hill, Lewisham and Dulwich Hill with the CBD and providing feeder services to the CityRail network at Lewisham and Dulwich Hill.
- Provide a safe and accessible bike corridor facilitating easy access to light rail stops and linking Cooks River with Iron Cove and the CBD.
- Make more efficient use of existing, currently under-utilised, light rail infrastructure and vehicles.
- Enhance the amenity of inner city heritage suburbs without destruction or resumption of property or inconvenience to local residents.

I believe that extension of the light rail service to Dulwich Hill will provide a crucial link in the public transport network for Sydney's populous Inner West. What possible arguments could there be against such a low cost, high value, project?

Please write back to tell me that you will instruct the Departments of Transport and Planning to proceed with this extension of the light rail service immediately.

Yours sincerely,

.....  
SIGNATURE

.....  
NAME

.....  
ADDRESS

.....  
DATE

Copy to: The Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP, Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Post to: EcoTransit, PO Box 630, Milsons Point NSW 1565 and we'll deliver it to the Premier. Please make copies for friends and neighbours to send!

