

**Major issue: M2 Widening  
Pennant Hills Road to Epping Tunnel**

**February 2008**

**Interested parties:**

Residents whose homes are affected by noise, air pollution and loss of amenity from the M2 Tollroad – operated by Transurban. Commuters who use the M2

**Area affected:**

Residents along and near to M2 Tollroad have lost notable amenity over recent years as traffic volumes have risen, and the Sydney Orbital ring road, of which the M2 is a northern part, has been completed. Truck traffic volumes, including extended “B-Double” articulated transport rig use have increased at very early morning times. The Trust understands that a concession rate may apply for some toll road users at these times.

**Background:**

This road is a northern part of the Sydney Orbital ring road that links with Macquarie Park area, the Lane Cove tunnel to the Harbour Bridge/ Tunnel, Sydney CBD, Sydney Airport, South Western Sydney, freeway links to Canberra Melbourne, Greater Western Sydney, Penrith and Blue Mountains and North Western Sydney. The Orbital is a mix of tolled and free roads to a good standard. The tolled sectors are operated privately.

**Key points:**

- Road freight noise is increasing and intermittent through the night during non-holiday periods.
- Peak-times’ use is reaching maximum capacity of the current 2 lane configuration for both eastbound and west bound carriageways; this tollroad east of the Epping Tunnel has had the bicycle/breakdown lane reconfigured to a third lane.
- Transurban is looking to reconfigure to 3 lanes the Epping Tunnel to Pennant Hills Road section of the M2 toll road, that dissects Beecroft.
- Local air pollution and noise is likely to increase with that potential increase capacity of 50% in this section of toll road, especially from diesel particulate matter. This type of pollution is the subject of the *Groundstrike* DVD, for purchase from the Trust.
- Increased peak traffic numbers plus the future absence of adequate breakdown space, means one vehicle breakdown can create extensive multilane delays, similar to that often experienced on Pennant Hills Road near the rail bridge.

**Trust response:**

- The Trust does not support the 50% increase in traffic capacity likely by the removal of bicycle/breakdown lanes on the above section of M2 toll road.
- The Trust would also oppose any widening of the existing carriageway because of the high impact on local amenity.
- The Trust believes more integrated strategic planning is necessary to accommodate passenger transport from the north west of Sydney; this would include fast tracking of the North West Rail Link (NWRL) and completion of the Epping to Parramatta rail link
- The Trust does not support bus use at the expense of major rail links like the NWRL, as it is estimated that one passenger train of 8 carriages can keep up to 2000 vehicles (their noise, cost, and pollution) off the roads. By comparison, a bus may carry some 50 persons, yet still be gridlocked.
- The Trust looks to the NSW Government to expand the rail network; this will become more critical as oil costs rise.
- The Trust also looks to NSW Government for better regional planning for NSW, recognising the limits to economically efficient and sustainable growth within the Sydney Basin, and more effectively encouraging lower-cost development, on a more sustainable basis throughout NSW.

**BCCT Contact:** Richard Talbot