

2011 State Election Campaign

Blue Mountains Electorate Transport Platform

The Blue Mountains is dependent upon three transport corridors, the western rail line, the Great Western Highway and the Bells Line of Road.

These three corridors are the only transport links between Sydney and NSW Central West

- **The Great Western Highway dissects 23 towns and villages between Penrith and Lithgow.** There are major traffic impediments including 10 school zones, 25 sets of traffic lights and 39 different speed zones. More traffic lights are planned.
- **More than 58% of Blue Mountains residents who work commute to Sydney¹**
- **Blue Mountains is a major tourism destination with more than 2.1 million domestic daytrip visitors** during the year ended 30 September 2010²
- **Blue Mountains is a LGA within a National Park and World Heritage Area**
- More than 1,100 semi trailers and 19 metre B-double trucks cross the Blue Mountains via the Great Western Highway each day³. According to the NRMA the Blue Mountains is facing a “*truck tsunami*” with recent decisions to shift thousands of tons of freight from rail to road.

¹ 2008 Better Future Forum, Blue Mountains City Council

² Source – Tourism NSW

³ Cardno 2008

Transport infrastructure across the Blue Mountains – where we are today:

Great Western Highway ('GWH')

The GWH will be upgraded to 4 lanes between Woodford and Katoomba by 2018.

B-doubles longer than 19 metres are currently restricted through the Blue Mountains.

Proposed upgrading of the GWH west of Katoomba:

- Mt Victoria to Lithgow upgrade estimated to cost \$1.7 to \$1.9 billion to upgrade approximately 20 kilometres of highway and will be built to a standard to accommodate 25/26 metre B-doubles⁴
- NSW Government committed in December 2008 not to widen the GWH through the township of Blackheath⁵

"... the Great Western Highway link between Sydney and the Blue Mountains unsuitable for B-double upgrading ..." NRMA Open Road⁶.

Bells Line of Road ('BLOR')

Federal and state governments announce commencement of 'Bells Line of Road Strategic Corridor Plan'⁷.

Public submissions for the BLOR close 31 January 2011.

"Bells Line Road, for example, needs wider lanes, improved overtaking, and better payment conditions." NRMA Open Road⁸.

⁴ See www.rta.nsw.gov.au

⁵ Media release Michael Daley NSW Minister for Roads dated 19 December 2008

⁶ NRMA Open Road January/February 2011

⁷ Joint media release dated 9 November 2009 Anthony Albanese, Federal Minister for Infrastructure and David Campbell, NSW Minister for Transport

Transport infrastructure across the Blue Mountains – where we are today:

Rail Network – no expansion in Western Sydney, the Blue Mountains and NSW Central West rail network since the 1980's despite massive population and economic growth

The Central West Transport Needs Study noted “*major constraint for increased freight traffic from the Central West is the significant growth in passenger trains within ... Sydney which reduces the availability of freight paths from the region*”.

“Without a second rail link across the harbour, the CityRail system will face paralysis by 2022. That is the finding of experts who have analysed the Keneally government's recent transport blueprint.”
Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 2010.

Our Aim:

- a) Investment by State and Federal Governments for integrated transport infrastructure that:
 - i) increases freight and passenger rail capacity,
 - ii) reduces reliance on heavy road freight transport and reduces congestion on roads, and
 - iii) Constructs a safer road system.
- b) Tax and regulatory reform by State and Federal Governments to level the competitive playing field between the trucking industry and rail freight and incentivises public transport usage.

Our Transport Policy Priorities:

We set out the following transport policy initiatives for the Blue Mountains, Western Sydney and NSW Central West, which we believe should be the focus and priority of the next NSW Government.

Transport policy priorities – the Blue Mountains

Rail - Passenger

1. Maintain existing service standards:
 - 1.1. Commit to replace Blue Mountains 'V' train sets (which are due to be retired between 2012 and 2016) with a similar train of comparable standard NOT a suburban OSCAR train set.
 - 1.2. Commit to retain existing station staffing hours in the Blue Mountains.
2. Restore services to pre 1995 levels:
 - 2.1. Introduce one peak express service between Blue Mountains and Parramatta/Sydney⁹.
3. Expand services:
 - 3.1. Improve week day train services between Katoomba and Lithgow.
 - 3.2. Increase the number of carriages on some services to ease overcrowding.

⁹ The journey time of the Fish was increased by approximately 20 minutes with the introduction of the Cityril October 2005 timetable, additional stops were also added to this service

Transport policy priorities – the Blue Mountains

Rail - Passenger

- 3.3. Review with a view to increase staffing levels on stations.
- 3.4. Provide additional train services including 1.32am.

Rail - Freight

4. Reinststate the 1.2 cents per litre transport petroleum by rail subsidy¹⁰.
5. Lengthen passing loops at Lawson and Katoomba to ARTC standard length of 1,800 metres to permit longer freight trains through the Blue Mountains.
6. Install bi-directional signalling over the entire length of the line through the Blue Mountains.
7. Undertake feasibility study into possible trailer rail drive on drive off freight rail service between Marrangaroo and St Marys.
8. Undertake feasibility study into modifying the rail line between St Marys and Marrangaroo to permit double stack container trains.

Road – GWH / BLOR:

9. Commit to redirecting \$120 million of funding from the proposed River Lett Hill B-Double Bypass to safety work on the Bells Line of Road.

¹⁰ Scrapped in NSW 2008-09 Mini Budget, see Page A-10, NSW 2008-09 Mini Budget

Transport policy priorities – the Blue Mountains

Road – GWH / BLOR:

10. Maintain restriction on B-double trucks longer than 19m through the Blue Mountains.
11. Abandon the proposed \$2 billion B-double Mt Victoria to Lithgow highway upgrade.
12. Address highway safety at Springwood / Valley Heights including:
 - 12.1. Construction of a link road between Peninsula Road and Hawkesbury Road, and
 - 12.2. Installation of traffic lights at the intersection of the GWH and Peninsula Road, to

enable westbound motorists to access Hawkesbury Road without diverting through Springwood along Macquarie Road.
13. Install Safety Cameras at key intersections along the GWH to monitor speed and red light offences (to reducing speeding and running of red lights by trucks and cars).
14. Seek state government funding for the construction and improvement of cycle ways between villages.

Transport policy priorities – Western Sydney:

Expand heavy rail to increase passenger and freight capacity

15. Expand capacity on the Western Sydney line to allow for additional services including express services, enhance rail freight capacity and provide a direct rail link to Macquarie and the Lower North Shore:
 - 15.1. Construct the Parramatta to Epping rail link
 - 15.2. Quadruplicate the rail line between St Marys and Penrith¹¹
 - 15.3. Support the proposed ATRC grade separated junction at Strathfield¹²
 - 15.4. Construct a Sydney West freight rail line between Rooty Hill and Leightonfield¹³
 - 15.5. Implement planning for a second harbor rail crossing¹⁴

Reform Public Transport Ticketing

16. Reform public transport ticketing:
 - 16.1. Implement integrated ticketing across the NSW public transport network.
 - 16.2. Introduce tourist 3 day pass for weekends.

¹¹ Appendix A, NSW State Plan, New South Wales State Government, November 2006

¹² Forms part of the Northern Sydney Rail Freight Corridor plan, page 21 “Submission by the NSW Government to Infrastructure Australia”, August 2010

¹³ Page 69, Section 5, “Long-term Strategic Plan for Rail”, Office of the Coordinator General of Rail, 13 June 2001

¹⁴ Recommendation LT10, Page 23, Independent Public Inquiry, Long-Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney (2010) *Independent Public Inquiry into a Long-Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney: Final Report—Themes and Recommendations*, 26 May 2010, submitted to and published by *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

Transport policy priorities – NSW Central West:

Expand rail as an alternative for the transport of freight & people

17. Support construction of the inland rail line between Melbourne and Brisbane.
18. Seek funding for the Central West Transport Needs Study rail recommendations¹⁵.
19. Reinstate morning passenger service from NSW Central West to Sydney and evening return service.
20. Support construction of the Maldon to Dombarton rail link¹⁶.
21. Develop a long term sustainable road/rail transport plan between the Eastern ports and NSW Central West.

¹⁵ Page 44, Central West Transport Needs Study Summary Report, May 2009

¹⁶ Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line Pre-Feasibility Study, 7 July 2009

Transport infrastructure requires national leadership

NSW Government should lobby the Commonwealth to address the tax, public investment and regulatory imbalance between road and rail:

22. Address the tax, public investment and regulatory imbalance between road and rail freight¹⁷. The NSW Government can lead in this area by offering to 'hand over' and / or work through Council of Australian Governments ('COAG') to:
 - 22.1. Reform and streamline existing legislation and regulations to 'cut red tape' for rail operators and users.
 - 22.2. Reform the tax system to encourage investment in rail freight and public transport.
 - 22.3. Make public transport fares FBT exempt to provide for additional funding for State public transport services.
 - 22.4. Make rail an infrastructure investment priority.

¹⁷ Refer to various papers by Dr Ian Manning and Professor Philip Laird which note the tax, public investment and regulatory imbalance between road and rail