



Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan as part of the North West Rail Link

Prepared for Transport NSW

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Prepared by the Physical Disability Council of NSW

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Who is the Physical Disability Council of NSW?

1. The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is the peak body representing people with physical disabilities across New South Wales. This includes people with a range of physical disability issues, from young children and their representatives to aged people, who are from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances and live in metropolitan, rural and regional areas of NSW.
2. The objectives of PDCN are:
 - To educate, inform and assist people with physical disabilities in NSW about the range of services, structure and programs available that enable their full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship
 - To develop the capacity of people with physical disability in NSW to identify their own goals, and the confidence to develop a pathway to achieving their goals (ie self advocate).
 - To educate and inform stakeholders (ie about the needs of people with a physical disability) so they are able to achieve and maintain full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship.
3. The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) appreciates the opportunity to consider, and make comment on the Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan for the North West Rail Link.

The following feedback has been prepared as part of the Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan for the construction of the North West Rail Link (NWRL). The Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan has been prepared by NSW Transport to facilitate bus transport between Epping and Chatswood from mid-2018 until early 2019 when rail services will be unavailable between Epping and Chatswood. Over the duration of the Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan people with physical disability will continue to be reliant on lifts at all train stations located on the T1 Northern Line with the T1 North Shore Line with the exception of lifts at Macquarie University, Macquarie Park and North Ryde train stations, but will still need provision of footpath and bus infrastructure at all train stations to safely board buses.

Feedback provided in this submission does not address access requirements at the new train stations included in the NWRL, but addresses issues arising from the temporary transport plans while rail services are unavailable between Epping and Chatswood.

New train stations within the NWRL are planned at the following locations:

- Cherrybrook
- Castle Hill
- Showground
- Northwest
- Bella Vista
- Kellyville
- Rouse Hill
- Cudgegong Road

Whilst construction of the NWRL trains will not be operational between Epping and Chatswood, and as a consequence buses will replace rail services at the following three stations, providing transport to approximately 13 800 passengers per day: ¹

- Macquarie University Train Station
- Macquarie Park Train Station
- North Ryde Train Station

It is assumed that bus services may be provided by public and private bus operators, and community transport. Whilst construction of the NWRL disruptions to road transport and train services are likely in the following local government areas:

- City of Parramatta
- Hornsby Shire
- Ku-ring-gai Council
- Lane Cove Council
- North Sydney Council
- Ryde Council
- Willoughby City Council

The project overview for the Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan identifies the following five bus routes to replace rail services where trains will be unavailable:

Bus route 1- This bus route will provide a pick up and drop off for each of the stations located along the T1 Northern Line with the T1 North Shore Line, including Chatswood, North Ryde, Macquarie Park, Macquarie University and Epping train stations. The overview identifies this bus route as being the most accessible, but having a long transit time due to the distance travelled. In peak hour this bus route will provide between 6 buses per hour, and 8 buses per hour in non- peak hour.

Bus route 2- Bus route 2 is only available during morning and evening peak hour providing 16 buses per hour. The transit time for bus route 2 is less than bus route 1, as it bypasses Macquarie Park and Macquarie University, and only stops at Chatswood, North Ryde and Epping. As this bus route is only available in peak periods, all promotional material needs to

¹ NSW Government Bureaux of Transport Statistics - Compendium of Sydney Rail Travel Statistics, 2012

be consistent and clearly identify morning peak hour as lasting from 6am- 10am and evening peak hour lasting from 3pm- 7pm.

Bus route 3- Bus route 3 connects the existing T1 Northern Line with the T1 North Shore Line by providing passengers north of the NWRL with a pick up at Beecroft, and south of the NWRL at St. Leonards train station. This bus route travels to at each of the following three train stations where rail services will be unavailable:

- Macquarie University Train Station
- Macquarie Park Train Station
- North Ryde Train Station

This bus route attempts to reduce traffic congestion with buses not stopping at Chatswood and Epping train stations but with bus services from St Leonards and Beecroft instead. Eight buses in either direction per hour for both morning and evening peak times will be available between St Leonards and Beecroft, and between seventeen and eighteen buses per hour in non- peak hour periods traveling between St Leonards and Macquarie University.

Bus route 4- Bus route 4 links passengers south of the rail line with a pick up at Eastwood and disembarks at Macquarie University and Macquarie Park train stations. This bus connection is relatively short with twelve buses in both directions between Eastwood and Macquarie Park in morning and evening peak hour.

Bus route 5- Bus route 5 links passengers north of the rail line with a pick up at Gordon and disembarks at Macquarie Park and Macquarie University train stations. This bus connection is relatively short with six buses in both directions between Gordon and Macquarie University in morning and evening peak hour.

Discussion

Access to the following eight train stations identified in the Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan located along the T1 Northern Line with the T1 North Shore Line already provide access via lift egress:

- St Leonards
- Chatswood
- Gordon
- North Ryde
- Macquarie Park
- Macquarie University
- Epping
- Eastwood

The following table compares accessibility at the eight train stations identified above addressing accessibility to toilet, phone, parking and connectivity to other modes of public transport including buses and taxis. It clearly identifies Gordon, Epping and Eastwood as preferred train stations when addressing accessibility requirements.

	Accessible toilet	Accessible payphone	Accessible parking	Connectivity to other modes of transport
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St Leonards	√	√	x	Bus stop, taxi rank, parking station
Chatswood	√	√	x	Bus stop, taxi rank, parking station
Gordon	√	√	√	Bus stop, taxi rank, parking station
North Ryde	√	√	x	Bus stop
Macquarie Park	√	x	x	Bus stop
Macquarie University	√	√	x	Bus stop, taxi rank
Epping	√	√	√	Bus stop, taxi rank, parking station
Eastwood	√	√	√	Bus stop, taxi rank, parking station

PDCN understands that funding is being provided as part of the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor Program for improved accessibility to Cheltenham and Beecroft train stations, with more substantial improvements being provided at Cheltenham train station. Improvements to these two train stations are planned to be completed by mid- 2016 and include the following key features:

- Cheltenham Station An upgrade to the accessibility of the station to make it compliant with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1982*. The new design includes construction of a small concourse to allow space for ticketing facilities, two new lifts and stairs to provide access to the existing platforms.
- Beecroft Station Improved access at this station will include modifications to the pedestrian underpass and commuter car park.

Given that Cheltenham train station is closer than Beecroft train station to the area where rail services will be unavailable, and that by mid- 2018 when the Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan becomes operational Cheltenham train station should be accessible, PDCN does not understand why Beecroft train station has been chosen in preference to Cheltenham train station. PDCN believes that Cheltenham train station should be reconsidered as part of bus route 3 rather than Beecroft train station to facilitate passengers with physical disability to board and disembark buses. If after reviewing this bus route, Cheltenham train station is preferred as part of bus route 3 access improvements will need to be implemented including the construction of bus and taxi facilities with access to toilet and payphone facilities.

At train stations where passengers are reliant on lifts to board and disembark trains, PDCN would recommend that NSW Transport adopt a universal strategy where all passengers are informed immediately when a lift is not operational, procedures that lifts are regularly maintained and are repaired immediately when required. Stakeholders are inconvenienced when lifts at train stations are not working. This means that they need to use alternate train stations and need to pay taxi fares back to the desired location. This has resulted in people being unable to attend appointments, and having to pay costs not originally budgeted for. These inconveniences and concerns were highlighted in the 2012 review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.

The Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan does not consider the impact of being charged additional costs because they are relying on buses with transit times as in Bus route 1. This will have the greatest impact on passengers with a physical disability as they need accessible buses provided as part of Bus route 1. Due to this concern PDCN believes that the impact of these charges should be addressed prior to implementation of the Epping to Chatswood Temporary Transport Plan.

In summary the following requirements are needed when designing and constructing accessible bus stop infrastructure:

- A boarding point located on a firm surface where the gradient is consistent and evenly graded
- Sufficient unobstructed space to deploy a ramp to ensure access into the bus
- A seamless transition between the bus stop and the connecting footpath
- Clear signage indicating the location of the bus stop
- Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) to assist blind people or people with low vision to identify the presence of a bus stop and the location of the boarding point.

As a guide to facilitate the implementation of accessible bus stop infrastructure PDCN recommends the attached guide and checklist published by the Australian Human Rights Commission to assist bus operators and bodies responsible for the construction of bus stop and footpath infrastructure:

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/australian-human-rights-commission-accessible-bus-stops-guidelines#_Toc278965066

Nationally the Bus and Coach Association has prepared the following comprehensive guidelines on the Accessible Transport Standards for bus operators. This guide covers critical legislation, definitions, compliance time frames and how to achieve the compliance and techniques for communicating with people with disabilities.

http://www.busvic.asn.au/images/uploads/links/BIC_-_Accessible_Public_Transport.pdf