

BNP /M2017

The Hon. John Watkins,
Member for Ryde,
Ground Floor,
123 Blaxland Road,
RYDE NSW 2112

January 22nd, 2007

M2 Widening – Provision of Bicycle Facilities

Dear Sir,

Bike North Inc request your support to ensure that appropriate, regional route standard facilities continue to be provided for those who currently ride or plan to ride the M2 bike lane for transport, recreation and training. **Your response is needed urgently, as there are plans to remove this bike lane by February 4th, without adequate alternative facilities.**

These proposals are located within your electorate and your constituents will be adversely impacted by these proposal. We have asked the Minister for Roads to commit to the following and **we ask you to actively support our request:**

- That the M2 bicycle shoulder lane will not be removed until an alternative route to regional route standard as per the NSW RTA Bicycle Guidelines has been provided.
- That an adequate budget either from the RTA or Transurban be provided to enable the regional route standard.
- That bicycle access along the M2 alignment and along existing M2 grades will return within a specified time frame eg 3 years.
- That Bicycle New South Wales and Bike North will be full participants in the planning for any future widening of the M2 motorway and design of the associated bicycle facilities.

Bike North Inc is a Bicycle User Group affiliated with Bicycle New South Wales, which promotes cycling and works with local councils and other organisations to improve the cycling environment in Northern Sydney. Representatives from our organisation have worked with the RTA and its consultants over the last six years to try to achieve the best possible cycling friendly environment for the critical commuter link along the Gore Hill Freeway and Epping Road, North Ryde. The M2 bicycle lane shoulder has always been recognised as a vital connection to this soon to be completed cycleway.

The M2 bicycle lane shoulder has been a popular route for the past ten year for commuters, especially to the growing Macquarie Park employment precinct but also to the Lower North Shore and City. This would increase significantly with the completion of the Epping Road Cycleway, by providing separation from traffic along a route to the Lower North Shore. The recently completed M7 cycle way and other soon to be completed cycleways associated with the Windsor Road widening and North Western T-Way also vastly increase the catchment for traffic separated cycling along this critical commuter route. By providing a continuous network of cycleways such as this, and promoting it, cycling will be better able to contribute to the overall transport solution and play its role in addressing issues of traffic congestion, environment, scarce, expensive non-renewable resources, climate change and a healthy community

The long direct runs along this wide shoulder have also been very popular for athlete training, including elite athletes of Olympic standard. It's good grades; separation from traffic and connections to other regional and local bicycle routes has also made this a popular recreational cycling path.

While we understand the RTA concerns about traffic congestion on the M2 and Transurban's desire to increase profits by increasing capacity, we fail to understand how this last minute decision to retrofit three lanes over five kilometres of a two lane motorway, can possibly achieve its objective safely. Our perception is that will simply move the traffic congestion five kilometres west and create a serious safety issue with fast moving traffic, including large trucks and buses, travelling in insufficiently narrow lanes. We view motoring in these circumstances through the Beecroft Tunnel in particular as a major safety risk.

Our prime concern though is the provision of an alternative route for bicycles. We have surveyed the route published by Transurban and discussed our findings on Wednesday 17th January with the Transurban and RTA representatives. It is clear that the **proposed route does not pass the RTA Safety Audit and does not meet the RTA NSW Bicycle Guidelines standards.** The route is very hilly and, indirect and includes sections along busy roads with no provision for cyclists. The **budget is also insufficient**, with Transurban claiming there are only enough funds allocated to provide route signage and create an access through the sound walls at Beecroft. The **project** has been so **poorly conceived** that in the time between advice being received of the proposed alternative route on Friday 12th January and our meeting, two major changes to the alternative route have been put forward, seemingly with as little thought as the original proposal.

Bike North, in their discussions with Transurban and the RTA has put forward six alternative options, including conversion of the remaining eastbound bicycle lane into two-way bicycle traffic. We still await their response regarding these options.

Bike North has been inundated with support from our members, many other cyclists and non-cycling supporters in the community and throughout Sydney on this issue. We look forward to your support for on-going bicycle regional route standard facilities along this corridor.

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Edwards
President,
Bike North