

President,
NRMA Motoring Service,
PO Box 1026
Strathfield NSW 2135
BNP /M2018

January 28th, 2007

Proposed M2 Widening

Dear Mr Evans,

I am writing to ask for your support in requesting that the proposed widening of the M2 be delayed in order it be done properly so that the breakdown / cycle lane is retained and the safety of motorists and cyclists alike is assured. The retention of this lane is vital for the safety of all motorway users, including NRMA members and road service patrol crews.

As you may be aware, on January 12 this year, Transurban, the owner of the M2 motorway in Sydney, announced proposal to widen the motorway from the current two lanes to three, westbound for a distance of 7km between Dehli Rd, North Ryde and Beecroft Rd at Epping. Space for the third lane is to be made by removing the breakdown / cycle lane, and narrowing the existing traffic lanes.

The removal of the breakdown lane for such a long section of road raises serious safety concerns in the event of a vehicle breakdown or traffic accident. In particular, the lane widths in the tunnel at Beecroft Rd will be 3.0 and 3.1 metres only, with no roadside area on the left. There is a high probability of the crash when trucks pass two or three abreast, especially in the tunnel, as there will be no margin for error.

The lack of a breakdown lane and road shoulder will endanger the lives of NRMA members needing to exit, and NRMA service patrol personnel attending to, a member's stricken vehicle, with no safe refuge from the traffic passing at 80 km/hr (or 70 km/hr in the tunnel). If a large vehicle, such as a truck or bus, breaks down, there will be absolutely no space on either side of it. In addition, accessing the site of an incident will be difficult and slow.

The tunnel will be particularly dangerous, since as well as being the narrowest section of the motorway, a stationary vehicle will not be clearly visible to traffic entering the tunnel. The road curves as it approaches the tunnel, creating less than ideal sight lines. During the day, visibility into the tunnel is limited due to the contrast between the bright sunlight outside and the dim lighting inside. At times other than the afternoon peak, traffic volumes are fairly low, thus motorists will be unlikely to observe the 70 km/hr speed limit approaching the tunnel. This, combined with the curve and light conditions, will create a hazardous situation for the occupants and attendants to any stopped vehicle.

In addition to the loss of the breakdown lane, the cycle lane will disappear. The M2 cycle lane is part of one of Sydney's most important major regional cycling routes, used by hundreds of commuting cyclists each week. The alternate cycle route offered by Transurban is completely unworkable and dangerous for cyclists. As most cyclists are also car drivers, and most likely

NRMA members, the NRMA's policies and activities should encompass the needs of these members as cyclists, not just as motorists.

Transurban and the RTA have planned the M2 widening and proposed cycle route without consulting with the local councils (Ryde and Hornsby), Macquarie University (through which the cycle route was originally planned), emergency services or the cycling community until AFTER the announcement on January 12. The proposed date for the changed road conditions to take effect is 4 February.

Has Transurban informed the NRMA, or consulted it regarding the impact on the provision of road service and the safety of road service patrol staff and NRMA members requiring assistance?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Edwards'.

Graeme Edwards
President,
Bike North

Cc Chief Executive Officer