

The Lane Cove Valley Freeway STEP Position Paper

This paper, written by John Burke, was prepared at the instigation of the STEP Committee and was adopted by it in August 1987.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND PRINTING

There have been many developments relating to freeways within Sydney in the two and a half years since this position paper was written. It is therefore STEP's intention to re-write the paper after the release of the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into the Castlereagh Tollway.

As an interim measure, however, it is appropriate to summarise the developments which have occurred while noting that nothing in the original paper has been shown to be deficient. On the contrary, we feel that the paper has played a key role in acquainting the community with the issues behind the urban freeway controversy.

1. The Politicians

In September 1987 Nick Greiner said "...we have no intention of building the Lane Cove Valley Freeway", Ray Aston the then Chairman of the Liberal Party Roads Policy Committee said in Feb 1988 "... I ... confirm that the Lane Cove Valley lands set aside for the F3 will not be used for roads.", Matt Singleton when Assistant Minister for Transport said on 17-10-88 "You may be assured that..... the Government does not intend to construct a freeway along the existing corridor." At this point we of course assumed that the fight was won so far as the Coalition Government was concerned and expected the release of the corridor. This was not to be.

Now, in 1990, the Opposition Transport spokesman has said that a Labor Government would not build the Lane Cove Valley Freeway.

2. The North West Sector Road Needs Study

In late 1988 the R.T.A brought out a document describing nine options for solutions to road problems in the area. Two of these, including that recommended by STEP in section 12 of this paper, happened to be in the Minister's electorate and were scrapped after an outcry from his constituents.

The Study was a biased one in that it made statements based on false assumptions such as that additional roads always mean less congestion. It also evoked abundant response from residents affected by one or other of the options who wanted any new road in someone else's backyard. Despite this a majority of the 1857 written responses were against a freeway through the Valley. Of the eight petitions raised the largest, with 1600 signatures, was organised by STEP.

The RTA announced in April 1989 that the B3 option was preferred. This option follows the existing reservation from Pearce's Corner through Wahroonga to South Turramurra and then turns south through beautiful bushland and crosses the river at Browns Waterhole. This proposal of course affected many residents who had carefully bought their houses a long way from any freeway corridor and brought a whole new dimension to the matter. These residents organised under the PAVE banner and began looking at the issues. Once they realised that, apart from the social and financial injustice in having a brand new corridor imposed on them, the proposed freeway would increase congestion rather than relieve it and would generally provide no transport or social benefits they became very effective campaigners against any freeway through the Valley.

In announcing the adoption of the B3 as the preferred option, however, the Government confirmed that the original corridor east of Kissing Point Road would be released as would a reservation along Kissing Point Road north of the Comenarra Parkway. In an attempt to discharge its undertaking not to build the freeway the Government stated that it would not be built in the lifetime of the current government.

3. The Castlereagh Freeway

In the STEP position paper we did not canvass the issue of whether the Castlereagh Freeway (or Tollway as is proposed) was a good idea or not and made the assumption that it would be built. Upon release of an E.I.S. for the Castlereagh in May 1989, however, the community began to question the value of this road. While some of the argument concerned its effect on bushland the leading issues have been noise, cost effectiveness and effectiveness from a transport planning point of view. The competence and bias of the E.I.S. has been questioned. An advisory group was set up by the RTA on which STEP was represented. In September 1989 a Commission of Enquiry under Commissioner John Woodward was set up and is now nearing completion. STEP made submissions to both the E.I.S. and the Enquiry. The Commissioner's report is expected in mid 1990. Because so many of the issues put before the Commission are of direct relevance to the Lane Cove Valley Freeway we wait this report with great interest.

4. The Noise Experience - Berowra to Wahroonga Section of the F3

The Newcastle freeway section from Berowra to Pearce's Corner opened in early 1989. The residents near this road had generally supported its construction and had relied upon undertakings from the R.T.A. that noise would be satisfactorily controlled. In the event, the noise was so bad that residents formed one of the most effective community groups ever seen on the North Shore and were able to have ameliorative measures taken. They are stuck with the road and a lot of noise, however, because they did not participate in the decision making process early enough. Had they done so there is no doubt that a better solution would have been found. For instance the freeway could have been put underground in areas where the most noise is being produced.

The Lane Cove Valley Freeway is seen by the R.T.A. as a truck route and STEP aims to ensure that residential areas along its way, such as the whole of the Campbell Drive valley in Wahroonga, will not also resonate with airport level noise in the early morning hours before its residents realise that their part of Wahroonga or Turramurra has also been destroyed as a place of quiet amenity.

5. The Coalition Against Lane Cove Valley Freeways

In March 1989 twelve community groups resolved to set up a Coalition to oppose any Lane Cove Valley freeway. The Coalition under the presidency of Elaine Malicki has been most effective and is fully supported by STEP. It has commissioned a social impact study which has provided valuable raw data on the attitude of the people affected by the freeway proposal and has produced a policy statement which summarises its goals. Copies of this are freely available from STEP.

Since the production of our position Paper there has been an explosion in the number of people interested in the urban freeway issue and in the amount of information available to them. STEP will continue to play a role in pursuing the issue until there is no longer a threat to the bushland of the Lane Cove Valley

March 1990

INTRODUCTION.

The days have gone when the community saw as its obligation the unquestioning acceptance of every decision made on its behalf by politicians and public servants. There is now an educated electorate which is quite capable of correctly disputing the wisdom of decisions made on its behalf. The proposed construction of the Lane Cove Valley Freeway is an issue where much is at stake, not only in respect of the freeway but because the community now has an opportunity to make a significant stand on the issue of the continuing destruction of urban bushland.

The idea that urban bushland is simply a convenient reservoir of vacant land which is available to be drawn upon for a wide range of community needs is still widely held by sections of the community. This is especially true of those planners and politicians who see the alienation of bushland as the easy way out of planning problems. Other planning decisions such as those currently being implemented to achieve urban consolidation unwittingly put more pressures upon open space. The end result of succumbing to such an approach would, of course, be the inevitable loss of all our urban natural bushland. We must not lose sight of what is at stake.

In the name of efficiency and social adaptation we are poised to destroy the very things which make Sydney one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

1. THE FREEWAY PROPOSAL

In 1929 Ku-ring gai Municipal Council proposed a scenic road linking De Burg's Bridge and Wahroonga. This road has been thought of as a freeway since the mid 1940's with the function of;

- * Forming part of the Sydney - Newcastle link.
- * Providing a radial route to the Sydney C.B.D.
- * Providing part of a circumferential route to South of Sydney.

Since 1951 The Department of Main Roads has proceeded with the outline design which is reflected in the Ku-ring-gai and Ryde Planning Scheme maps. The Castlereagh Freeway was proposed in the 1960's and would link up with the Lane Cove Valley Freeway near Macquarie University (Barker et al. 1974).

It has been generally considered that the need for the freeway would be linked to where the proposed second Sydney airport is eventually built (McLoughlin, 1985). If it was located at Pitt Town or anywhere else northwest then the Castlereagh Freeway would be a major access route to the City and there would be great pressure for construction through the middle Lane Cove River Valley from Epping Rd to Linley Point although the upper valley section from Pearce's Corner to Ryde would not be relevant in this respect. It now appears that the airport is to be built south of the F4 and will not be a factor in the need for the Castlereagh Freeway. The great increase in population expected to the north-west of Parramatta has, however, prompted the ROADS 2000 study to recommend construction of the Castlereagh from Seven Hills to North Ryde over the next 14 years.

In recent correspondence the D.M.R. has advised that construction of the Lane Cove Valley Freeway "..... is not likely to occur for at least 10 years" i. e. until the mid 1990's (DMR, Letter to Langshaw, 31 Jul. 1984). The ROADS 2000 recommendations push this date out to after the year 2000.

The ROADS 2000 study, released in early 1987, recommended the release of the corridor through the Middle Valley from Epping Rd to Linley Point and the Blue Gum Creek corridor from the Pacific Highway to Lady Game Drive.

2. STEP'S POSITION.

STEP'S constitution sets out one of its objects to be, "To preserve all natural bushland in South Turramurra and areas relating to it". **Construction of the freeway on the proposed route will destroy large areas of bushland and STEP is therefore totally opposed to its construction in its proposed location.**

STEP is not, however, opposed to the existence and construction of roads and recognises that efficient traffic flow is socially and economically desirable.

Basic to STEP's opposition to the Lane Cove Valley freeway is the conviction that **bushland is not one of our most disposable resources and that in fact it is one of Sydney's most valuable natural assets.**

Of particular concern in this case are;

- * The probability of the existence of better engineering solutions to the traffic problems.
- * The lack of logic in being locked into a planning decision made 40 or so years ago.
- * The existence of the corridor leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy of inevitable freeway construction.
- * The high probability of the existence of better social and environmental solutions than inherent in the existing proposal.
- * The impossibility of ever reclaiming bushland once it is removed.
- * The role of the D.M.R. in being the sole evaluator of its own environmental impact studies.

We are convinced that there will always be a better way to design and construct this road. A preliminary design carried out many years ago cannot incorporate the latest knowledge of traffic engineering, of the importance of the natural environment, of civil engineering and of the social and demographic factors involved.

3. BUSHLAND IN SYDNEY

The unique flora of Australia evolved over immense periods of time. Because, apart from fire, the Aborigines had relatively little impact and because Western civilisation has settled Australia only over the past 200 years we are fortunate in having many bush areas which are almost unaffected by man and many more which are still essentially in their original condition. Most of the fertile and semi-arid areas of Australia have been taken for rural industries, however, and much of what we call "bush" is being constantly logged and thus is young modified forest rather than true Australian bush. It is ironic and very fortunate, therefore, that areas of good bush are still in existence in the middle of our greatest city.

Sydney has major National Parks on its Northern, Western, and Southern boundaries. These parks by their nature are not set up to cater for high volumes of visitors. In addition they are a considerable travelling time away for many Sydney residents and hence it is neither possible nor desirable for them to cater for high volumes of residents seeking relief from suburbia. There are other areas of urban bushland throughout the metropolitan area, however, which are able to provide residents with many of the benefits of a National Park if their desire is for a

bushwalk, a picnic, or to enjoy peace and quiet in a natural setting which forms part of the urban landscape and which is close to home.

Urban bushland in the metropolitan area is not extensive. It consists of remnants left because of circumstances of topography, the actions of farsighted individuals, and developmental anomalies (some remains only because it is in freeway reservations). It is generally located in long narrow strips and almost universally under threat - either from major developments such as the Lane Cove Valley freeway or from the tyranny of small decisions (a bowling club extension, an additional scout hall etc.) **The Lane Cove Valley is one of the largest and best preserved urban bushland remnants.**

Thus while there are numerous bushland areas left in Sydney they represent a tiny percentage of the metropolitan area, are all under threat, and they will all succumb to destruction unless society guards them zealously.

A good example of the thoughtless progress of man is the virtual elimination of Wianamatta Shale forests from the Metropolitan area. These magnificent rich-soil forests once covered much of the city but account for only a tiny percentage of the remaining bushland reserves. They were destroyed because they were on the easiest farming and building land. **The proponents of the freeway would continue this destruction through the Hawkesbury Sandstone bush and their descendants will be left to wonder why a living system which took millions of years to evolve was counted as our least valuable asset.**

4. LANE COVE VALLEY BUSHLAND - DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY.

The Lane Cove River rises about 150 metres above sea level in the Hornsby plateau which it has eroded to form steep valleys. It flows into one of the flooded river valleys of the Sydney Estuary and becomes tidal at the Fullers Bridge weir.

While the valley bushland which remains has traces of all the soil types present in the Sydney area it contains predominantly Hawkesbury Sandstone derived soils, the main exception to this being the alluvial deposits which often contain richer shale derived soil and the Wahroonga Sanitarium land which is perhaps the only good Wianamatta Shale remnant in the Valley bushland. Hawkesbury sandstone soils are sandy and low in nutrients but nevertheless support an amazing diversity of flora. Over 350 species of native plants can be found within the valley.

While kangaroos, koalas and other vulnerable animals have been eliminated from the valley it is still the home of at least 17 frog species, 37 reptiles, 12 mammals and 190 native birds. (Lane Cove River SRA Trust, 1983) Swamp Wallabies were last sighted in the upper valley in 1950, Koalas in 1967 and the Eastern Native Cat in 1970 (STEP 1985).

The notion persists in many quarters that any undeveloped land should be available for development. For instance McLoughlin (1985) reports that ".....the DMR recently described urban bushland of the Castlecrag escarpment as 'vacant' land". The bush areas of the Valley are not, primarily, land which the community has simply not yet got around to developing, they are areas which have been deliberately set aside because of their and the river's aesthetic and recreational value to the community or which have been undeveloped for reasons such as topography. This bush has often been assembled piece by piece at considerable cost and effort on the part of those involved. The Lane Cove River SRA Trust's book (1983) tells about the work of the committee formed to oversee the formation of the Lane Cove National Park (as it was first called). "On the 13th February 1925 they expressed a detailed opinion concerning the formation of a formal park:

"1. That the whole of the alienated foreshores of the waterway of the Lane Cove River, including so far as practicable all contiguous creeks, valleys, ravines and gorges lying generally between Fig Tree Bridge and to some distance above De Burghs Bridge, should be mapped out for anticipated resumption."

Most of the Lane Cove Valley bushland was set aside long before the term freeway was invented. McLoughlin (1985) points out in relation to the Middle Valley freeway corridor (now to be released) that, "All of the land through which it passes constitutes some of the last remnants of the Field of Mars Common, set aside in 1804 for general use by the people. When it was subdivided in the 1880s the reserves were again set aside for the general public, as parks. The concept of the extension of these reservations to include the entire foreshores of the Lane Cove River has been an ideal sought after in many plans since 1900 as well as being part of the Cumberland County Council's 'green web'."

Thus we can conclude that this land is not vacant or land without a use. It is land which has been valued by the community as parkland for many years. It represents a unique opportunity to retain a major recreation and tourist potential for future generations. The freeway is a relatively new idea which seeks to appropriate and alienate this parkland.

5. THE VALUE OF URBAN BUSHLAND.

It is hard to find better words to describe the importance of urban bushland than those used by the Minister for Planning and Environment in Jan. 86 when releasing the N.S.W. Government's Draft State Environmental Planning Policy on Bushland in Urban Areas. In the introduction to the Draft Policy he wrote:

"One of metropolitan Sydney's greatest assets is its urban bushland. The region is fortunate to have much natural bushland already dedicated as open space within its built up areas. By contrast many other cities have none of their natural areas left. The recreational, educational and purely aesthetic value of these areas is immense.

But there is no room for complacency. As the city grows, there is increasing pressure to turn these bushland areas over to other uses.

The challenge to all concerned with preservation of our environment is to ensure the future of Sydney's remaining parcels of bushland. It must be remembered that once they are cleared their original character may never be restored."

Elsewhere in the same document the values of urban bushland are well documented.

"Bushland areas are an important addition to any city's recreational opportunities. They provide for activities such as bushwalking, the study of natural history or simply allowing city dwellers ready access to picnic areas in natural surroundings.

The aesthetic value of natural bushland in an urban environment cannot be underestimated. Natural areas improve the cityscape, and can act as a buffer between residential development and sources of noise or pollution.

Remnant bushland areas play a major role in conserving animal and plant species. They provide temporary or permanent habitat for wildlife, especially birds, and where smaller bushland areas can be linked together, they may act as wildlife

corridors, allowing the movement of many species, particularly non-flying mammals.

Urban bushland areas are also valuable for educational purposes, acting as living laboratories for the study of subjects such as biology, ecology, zoology and biogeography. In cities like Sydney, the demand for such areas by schools, universities and adult education centres is obvious.

Bushland helps to stabilise soils, preventing erosion and the siltation of streams and estuaries and so protecting the delicate ecology of these areas. It is also useful in climate control, by acting as a buffer against wind and lessening extreme weather conditions."

6. THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM.

One of the real obstacles to rational debate on bushland conservation is that many people who are sympathetic towards the bush are deceived by their own lack of real knowledge combined with attitudes which reflect two centuries of not having to worry. Many misconceptions are ingrained in the conventional wisdom and rule the minds of those who have not been exposed to another point of view. These attitudes arise out of:

- * Lack of knowledge of the scarcity and fragility of the bush.
- * Blind faith and trust in figures of authority such as politicians and council engineers and the belief that no one is entitled to have doubts because the road has been planned for 40 years.
- * Distrust in those who seem to be opposing progress.
- * Their perception of the severity of the traffic problem and lack of understanding that the proposal for a freeway in this corridor may not represent the best solution to the problem.

7. THE IMPACT ON BUSHLAND.

It is widely believed that modern, environmentally sensitive road construction methods will eliminate damage to the bush. While damage can be minimised by modifying construction methods there will still be basic changes to drainage and canopy cover and additional ingress points for rubbish and nutrients which will inexorably lead to change in, and degradation of, the surrounding bushland.

Previously quiet bush areas will be affected by noise and pollution, drainage patterns will be altered causing dieback, dry sclerophyll areas will be changed to incongruous wet vegetation and large sections of the Lane Cove Valley bushland will look more like a setting for a road rather than a scenic refuge from the megalopolis and a living museum of the way things were for many thousands of years.

The freeway itself will be a minimum of 36 metres wide but adjacent earthwork batters will extend the construction zone to twice that or more in some cases.

The proposed route enters bushland South of Fox Valley Rd. and traverses the valuable (privately owned) bushland behind the Adventist complex. It re-enters bushland after crossing

Kerela Ave and emerges at Canoon Rd. It again enters bushland at Maxwell St., crosses the Lane Cove River and emerges at Alma Rd. It then is joined by the Castlereagh Freeway.

The loss will be much greater, however than the 15 or so hectares of bush taken up by the road. Access and temporary construction roads will take additional bushland. The construction phase will cause massive siltation downslope, the visual and noise effect will be catastrophic as the harmony and serenity of existing bushland is disrupted by being traversed by the road. Cuttings will be put deep into sandstone in some places (up to 15 metres) and fill will be up to 60 metres (a 24 storey building height) in others (Barker et al. 1974). Thus large areas of bushland will be downgraded by the physical presence of the freeway.

The fragmentation by the freeway of the bushland through which it passes will reduce or eliminate habitat for some species of plants and animals and put their existence within the valley under threat.

8. THE PLANNING PROCESS.

The freeway was planned and the corridor reserved some forty years ago when community standards were different. McLoughlin(1985) explains that D.M.R. planners had a vision of the freeway as ".... a parkway amid natural surroundings affording lovely views for the motorist. D.M.R. engineers and planners had been most impressed by the achievements in European freeways and were proud of their oblique aerial view looking up the Lane Cove Valley with the aesthetic curves of the freeway superimposed."

It should be appreciated that this planning occurred before the post war housing boom and that the character of much of the affected area has changed from bushland to urban.

Community standards have now changed, however, so that destroying the integrity of small parcels of urban bushland is no longer strongly or widely advocated.

Another danger in the planning process is that, as stated in the Warringah Transport Corridor Inquiry (pp.316,317), corridors can become self fulfilling prophecies. The words used by Commissioner Kirby are relevant.

"The corridors were designed soon after the War. Urban freeways were then held in somewhat greater esteem as a means of solving peak hour congestion than is now the case. Other solutions may be better able to solve present day problems. **Yet the presence of a corridor may tend to weigh the odds in favour of a solution conceived before the lessons of the past twenty-five years had been absorbed.**"
(emphasis added)

The danger is, therefore, that we may become locked into a decision made many years ago which offers neither the best engineering nor an acceptable environmental solution. The further danger is that a government in need of a quick major public works project will find the freeway projects desirable because of the existence of design concepts and the land corridors. The concept of funding public works off-budget as is being done with the harbour tunnel increases the danger of an abrupt start to the work despite the recommendations of Roads 2000.

It is understood, however, that the DMR will begin to plan a freeway standard link between Pearce's Corner and the main inter-city routes to the west and south in about 1990.

9. THE ROLE OF THE D.M.R.

The Department of Main Roads is the arm of the State Government which undertakes both the planning and construction of new roads. It is a competent, professional organisation which has a good reputation for quality and efficiency. Its continued existence in its present form, however, depends on the availability of new roads to plan and build and great doubt must exist as to whether it is capable of giving the Minister, the Government, and the community advice which is unbiased and which reflects the needs and values of the whole community.

The DMR has always evaluated its own environmental impact statements and hence has been advocate, judge and jury. This is neither equitable nor desirable and any impact statement should be subject to impartial scrutiny and review.

There is merit in the concept that all the State's transport planning should be under the control of one authority and the construction under another.

10. THE PURPOSE OF FREEWAYS.

The primary purpose of freeways is to allow traffic to cover relatively large distances at high constant speeds with consequent economic and social advantages which may make them cost effective and socially desirable. A good example of this is the completed sections of the Newcastle freeway which has greatly reduced travelling time, costs, stress and accidents. The secondary purpose is to relieve local roads of congestion. We believe that expressways should by-pass metropolitan areas and in doing so should allow traffic to exit into an efficient network of suburban highways, arterial roads and streets.

The Newcastle expressway is now being constructed to Pearce's Corner from where motorists will have the choice of the Pacific Highway or Pennant Hills Road. Both these major roads have been or are being upgraded and between them feed traffic into the various routes to suburban Sydney. Other local roads such as Mona Vale and Ryde Rds. are also being improved and this process should continue.

The construction of freeways into the city only transfers bottlenecks from one location to another and will have only marginal impact on peak hour traffic. Users of public transport and others now not using the roads at peak periods will be attracted onto the roads by freeways until congestion builds up to the point that the freeway is no longer the more attractive alternative. The effect of the development of the north-west metropolitan area, where another 750,000 or so people are to be located, will surely be to choke the Castlereagh Freeway so that it will provide no peak period relief to existing urban areas while robbing them of their amenity and creating enormous congestion at the exits. Suburbs which now hope to benefit from the freeways will find themselves host to ever increasing traffic from further out.

In the Warringah Transport Corridor Inquiry the Commissioner records various relevant comments. He points out that (p179):-

"People commence their journey according to the time it takes to reach their destination. It is a question of judgement and a matter of trial and error. If more capacity were provided, more people could leave later and still arrive on time. The benefit to them is likely to be the extra time in bed rather than congestion free traffic. Accordingly, by one means or other, and with or without a freeway, the radial arteries serving the city are likely to remain congested."

Public transport and the metropolitan road network should be developed for more efficient

intra-city travel and expressways developed for more efficient inter-city travel. People should not be tempted to travel large distances every day but should have incentive to live near their work. We should not grow up with the expectation that another freeway will be built every time congestion becomes a problem. Commissioner Kirby in the Warringah Report (p176) said:-

"The submission would suggest that whenever traffic demand exceeds road supply, road supply shall be increased. It is a philosophy which we reject for a number of reasons."

Kirby quotes (p177) from another source:-

"... providing more road space itself generates more traffic...Very broadly speaking, the amount of traffic is governed by what is regarded as a tolerable level of congestion. If the capacity of the road network is increased... the mileage will increase until the same conditions are obtained. If the capacity of the road network is not increased, the mileage performed will stabilise." The Report continues; " the very efficiency of the facility will itself generate additional traffic. The Transport Strategy Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) said this:-

'The provision of almost any new transport facility within the former freeway reservation would lead to a growth in travel demand which is not reflected in the 1991 forecasts.'

It should not be thought that this is a controversial proposition which we are bravely asserting. It is a precept accepted by the Department of Main roads, as well as the Northside Councils. The Town Planner of Willoughby Council, for instance said this:-

COMMISSIONER: ..(it is suggested) you cannot ever beat commuter peak demand, that no sooner do you provide capacity than the cars tend to quickly absorb the available space, so there is always be congestion in the morning peak. Do you feel this is valid?'

COSTLEY: I think it is difficult to argue against this point.'

There are many potent historical analogies, especially in the United States of America, where traffic engineers have endeavoured to answer traffic demand by the provision of further road capacity. Whatever else may have been achieved (and unquestionably they have increased accessibility), they have manifestly failed to eliminate congestion."

11. ROADS 2000.

The Roads 2000 study was released in early 1987. It is a rational assessment of priorities which, when coordinated with the likely available funding, gives a programme of construction to the year 2000. A booklet describing the recommendations for the Sydney region is available from the DMR. The following quotes are from the booklet:-

"Sydney needs a strong arterial road network but does not need the extensive system advocated by the County of Cumberland Scheme and the 1974 Sydney Area Transport Study. The freeways of those networks are not all necessary and would have taken 150 years to build with greater funds."

"The efficient use of the road network also means encouraging a healthy public transport system. Without the added peak capacity provided by Sydney's trains and buses the road

network would be unable to cope with the demand."

"The prospect of road construction often causes concern where there is a potential loss of property or of valuable urban bushland.

Roads 2000 has addressed this issue.

Now that goals have been established a **complete review of the corridors reserved for roadworks will be undertaken** (emphasis added).

If it is established that a corridor affecting housing and the local environment is no longer required then it will be abandoned.

For instance the Lane Cove Valley reservation between Epping Road and Linley Point is no longer required because of the upgrading of Epping Road and the construction of the Gore Hill Freeway."

"This environmentally conscious programme will allow the return of large tracts of valuable urban bushland and residential property to the community."

In an address to the Institution of Engineers on 3rd march 1987, Ken Dobinson, the Chairman of the Roads 2000 Task Force made the following points:-

- * The grand plans of previous road schemes had led to financially unrealistic expectations. For instance the cost of the Western Freeway, estimated at \$300,000,000 has been replaced by the City West link at a cost of \$70,000,000.
- * In Sydney "Network performance is the key rather than routes".
- * "The Lane Cove Valley Freeway needs to be turned to the West, not to the CBD".
- * Roads 2000 will only "start the dialogue". Interested groups will want to lobby for the inclusion or exclusion of particular roads.

Roads 2000 has therefore been a constructive and rational contribution to the debate because it has put forward a concept of dealing with Sydney's traffic, has dismissed corridors as a sacrosanct part of our road planning, has acknowledged that urban bushland has a value and has recommended the release of the Middle Lane Cove Valley corridor.

12. IS THE CORRIDOR NEEDED ?

As stated by Mr Dobinson and quoted in 11. above the DMR planners do not perceive a need for a radial route to the CBD along the LCY corridor. They do see a need, however, for a freeway standard link connecting the Newcastle Freeway with the main routes to the south and west. The most logical route to provide this is Pennant Hills Rd and the current upgrading of that road will serve the purpose for at least a period of time. Pennant Hills Rd is not a freeway, however, and there will almost certainly be pressure for a better route and the Lane Cove Valley corridor will be proposed by some. There will be little point, however, in turning the through traffic in towards the city along the corridor. **The only logical method of providing the required high standard link is a further upgrading of Pennant Hills Rd between Pearce's Corner and the Castlereagh Freeway after 2000.**

Thus the retention of the corridor is not indicated by current traffic planning nor by future requirements so long as Pennant Hills Road can be upgraded or another alternative route developed. Doubtless there are other alternatives to Pennant Hills Rd but for the time being it seems the overwhelmingly obvious choice.

13. SUMMARY.

The community is no longer prepared to accept the irreversible loss of Australia's remaining urban bushland. It has been whittled away piece by piece and there are some who would be prepared to see this continue until there is none left. These same people would then be just as prepared to then see the National Parks surrounding Sydney appropriated for more roads, ovals, speedways and the multitude of other uses the community has for "vacant" land.

There is no doubt that there are solutions to our traffic problems which do not include the destruction of Lane Cove Valley bushland. It is our responsibility to ensure that our Government finds those solutions and implements them. Nothing less will do.

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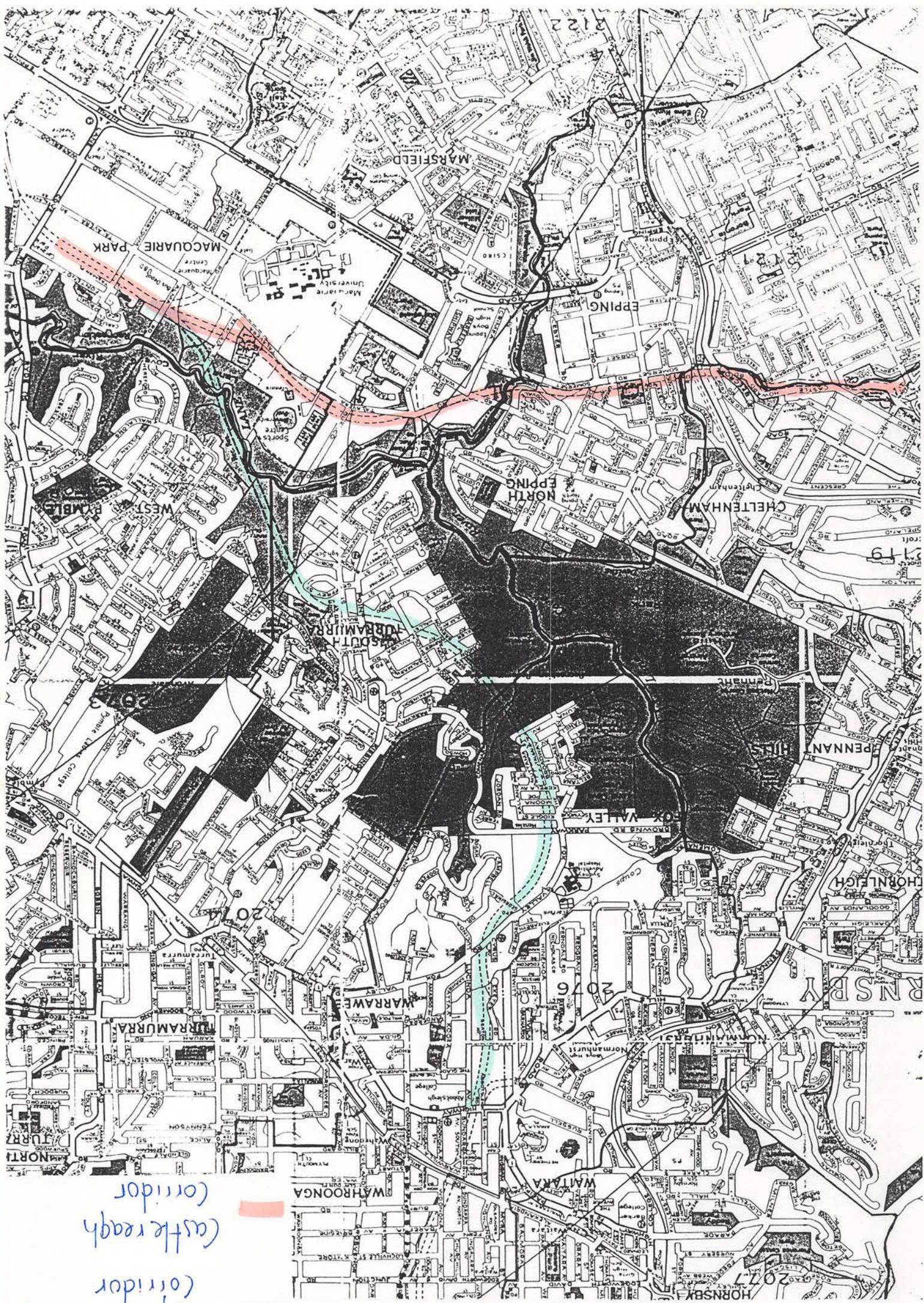
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Valley Lane Valley
Corridor

Castle Reach
Corridor

