

**Submission to the
Review of F3 to M7 Corridor Selection
by Athol Mullen**

Fundamentally, I believe that the National Highway Objective for **the M7 and the F3 to M7 link** is to provide as direct as practicable a motorway standard bypass of the Sydney region, connecting the F3 and F5 freeways north and south of Sydney respectively. It should do this while also providing adequate connections into the road network within the Sydney region, particularly to other inter-regional roads. I would respectfully suggest that, if a type A corridor is constructed as a National Highway link, it should always retain the title of **interim National Highway** in recognition of its compromised function in providing a connection between the F3 and F5.

I am extremely concerned that the fundamental principle of providing an effective bypass of the Sydney region appears to have been confused with provision of internal traffic routes within that region and I herein submit that I am concerned that the entire study process might have been flawed from the outset due to this.

The MWT review states that “A type A corridor option is needed now.” Indeed, the Sydney internal road network does need a type A corridor or some other type of significant traffic relief such as a completely new rail corridor from the Central Coast to the North Shore via the Northern Beaches. I believe, however, that the key question is actually whether **any** type A corridor is primarily a federal responsibility and whether it is in any way related to the National Highway Objectives.

There appears to be an assumption within the study process that the National Highway Objectives and the NSW Government's Planning and Project Objectives are all for the same project and have a common goal. I do not believe that it is possible for this to be the case, for reasons outlined below.

Attention is drawn to the NSW Government's *State Infrastructure Strategy* <http://www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/sis/sis-2006.htm>, wherein references are made to corridor preservation for both a type A corridor and a type C corridor within a 10-year timeframe. That document also clearly shows significant growth plans in a 10-year timeframe for the *North West Growth Centre* and *South West Growth Centre* areas, which would significantly alter traffic patterns, increasing traffic in the vicinity of the northern and southern ends of the M7.

Term of Reference 1

I believe that it is necessary to examine whether some of the National Highway Objectives and NSW Planning and Project Objectives that have been used as the basis of the entire route study process are appropriate or have not been adequately addressed in the study process to date. In particular:

- The F3 freeway between Mt White and its southern terminus appears to be incapable of providing **safe and reliable access**, having closure due to bushfires in the order of magnitude of one day per annum and frequent crash related closures but no viable alternate route to provide the necessary reliability of access. Hence, I submit that no type A route can ever properly satisfy this National Highway Objective. I further submit that there appears to have been no consideration given to national security implications of the proximity of the F3, railway line and Pacific Highway in this area and the continued failure to provide a geographically separated alternate route.
- The construction of a type A corridor as a National Highway followed by the subsequent construction of a type C corridor would fail to **minimise the cost of the National Highway to the Australian Community**. The NSW Government's *State Infrastructure Strategy* appears to indicate an expectation that both will be required, with the implication that both will be substantially federally funded.
- The Planning Objective to **alleviate existing poor travelling conditions on the interim National Highway and the surrounding network** does not appear to have been adequately

considered in respect of the fact that the portion of the F3 south of Mt White is effectively part of the current *interim* National Highway in the context of a type C corridor being one of the alternatives. A type A corridor would completely fail to provide any relief for this portion of the route and hence I submit that no type A route can ever properly satisfy this Planning Objective.

- I do not believe that the Planning Objective to *improve local amenity for people living and working along Pennant Hills Road* is directly relevant to the National Highway that will replace the interim National Highway function of that road. To put this in perspective, even if Pennant Hills Road was not the interim National Highway, it would still be suffering from traffic problems. If a separate National Highway already existed, the NSW Government would be responsible for resolving traffic and local amenity issues that would still exist on Pennant Hills Road. As such, I believe that the improvement of traffic conditions and local amenity on and around Pennant Hills Road after it ceases to be the interim National Highway should have been studied separately by the NSW Government. That such a study might have concluded that the NSW Government needed to construct new rail links &/or a new type A road corridor would be independent of construction of a type C National Highway corridor.
- For reasons addressed in the above points as well as the additional distance and travel time inherent in a type A route compared to a type C route, I believe that no type A route can ever properly satisfy the final 2 Planning Objectives, **improve travel reliability and reduce operating costs of long distance commercial and freight transport on the National Highway** and **serve the future needs of long-distance transport**.

In consideration of the above, I believe that the Planning Objective to *improve local amenity for people living and working along Pennant Hills Road* should have been rejected as irrelevant to the study and that all type A options should have been rejected along with all type B options for the purpose of determining a new route for the National Highway. Given that this has not occurred, I believe that the entire study process to date has been fundamentally and fatally flawed.

I will not be addressing terms of reference 2 and 3.