

REVIEW OF THE F3 TO M7 CORRIDOR SELECTION

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL SERVICES SUBMISSION TO REVIEW

Introduction

1. Until 1993 the National Highway network terminated at the outskirts of major cities. In Sydney it terminated at the start of the M5 Motorway at Prestons in the south and at the southern end of the F3 Freeway at Wahroonga in the north. In 1993, the Federal Government announced that it intended to extend the National Highway to link the termination points across major cities. Following studies undertaken by Maunsell-DJA in 1993¹, the Government announced in January 1994 that the Cumberland Highway, including the Pennant Hills Road section, would be the interim National Highway route through Sydney until a superior route was available for traffic.
2. During the planning and development of the route to replace most of the Cumberland Highway link by the Western Sydney Orbital (WSO)² – now known as the Westlink M7 - the Australian Government recognised³ the need for a route selection study to identify a link between the WSO and the F3 Freeway. This link would complete the National Highway through Sydney at freeway-standard, replacing the interim National Highway route on Pennant Hills Road, and would have adequate capacity for forecast traffic in 2025.
3. The new route would provide a continuous motorway link to the north of Sydney for the predicted large increase in commercial freight vehicles using the AusLink National Network. It would provide traffic relief to Pennant Hills Road, with accompanying long term benefits for the communities affected by the current high levels of traffic congestion and loss of amenity.

Responsibilities

4. The New South Wales Government is the owner of the state road infrastructure and its responsibilities include land use planning and forecasting, route location, design, construction and maintenance. Under the former National Highway programme, the Australian Government funded the National Highway in New South Wales and was involved in planning the National Highway in partnership with New South Wales. The former National Highway was subsumed into the AusLink National Network in 2005.

¹ Maunsell-DJA (1993a), Liverpool Hornsby Highway Strategy Study Final Report, prepared for the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Communications, Sydney.

Maunsell-DJA (1993b), Highway Strategy Study – Phase One Options Development, prepared for the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Communications, Sydney.

² This allowed for options including a link via the M2.

³See Attachment A.

5. Arrangements between the Australian and New South Wales Governments in relation to the AusLink National Network are set out in a bilateral agreement. This details the responsibilities of the parties and funding arrangements for projects. Whilst the primary responsibility for project planning and delivery rests with New South Wales, the two Governments have acknowledged the need for on-going cooperation in order to ensure that land transport infrastructure requirements are planned, prioritised and delivered. Under the current bilateral agreement, the Australian Government has undertaken to provide 80 percent of the cost to government of the F3 to M7 link.
6. The following objectives have been set for the AusLink Network:

The AusLink Network will support national economic growth by developing sustainable transport solutions that:

- increase its infrastructure handling capacity and efficiency;
- improve its safety and security;
- improve transport productivity on its nationally strategic and export-oriented freight corridors;
- improve the reliability of travel on interstate and interregional corridors;
and
- are consistent with viable, long-term economic and social outcomes, and with the obligation to current and future generations to sustain the environment.

Earlier Studies

7. In the 1980s the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) investigated route options for a road network bounded by the Pacific Highway, Pennant Hills Road, Beecroft Road and Epping Road. The investigation included options to link Pearce's Corner at Wahroonga to the Castlereagh Freeway, now a part of the M7/M2 Motorway. They were surface route options known as the B2/B3 options and were abandoned by the New South Wales Government in 1996 because of environmental impacts on the Lane Cove Valley bushland.
8. In the 1990s the RTA investigated route options for the WSO. A 1993/94⁴ National Highway study also identified an option for a bypass of Pennant Hills

⁴ Maunsell-DJA (1993a), Liverpool Hornsby Highway Strategy Study Final Report, prepared for the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Communications, Sydney.

Maunsell-DJA (1993b), Highway Strategy Study – Phase One Options Development, prepared for the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Communications, Sydney.

Road which would connect the proposed WSO from Dean Park to Mount Colah on the F3. The route passed through Rouse Hill, Dural and Galston and required a high level bridge over the Berowra Creek in the vicinity of Hornsby Heights. New South Wales did not adopt the proposal because of high environmental impacts and low traffic demand. However the Government received representations from the community at that time, seeking provision for a link to be made between the F3 and the WSO and for relief of traffic pressures on Pennant Hills Road.

9. The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the WSO, released in December 2000, included a reference to the request from the Commonwealth Government for the New South Wales Government to ‘initiate a study into the options for the long term development of a high standard road link between the M2 Motorway and the F3 Freeway’⁵.
10. On 4 January 2001, the Australian and New South Wales Governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the delivery of the WSO. The MOU included an agreement by both Governments to carry out a study to ‘*identify a route for the National Highway from a point on the WSO to the F3*’. A joint media release between the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon John Anderson and the New South Wales Minister for Roads, the Hon Carl Scully, stated “the Federal Government would also give high priority to establishing a new link from the M2 to the F3 to relieve pressure on Pennant Hills Road and complete the National Highway ring-road around Sydney”. (See Attachment A.)
11. The Terms of Reference for the study were to:
 - “Identify a route for the National Highway from the WSO to the F3 to relieve pressure on Pennant Hills Road (the interim National Highway route) recognising that there is no scope for further upgrading on the current route, and
 - Investigate funding scenarios for the identified route”.
12. Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) was engaged to carry out a feasibility study for the link in February 2002, following a selection process begun in April 2001.

Route Selection Process

13. The initial part of the study identified 17 route options, grouped into three broad corridor options referred to as Options ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’. These 17 options were examined at a strategic level and assessed against criteria with four elements:
 - Transport effects, including traffic relief on Pennant Hills Road, road safety, access to ports and opportunity to improve public transport;
 - Social effects including number of properties affected, traffic emissions and noise and changes in urban design character;

⁵ Proposed Western Sydney Orbital: Summary of Environmental Impact Statement, PPK and Sinclair Knight Merz. November 2000.

- Environmental effects, including impacts on bushland and national parks, threatened fauna species, water and air quality, heritage and character of landscape; and
 - Economic effects, including benefit to cost ratios.
14. This multi-criteria investigation showed that the Option 'A' corridor was superior to both Options 'B' and 'C' in addressing the criteria and the study process was then narrowed to focus on route options within the Option 'A' corridor.
15. The narrowing of options is a standard process in development of road infrastructure projects where several corridor options are examined by the study team. The route options are examined against project objectives and assessment criteria and the options which do not meet the objectives and criteria are progressively eliminated until a final option is selected for more detailed design and environmental investigations.
16. Four routes (Red, Yellow, Blue and Purple) within the Option 'A' corridor were then investigated by SKM using the following criteria⁶:
- Strategic development objectives including improved access to ports and centres of economic activity;
 - Traffic and transport benefits such as traffic relief to key arterial roads, including Pennant Hills Road, road safety and opportunities for public transport improvements;
 - Urban design and visual landscape including visual impacts on residents, impact on existing landscape, impact on open spaces and impacts of pedestrian access;
 - Environmental effects including air quality issues, noise, land take, indigenous and non-indigenous heritage;
 - Social effects including number of properties likely to be directly affected, and impacts of severance to communities
 - Engineering effects including gradients, fire and safety, impacts on existing infrastructure and construction;
 - Cost; and
 - Community consultation.

Option 'A' Routes

17. The four corridor route options are – Red, Yellow, Blue and Purple (see Attachment B). All the four routes connect with the F3 Freeway at Wahroonga. At the southern end:
- The Red option connects with the M2 at Macquarie Park;
 - The Yellow option connects with the M2 on either side of the M2 tunnels in North Epping;
 - The Blue option connects at the M2 at the existing Pennant Hills Road/M2 interchange;

⁶ F3 to Sydney Orbital Link Study, Main Report, SKM, April 2004.

- The Purple option is almost parallel to Pennant Hills Road and connects at the Pennant Hills Road/M2 interchange.
18. Using the criteria set out at Paragraph 16, the SKM study concluded that the Purple Option was the best of the final four route options because:
- It best met the Strategic Development criteria;
 - It had better performance in terms of traffic relief on the key arterial roads in northern Sydney, particularly Pennant Hills Road;
 - It had the lowest negative impact in terms of urban design, landscape and visual aspects;
 - Overall it best met the environmental criteria;
 - It best met social criteria;
 - It best met the engineering criteria; and
 - A large proportion of public submissions which expressed a preference, supported the Purple Option.
19. SKM recommended the Purple Option on this basis. On 6 May 2004, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services and the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads announced that the Australian Government adopted the Purple Option as its preferred option to link the F3 to WSO (see Attachment C)
20. The study also recognised that a western route (Option ‘C’ route) may be needed in the longer term (20 to 25 years) to service an increasing population and employment demand in the West and North West of Sydney. In addressing F3 capacity issues, the study recommended that “an investigation into the planning need for a new northern transport corridor could be considered as part of the current review of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy by the New South Wales Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources”. In December 2005, the New South Wales Government released its Metropolitan Strategy in which it has undertaken to *‘investigate the need for a road corridor reservation between the F3 Freeway north of the Hawkesbury River and north western Sydney and the M7 Motorway, as a second major road route between Sydney, the Central Coast and further north.’*⁷

Public Consultation throughout the route selection process

21. SKM undertook extensive public consultation, through letters, feedback forms, various forums, emails and phone contacts.
22. Key stakeholders were briefed by SKM at the commencement of the study and at the time of the display of Option ‘A’ routes in August 2003. The stakeholders included seven Councils in the area, progress associations, civic trusts, chambers of commerce and other community and environmental organisations. A Planning Focus Meeting was held on 17 April 2002 and attended by representatives of the Federal, State and Local Government agencies and peak transport bodies.

⁷ Transport Strategy for Sydney. NSW Government’s Metropolitan Strategy, December 2005.

23. Community Focus Groups were established by SKM to help the study team to identify community issues and to communicate facts about the study.
24. Two Newsletters were issued during the study by SKM. Both newsletters were distributed to households and businesses in the study area. Newsletters could also be viewed and downloaded from the study website. Copies of the newsletter were also provided to the Councils for their office counters and libraries.
25. Newsletter 1 was issued at the commencement of the study in April 2002. Its purpose was to introduce the study, provide general background and outline the process of the study. It also explained to the stakeholders how they could obtain more information on the study and be involved in the Community Focus Groups.
26. Newsletter 2 was issued at the time of the route options display in July 2003. Its purpose was to present the process for identifying options, describe the feasible options and provide preliminary comparison of the routes in Option 'A' corridor. A Background Report was prepared as a support document for the Newsletter. Its purpose was to provide further explanation of the information in the Newsletter. It was made available through the study website, at display locations and posted on request. All Community Focus Group members were given copies of the report. Copies were also made available to Councils and placed in Council libraries.
27. Newsletter 3 was issued in May 2004 following the Government's announcement of the preferred Purple route option and was distributed to all the households and businesses in the study area.
28. SKM held public displays of the route options during the course of the study. Public information days were held in May 2002. Route options were displayed at four locations – Gosford, Dural, Hornsby and Carlingford – in August 2003. Around 2500 people attended the displays and provided feedback on selected route options.
29. All comments received by phone and in writing (e-mail, post or fax) were recorded by SKM on their study database. Comments relating to route options were communicated to the study team.
30. By the end of October 2003, SKM had distributed over 230,000 newsletters, received over 1000 calls on a 1800 number, and received 991 submissions (576 by email and 415 by mail or facsimile). The submissions were analysed by SKM to assess the community comments and input.
31. The SKM analysis of the community input indicated that 'it was generally acknowledged that the Option 'A' corridor would best meet the shorter term objectives of the project by providing earlier traffic relief to Pennant Hills Road'.

Reaction to the Purple Option

32. SKM received a number of submissions which called for solutions which would also cater for longer term traffic demand and the need for a longer term western

option. This issue was recognised by the New South Wales Government and addressed in its Metropolitan Strategy⁸ which was released in December 2005.

33. Some local community groups in Pennant Hills area have continued to protest the Government's decision to adopt the Purple Option and have been campaigning for a western option. They have questioned the process, assumptions and the data used by the study and have called for the adoption of a western option.
34. There have also been representations by Hills Motorway to the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) and the RTA and subsequently by Transurban, following its acquisition of Hills Motorway and the M2, seeking to make a case that the Yellow Option was preferable to the Purple Option. In October 2004, Hills Motorway, then owners of the M2 Motorway, presented a case to DOTARS for the Yellow Option and requested that the route selection decision between the Yellow and Purple Option be re-opened. The Minister (Lloyd) agreed that the Hills proposal should be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for the Purple Option.
35. The RTA and DOTARS commenced preparatory work for detailed design and EIS for the Purple Option. However Hills Motorway was taken over by Transurban in June 2005 and the process was delayed pending the outcome of the takeover. Following the takeover, Transurban carried out its own assessment of the Purple and the Yellow Options using 2005 traffic data. While Transurban has advised that this work indicated that the Yellow Option was better than the Purple Option, the supporting data has not been supplied to the Government.
36. In January 2006, in response to the representations, Minister Lloyd agreed to a review of assumptions, data and models used by SKM and Transurban for the Yellow and the Purple Options. This overtook the earlier decision to consider the Yellow Option as part of the EIS. The terms of reference also asked the consultant to advise on the feasibility on a western Option 'C' in comparison to the Yellow or the Purple Option. In January 2006, at DOTARS request, the RTA engaged a firm with expertise and no prior involvement, Masson Wilson Twiney (MWT), to carry out the review.
37. MWT compared the data and assumptions used by SKM and Transurban to support their conclusions. They compared SKM's and Transurban's data sources, land use assumptions, sources of trip tables, extent of network modelled, software package used, assumptions and calibrations of traffic models.
38. In March 2006, MWT presented a draft interim report to the two Governments. MWT's interim findings supported SKM's conclusion that the Purple Option was preferable to the Yellow Option and that Option 'C' routes were not justified in terms of traffic demand for the foreseeable future.
39. The MWT review indicated that:

⁸ Transport Strategy for Sydney. NSW Government's Metropolitan Strategy, December 2005.

- Differences between the land use scenarios and trip tables used by SKM and Transurban are likely to explain the differences in traffic forecasts. (SKM's work was done between 2002 and 2004 and they used 2002 land use data. Transurban used 2005 data).
 - The Option 'A' corridor is needed now. It will require supporting works and measures to ensure traffic from the M7 corridor can access it and that the F3 as a six-lane freeway operated in an efficient manner, even when heavily loaded in the peaks.
 - The current function of Pennant Hills Road has characteristics of freight and temporal demand that better aligns with AusLink's objectives than roads to the east such as the Pacific Highway. This suggests that the Purple Option would better align with freight and regional traffic demand in the corridor.
 - Option 'C' corridor options are not justified on current projections of travel demand through to 2021. However, the overall benefit of an Option 'A' option will be influenced by the ability of traffic to move between the F3 and the M7 corridors and the ability of the F3 to process traffic service flows. When the F3 (at six-lanes) can no longer provide an efficient function, a decision about the long term for the corridor would be between an eight-lane F3 and an Option 'C' option.
40. In order to fully verify Transurban's claims it was necessary for MWT to obtain from Transurban their tolling strategies and data. Since March 2006, DOTARS and RTA have met several times with Transurban which has presented its case for the Yellow Option but declined to provide tolling data and strategies.
41. MWT accordingly finalised its report on an interim basis in February 2007, to enable Transurban to provide further data.
42. On 19 February 2007, the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads announced an independent Review of the F3 to M7 Corridor Selection, to be conducted by the former Chief Judge of the New South Wales Land and Environment Court, the Hon Mahla Pearlman AO. The focus of the Review is to examine the technical underpinnings and the robustness of the process followed, to ensure the decisions taken by governments on the route selection were soundly based. The Review will consider any community and business concerns of the route selection study, including possible impacts in traffic usage patterns as a result of opening the Westlink M7.
43. A chronology covering the history of the SKM study and subsequent developments is at Attachment D.

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon John Anderson MP

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and Regional Services
Leader of The Nationals



04 January 2001
Joint Release

Joint Media Statement

**The Hon John
Anderson MP**
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and
Regional Services
Leader of The Nationals

Carl Scully
NSW Minister for
Transport
NSW Minister for Roads

\$1.25 BILLION WESTERN SYDNEY ORBITAL UNDERWAY

Sydney motorists could save up to an hour in travel time on the proposed Western Sydney Orbital Road by 2007, following the release of federal funding details and an Environmental Impact Statement today.

In a major win for the residents and businesses of western Sydney, the Federal Government has allocated \$350 million towards construction of the 39 km National Highway project.

The remainder of the \$1.25 billion cost of the project will be provided by the private sector, financed by a road user toll.

The Acting Prime Minister and Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, and the NSW Minister for Transport and Roads, Carl Scully, jointly issued the EIS for the motorway.

The EIS was prepared by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority as part of its responsibilities as project manager for the Federal Government.

The divided dual carriageway motorway will stretch from the Hume Highway south of Sydney to Pennant Hills Rd and the F3 Freeway to the north, linking the M5, M4 and M2 motorways and acting as the east coast's main freight route.

Mr Anderson said the Federal Government would also give high priority to establishing a new link from the M2 to the F3 to relieve traffic pressures on Pennant Hills Road and complete the National Highway ring-road around

Sydney.

"The Western Sydney Orbital is a vital link in the National Highway network," Mr Anderson said.

"The new link will provide a safer and more efficient route for heavy vehicles travelling through Sydney, as well as providing improved access to the Sydney Orbital motorway network, Port Botany and Sydney airport for freight and rural produce."

Mr Scully welcomed the Federal Government's commitment to the project, which will be the biggest road project in Australia when construction commences.

"This is the single most important post-Olympic construction project in western Sydney and will create up to 1200 direct jobs during construction," Mr Scully said.

"It will also create thousands of indirect jobs by improving access and reducing costs for businesses in Western Sydney.

"The Orbital will both provide traffic relief for motorists and remove heavy vehicle traffic from local roads.

"It will bypass up to 56 sets of traffic lights between Liverpool and Pennant Hills, and will save commuters and freight vehicles up to an hour time travelling across Sydney."

Mr Anderson said the funding package included \$300 million from the National Highway budget over six years towards construction, in addition to \$56 million already spent on planning and land acquisition.

"The Federal Government has agreed on a toll to help finance the project to enable the road to be constructed in a time frame acceptable to the motoring public," Mr Anderson said.

"This will bring forward the economic benefits to the whole nation, not just Western Sydney.

"The Federal Government's decision to toll the National Highway was taken only after careful consideration of all the issues and alternatives. The Federal Government will only consider tolling the National Highway in the future on a case by case basis, not as a matter of course."

While the level of the tolls has yet to be determined, it is proposed to cap the toll for vehicles travelling the entire 39 kilometre route at an expected \$4 - \$5, a rate comparable to tolls charged elsewhere in the Sydney area.

However, most motorists will use only part of the Orbital on a typical journey, which means they will pay less than the maximum rate.

Mr Anderson invited the community to view and comment on the EIS, which is on display from Monday 8 January until Monday 5 March 2001 at locations throughout western Sydney, including Blacktown, Fairfield, Liverpool and Baulkham Hills Councils.

Subject to the determination of the EIS, construction of the Western Sydney Orbital is expected to commence in 2002, and to be opened to traffic in 2007.

Media Contacts

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WESTERN SYDNEY ORBITAL - FACT SHEET

Extent of work:

- The Western Sydney Orbital (WSO) will form the National Highway link through Sydney, joining the Hume Highway to the South and Pennant Hills Rd/F3 freeway to the North of Sydney.
- The WSO will also join the three existing motorways in Western Sydney- the M5, M4 and M2.

Length:

- 39 kilometres divided dual carriageway.

Travel time savings in 2006 (on opening of the WSO):

- Liverpool to Pennant Hills: 67 minutes
- Liverpool to Wentworthville: 33 minutes
- Liverpool to Eastern Creek: 16 minutes
- Avoids up to 56 sets of traffic lights.

Truck cost saving (eg. Fuel, time, vehicle wear for full trip on the WSO):

- At least \$25 each way.

Interchanges:

- 15 interchanges (including connections at both ends).

Major interchanges include:

- Cowpasture Road, Hinchinbrook.
- The Horsley Drive, Horsley Park.
- Richmond Road, Dean Park.
- Elizabeth Drive, Cecil Park.
- M4 Motorway, Eastern Creek.
- Sunnyholt Road, Kings Langley.

Estimated Cost (\$2000):

- \$1.25 billion.
- The Commonwealth will provide \$300 million (in addition to \$56 million spent to date).
- The balance of the cost will be provided by the private sector, financed by a toll on road users (except cyclists).

Toll:

- Final toll yet to be determined- indicative toll examined is approximately \$0.25 per kilometre, with a toll cap of \$4-\$5.
- The WSO will be electronically tolled.

Jobs:

- 1,200 direct jobs created by construction.

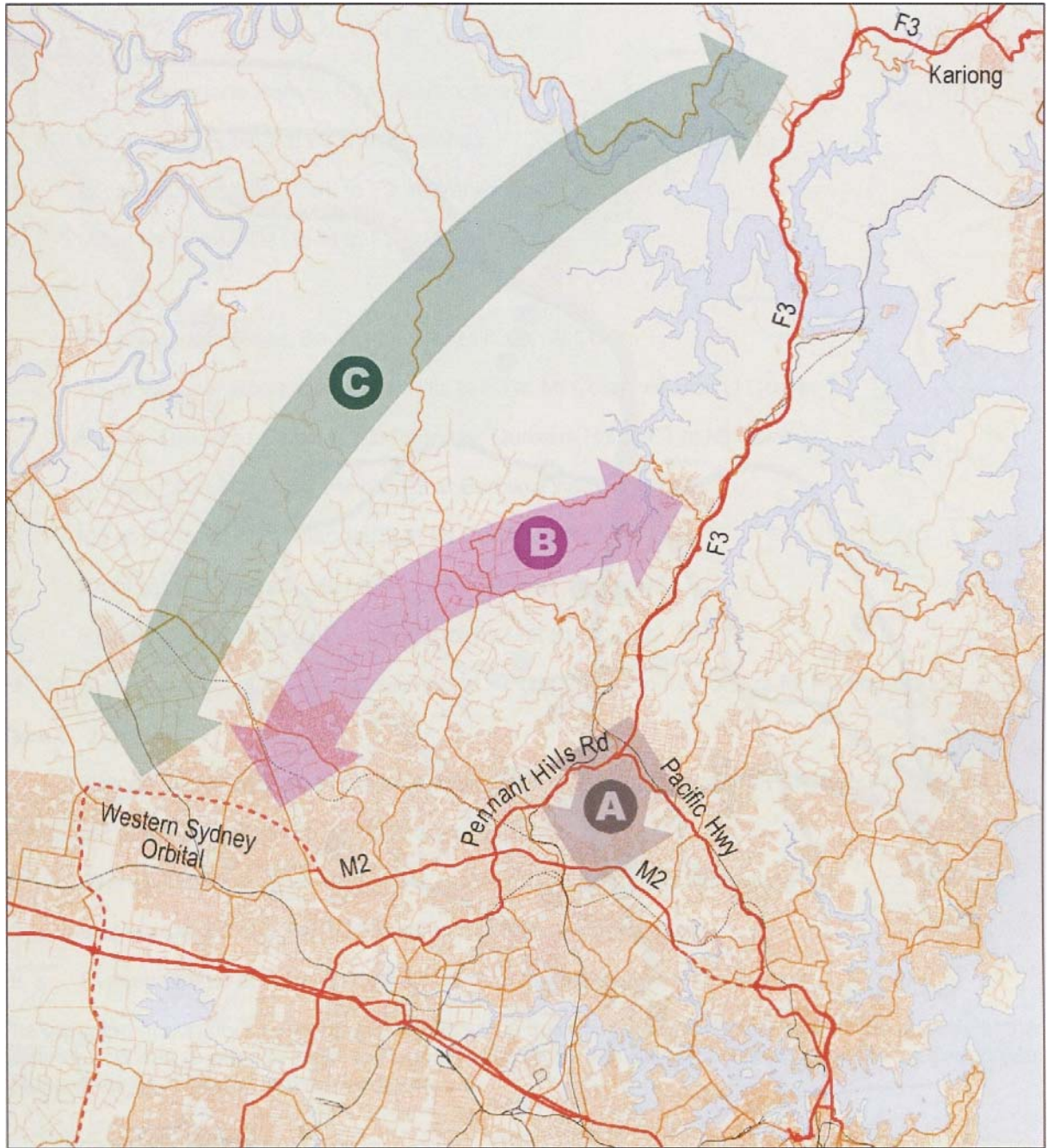
Major benefits include:

- Improve travel time and safety, especially for freight.
- Less traffic on major roads through western Sydney.
- Less traffic on local roads and improved amenity.
- Encourage development of western Sydney employment centres.
- Create employment opportunities in western Sydney.
- Improve the National Highway Link through Sydney.

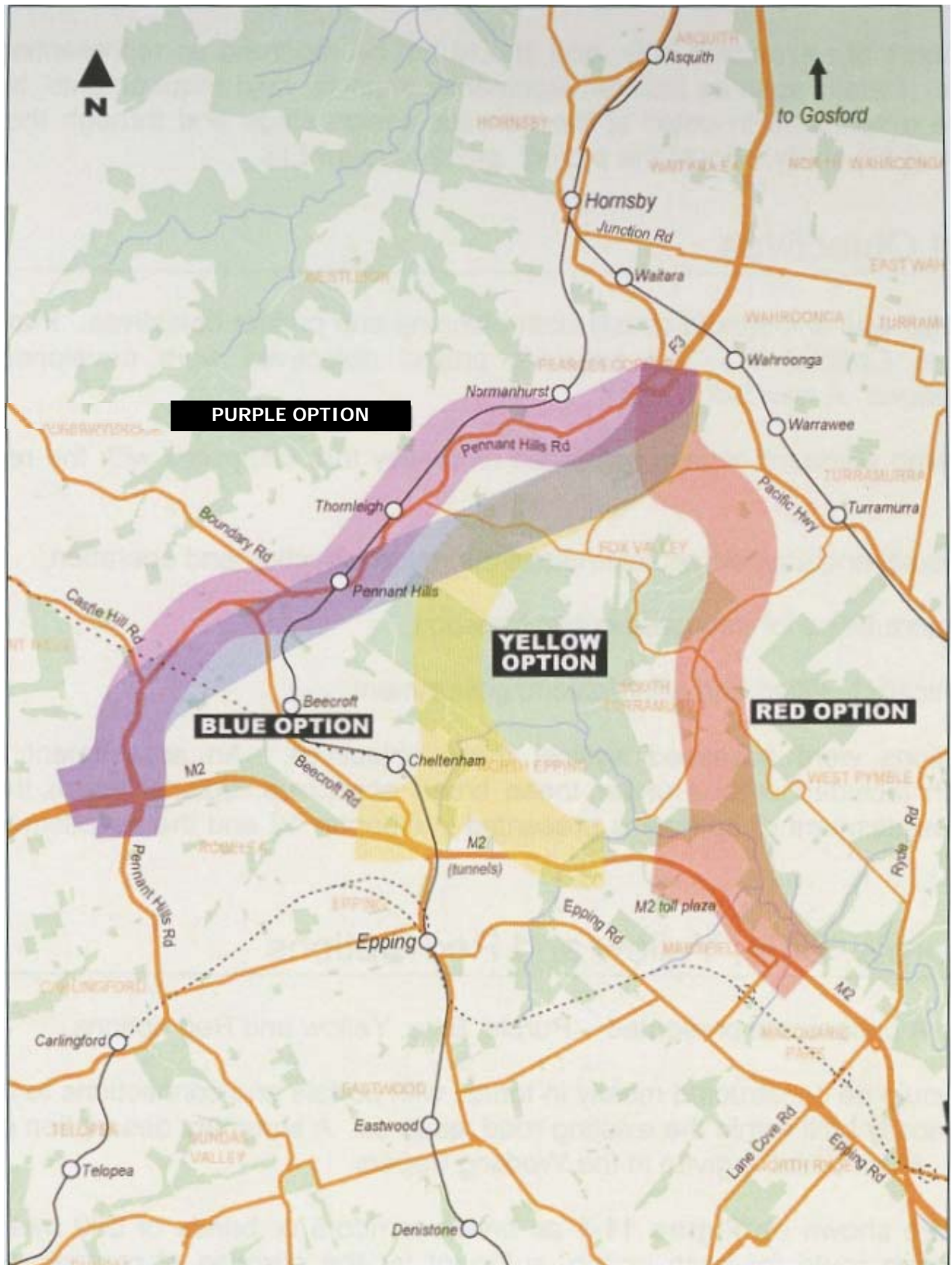
URL:

<http://www.ministers.dotars.gov.au/ja/releases/2001/january/a040101a.htm>

Broad Corridor Types



Options 'A' Corridor routes – Red, Yellow, Blue and Purple Options



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon John Anderson MP

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and Regional Services
Leader of The Nationals



06 May 2004
Joint3/2004

Joint Media Statement

**The Hon John
Anderson MP**
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and
Regional Services
Leader of The Nationals

**Senator The Hon Ian
Campbell**
Minister for Local
Government,
Territories and Roads

NEW F3 TO SYDNEY ORBITAL LINK ONE STEP CLOSER

A preferred corridor for a new F3 to the Sydney Orbital link to replace Pennant Hills Road was announced today by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, and the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, Senator Ian Campbell.

The preferred "Purple" option was one of four "Type A" options put to the public last year. It includes eight kilometres of tunnel and will connect from the F3 at Wahroonga to the M2 at Pennant Hills Road interchange. It was the most favoured by the public in submissions.

This follows intense consultation with the community and their members of Parliament, the Member for Berowra, Philip Ruddock, and the Member for Bradfield, Brendan Nelson.

"The Purple Option will improve travel conditions on the National Transport Network, and reduce noise, congestion and pollution on Pennant Hills Road," Mr Anderson said.

"A number of routes are possible within this option and the final route will be determined after a process involving an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This process will involve extensive community consultation and may take some time."

The decision in favour of this option on environmental, social, economic and transport grounds followed a study report from consultants Sinclair Knight Merz.

Senator Campbell said the study had examined options stretching from

Kariong to Dean Park, as well as public transport upgrades.

While the Australian Government endorsed the preferred corridor it will insist on the following in three key areas:

- The Government has a strong preference for a fully tunnelled link and will ensure that there is no opening in Brickyard Park;
- The Government will ensure the ventilation stacks use the world's best practice filtration suitable to Australian conditions, and;
- The Government rejects the concept of intermediate access points from the link.

The consultants received more than 1000 written and electronic submissions about the study.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the individuals, local councils and community groups who have made submissions to the study," Mr Anderson said.

"Their inputs have identified several major issues that will be the subject of further work in the next stage."

Senator Campbell also thanked the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) for managing the Sinclair Knight Merz study over the past two years and participating in the Steering Committee, along with the New South Wales Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources. He said the RTA would now be asked to refine the chosen option into a concept proposal, which would identify route options for consultation with the public, and undertake the EIS for the preferred route. A business case will also be developed on the preferred route.

"The active participation of the community in the planning process is vital to getting the best outcome," Senator Campbell said.

The completed project is expected to enable users to save 10 to 15 minutes in travel time and avoid 22 sets of traffic lights when compared to using Pennant Hills Road.

"I welcome this important step towards completing a freeway-standard National Highway through Sydney," Mr Anderson said.

The construction cost of the F3 to Sydney Orbital link has not yet been finalised, but on preliminary estimates it would be in excess of \$1.6 billion in 2003 dollars.

"Funding arrangements will be considered with New South Wales under the new AusLink framework, which provides for government and private sector participation, as the project moves forward.

It is expected that a contract for the option refinement work and EIS will be awarded in the second half of the year. It will take approximately two years to complete the EIS.

The final report is available from the consultant, or may be downloaded from their website, <http://commcons.skm.com.au/f3tosydneyorbital/>.

URL:

http://www.ministers.dotars.gov.au/ja/releases/2004/May/Joint3_2004.htm

ATTACHMENT D

Chronology of the F3 to Sydney Orbital Corridor Selection process

Letter from Minister Scully to Minister Anderson	3 October 2000	The letter was in response to Minister Anderson's letter regarding the Australian Government consideration of funding for the WSO and included NSW commitment to undertaking 'a study to identify a route for the National Highway from the WSO to the F3 at a point between Wahroonga and North of Gosford.
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Western Sydney Orbital (WSO).	December 2000	WSO EIS includes: 'initiate a study into the options for the long term development of a high standard road link between the M2 Motorway and the F3 Freeway
Australian and NSW Governments sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the WSO.	4 January 2001	MoU includes: 'Both Governments agree to carry out a study to identify a route for the National Highway from a point on the WSO to the F3.'
Joint media release by Ministers Anderson and Scully announcing federal funding details for the WSO.	4 January 2001	The media release includes 'Federal Government would also give high priority to establishing a new link from the M2 to the F3 to relieve pressure on Pennant Hills Road and complete the National Highway ring-road around Sydney.'
Call by the RTA for Expressions of Interest for the F3 to Sydney Orbital Study.	April 2001	Terms of Reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Identify a route for the National Highway from the WSO to the F3 to relieve pressure on Pennant Hills Road (the interim National Highway route) recognising that there is no scope for further upgrading on the current route; and ▪ Investigate funding scenarios for the identified route".
SKM Study		
SKM contracted by the RTA to conduct the Study	8 February 2002	
SKM Study: Planning Focus Meeting.	17 April 2002	Planning Focus Meeting held with Federal, State and Local Government agencies, and peak transport bodies advising them of scope and process of the study. Arranged by SKM.
SKM Newsletter No 1	April 2002	115,000 copies of the Newsletter were

		prepared by SKM and distributed to the households and businesses in the study area. Its purpose was to introduce the study and its process to the community and other stakeholders.
Minister Anderson's Press Release.	3 May 2002	Announcing public information days from 16 to 19 May at Gosford, Thornleigh, North Ryde, Dural and Parklea.
Community Focus Group Meetings.	June and July 2002	Community Focus Group meetings were held by SKM at Dural and Pennant Hills to obtain feedback on corridor options. Organised by SKM.
Value Management Workshop	26 June 2002	Workshop to discuss 17 route options within corridor Options 'A', 'B' and 'C'. Outcomes of the workshop included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short and long terms needs of Sydney could not be met by a single option; ▪ A short list of routes from Options 'A', 'B' and 'C' to be carried forward to the next stage of the study.
Minister Anderson media release.	31 October 2002	Minister announces extension of completion date for study to allow for more community input to the study.
Newsletter No 2	July 2003	The Newsletter presented a comparison of the three corridor options 'A', 'B' and 'C' and, stated that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'The study findings indicate that corridor Type 'A' options are preferred, as they would best meet the project objectives by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing traffic volumes and congestion on Pennant Hills Road. - Minimising community impacts...'
Route options displays	August 2003	Route options displayed at Gosford, Dural, Hornsby and Carlingford to obtain community feedback.
Community Focus Group meetings	September 2003	Meetings held at Dural and Pennant Hills to obtain community feedback.
Media release by Minister Anderson	8 September 2003	Minister announces extension of submission period by three weeks, to allow further time for all stakeholders to respond.
Value Management Workshop	17 & 18 Sept 2003	Second Workshop arranged by SKM to select best route from Option 'A'. Purple Option identified as preferred route.

		<p>Outcomes of the workshop included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Option 'A corridor was superior to Option 'B' or 'C' in meeting the project objectives; ▪ Within Option 'A', the Purple Option was the best in meeting the project objectives and therefore recommended for further detailed investigation
SKM Study report.	April 2004	SKM submits final report to RTA.
Media release by Ministers Anderson and Campbell	6 May 2004	Announcement that the Australian Government has endorsed the Purple Option.
SKM Newsletter 3	May 2004	Information on findings and the Government's decision of the Study released through a newsletter to all the households and businesses in the study area.
Developments since the SKM Study		
Hills Motorway submitted an alternative proposal to the Australian Government	October 2004	Hills Motorway, the then owners of the M2 presented a case for the Yellow Option and requested that the route selection decision between the Purple and the Yellow Options be re-opened.
Consideration of Hills Motorway proposal	January 2005	Minister Lloyd agreed to consider the Hills proposal as a part of route refinement of the Purple Option.
Transurban acquires Hills Motorway (operators of the M2)	June 2005	Following the acquisition of the M2, Transurban carried out its own assessment of the Purple and the Yellow Options.
Transurban presents an alternative proposal to the Australian Government.	September 2005	
Consideration of Transurban proposal	December 2005	Minister Lloyd agrees to a review of assumptions, models and data used by SKM and Transurban for the Purple and the Yellow Option.
MWT Review of SKM's selection of the Purple Option	23 March 2006	MWT submits interim report to governments.
Meetings with Transurban	July-August 2006	Transurban meets separately with DOTARS and the RTA presenting their

		case for the Yellow Option.
Finalisation of MWT study	February 2007	RTA requested MWT to finalise the interim report following assessments by the Australian and NSW Governments of Transurban material