

# **2011 State Election Campaign Blue Mountains Electorate Transport Platform**

***The Blue Mountains is dependent upon a three transport corridors, the rail line, the GWH and the BLOR. Not only do the Blue Mountains rely on these links but they are also the only transport links between Sydney and NSW Central West.***

***The GWH dissects 23 towns and villages between Penrith and Lithgow. There are major traffic impediments including 10 school zones, 25 sets of traffic lights and 39 different speed zones. More traffic lights are planned.***

***Unlike any other highway in NSW the GWH is characterised by the conflict between through traffic, particular road freight on tight schedules and local residents and tourists moving within the Blue Mountains.***

## **Considerations:**

- More than 58% of Blue Mountains residents who work commute to Sydney<sup>1</sup>
- Blue Mountains is a major tourism destination with more than 2.1 million domestic daytrip visitors during the year ended 30 September 2010<sup>2</sup>
- Blue Mountains is a LGA within a National Park and World Heritage Area
- Through traffic particularly increasing numbers of long haul trucks traversing across the Blue Mountains<sup>3</sup>

## **Current State Government Policy:**

### ***GWH***

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<sup>1</sup> 2008 Better Future Forum, Blue Mountains City Council

<sup>2</sup> Source – Tourism NSW

<sup>3</sup> 2010 – more than 1,100 semi trailer movements across the Blue Mountains per day, source Cardno 2009

The GWH will be upgraded to 4 lanes between Woodford and Katoomba by 2018.

B-doubles longer than 19 metres are currently restricted through the Blue Mountains.

Proposed upgrading of the GWH west of Katoomba:

- Mt Victoria to Lithgow upgrade estimated to cost \$1.7 to \$1.9 billion to upgrade approximately 20 kilometres of highway and will be built to a standard to accommodate 25/26 metre B-doubles
- NSW Government committed in December 2008 not to widen the GWH through the township of Blackheath<sup>4</sup>

***Rail Network – no expansion in Western Sydney and beyond since the 1980’s despite massive population growth***

The Central West Transport Needs Study noted “*major constraint for increased freight traffic from the Central West is the significant growth in passenger trains with ... Sydney .... which reduces the availability of freight paths from the region*”.

*“Without a second rail link across the harbour, the CityRail system will face paralysis by 2022. That is the finding of experts who have analysed the Keneally government’s recent transport blueprint.”*  
Sydney Morning Herald, 31 May 2010.

**Our Aims:**

Secure investment from State and Federal Governments for integrated transport infrastructure that:

- i) increases freight and passenger rail capacity,
- ii) reduces reliance on heavy road freight transport and congestion on roads, and

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<sup>4</sup> Media release Michael Daley NSW Minister for Roads dated 19 December 2008

- iii) Constructs a safer road system.

Obtain tax and regulatory reform by State and Federal Governments to level the competitive playing field between the trucking industry and rail freight and incentivise usage of public transport by employees.

We do not support:

- i) The construction of the Bells Line of Road Expressway.
- ii) The privatisation of Countrylink and Cityrail services and or infrastructure and or the metropolitan rail network.

## **TRANSPORT POLICY INITIATIVES**

### **Blue Mountains:**

#### **Rail:**

#### **Rail - Passenger**

1. Maintain existing service standards:
  - 1.1. Commit to replace Blue Mountains 'V' train sets (which are due to be retired between 2012 and 2016) with a similar train of comparable standard NOT a suburban OSCAR train set.
  - 1.2. Commit to retain existing station staffing hours in the Blue Mountains.
2. Restore services to pre 1995 levels:
  - 2.1. Introduce one peak express service between Blue Mountains and Parramatta/Sydney.
3. Expand services:

- 3.1. Improve week day train services between Katoomba and Lithgow.
- 3.2. Increase number of carriages on afternoon peak outbound services (from Sydney) to ease current overcrowding.
- 3.3. Review with a view to increase staffing levels on stations.
- 3.4. Provide additional train services including 1.32am.

### **Rail - Freight**

4. Reinststate the 1.2 cents per litre transport petroleum by rail subsidy<sup>5</sup>.
5. Lengthen passing loops at Lawson and Katoomba to ARTC standard length of 1,800 metres to permit longer freight trains through the Blue Mountains.
6. Install bi-directional signalling over the entire length of the line through the Blue Mountains.
7. Undertake feasibility study into possible trailer rail drive on drive off freight rail service between Marrangaroo and St Marys.
8. Undertake feasibility study into modifying the rail line between St Marys and Marrangaroo to permit double stack container trains.

### **Road:**

9. Commit to redirecting \$120 million of funding from the proposed River Lett Hill B-Double Bypass to safety work on the Bells Line of Road.

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<sup>5</sup> Scrapped in NSW 2008-09 Mini Budget, see Page A-10, NSW 2008-09 Mini Budget

10. Maintain restriction on B-double trucks longer than 19m through the Blue Mountains.
11. Abandon the proposed \$2 billion B-double Mt Victoria to Lithgow highway upgrade.
12. Address highway safety at Springwood / Valley Heights including:
  - 12.1. Construction of a link road between Peninsula Road and Hawkesbury Road, and
  - 12.2. Installation of traffic lights at the intersection of the GWH and Peninsula Road,  
to enable westbound motorists to access Hawkesbury Road without diverting through Springwood along Macquarie Road.
13. Install Safety Cameras at key intersections along the GWH to monitor speed and red light offences (to reducing speeding and running of red lights by trucks and cars).
14. Seek state government funding for the construction and improvement of cycle ways between villages.

## **Sydney Metropolitan:**

15. Expand capacity on the Western Sydney Cityrail line to allow for additional services including express services, enhance rail freight capacity and provide a rail link to Macquarie and the Lower North Shore:
  - 15.1. Construct the Parramatta to Epping rail link
  - 15.2. Quadruplicate the rail line between St Marys and Penrith<sup>6</sup>
  - 15.3. Support the proposed ATRC grade separated junction at Strathfield<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix A, NSW State Plan, New South Wales State Government, November 2006

- 15.4. Construct a Sydney West freight rail line between Rooty Hill and Leightonfield
  - 15.5. Implement planning for a second harbor rail crossing
16. Reform public transport ticketing:
- 16.1. Implement integrated ticketing across the NSW public transport network
  - 16.2. Introduce tourist 3 day pass for weekends

### **Central West and broader NSW:**

- 17. Support construction of the inland rail line between Melbourne and Brisbane.
- 18. Seek funding for the Central West Transport Needs Study rail recommendations.
- 19. Reinstate morning passenger service from NSW Central West to Sydney and evening return service.
- 20. Support construction of the Maldon to Dombarton rail link.
- 21. Develop a long term sustainable road/rail transport plan between the Eastern ports and NSW Central West.

### **Address imbalance between rail and road:**

- 22. Push the Federal Government to address the taxation, investment and regulatory imbalance between road and rail freight. The State Government can offer to 'hand over' and or work through COAG to simplify state legislation and regulations whilst putting pressure on the Federal Government to reform the tax system.

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<sup>7</sup> Forms part of the Northern Sydney Rail Freight Corridor plan, page 21 "Submission by the NSW Government to Infrastructure Australia", August 2010

23. Call on Federal Government to make public transport fares FBT exempt to provide for additional funding for State public transport services.

**ENDORSED AND SUPPORTED BY:**