

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2007



LATEST UPDATE

This is the first formal newsletter from the Bells Line Expressway Group (BLEG).

The group's aim is to see construction of a 4-lane divided expressway across the Blue Mountains.

BLEG now has a detailed aerial map of the proposed expressway route that gives a clear picture of where and how the expressway will relate to the broader community. It details the route from the Marsden Park offshoot (from the M7 at the intersection of the old Richmond Road) to the intersection of the Mudgee exit on the Great Western Highway east of Lithgow – as in the consultant's plan.

The expressway is 94 kilometres in length and will slash the travelling time to Sydney by 35 minutes for cars and 25 minutes for trucks. The first priority for the new expressway is safety. Statistically, the Bells Line of Road is the most dangerous road in NSW per vehicle kilometre travelled.

The push for the expressway is currently being enhanced by a

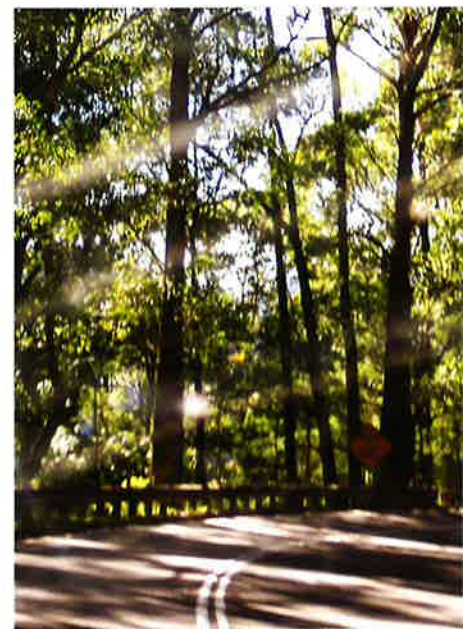
major campaign waged by local residents to upgrade the old Richmond Road due to the significant growth in population and transport demands in Western Sydney suburbs.

The Bells Line Expressway project continues to gain strong community support from both sides of the Blue Mountains as the statement by previous NSW Premier, Bob Carr, that "Sydney is full" becomes a reality.

There has been constant lobbying of Federal and State Governments.

On 17 October 2006 a unique delegation comprising Deputy Prime Minister, Mark Vaile; former Deputy Prime Ministers, John Anderson and Tim Fischer; Senators Fiona Nash and Bill Heffernan; Federal Members Jackie Kelly and Kerry Bartlett; BLEG Chairman, Ian Armstrong MP; former Bathurst Mayor, Ian Macintosh; Bathurst Regional Council Engineer, Neil Allen; and the Secretary of BLEG, Bob Roach met with the Prime Minister's Chief-of-Staff, Arthur Sinodinos and the Federal Minister for Roads, Jim Lloyd along with their advisers.

At this extremely high level meeting, which lasted more than 30 minutes, BLEG pushed for government support for the commencement of an Environmental Impact Study



and a commitment to the development of the Bells Line Expressway.

It was a positive meeting and as a result, a committee of professionals is currently working on extrapolating the community benefits of the project.

Following this deputation, BLEG lodged a submission to AusLink on 3 November 2006 in support of the Bells Line Expressway project. AusLink is Australia's first National Land Transport Plan and by linking transport performance outcomes to projected economic growth and development it is hoped to transform the way Australian Governments fund major road and rail systems infrastructure.

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Western Research Institute FINAL REPORT

The Western Research Institute has completed its third and final report on the development of the Bells Line Expressway.

This report compares the effects of the Hume Highway by-pass on the towns of Mittagong, Berrima, Goulburn and Yass with the likely effects of the Bells Line Expressway bypassing existing towns on the Bells Line route.

The report will be released early in the New Year and it is eagerly anticipated.

On 1 November 2006, the Western Research Institute and Charles Sturt University hosted a 'hypothetical' night in Bathurst, attended by about 70 people representing local government, chambers of commerce, community and user groups, traffic experts and the general public.

It was an excellent evening and many good questions were forthcoming on the project, environmental issues and alternate routes – all indicative of the support for the expressway concept.

It was formally established that the expressway must be built as soon as possible in the interests of safety, providing an efficient and fast transport link to Sydney, reviving tourism in the Central West, boosting commercial development and taking heavy traffic off the Great Western Highway for the benefit of towns and villages where there are 47 speed changes from Penrith to Blackheath on school days.

We have been informed that supplies of sand in Sydney

have been almost exhausted and that large supplies of sand are now being sourced from Lithgow and transported to the city, further underlining the need for the expressway.

Sydney's water supplies are becoming critical and it must be recognised that the city of Lithgow offers adequate sources of water and energy, both of which, along with cheap land, are essential ingredients for industrial development.

There has never been progress or development anywhere in the world without two key factors – water and a track to get to that water!!

Think about it!

NRMA SUPPORT for expressway

The NRMA now has three members on the Bells Line Expressway Group – the NRMA Chairman, Alan Evans and NRMA Directors, Graham Blight and Gary Punch.

TRAVELLING TIME FROM SYDNEY TO PARKES

**In a 1920 car rally
it took Perry Donnelly
4 hours and 56 minutes
to drive from Sydney to Parkes**

Despite the dramatic improvement in the quality of cars, their technology, tyres and safety combined with better roads

NOTHING HAS CHANGED 86 YEARS LATER!

**In 2006, the NRMA says the travelling time
for the 360km trip from Sydney to Parkes
via the Bells Line of Road is now**

5 hours and 8 minutes

**so the trip to Sydney via the Bells Line of
Road today is 12 minutes longer than it was
86 years ago!**

Hardly an efficient road transport link from
Western NSW to Sydney in the 21st century!

