

the light rail solution for the Botany Bay Region

Bay Light Express



NEWS UPDATE, November 2001

Bay Light Express or M6 tollway a year of community discussion

TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN SYDNEY has been dominated by the question of what will happen to the M6 motorway corridor. The community Bay Light Express and Illawarra Heavy Rail campaigns are both reactions to this. These successful campaigns are a testament to the community's desire to see development of a comprehensive public transport system over more motorway construction.

The last year of campaign activity in southern Sydney was sparked when Bruce Baird, Federal Member for Cook, organised a public meeting at the Cronulla Leagues Club to discuss transport development and in particular the M6 motorway. In his newsletter *Bruce Baird's Cook Courier* local residents were informed that:

Plans have been in place for decades for a link road between Rockdale and Loftus. With the completion of both the Eastern Distributor and the Sydney-Wollongong Expressway, acting on those plans seems the only way forward for our local roads.

The NRMA has supported my call for a government study to review the need to construct a link road, with the involvement of the local community. A link road would prevent traffic jams suffered by commuters between Cook and Sydney.

The M6 is the last big Sydney radial proposed as part of the County of Cumberland Scheme back in 1952. If built it would destroy a range of nature conservation and heritage sites located in the Botany Bay Region as well as undermine local amenity for thousands of residential homes. This is why viable public transport alternatives are high on the community's agenda.

Fortunately, EcoTransit Sydney, with the help of Independent Member for Bligh, Clover Moore and Greens MLC Lee Rhianon, launched the Bay Light Express proposal before the Liberal Party

Transport meeting. Because of the M6's enormous potential for destruction, the initial attempt to manufacture support for the proposal has been met with strident opposition from local residents and community groups along the corridor.

In the Sutherland Shire, local residents formed a special sub-committee of the Sutherland Shire Environment Centre to fight the M6. CARTS—Citizens Advocating Responsible Transport for the Shire.

In the inner city, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre has put its weight behind the campaign to see light rail reintroduced to King Street.

What is the Bay Light Express?

The Bay Light has to be appreciated as operating on two fronts.

First it has been a catalyst for public discussion on transport development—a mechanism that helps communities to realise that more motorway development is not the only option they have. By introducing a rail based proposal, residents and decision makers have been able to compare road with rail transport rather than be asked to discuss details for a road option making it a fete of complé.

Secondly, the Bay Light needs to be seen as a line on a map that potentially represents a new piece of infrastructure which would have a physical presence and impact on the environment and neighbourhoods it passes through. This would change movement patterns in the short term and effect land use, or

the Bay Light Calendar

■ 11 October 2000

Launch of the Bay Light Express at Parliament House by Independent Member for Bligh, Clover Moore MP

■ 31 October 2000

EcoTransit Sydney (ETS) and Sutherland Shire Environment Centre (SSEC) meet Ian McManus (State MP for Heathcote) and Barry Collier (State MP for Miranda)

■ 1 November 2000

ETS present Bay Light to Kirrawee Precinct Committee

■ 2 November 2000

Liberal Party Meeting on Transport at Cronulla Leagues Club

■ 7 November 2000

ETS meets with George Thompson (State MP for Rockdale)

■ 9 November 2000

ETS meet South Sydney Development Group and Total Environment Centre (TEC) to discuss Bay Light

■ 19 November 2000

ETS presents Bay Light to No Aircraft Noise Party

■ 30 November 2000

Campaign meeting at SSEC (20 local Kirrawee residents turn up)

■ 6 December 2000

ETS presents Bay Light to Sutherland Shire Council (SSC) lunch-time seminar

■ 7 December 2000

ETS presents Bay Light to Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils' Transport Committee at Bankstown Council Chambers and SSC Transport Committee

■ 12 December 2000

Community Meeting on M6 at Stapleton Community Centre, Richard Aberline from SSC presents ideas for alternate uses of the M6 corridor

building development patterns, in the long term.

As a concept, the Bay Light Express began during community discussions in March of 1996. Residents in Sutherland Shire, joined forces with residents from inner south west neighbourhoods in Rockdale Municipality. The implications of the M5East were discussed—the geometry of this motorway would generate traffic congestion at key points in the road network, which could then be used as a pretext for building the M6 motorway. It was agreed the M6 would have a destructive impact on Sydney's south and that moves needed to be made to counteract it.

From these discussions an alternate public transport proposal emerged—the Bay Light West—which would use some, but not all, of the M6 corridor, catering to a different set of trip patterns within that region—short and middle distance trips. It would also act as a force to bring communities together by fostering a more pedestrian and transit orientation for land use activities in those adjoining neighbourhoods.

In late 1999, community groups became aware of discussions that had taken place inside the RTA about alternative alignments for the M6 motorway. Community opposition would make the push for a tollway through Rockdale extremely difficult and there was the added problem of how to link the northern head of the motorway into the rest of the Sydney freeway and tollway network.

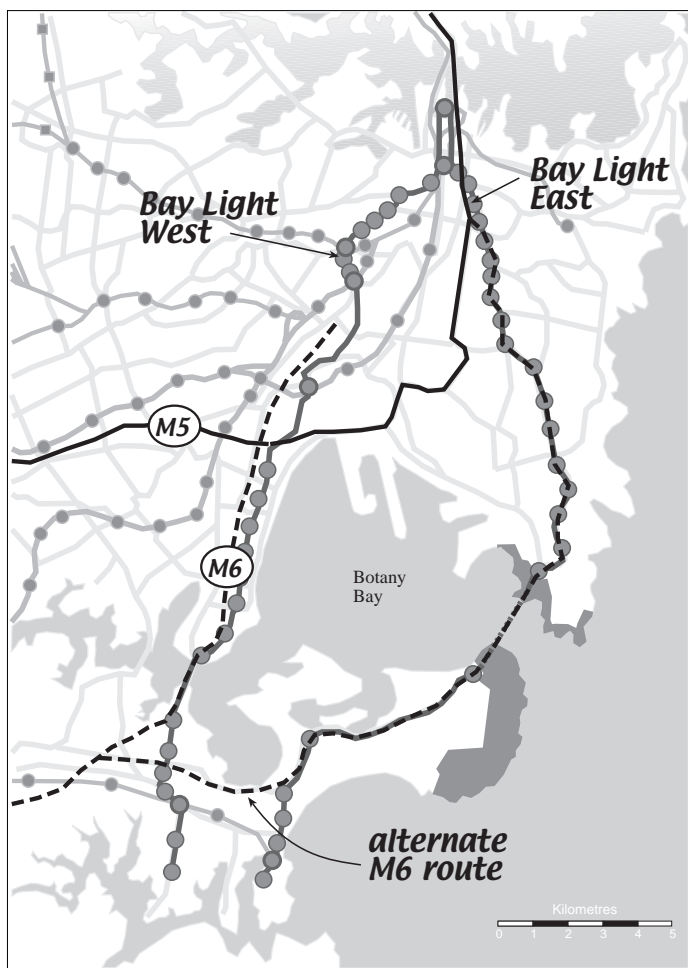
It was suggested an alternate route could be developed. This would use part of the motorway corridor in the south, but re-route road and heavy vehicle traffic through to Captain Cook's Drive and out to Kurnell before the motorway would enter a tunnel section crossing the heads of

Botany Bay. Exiting at La Perouse it would link in with an expanded Anzac Parade.

On considering this new aspect to the M6, EcoTransit Sydney members decided to add a new component to the Bay Light proposal—the Bay Light East. This was to be a second light rail link. Skirting the eastern side of Botany Bay along the alternate M6 route, it would use the historic alignment down Anzac Parade removed during the 1960s.

Conceptually, this proposal opens the way to thinking about transport for an entire region in a new and innovative way. It also allows the focus to shift from 'moving traffic' to 'linking and building communities'. The Bay Light also provides a good platform from which issues such as energy use and the security of energy supply can be discussed, as well as the staged implementation of a large project.

If built, the stages closest to the inner city would need to be constructed first. They provide the core of the system while at the same time follow routes where demand for public transport has outstripped the capability of existing bus services. The risk of failure in these sectors is non-existent with commuters being left at the side of the road while buses too full to pick them up pass them by.



■ **16 January 2001**

Community Meeting on Bay Light and M6 at Stapleton Community Centre

■ **23 January 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Andrew Refshauge (MP for Marrickville)

■ **31 January 2001**

ETS and SSEC meet Barry O'Farrel to discuss Southern Sydney transport issues

■ **13 February 2001**

Community meeting on Bay Light and M6 at Stapleton Community Centre

■ **12 February 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Randwick Tourism Committee at Randwick Council

■ **16 February 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Cherie Burton (Member for Kogarah)

■ **21 February 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Women In Transport, at Department of Transport, Elizabeth Street

■ **9 April 2001**

ETS and SSEC meet Danna Vale (Federal MP for Hughes) to discuss Bay Light

■ **2 May 2001**

ETS and CARTS meet with Bruce Baird (Federal MP for Cook)

■ **14 May 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Maroubra Branch of the ALP

■ **21 May 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Sam Witheridge (Mayor of Kogarah Council)

■ **7 June 2001**

ETS meet coordinator for Illawarra Regional Organisation of Councils

■ **12 June 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Rockdale Council's Environment Committee

■ **13 August 2001**

ETS, CARTS and SSEC meet Michael Deegan (DG of Transport) to discuss upgrades on Illawarra Heavy Rail Line.

■ **3 September 2001**

ETS presents Bay Light to Marrickville Council

■ **28 October 2001**

ETS submits motion to Nature Conservation Council Annual Conference to oppose M6 through the Royal National Park. Motion is accepted unanimously.

■ **27 November 2001**

ETS meets Peter King (Federal MP for Wentworth) to discuss light rail Sydney.

■ **19 December 2001**

ETS meets Greens Councillors from East Sydney to discuss light rail and Bay Light.