

## **Appendix A: Critical Analysis of Hunter Business Chamber Proposal**

*Supplementary Technical Information  
Presented to Premier's Infrastructure  
Implementation Group (IIG)*

Prepared by Save Our Rail NSW Inc.  
<http://saveourrail.org.au/>

### **Proposal has Serious Flaws**

- ◆ Save Our Rail is concerned that the Hunter Business Chamber's proposal -- to remove electrification from the line between Broadmeadow and Newcastle and divert electric trains to Warabrook -- is seriously flawed.

# A Waste of Public Money

- ◆ Save Our Rail is concerned that public money will be wasted exploring ways to implement this fundamentally flawed plan.
- ◆ However, alternative plans do exist and provide positive outcomes for the budgeted amount.

# Main Areas of Concern

- ◆ Save Our Rail's criticisms of the Hunter Business Chamber's proposals fall into the following categories:
  1. Passenger Disadvantage / Patronage Loss
  2. Systemic Disadvantage
  3. Implementation Problems / Cost

# Passenger Disadvantage

- Re-direction of all trains from the South:
  - Disruption and delay to all Newcastle passengers from Sydney, Central Coast, and Western Lake Macquarie.
- Forced transfer: Disadvantage, especially to passengers with reduced mobility.
- **Time penalty to all passengers**, estimated minimum 25 minutes.
- Effects on punctuality – workers, students, people with appointments
- Overcrowding – Hunter diesels are currently “standing room only” during peak hours.

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# Passenger Disadvantage (cont.)

## Results

- ◆ Many passengers will abandon rail to opt for car transport.
- ◆ Patronage will fall, affecting viability of the whole system.
- ◆ Increased traffic congestion, parking problems and environmental damage.

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# Loss of Patronage

- ◆ Forced in-transit mode change known to cause **loss of patronage, estimate 60%** (Currie Report).
- ◆ Hunter Transport Task Force report recommends *“There should be a determined effort to increase patronage on the current system”*.

# Loss of Patronage (cont.)

- ◆ The Business Chamber proposal would do the opposite – it would deter public transport use by passengers from:
  - Sydney
  - Central Coast growth areas (e.g. Warnervale)
  - Lake Macquarie growth areas (e.g. Morisset)
    - These growth areas are expected to commute to Newcastle, not Sydney.

# Ageing Population

- ◆ Certainties:
  - **Population increase** (estimate 95,000 to 125,000).
  - **Greater percentage of elderly.**
- ◆ Public transport provision is essential.
  - trains preferred
- ◆ **Changeover during journey is inappropriate** for elderly passengers.

# Systemic Repercussions

- ◆ Lower Hunter Draft Regional Strategy states the need to **retain Newcastle as the regional business and cultural centre.**
- ◆ KBR report – warns of compromise of CBD's role as regional centre if there is any cut to line.
- ◆ Currie report states – removal of Newcastle section of line can **reduce viability of entire transport system.**

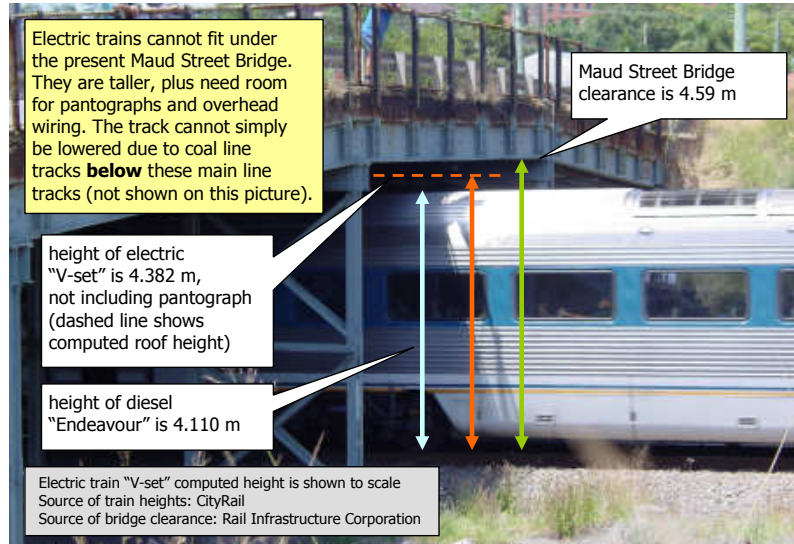
# Implementation Problems and Cost

- ◆ Technical implementation problems will increase the cost of the follow items:
  - Electrification from Woodville Junction to Warabrook.
  - Rebuild two existing road bridges to give clearance for taller electric trains plus associated overhead wiring.
  - Upgrade Waratah Station with an island platform and support for longer electric trains.
  - Upgrade Warabrook Stations with additional terminating platforms and support for longer trains.

# Implementation Problems – Maud Street

- ◆ Electric trains won't fit under Maud Street Bridge.
  - Main passenger line can't be lowered because of the coal line underneath it.
  - Raising the road bridge makes the “hump” even bigger, affecting road safety.

# Maud Street Bridge (pic. 1)



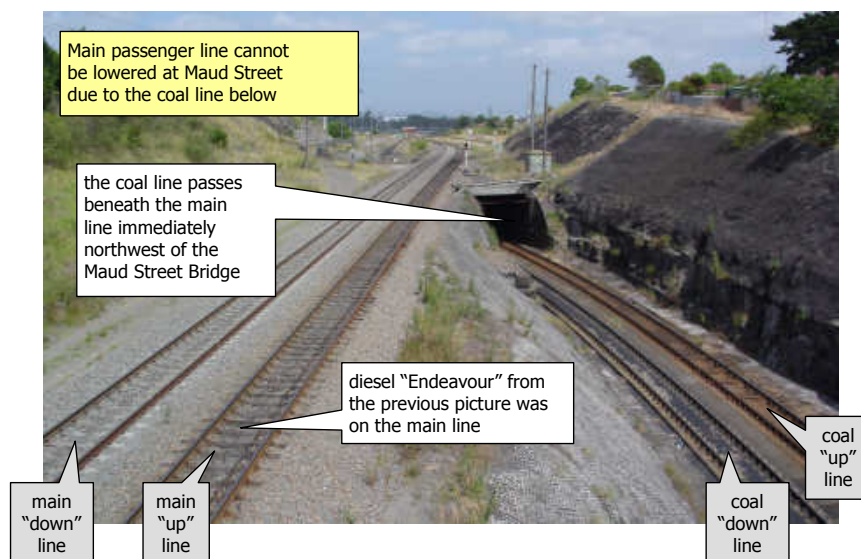
Looking southwest at Maud Street Bridge

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# Maud Street Bridge (pic. 2)



Looking northwest from Maud Street Bridge (away from Newcastle)

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## Maud Street Bridge (pic 3)



Looking northeast along Maud Street toward the Maud Street bridge

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## Implementation Problems – Waratah Station

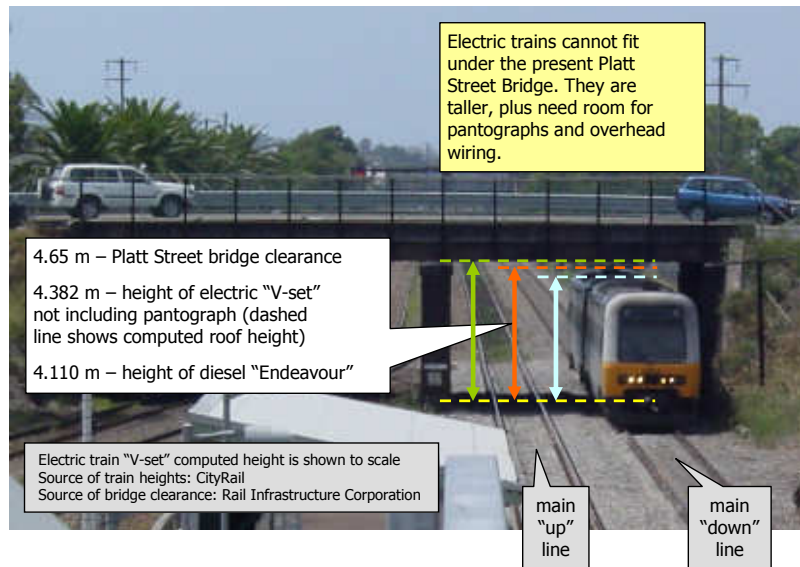
- ◆ Electric trains won't fit under Platt Street Bridge.
- ◆ Safety – Granville-style derailment risk of curving track around an island platform so close to a bridge.
- ◆ Platforms need to be extended but are constrained on all sides (road bridge, coal line crossovers and ARTC maintenance area)

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# Waratah Station (pic. 1)



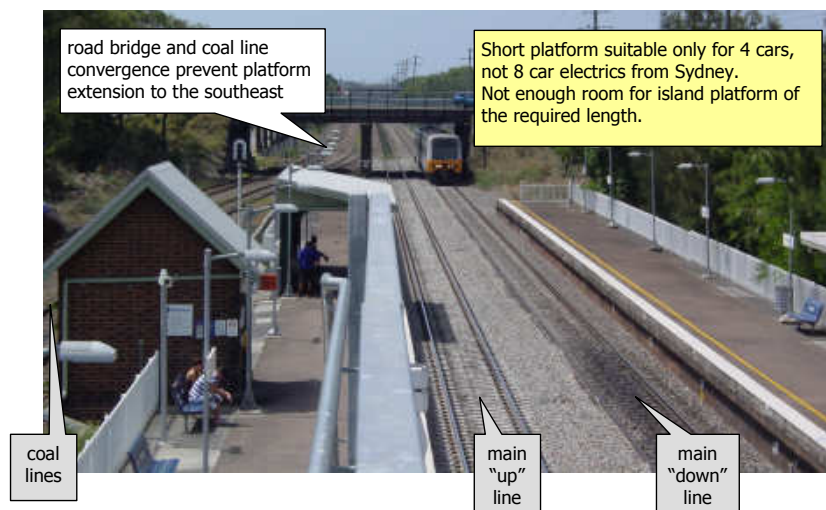
Looking southeast from Waratah Station pedestrian bridge

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# Waratah Station (pic. 2)



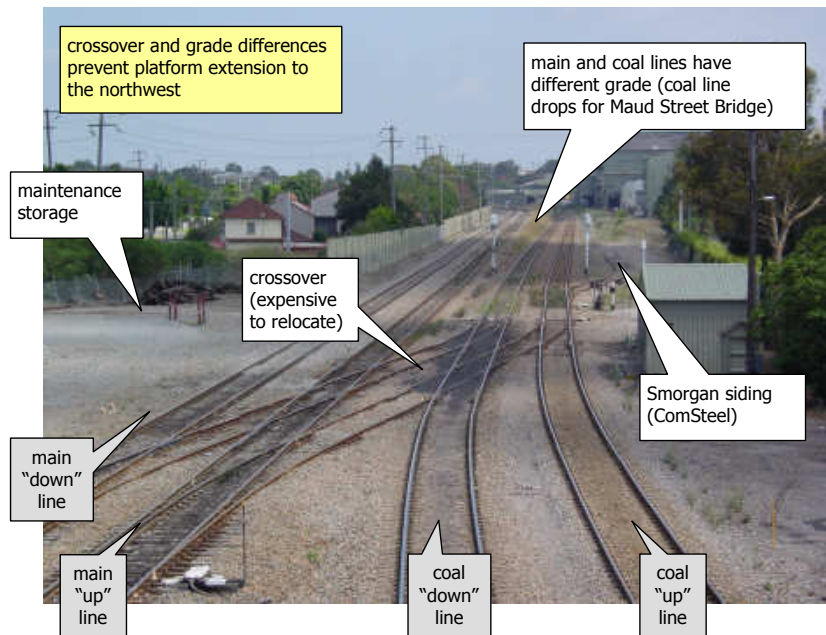
Looking southeast from Waratah Station pedestrian bridge toward Newcastle

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## Waratah Station (pic. 3)



Looking northwest from Waratah Station away from Newcastle

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## Implementation Problems – Warabrook Station

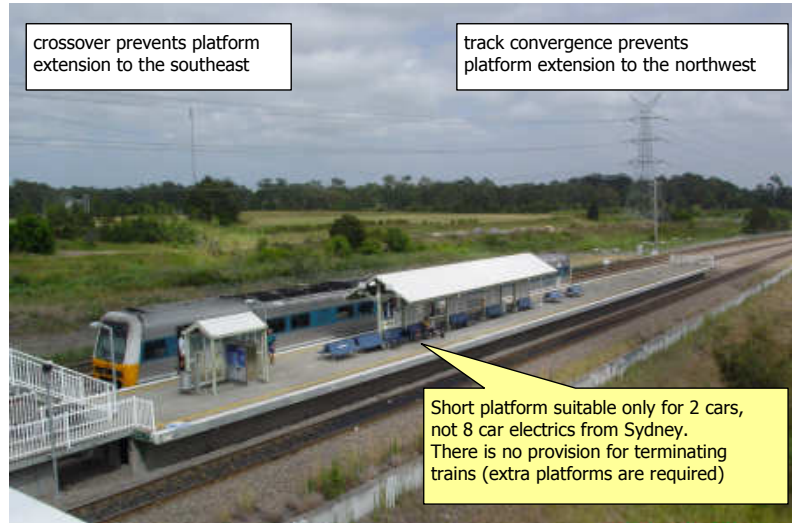
- ◆ Insufficient platform length – extension is constrained by:
  - Nearby coal-line crossover
  - The coal-lines themselves
  - Wetlands
- ◆ Extra terminating platforms required:
  - Nearby wetlands make this difficult

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# Warabrook Station (pic. 1)



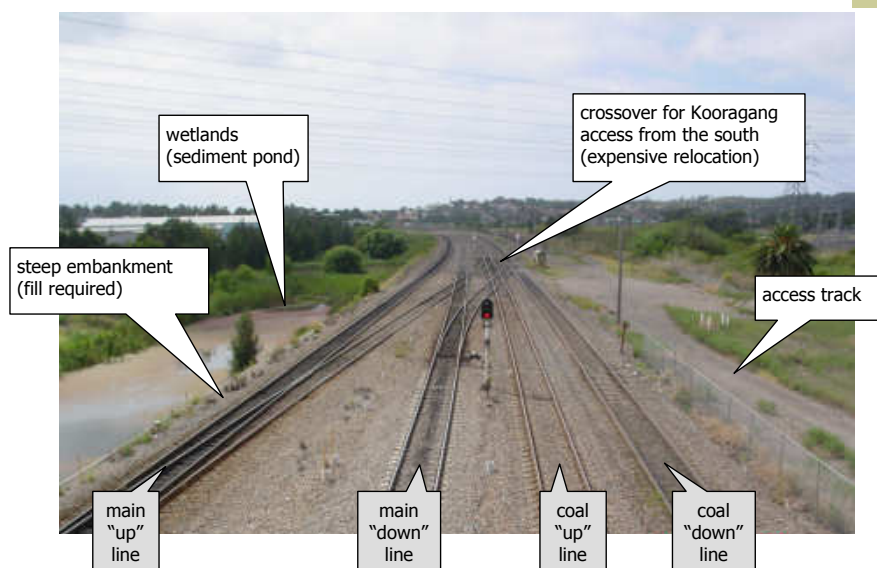
Looking west from Warabrook Station pedestrian bridge

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# Warabrook Station (pic. 2)



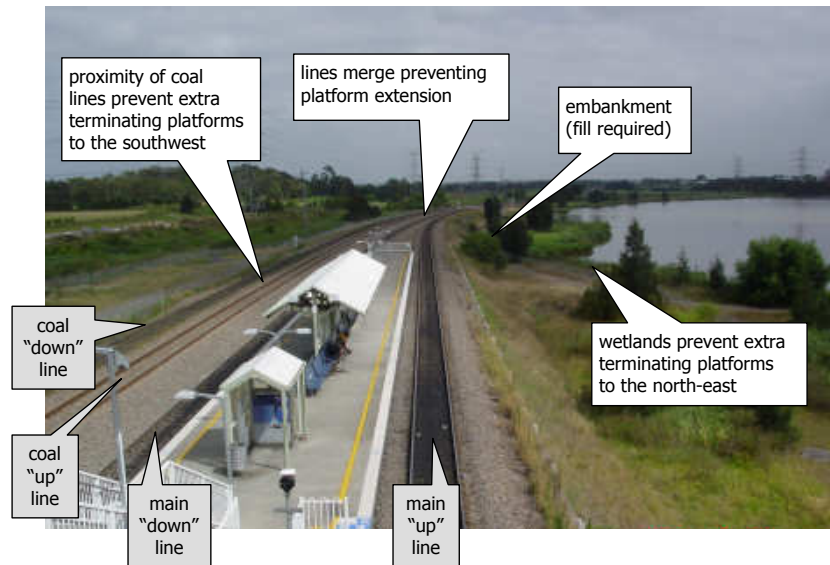
Looking southeast from Warabrook Station (toward Newcastle)

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## Warabrook Station (pic. 3)



Looking northwest from Warabrook Station (away from Newcastle)

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## ARTC Lease Problems

- ◆ Chamber's plan affects track leased by ARTC.
  - Plan results in disruptive construction and increased congestion on ARTC line.
- ◆ Chamber has no indicative support from ARTC.
- ◆ A ridiculous proposal when ARTC is spending \$152 million on Hunter Valley rail improvements:
  - \$66.6 million specifically "for capacity enhancement though the elimination of identified congested locations".
    - Of this amount, \$25 million is for grade separation at Sandgate "to remove conflict between coal movements ... and interstate, regional and commuter traffic on the main line".

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# Conclusion

- ◆ Save Our Rail believes the Hunter Business Chamber proposal would disadvantage Lower Hunter community through social disadvantage, loss of tourism opportunity and environmental damage.
- ◆ The community would not accept this proposal.
- ◆ Save Our Rail views this proposal as detrimental to transport into Newcastle.
- ◆ The proposal threatens viability of the Newcastle CBD and the viability of the Hunter rail system.

# Conclusion (cont.)

- ◆ The proposal has major technical difficulties and would be costly to implement.
  - Inability of electric trains to fit under current overpass structures and the need to greatly modify stations.
- ◆ **It is an attempt to close the Newcastle line through stealth – creating loss of patronage for the aim of eventual closure.**

## Conclusion (cont.)

- ◆ **Save Our Rail will not accept this proposal and requests the NSW Government to waste no money on it.** It would cause disadvantage – not improvement – to transport.
- ◆ **Money allocated should be re-directed toward positive improvements** – additional crossings, beautification and better access.