

HEALTHY CITIES ILLAWARRA INC.

30 November, 1998

Progress in Rail Reform Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
Locked Bag 2  
Collins Street East Post Office  
MELBOURNE VIC 3003

Dear Sir/Madam.

**OAK FLATS BUS RAIL INTERCHANGE**

Please find enclosed supporting information about the above facility. This information was referred to in the presentation by Dr Philip Laird on behalf of the Healthy Cities Illawarra Transport and Environment Task Force.

We would appreciate if this document could be included in the final report of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Frank Wallner  
MANAGER

Encl.

**OAK FLATS BUS/RAIL INTERCHANGE FACILITY**

**Prepared by Shellharbour City Council for Healthy Cities Illawarra Transport and Environment Taskforce.**

Shellharbour City Council, along with the Healthy Cities Illawarra Transport and Environment Taskforce, is seeking commitment to the provision of funding for the next stage of the extension of the electrified rail line to Oak Flats and the construction of the Oak Flats Bus/Rail Interchange.

The original proposal for the construction of the Oak Flats Interchange arose in 1981 and to this date the only commitment to funding which has been achieved is for the pre-design stage of the extension of the electrified rail line to Oak Flats. However, there has been no commitment to date from either the State or Federal Governments for the construction of the Oak Flats Bus/Rail Interchange.

Council and Healthy Cities Illawarra seek budget funds to be allocated for this work in the 1999/2000 budget by the NSW Government in 1998. The local community, Shellharbour City Council and Healthy Cities Illawarra have tried on numerous occasions to seek the support of the State Government for this vital project.

Healthy Cities Illawarra Transport and Environment Taskforce, along with Shellharbour City Council, regards the provision of the Oak Flats Bus/Rail Interchange facility as long overdue. It would be desirable for both the construction of the Oak Flats interchange and the extension of the electrified rail system to proceed concurrently.

## The need for the Oak Flats Bus/Rail Interchange

Shellharbour has been one of the major growth areas of the South Coast region over the last 20 years and has an existing population of over 53,000 people.

Population projections have indicated that there is an expected population of 79334 people by 2013, which represents an increase of 26,334 people, and 9,739 households in the twenty year period between 1993 and 2013. Nearly all of this growth will occur within a 5 - 6 km radius of the proposed Oak Flats bus/rail interchange. Future land releases are expected to occur on a number of fronts including:

- Albion Park development area - the first stage has been approved, however there are an expected 2000 lots to be released over the next 10 years.
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- Shell Cove: the master plan for this estate sets out 3200 residential lots, with the project expected to be completed by 2010; and
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- Lakeview Estate - 1600 lots to be released by 2002.

The proposed site of the Oak Flats Bus/Rail interchange is centrally located in respect to the residential release areas of the City of Shellharbour and is the geographic centre of the Local Government Area. In addition, the site is accessible from all areas of the Local Government area by all transport modes. Council is also developing a cycleway system to pass through the site.

Studies have indicated that 60% of the workforce of Shellharbour work in establishments within the Wollongong LGA, with a further 8% based in Sydney. 1991 Journey to Work Data shows that a large proportion of the people working within Wollongong travel to work by car (approximately 7,000 people).

Shellharbour also has a significant proportion of the labour force commuting daily to Sydney for employment. At the present time rail commuters have to travel to Dapto Rail Station and then change trains for the electrified rail line to Sydney. This is considered inconvenient and many commuters now choose to travel by private transport to either Sydney or Dapto to reduce travelling times. It is likely that some of these people would switch to taking the train to work if train and bus services were improved.

Healthy Cities Illawarra's Transport and Environment Taskforce and Shellharbour City Council aim to improve the public transport network of the Illawarra in the hope of reducing the reliance on private transport, increasing public transport patronage and reducing vehicular emissions, improving the quality of life for those living in the Illawarra and the environment. The construction of the Oak Flats Bus/Rail interchange and the extension of the electrified rail line to Oak Flats is considered an essential project in this regard.

The project has obvious benefits to the entire Shellharbour community. The opportunity exists to positively impact upon public transport options in Shellharbour and potentially expand existing bus operations. However, not making a commitment to the project will result in a very low standard transport system with likely increased dependency on private vehicle ownership. This must be avoided as Shellharbour already has a high level of private vehicle ownership.

The construction of the Oak Flats Bus/Rail Interchange, coupled with the electrification of the rail line to Oak Flats, has been assessed in several transport studies including the following, which have each regarded the projects as essential components of the Illawarra regional transport network:

- Illawarra Rail Line Interchange Study was commissioned by City Rail in August 1993 to review the requirements for works from Dapto to Kiama. The outcomes of this study were in support of the establishment of the bus/rail interchange at Oak Flats.
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- The Oak Flats Interchange Study was commissioned by the Department of Transport in April 1996 to review the feasibility of establishing a bus/rail interchange at Oak Flats. The study made various recommendations which would enable the viable implementation of the interchange.
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- Illawarra Urban Transport Opportunities Study Final Study Report, commissioned by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and prepared by DJA Maunsell, November 1996.
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- Metropolitan Strategy Committee - Illawarra Sub-Committee Draft Integrated Transport Strategy.

This urban public transport system requires improvement. The current level of funding for this public transport improvement project is inadequate and should be provided in the short term. The State and Federal governments would be supporting the principles of ecologically sustainable development in allocating funds to the improvement of the public transport system in Shellharbour City. Council and Healthy Cities Illawarra requests your strong support and a recommendation to the Minister to ensure commitment of funding for the Oak Flats Bus/Rail Interchange and rail electrification to Oak Flats is included in the next State government budget. These two projects need to be identified within the Ministry of Urban Infrastructure Management's Infrastructure Program, to be included within the 12 month program to obtain the funding commitment required.