

**Wood Richard**

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**From:** [redacted] Section 47F  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 May 2012 10:16 AM  
**To:** Wood Richard  
**Subject:** RE: Northern Sydney Freight Corridor 3rd Line Epping - Thornleigh

Richard – I think also you said you would not object to sending me the cost benefit analysis ratios used in Nation Building funded projects.

Would you be able to send as much detail on this as possible, please?

Kind regards,

[redacted]  
**From:** [redacted] Section 47F  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 May 2012 6:52 PM  
**To:** Richard Wood  
**Cc:** Nick Seow; [Sonya.Gatfield@aph.gov.au](mailto:Sonya.Gatfield@aph.gov.au); The Hon. Greg Smith SC MP; Lynn Taye  
**Subject:** Northern Sydney Freight Corridor 3rd Line Epping - Thornleigh

Mr Wood:

Thank you for your time today on the telephone. I promised to send you a summary of the position that the residents confronted with the Epping – Thornleigh Third Line are faced with, which I believe ought to be brought to the attention of the Minister on the grounds that the Commonwealth is funding three-quarters of the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor Project.

If it is the case, I do not think it is acceptable for the Commonwealth to be taking a position with respect to environmental issues that seeks to satisfy itself that such matters are being appropriately addressed by axiomatic reference to position that the States (sic) have environmental considerations enshrined in their planning and infrastructure guidelines. Notwithstanding whether those have been established by the will of their Parliaments, as you suggested. That might an appropriate stance were the funding exclusively or predominantly coming from the State concerned but that is not the case in this situation.

Indeed, it is precisely for this reason that I drew your attention to the interim and shortly final rail infrastructure construction guidelines. These contain both structural and policy setting flaws – quite intentional, we believe – from an environmental perspective as to be an insult to the communities that they purport to acknowledge. Specifically, (1) they are 'guidelines'; just as the broader regulatory regime as it applies to rail freight-related pollution rather than any mandatory dimension (2) the settings for the guidelines are so low by any measure as to be meaningless. (Indeed, the trigger levels fall very short of WHO guidelines, something that the NSW Chief Medical Officer has brought to the attention of CEOs of both Railcorp and the NSW Environmental Protection Agency.)

Residents are presently considering a class action against extant freight train pollution, noting that we are facing 24-hour a day exposure to noise in the range of 90-108db; respiratory disease from asbestosis from freight train brake pads and diesel loco emissions; and, psychological damage because of the savageness, intrusiveness and frequency of the freight train movements.


Residents recognise that with economic growth comes the need for changes to intermodal freight capacity but the current arrangements are ill-conceived and a symptom of the dysfunctional planning arrangements both within and between State and Federal governments, all too a function of political cycles rather than long-term planning. Indeed,

estimates by a resident qualified to make such calculations, suggest that the increases in both rail and road borne freight will render the capacity contemplated to be sated within two decades. A poor return on your/our investment!

In short, I would be obliged if you could have the Minister consider more robustly the environmental impacts rather than relying on flawed arrangements at a State level as a defence in this regard. And, further, to encourage the Minister and other stakeholders to become far more imaginative and bold when it comes to infrastructure planning. At present, no one is winning – communities; taxpayers; commerce.

Once again, thank you for coming back to me following my representation to the Mr Albanese's office.

Regards,

  
Section 47F