



The BLOR and M9/OSO Corridors, Part 2

Description

This post is the second of two in response to a proposal to create two motorway and rail corridors through the Hawkesbury.

The [first video](#) provides some historical context to the broader phenomenon of State and Federal governments foisting large projects on unsuspecting communities. The challenge of balancing long term planning and the impact on individual communities has frequently been botched, and I cited the history of corridor sell-offs, and earlier proposals for airports, prisons, dumps and new suburbs, by both major political parties, as salutary examples.

What follows is a transcript of the video, with documents referenced on-screen linked or inserted as needed.

TRANSCRIPT:

In the first video, I provided a small history lesson about the litany of misguided schemes that governments of both hues have cooked up over the decades for the Hawkesbury, and how each one, after a fight from the community, was scuttled, and the government of the day had their asses handed to them, on a plate.

Today, let me be far more specific about the current corridor proposals. This video is also a part of my submission to Transport for NSW.

Point 1: Both these corridor proposals are equally bad.

It is true that the Bells line of road corridor has gained more publicity here in the Hawkesbury, including through a very well attended meeting at Clarendon showground a few weeks ago. But the fundamental problem of both corridors are the same.

Both corridors divide rural communities, destroy productive agricultural and equine lands, diminish visual amenity, endanger ecological communities and threaten the futures that families thought they had by buying homes outside of what I call ant-nest Sydney.

And both corridors suffer from the deficiencies of process that have landed these proposals on unsuspecting voters, without sufficient community consultation, without enough knowledge of the options to make meaningful contributions to the debate, and in a time-frame that is far too short.

The community has had barely 8 weeks to inform themselves and organise to have their say on projects that may happen decades from now. What's the rush?

Point 2: The River crossing has to be back on the table

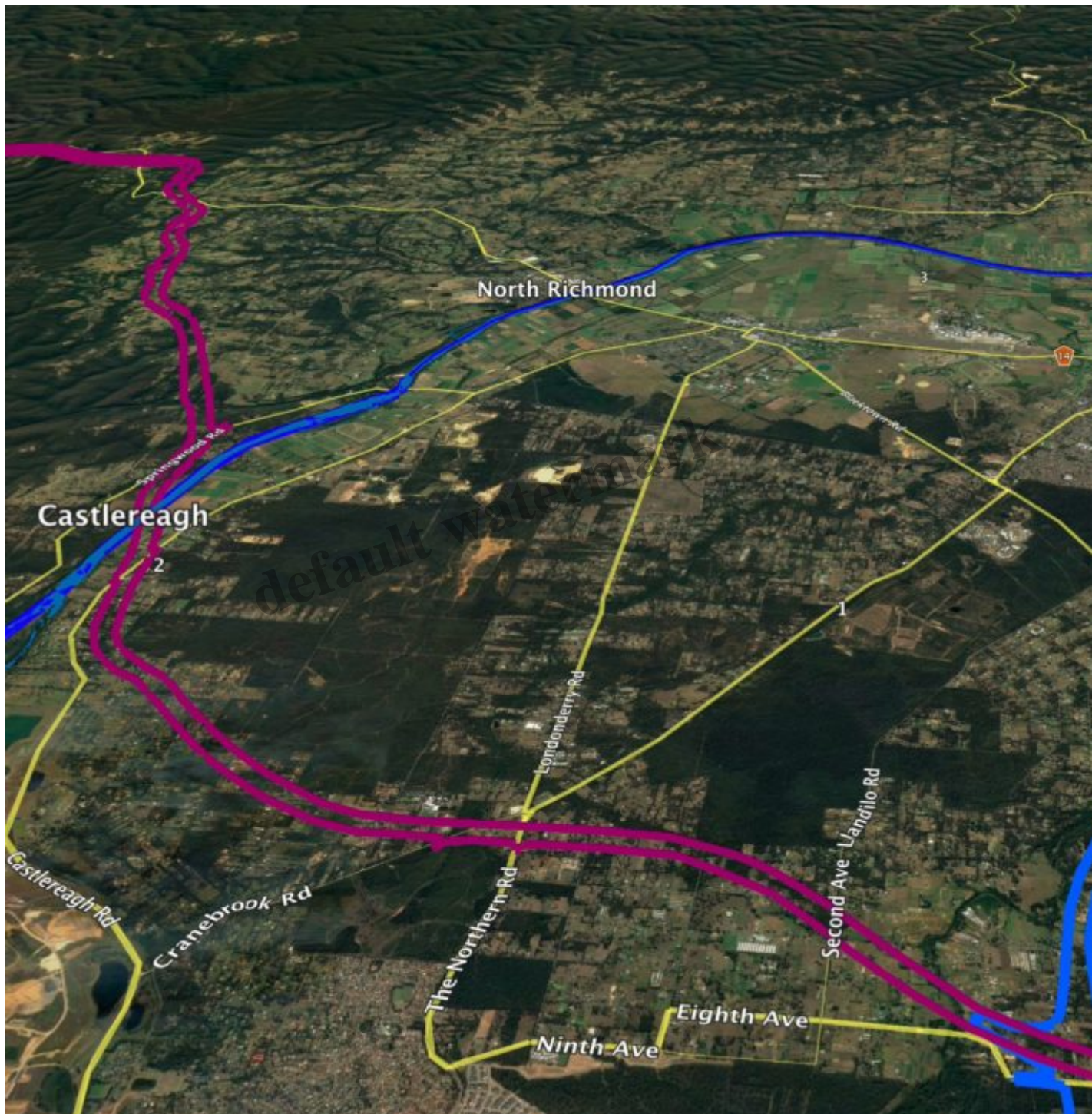
default watermark



We are free to speculate that the government will change its mind about the Castlereagh corridor. It may default to the [original 1951 alignment](#), and it may choose to stop at the Hawkesbury Nepean river instead of crossing over it.

If that's the case, then the question of an extra crossing of the river must be back on the table.

I always believed that only someone as major as the M9 could deliver what we've always needed – a new crossing of the Hawkesbury Nepean River, somewhere between North Richmond and Wilberforce.

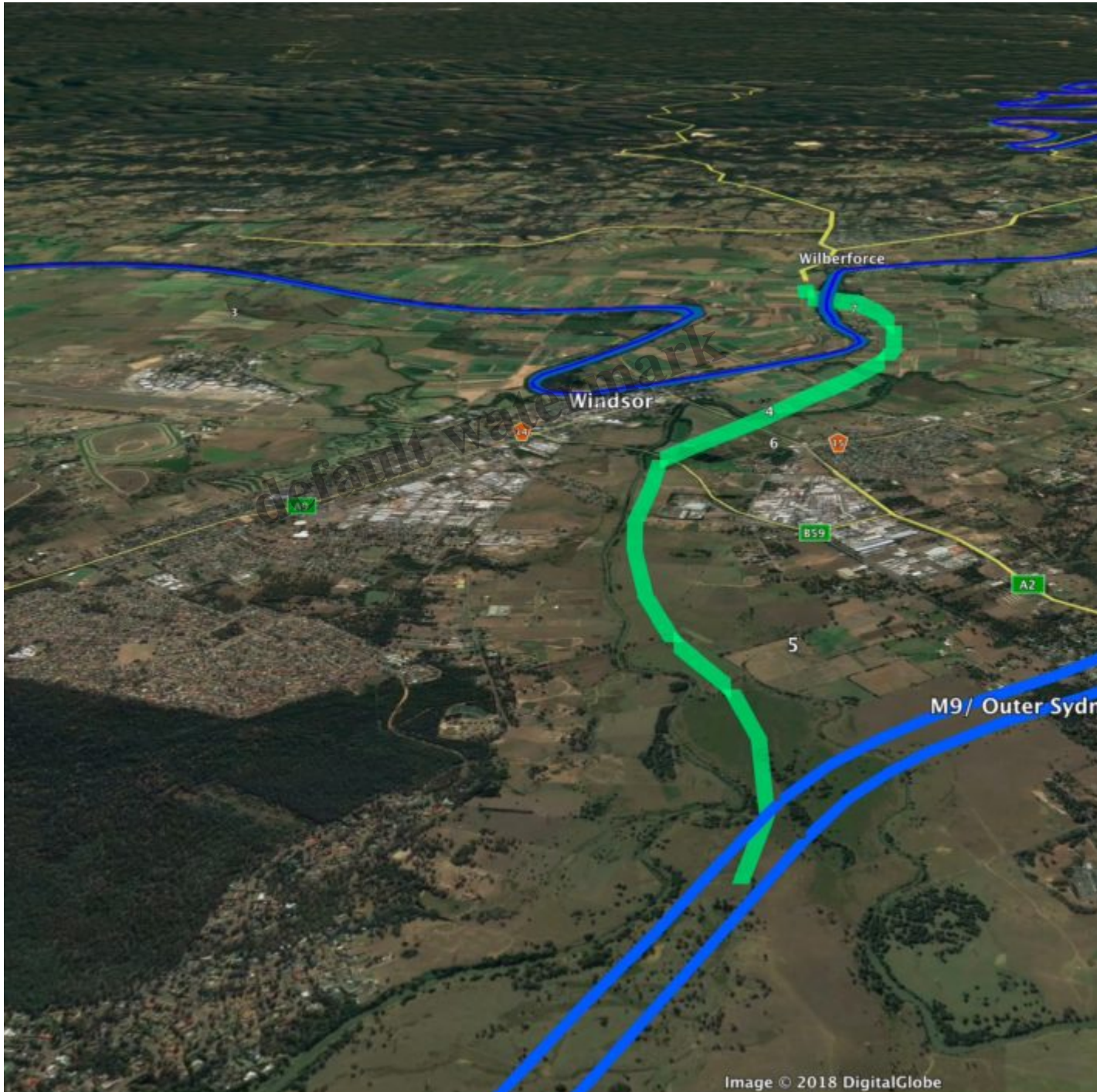


The BLOR/ Castlereagh corridor (purple, at left) and the M9/ OSO corridor (blue, at right), and the floodplain. Castlereagh is a long way from where traffic relief is needed, which should be between North Richmond and Wilberforce

It turns out that we got proposals for two corridors, and *neither* delivered. The briefing Council received

on the Castlereagh corridor actually suggested that it would help alleviate traffic on Windsor Road, by putting a new crossing of the river at Castlereagh, more than half the way to Penrith. Bollocks!

But what a huge political win it would be for the party that redirected the M9 along, say, the south creek floodplain, crossed the Hawkesbury river downstream of Windsor bridge, and joined it to the Putty road, providing a link to both the Hunter and Newcastle as originally intended.



An alternative route that would cross the South Creek floodplain and cross the Hawkesbury River downstream of Windsor.

Point 3: Why are both corridors roads to nowhere?

The Bells line corridor is irrelevant unless there is a major amplification of Bells line itself west of Kurrajong Heights and over the range. There isn't anything like a compelling case for this given that billions have been spent over the last two decades to upgrade the Great Western Freeway.

default watermark

Mount Victoria to Lithgow Great Western Highway Upgrade
Strategic review of a Newnes Plateau corridor

WORKS COMPLETED SINCE 2000

July 2000 – Valley Heights – New pedestrian bridge	✓
July 2000 – Warrimoo – Four lane upgrade and pedestrian bridge at railway station	✓
February 2001 – Blaxland – Parking improvements and pedestrian bridge at railway station	✓
June 2001 – Faulconbridge – Four lane upgrade and pedestrian bridge at railway station	✓
June 2002 – Soldiers Pinch (Mt Victoria) – Improved alignment and overtaking lane	✓
August 2003 – Linden – Four lane upgrade with new bridges and pedestrian signals	✓
December 2003 – Coomassie shopping precinct – Parking, pedestrian and cyclist improvements	✓
December 2003 – Medlow Bath – Improved alignment, replacement bridge and new signalised intersection	✓
August 2004 – Shell Corner (Katoomba) – Four lane upgrade, two new bridges, new traffic signals	✓
June 2005 – Wentworth Falls West – Four lane upgrade with three improved intersections and new off-road shared pedestrian/cyclist path	✓
August 2005 – Lapstone Hill safety improvements – Median barrier extended and wider shoulder for cyclists	✓
May 2006 – Leura to Katoomba (Section 1) – Four lane upgrade and new underpass at Leura Mall	✓
June 2008 – Layton Avenue to Baden Place (Blaxland), The Valley Road to Lugarno Avenue (Springwood), west of Railway Parade (Medlow Bath), railway overbridge to Grandview Road (Mt Victoria) – pavement resurfacing	✓

WORKS IN CONSTRUCTION

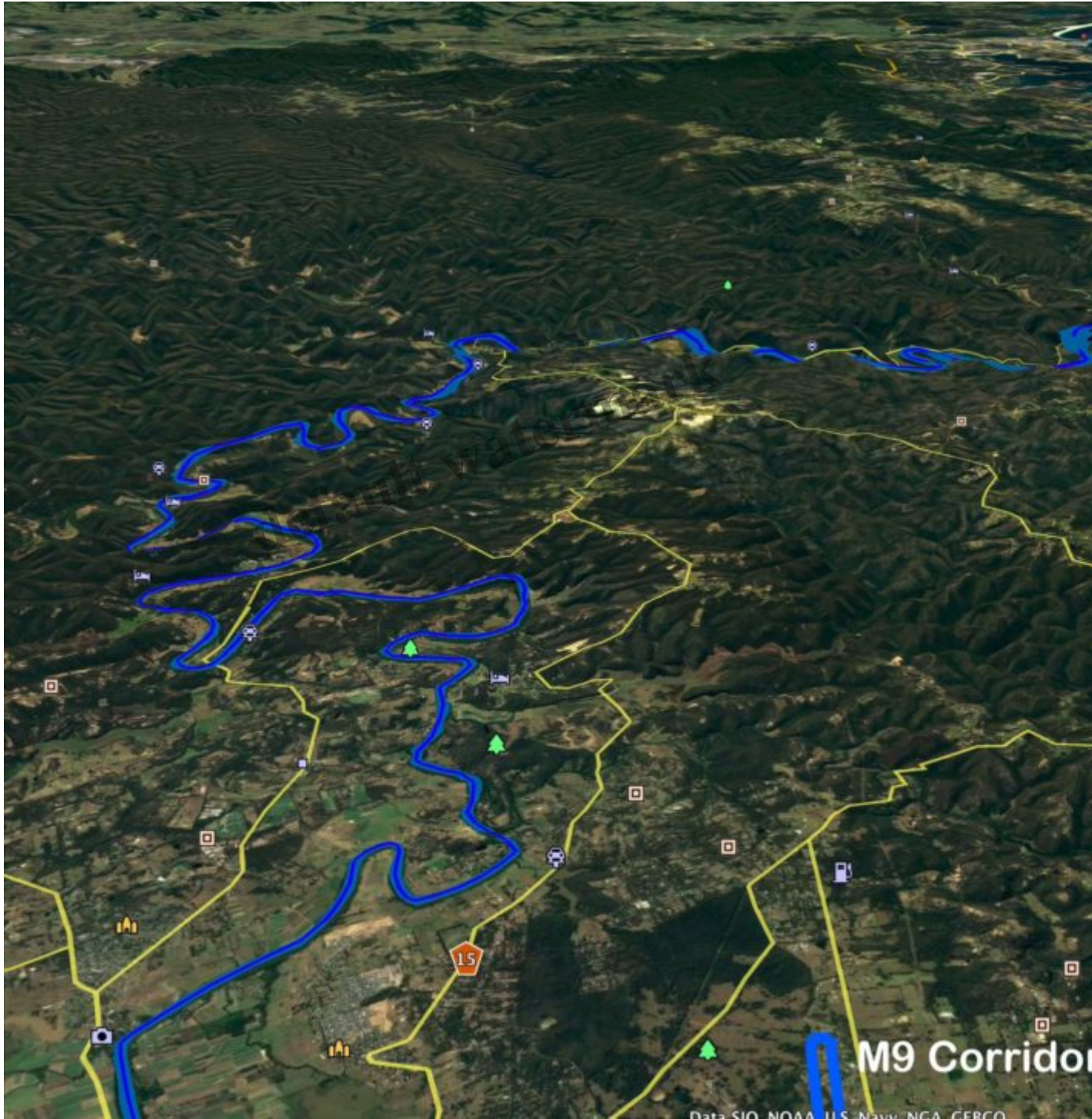
Woodford to Hazelbrook – Four lane upgrade from Station Street (Woodford) to Ferguson Avenue (Hazelbrook), Winbourne Avenue to Ferguson Avenue (Hazelbrook) under construction	🔄
Leura to Katoomba (Section 2) – Four lane upgrade from East View Avenue (Leura) to Bowling Green Avenue (Katoomba)	🔄

WORKS IN PLANNING/DESIGN

Lawson – Four lane upgrade Ferguson Avenue to Ridge Street. Shopping Centre redevelopment by Blue Mountains City Council and property owners	📅
Bullaburra East – Four lane upgrade Ridge Street (Lawson) to Genevieve Road (Bullaburra)	📅
Bullaburra West – Four lane upgrade Genevieve Road (Bullaburra) to Tableland Road (Wentworth Falls)	📅
Wentworth Falls East – Four lane upgrade Tableland Road to Station Street	📅
Mt Victoria to Lithgow – investigating improved alignment	📅

A summary of the major capital works spent on the Great Western Highway.

And the M9 corridor konks out at Maraylya. Here's what the terrain looks like between there and Newcastle. Mountainous terrain, National parks, wetlands, another major crossing of the Hawkesbury River, and well downstream, so the river is broader and deeper.



The terrain north of Maraylya is hilly, heavily forested, and crosses both the Hawkesbury at a location that is deeper and wider than Windsor, and passes through National Parks

If there's little prospect of the corridor being driven north of Windsor Road, why endure the political pain of taking it even that far?

Point 4: Why is the government's material contradictory and incomplete?

Why do the government's press releases and maps state that the corridor passes through Box Hill?

About the Outer Sydney Orbital

Transport for NSW is identifying a corridor of land for the Outer Sydney Orbital in Sydney's west.

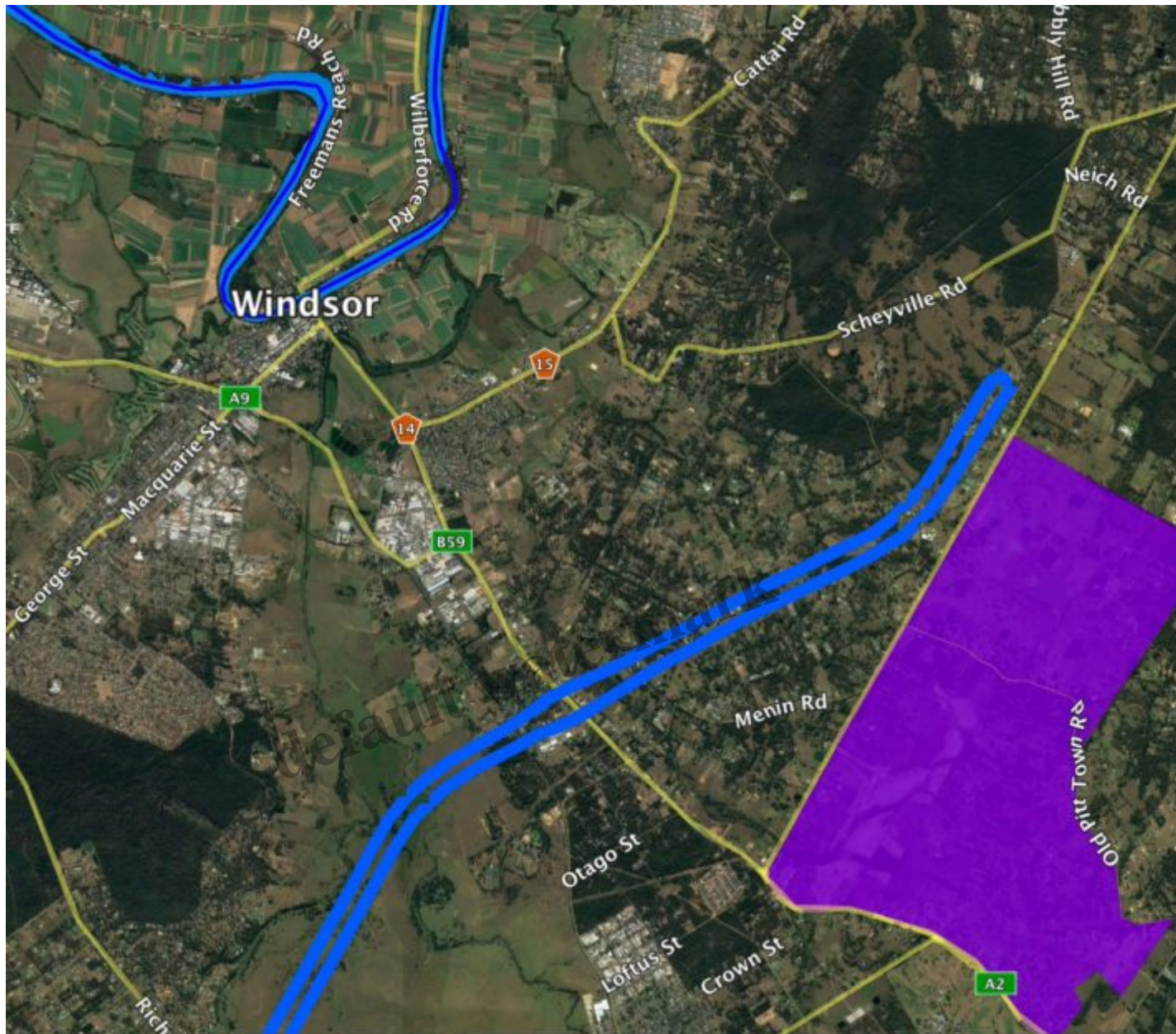
The Outer Sydney Orbital corridor will provide for future motorway and freight rail connection between **Box Hill in the north**, and the Hume Motorway near Menangle in the south.

A recomme
identified in
Greater Syd
the Departm
Environmen
will support
requirement
Botany, and
Sydney. It w
transport so
Western Syc
catalyst for
jobs and wil
closer to ho

In the future
investigation

The Outer Sydney Orbital brochure referencing the corridor as passing through Box Hill.
You'd think they could name the suburb correctly.

Below, the area in purple is Box Hill, in the Hills Shire, and on the left is the corridor. They are not the same.



Why does the draft EIS reference the M9 corridor as only running from Windsor Road and south to the Hume Highway at Menangle?

1.2 KEY TRANSPORT CORRIDORS OF WESTERN SYDNEY

The NSW Government is investigating and protecting land for a suite of other future transport corridors in Western Sydney. These corridors are shown in Figure 1.1 and include:

- Outer Sydney Orbital Corridor – planned to accommodate a motorway and freight line and extend for 80 kilometres from Windsor Road in the northwest and Hume Motorway in the southwest.
- North-South Rail Line Corridor – planned to service the Western Sydney Airport, new aerotropolis surrounding industrial, commercial and residential lands between Bringelly and Schofields and extend to Macarthur.
- Bells Line of Road – Castlereagh Connection Corridor – planned to accommodate a motorway and freight line from Bells Line of Road in Kurrajong Heights to the junction of Richmond Road and Westlink.
- South West Rail Link extension corridor – planned to extend from Leppington Station to Bringelly.

The Bells Line of Road – Castlereagh Connection, South West Rail Link Extension and the North-South Rail Line Corridor projects have no direct functional relationship to the Western Sydney Freight Line project. The proposed Outer Sydney Orbital Corridor would connect to and provide an extension to the Western Sydney Freight Line Corridor (as shown in Figure 1.1).

vegetation

Why is the vegetation study in the draft EIS so incomplete?

I've created a tool in the program Google Earth. The online map that Transport for NSW provides is difficult to navigate and doesn't allow you to leverage other geographical datasets and overlay them on the corridor.

This overlay I've created allows you to see the Hawkesbury ends of both corridors and toggle them along with other useful data, like alternative routes and a vegetation study.

[There's a link to this overlay at my website, along with a longer video tour of what it shows.](#) All you need is the [Desktop version of Google Earth for Mac or Windows](#), and that's a free program.

Nobody else seemed to be doing this kind of analysis, so I thought I'd do my bit.

What you can see here is the area of the M9 north of Windsor Road, in Oakville, Vineyard and Maraylya. Here is an overlay of the vegetation study map that appears on page 96 of the [OSO Draft EIS dated March 2018](#).

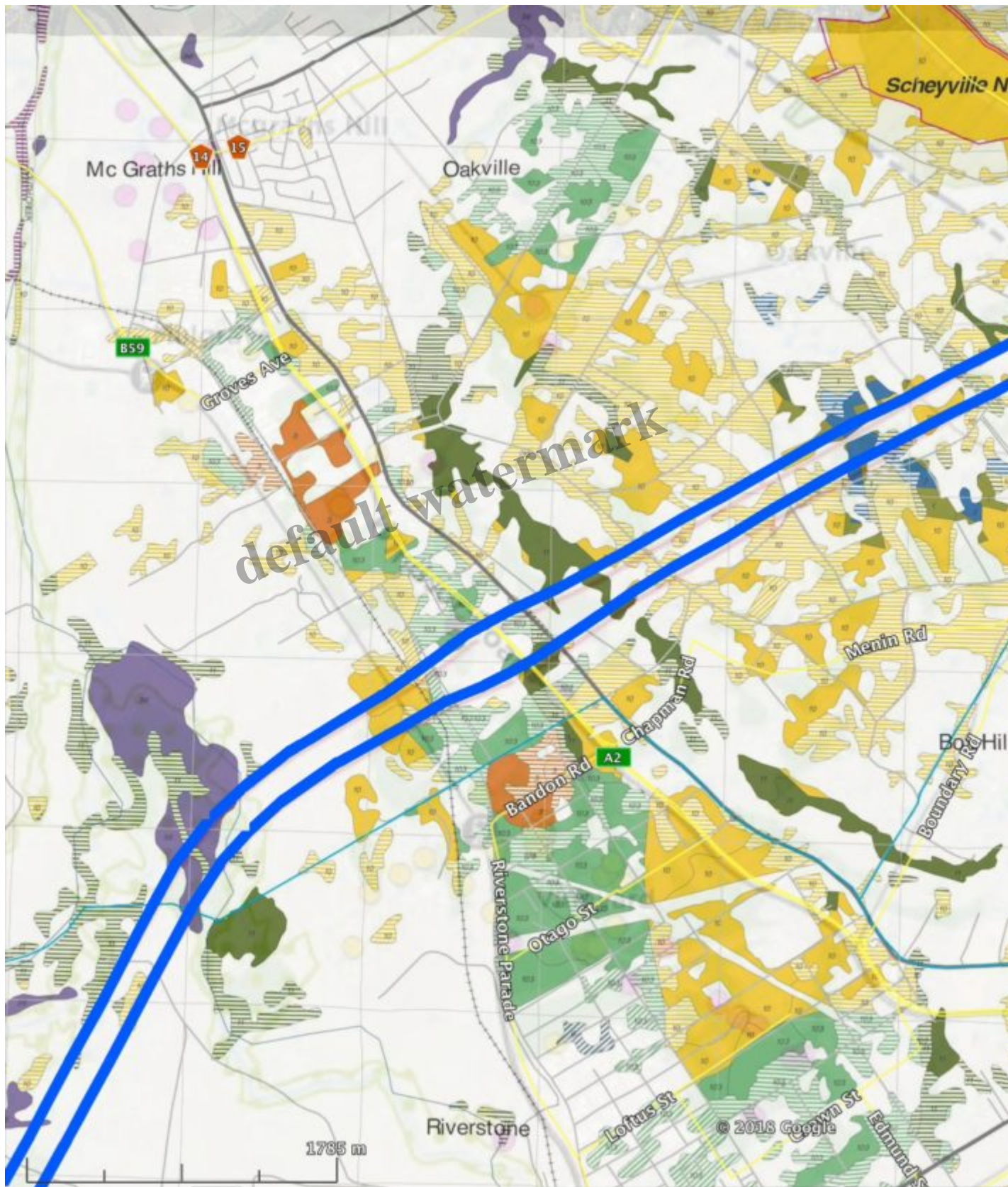
default watermark



The northern extent of the proposed M9 corridor overlaid on the vegetation study created by Transport for NSW.

This looks a little muddy, but the green areas represent “Threatened ecological communities” and the

hatched areas represent “Cumberland Plain Priority Conservation Lands”. Even from this map, it’s obvious that the M9 corridor goes through threatened ecological communities. However, what concerns me more is that this map is incomplete.



The northern extent of the proposed M9 corridor overlayed on the vegetation study created by the National Parks and Wildlife service. This shows that TfNSW have vastly underplayed the significance of the remnant Cumberland woodland (specifically, endangered shale forest) in the corridor area.

Here is a 2002 map from NSW National Parks overlayed on the same area. It shows many more stands of Cumberland Shale Forest – areas that just don't appear on the Transport for NSW Map. And it's not because there has been mass deforestation since 2002 – the amount of tree cover in this area has remained pretty constant over the years, precisely because landowners look after them as rural lands.

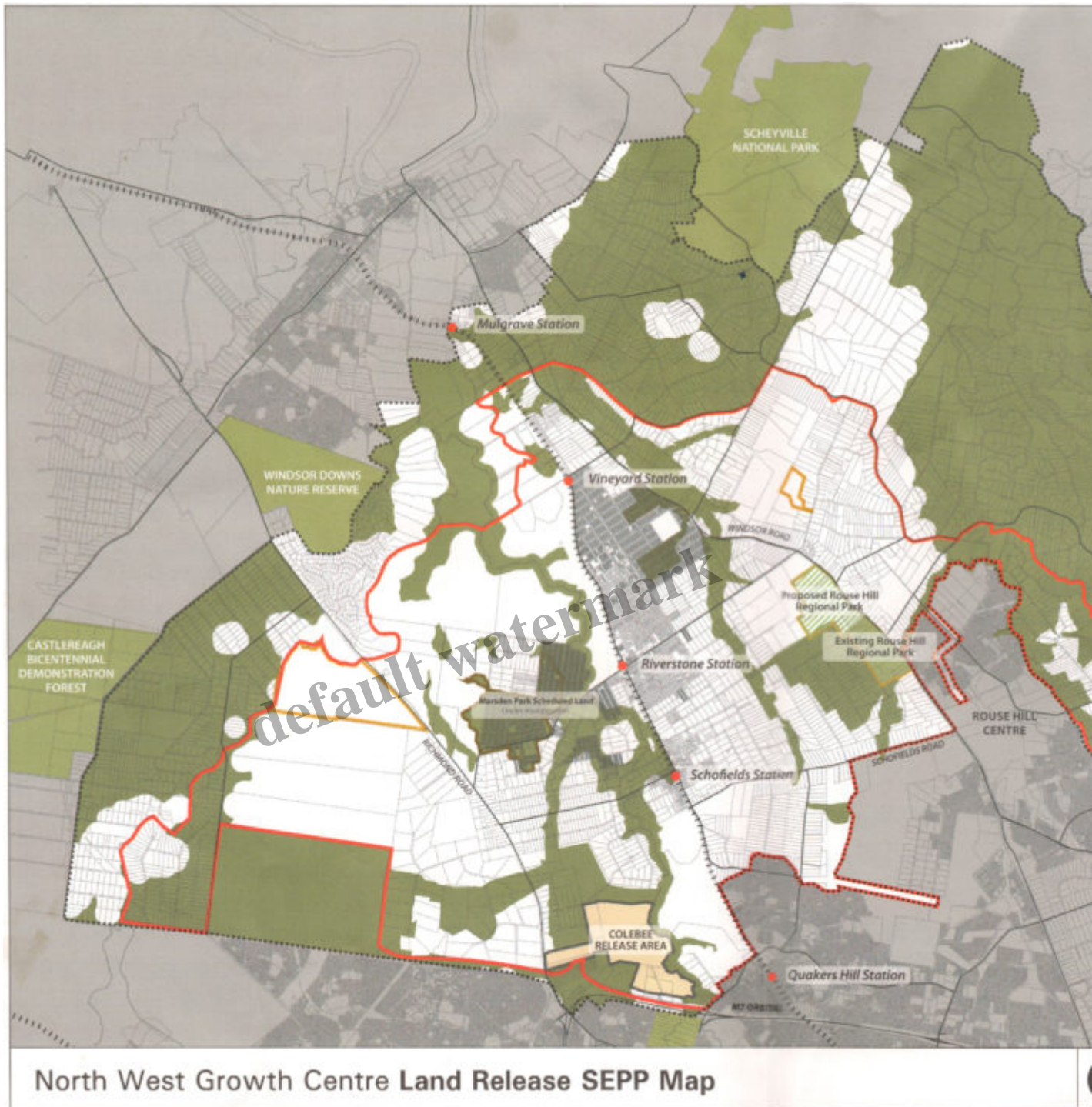
If I toggle the layers, you can see a huge difference. The draft EIS has massively underestimated the tree cover, and the conservation value of the lands under the M9, and it seems apparent that the BLOR corridor study suffers from the same defect.

Point 5: What is the future of this part of the Hawkesbury anyway?

The government can't have it both ways. It says it needs to reserve this corridor through the area because of future land use pressures. But this land is currently zoned rural, for acreage properties.

Here's the property on the corner of Old Pitt Town Road and Speets road – part of the Sydney basin's diminishing store of productive agricultural land. It's also smack bang underneath the M9 corridor.

default watermark



Here's a map you've probably never seen. The red area is the area defined by the current North West growth sector. The part that's in the Hawkesbury is this bit south of Commercial Road and Menin Road.

The outer dashed line represents the outer boundary of what's called the SEPP – it's the planning instrument that makes the North West Growth sector possible. It encompasses a much larger area – all of Oakville, the rest of Vineyard, most of Maraylya, and parts of Mulgrave and McGraths Hill.

Why stick a fuse in something unless you're going to light it? We already know large chunks of land inside the dashed boundary, but outside the North West Growth Sector, are already subject to

development, like this huge area north of Old Pitt Town Road. When will the other shoe drop?

Hawkesbury Council will be reviewing its Residential Lands Strategy later this year. I grew up in Oakville, and live there still. My heart is to protect our rural amenity and provide a buffer between the development at our door, and our agricultural lands, the National Park, and the remnant Cumberland Woodland that still exists outside the boundaries of the park.

But as an elected representative, I have to weigh what is best for the whole community. If there has to be development in the Hawkesbury, this is the area closest to Windsor Road, closest to the new rail infrastructure, not subject to the pinchpoints of the river and its inadequate crossings, and relatively flood free.

I'm calling on the state government to be honest with the community and to tell us if there are any plans to subdivide land outside the current growth sector boundaries.

For example, there's this from the [OSO Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment](#), which says:

The Growth Area LUIIPs have assumed that the recommended corridor will be formally identified in the future, and will inform more detailed planning for precincts yet to be rezoned. For example, the DPE is considering land immediately north of the Vineyard Precinct as providing future opportunities for employment and industry related to the future OSO infrastructure, with detailed planning to commence once the location of the recommended corridor is formalised.

The areas north of the Vineyard Precinct are in Oakville and Maraylya, and are currently zoned "Rural". Questions I have asked of departmental officials about the long term future of Oakville, Vineyard and Maraylya have been met with silence.



A map of the Vineyard Precinct. Note the lands to the north are zoned “Rural”

Point 6: Why weren’t we told?

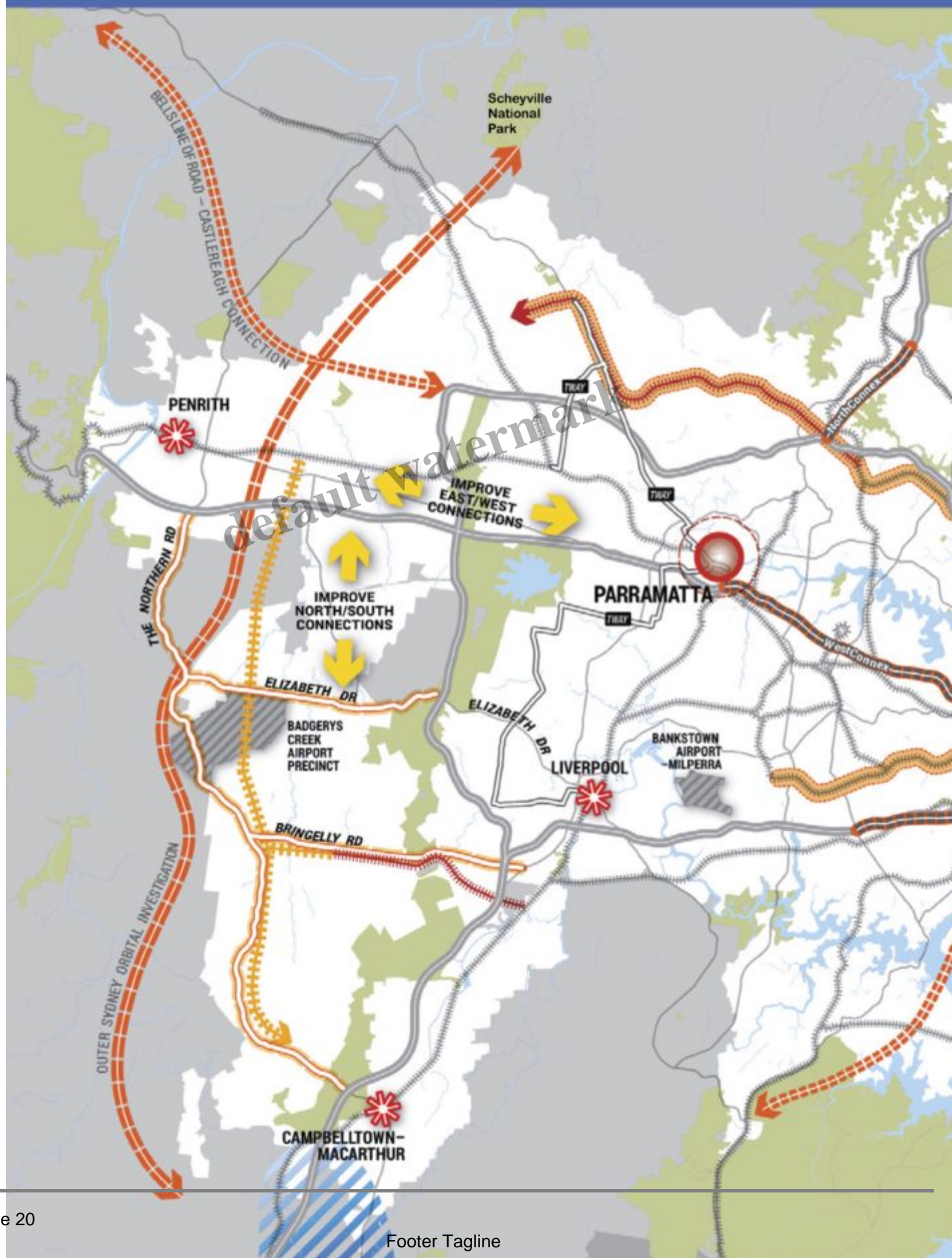
Minister for Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres made much of saying that the announcement of these corridors was already the culmination of plenty of consultation with the community. Bollocks.

Here’s a glossy document that came out in 2014, three years ago, titled “[A plan for growing Sydney](#)”. And in that document is the only map I’ve ever seen that shows, before this announcement in March,

where the corridors may have been.

default watermark

FIGURE 3: Major transport projects to support a growing city



“A Plan for Growing Sydney” (p14), released December 2014

It clearly shows the possibility for these corridors to affect Castlereagh, Grose Vale, Yarramundi, Bowen Mountain, Kurrajong in the west; and Oakville, Maraylya and Vineyard in the East.

No one I have spoken to in any of those communities were consulted. Not one. And not Hawkesbury Council, to the best of my knowledge.

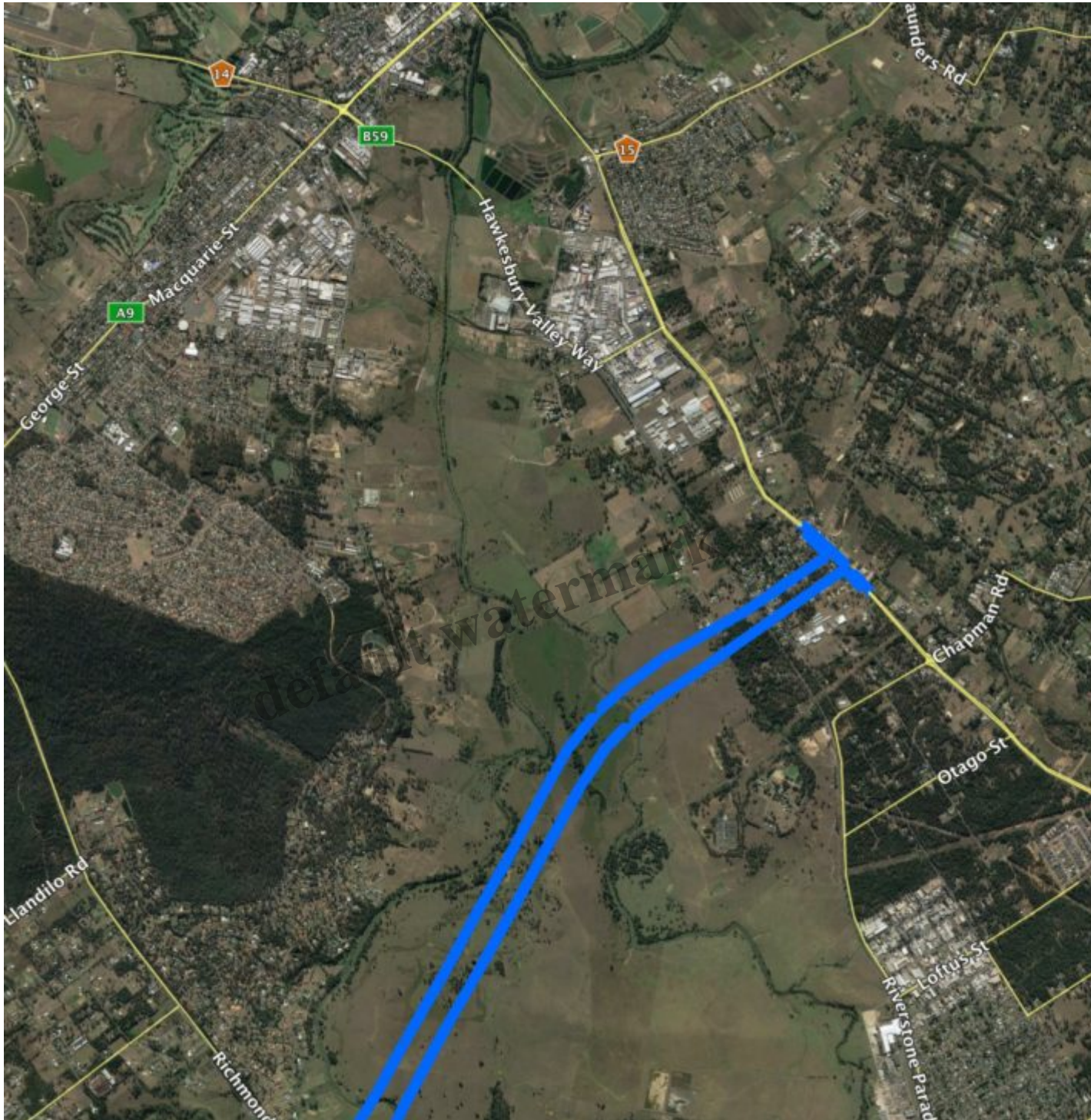
Point 7: There are plenty of alternatives.

I'm not a town or transport planner. Maybe you are. But why has the government placed one option for each corridor before us, and left it to us to suggest alternatives?

I feel inadequate to the task, but here are some starters.

Stop the corridor at Windsor Road.

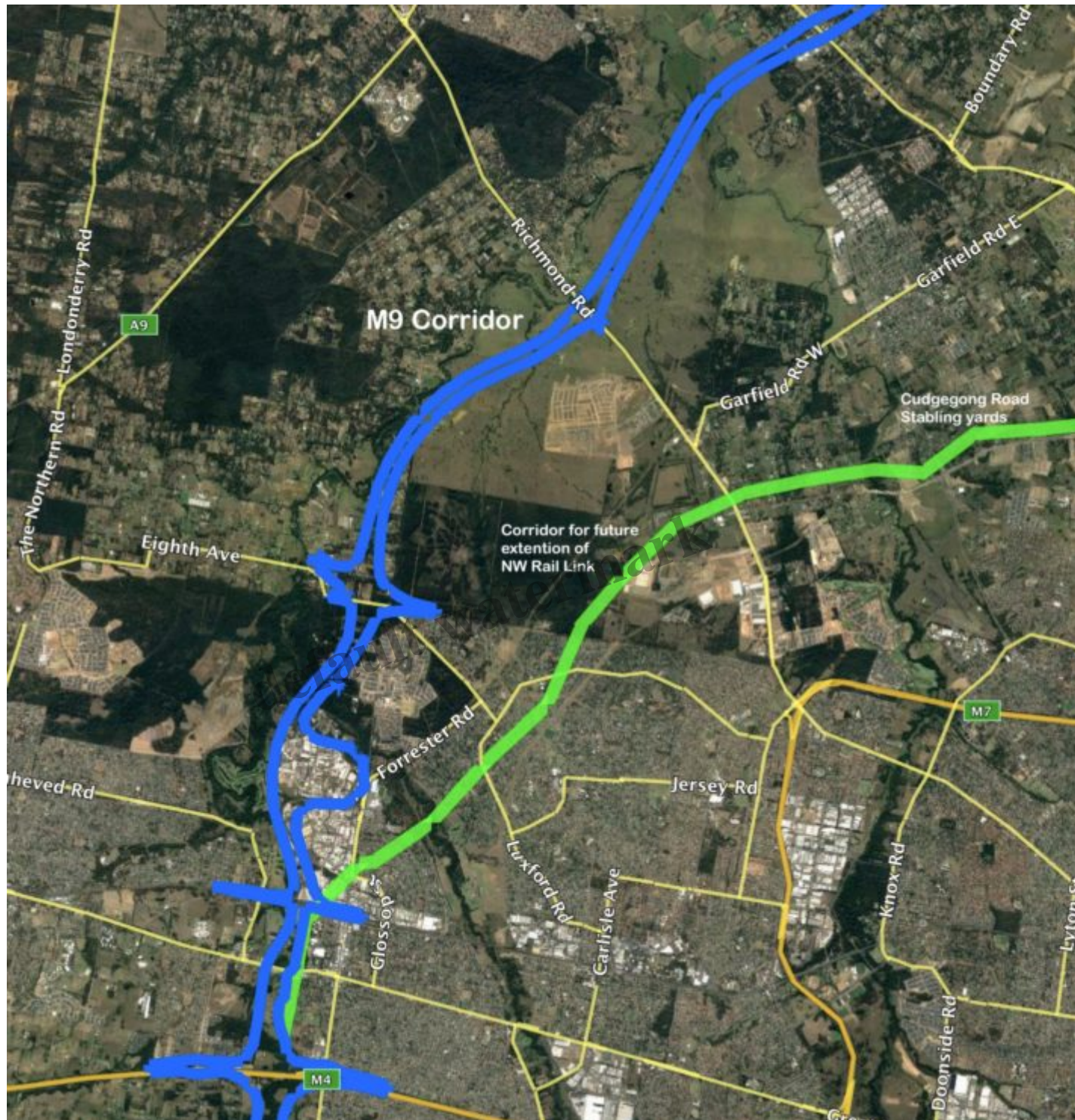
default watermark



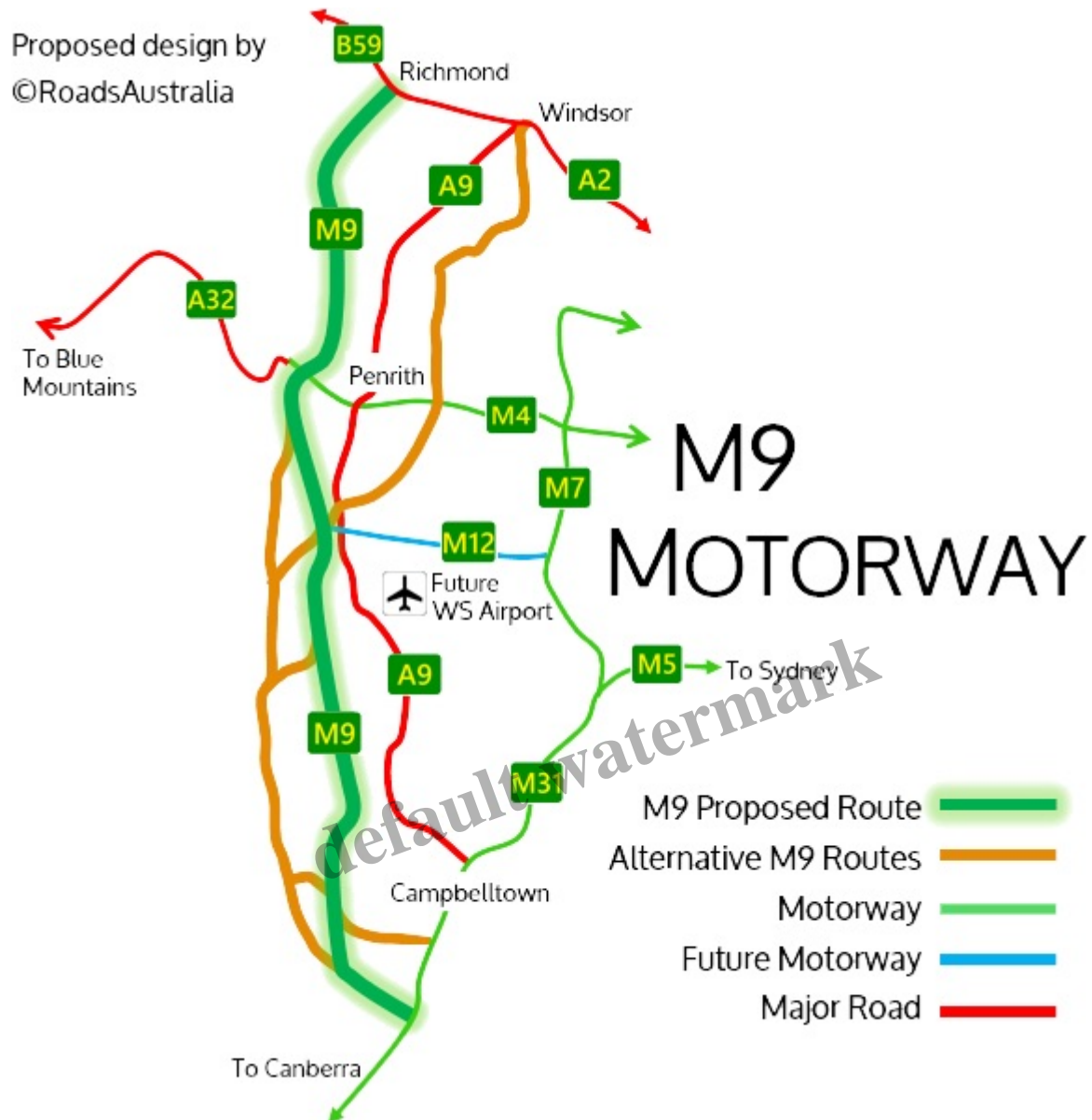
This option has the M9 corridor ending at Windsor Road.

Follow the South Creek catchment and cross the river downstream from Windsor (see map above)

Follow the alignment of the North West Rail Line extension corridor.



Or, there's this proposed solution from a road lobby group, [Roads Australia](#).



Lastly, the funds could be diverted into local road solutions.

Point 8, and my last: Do not forget the political dimension.

I am an elected Liberal, and statistically, most Hawkesbury voters are Liberal voters. This isn't a left-right thing – my last video showed you a long list of awful thought bubbles foisted on us by past governments of both hues.

But I lament that the bad way in which this issue has been handled by an otherwise praiseworthy state government has given a huge free kick to our political opponents.

The government has made a mistake in both these corridors. I can't find it in my heart to attribute to malice what can easily be explained through stupidity.

The government simply needs to step back, realise it may well lose the next State election if it keeps

this up, and without ego, change its mind – just as it was mature enough to do on the question of council amalgamations, greyhound racing, and stadiums.

I think it's actually the mark of a good government to put things out there and then really heed criticism. It needs to do that now, because the damage has already been done.

Even if you're watching this after the deadline for community submissions, which is June 1st, please let me encourage you to keep the pressure up, especially by calling and writing to the office of your state member of parliament, Dominic Perrottet, Stuart Ayres, and the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian.

My name is Nathan Zamprogno, and these views are my own. They are not Council policy and they are not the "Liberal Party line", whatever that is. I'd love to know what you think.

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. Hawkesbury City Council
2. OSO
3. Western Sydney
4. Motorways
5. NSW Government
6. Development
7. Outer Sydney Orbital
8. M9

Date Created

May 31, 2018

Author

councill

default watermark