



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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COMMUNITY TO BENEFIT FROM EXTRA FUNDING

At least \$2 million will be spent on community benefits in addition to a comprehensive range of offsets as a condition of environmental approval for a freight line in Sydney's south west, Environment Minister Peter Garrett said today

Mr Garrett gave the Australian Rail Track Corporation proposal his approval on the condition that works include benefits for local residents and councils living along the proposed rail corridor.

The Southern Sydney Freight Line project, designed to take trucks off our roads and free-up passenger services, involves building a 30km freight line from Macarthur to Sefton.

"In considering this proposal, I've looked closely at its impacts on the environment as well as the social and economic impacts," Mr Garrett said.

"I'm aware that there have been some concerns by locals and councils about the impact of the proposal on local amenity and for this reason have included a range of conditions specifically to address this.

"In particular, a minimum \$2 million community offsets plan must be developed and will need to be approved before construction can start on this project.

"This will mean significant benefits for nearby local residents such as extra car parking.

"I've also stipulated that the offsets plan, as well as a plan to improve the visual aspects of the project, be prepared in consultation with the community.

"This is about finding a balance between providing an essential service to Sydney and ensuring the environment, including social impacts, is adequately protected.

"This project will provide important infrastructure to Sydney, will relieve the pressure of heavy haulage on the roads and free-up existing passenger services. At the same time, there are approval conditions in place to minimise the impacts on local residents and the local environs."

The approval conditions can be found at http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epbc/epbc_ap.pl?name=current_referral_detail&proposal_id=2393