The following is the Trust's understanding of the Metro Project and why the rehabilitated bushland is in its current unacceptable state.

1. Transport for NSW obtained approval from the NSW Planning Minister to construct the Metro train line from Chatswood to Schofields/Tallawong. One of the conditions of this approval was the rehabilitation of the 1ha of bushland, under Hornsby Council's management, destroyed for a temporary haulage road that was required to construct the service facility at Cheltenham Oval.
2. It is important to state that the Metro approval was dependent upon the rehabilitation of the bushland, not the construction of the temporary haulage road from Kirkham St through to the rear of the netball courts next to Cheltenham Oval.
3. A sizeable area of the impacted bushland was identified as a critically endangered ecological community, namely Sydney turpentine ironbark forest(STIF).
4. The Metro design project team developed a collaborative working relationship with the community but more importantly with Hornsby Council.
5. Hornsby Council agreed to source local seed stock and propagate, with the assistance of volunteers, over 11,000 seedlings at its nursery at Pennant Hills.
6. The metro design project team had agreed with Council that the rehabilitation process required a contractor experienced in bush regeneration for a period of 5 years minimum in order to manage the anticipated weed growth. The Metro design project team met with the Trust and walked the haulage road discussing how the hard surface would be taken away, clean bush soil installed, the banks repaired, trees protected… The promises were many.
7. The final stage of the Metro project after the facilities at the oval were completed involved site rehabilitation, including the rehabilitation of the disturbed bushland. This involved a different Metro project team.
8. This is when all the good planning, cooperation and community goodwill was destroyed by Metro.
9. The bitumen surface was removed and the concrete barriers along the haulage road were trucked away. The subsurface of the road was ripped up into furrows. The earthen embankment supporting the road , adjoining the M2 , remained in situ, as well as construction material such as sediment fencing, cyclone fencing and scattered rubbish such as piping and plastic containers.
10. The new Metro project team was not briefed by the outgoing project team whom the Trust had met and agreed on how the haulage road would rehabilitated back to bushland.
11. Hornsby Council had trouble contacting the new Metro project team. The trust understands there was no longer a dedicated Metro project team because the site clean-up was to be contracted.
12. There was no longer any form of communication between Metro and the local community. So all the good will that was created by the design team with regular meetings disappeared overnight once the Metro facility was completed and the trains started operating.

13. Further, the rehabilitation process was delayed for months waiting for contracts to be let, which meant the planting of the tube stock could not occur at the prearranged time when the weather conditions and plants were ideal for planting.
14. Metro engaged a landscape contractor, instead of a bush regenerator, for a 12 month period only, completely contrary to the earlier agreement reached between Metro and Council.
15. The Metro contractor, laid out a comprehensive timed watering system connected to council's water supply near Cheltenham Oval.
16. The contractor planted the 11,000 nursery grown seedlings, plus another 6,000.
17. The Metro contractor fertilised the soil with lime which raised the soil ph so much that many of the seedlings died. After urgent complaints by Council the contractor than tried to neutralise the high ph by spreading sulphur over the site.
18. A Trust representative was informed by the contractor during this initial period that the contract was no 12 months only, and it did not include any weeding or rubbish removal. The earthen embankment along the M2 was not part of the contact
19. By August 2119 large sections of the plantings were becoming waterlogged because the automated watering system was leaking water at the connections. The contractor did not regularly inspect the watering. At one stage the local bushcare volunteers were so concerned about the water damage and lack of maintenance by the contractor that, after informing Council, turned off the watering system to stop the seedlings drowning. This occurred in the height of the 2119 drought.
20. When the Metro landscaping contract expired at the end of June 2020, the contractor walked away and left the watering system in situ.
21. Since August 2020 with the recent rains and warmer weather, there has been an explosion of weed growth.
22. Many of the weeds do not exist in Beecroft or Cheltenham but are common in areas of western Sydney, indicating that the soil brought in for the haulage road was not local, nor clean, but contaminated.
23. During this whole episode the Trust had been in constant communication with our local Member Dominic Perrottet, explaining how poorly the rehabilitation was being handled.
24. The Trust has also been in constant communication with the Mayor and the General Manager working together on how to achieve a solution.
25. Council also has been in constant communication with Dominic Perrottet, explaining that the best solution is for Metro to fund Council for 5 years to correct the problems left by the Metro project.
26. After all the above communication, without any consultation with Council, Transport for NSW promptly closed down the Metro project. No checking, no auditing and no communication.
27. The Trust understands the Metro project is legally not completed because the conditions of approval issued by the Minister for Planning have not been satisfied.
28. Council has refused to accept the handover of the site in its current condition, but is prepared to take control if the State Government provides the funding for the work to be completed.
29. Repeated correspondence between Council, Transport NSW and Dominic Perrottet has to date achieved no result.
30. The Trust is still lobbying Dominic Perrottet for resolution, together with Council.

31. The Trust understands Dominic Perrottet has now written to the Minister for Transport Andrew Constance seeking funding to complete the Metro project
32. In the meantime, because the weeds are now seeding and spreading with the warmer weather, the local bush care volunteers have started weeding in an attempt to arrest the spread of the weeds into the adjoining bushland.

Planting 11,000 council seedlings

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A site visit to discuss bushland in June 2015

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Haulage road and facilities under construction

Haulage road and facilities under construction

Haulage road and facilities under construction

Typical water leakage

Typical water leakage

Material left behind along haulage road by Metro

Material left behind along haulage road by Metro

Dumped lime on seedlings

Black plastic left on embankment

Planting completed

The abandoned watering system on the former haulage road after the contract concluded