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Steering Committee to Tackle the Real Story on Bells Line Funding

“At the meeting of the Bells Line of Road Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan Governmental Steering Committee yesterday we had a really solid discussion about communication with the various communities along the corridor. Of particular interest to Centroc is how we talk to our communities about the cost of the road,” said Cr Castle, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Lithgow.

“What I want and what I commit to the people of Central NSW are the facts. The problem for the Steering Committee is getting stuck on arguments about what the dollars will be, when we really need to be talking about for the time being is planning for the future corridor upgrade,” said Cr Castle.

“At the same time there has been a lot of discussion and seriously differing ideas about the cost of the road. It is challenging because the first part of the upgrade is the Sydney Motorway network to Kurrajong link and this has never been costed,” said Cr Castle.

“Gone are the days when we saw the comforting dotted lines in our street directories that said where the next roads would go. The acquisition of the land with all the legal trimmings now has to be factored in as well,” said Cr Castle.

“Look at the recently published cost estimates for the tunnel and viaduct works for Mount Victoria, a much shorter length of highway,” said Cr Castle.

“When you consider we want a safe, swift road between Western Sydney and Lithgow, the figures that come to mind get very big. This needs to be weighed against the cost benefit of a safe, swift route between Sydney and Central NSW, which has a GDP bigger than Tasmania. The strategic work in Central NSW suggests that the cost benefit is there,” said Cr Castle.

“The real issue for me is safety. Only yesterday on the way to the Steering Committee meeting we had to run the gauntlet of a truck and car smash. It would be wonderful for all to have a road suitable for those bigger trucks along the Bells Line and not have them putting the communities along the ribbon of what must, because of mountain topography, remain a road linking the communities of the Blue Mountains,” said Cr Castle.

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