



The Hon. Andrew Constance MP
Minister for Transport and Roads


Ref: P119/00006


Mr David Blunt
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Parliament House
Macquarie Street
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Dear Mr Blunt

Please find attached the NSW Government response to the Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and Customer Service Committee inquiry into Sydenham-Bankstown Line conversion.

Yours sincerely

 7/10/20
The Hon. Andrew Constance MP
Minister for Transport and Roads

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NSW Government response

Inquiry into the Sydenham-Bankstown line conversion

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Background

The NSW Government endorses the views of the Government members of NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 in their dissenting statement where they strongly disagreed with the committee's report into the Sydenham-Bankstown line conversion.

The dissenting statement of the Government members of the committee notes that:

“Government members are of the opinion that this inquiry chaired by the Greens and dominated by Greens, Cross Bench and Labor Opposition members was never intended to look objectively into the issues of public transport infrastructure and investment in NSW and in particular the integrated conversion of the heavy rail line from Sydenham to Bankstown to modern driverless metro rail systems.

It was clear from the outset that the underlying issue for the Labor Opposition and Greens as well as protest groups that they had evidently coordinated, was the approach of the Liberal Nationals government to deliver decades long overdue public transport infrastructure and reform through private sector partnerships and investment. The key evidence of that was Labor's enthusiastic adoption of the report and the recommendation to cancel the project.

This was one of Labor's key policy for the 2019 state election and clearly rejected by the people of NSW who still recall in great disgust Labor's 16 years wasted in government and Labor's failure after repeated promises to reform and deliver public transport infrastructure in the state.”

Introduction

Upgrading and converting the existing 125-year-old T3 Bankstown Line from Bankstown to Sydenham to metro rail standards will dramatically improve the level of train services for customers in this area. Some stations (e.g. Wiley Park) currently only have four trains an hour during the peak – while Sydney Metro will deliver 15 trains an hour, in each direction, throughout the peak, moving more people, faster and more frequently.

Sydney Metro, together with signalling and infrastructure upgrades across the Sydney rail network, will increase the capacity of the network by up to 60 per cent to meet demand.

Removing the T3 Bankstown Line metro upgrade from the project would mean it would fail to deliver wider Sydney rail benefits.

Significant numbers of construction jobs would also be lost as a result.

Currently, more than 5,000 people are working across the Sydney Metro City & Southwest project, including the Bankstown Line upgrade, and the project will support more than 50,000 jobs before it is completed in 2024.

Recommendation 1

That the NSW Government immediately publish the full Sydney Metro City & Southwest final business case, including the final financial model and benefit cost analysis for the Metro Southwest project.

NSW Government response

Over three years ago, in October 2016, the NSW Government published the Final Business Case Summary, which is available on the Sydney Metro website (<https://www.sydneymetro.info/sites/default/files/Sydney%20Metro%20CSW%20Business%20Case%20Summary.pdf>). This summary was published in accordance with government guidelines on business cases. The detailed 104 page summary reflects the structure of the full Final Business Case and provides extensive information on the project, including consideration of project alternatives and analysis of the economic benefits.

In addition, a significant amount of information on the development, rationale and benefits of the project has been published, beginning with *Sydney's Rail Future* in 2012, and including the Environmental Impact Statement documents and the NSW Government submission to this Inquiry.

Recommendation 2

That the NSW Government ensure that any future projects with private partners outline more explicitly the benefits that the government foresees from privatisation in comparison with a project which would result in the relevant public transport assets and services being held in public hands.

NSW Government response

The committee has either fundamentally misunderstood or actively ignored the structure of the project, notwithstanding repeated attempts by the NSW Government and witnesses to clarify this point. It is not and has never been a privatisation.

All Sydney Metro infrastructure (like the stations, trains and railway tracks) will be owned by the NSW Government. A private operator will operate and maintain the network.

Sydney Metro uses Opal ticketing and fares are set by the NSW Government, the same as the rest of the Sydney public transport network.

The NSW Government is strongly committed to the delivery of infrastructure and services to the people of NSW.

The service availability Public Private Partnership structure of Sydney Metro operations was first outlined publicly in 2014.

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are one of the options the NSW Government uses to procure infrastructure and offers opportunities to improve services and achieve better value for money. The PPP approach provides an avenue for governments to transfer risk and access the innovation necessary to maximise value over whole of asset life.

The Sydney Metro City & Southwest project has been developed and procured with the close involvement of NSW Treasury, and consistent with all relevant requirements, including the National Public Private Partnerships Policy and Guidelines and the NSW Public Private Partnerships Guidelines. The NSW Guidelines require any public infrastructure project with a total estimated capital value exceeding \$100 million to be assessed for possible PPP procurement having regard to value for money drivers.

Recommendation 3

That the NSW Government not proceed with the Metro Southwest project, leaving the Sydney Metro to terminate at Sydenham, and that project funds are instead spent on connecting new communities to rail services and improving existing rail services (for example, through digital signalling).

NSW Government response

At the 2019 State Election, NSW Labor took to the voters of NSW a commitment that if NSW Labor were elected, NSW Labor would cancel the Sydney Metro City & Southwest project – and in doing so cut thousands of jobs which the project has and will continue to create in NSW.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals went to the 2019 State Election reaffirming its commitment to continue to deliver this city-shaping infrastructure project. NSW Labor lost the election. The NSW Liberals & Nationals were returned.

The NSW Government is committed to delivering Sydney Metro, Australia's biggest public transport project, is a key component of the *Future Transport 2056* strategy, the NSW Government's overarching strategy to achieve a 40 year vision for our transport system.

Currently, more than 5,000 people are working across the Sydney Metro City & Southwest project, including the Bankstown Line upgrade, and the project will support more than 50,000 jobs before it is completed in 2024.

Services on the Metro North West Line started in May 2019, and are now providing customers with a new metro train every four minutes in the peak between Tallawong Station at Rouse Hill and Chatswood, serving eight new metro stations and five upgraded stations. The new line has already carried 20 million people.

The Sydney Metro City & Southwest project will extend metro services from the north west, under Sydney Harbour, to new underground city stations and beyond to the south west.

Sydney Metro City & Southwest is due to open in 2024 with the capacity to run a metro train every two minutes each way through the centre of Sydney – a level of service never before seen in Sydney. It will deliver a step change in the capacity of Sydney's rail system to connect people to the CBD during peak periods.

The upgrade of the 125-year-old T3 Bankstown Line to metro rail is integral in taking the pressure off the rest of Sydney's suburban rail system. Currently, this line creates a significant bottleneck for the existing rail network. It slows down the network where it merges with other railway lines close to the Sydney CBD, including the T8 Airport and South Line and the T2 Inner West and Leppington Line.

Construction starts this year (2020) on the Sydney Metro West project, with the first of the mega tunnel boring machines to be in the ground before the end of 2022. The Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport project, connecting western Sydney and the new Western Sydney International Airport with the rest of the city, opens at the same time as the new airport.

The NSW Government is investing significantly in improvements to the Sydney Trains network. Transport for NSW's plans for the future are integrated not only across the rail network but across modes.

Our \$4.3 billion More Trains, More Services program has delivered more than 1,700 additional weekly services and 24 brand new air-conditioned trains, enabling the retirement of the ageing S-Sets and improving reliability for customers. The program is also fast-tracking another 17 new trains, bringing the total of new Waratah Series 2 trains to 41.

Future improvements to the Sydney Trains networks, including under the More Trains, More Services program will harness digital systems technology and allow us to increase service

capacity on high demand lines including the T4 Illawarra, T8 Airport, T1 Western and T9 Northern and South Coast lines in the years to come. However, despite all these investments, the demand requires that we need to continue to improve the Sydney Trains network and also provide a stand-alone Sydney Metro network that takes some of the pressure off the Sydney Trains network.

Recommendation 4

That the NSW Government review its consultation processes and develop and implement a mandatory consultation strategy which is focused on genuine and meaningful community consultation.

NSW Government response

The NSW Government categorically rejects the committee's finding that there has not been genuine and meaningful community consultation on this project. Extensive community consultation on this project started in 2012.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals went to the 2019 State Election reaffirming its commitment to continue to deliver this city-shaping infrastructure project. NSW Labor committed to cancelling it. NSW Labor lost the election. The NSW Liberals & Nationals were returned. The NSW Government is delivering on its election commitment.

The T3 Bankstown Line is more than 125 years old. Upgrading the T3 Bankstown Line to metro standards between Sydenham and Bankstown increases the frequency and capacity of rail services, while also ensuring the line is fully accessible.

Southwest Metro will enable services every 4 minutes in the peak, with ultimate capacity for a metro train every two minutes. Some stations along the T3 Bankstown Line currently have a train every 15 minutes in the morning peak.

Over the three-hour morning peak, Sydney Metro will be able to move 51,000 people in each direction on the T3 Bankstown Line – that's an extra 15,000 more people than now.

All stations will be fully accessible, with lifts and level access between trains and platforms, and platform screen doors for extra safety and security.

It is not a matter of one or the other. The NSW Government is also investing over \$4.3 billion in the More Trains, More Services Program which delivers 41 new trains, the single largest uplift in services in the State's history, new infrastructure and digital signalling on the Sydney Trains suburban rail network.

The NSW Government, including Transport for NSW, is committed to continuing to meaningfully engage with the communities which it serves.

Sydney Metro has been working with the community since 2015 on the development of the City & Southwest project, in addition to extensive public engagement carried out for development of *Sydney's Rail Future* in 2012 and the *Long Term Transport Master Plan*.

In June 2015, consultation started along the Sydney Metro City & Southwest corridor. This was not required by the planning process, but was carried out by Sydney Metro to proactively engage with the community before starting the Environmental Impact Statement assessment. The community was provided with information about the project proposal and provided feedback via online forums and community information sessions.

Consultation has included community information sessions held at local venues, newsletters, flyers, mobile information centres, web information, as well as the formal consultation undertaken during the planning approval process.

During this time the Sydenham to Bankstown element of the project has been significantly modified in response to community feedback.

Since June 2015, consultation has included:

- 23 community information sessions and workshops
- 9 local community events, such as community markets and fairs
- 6,905 enquiries to community email (493 for Sydenham-Bankstown specifically)

- 8,371 calls to 1800 community information line (369 for Sydenham-Bankstown specifically)
- 18,199 subscribers to mailing list (10,940 for Sydenham-Bankstown specifically)
- More than 190,000 unique page views to Sydenham to Bankstown pages on the Sydney Metro website (<https://www.sydneymetro.info/citysouthwest/sydenham-bankstown>)
- Over 170,000 newsletters distributed
- Over 38,000 flyers handed out at stations.

Recommendation 5

That the NSW Government restore regular direct services to the city via Lidcombe for those stations west of Bankstown affected by the conversion.

NSW Government response

During the planning approval process Sydney Metro consulted with thousands of community members and other stakeholders. Following the consultation for *Sydney's Rail Future* in 2012, Sydney Metro has been engaging with the community along the T3 Bankstown Line since 2015 – two years before the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) went on exhibition.

had 17 community information sessions, distributed 150,000 newsletters, handed out over 38,000 flyers at stations, and project engagement material has been translated into seven languages other than English.

Sydney Metro has considered and listened to the feedback received about the project. As a result of community engagement and feedback, the design was significantly changed. The revised project, which was approved a year ago, addressed the issues and significantly minimised impacts – particularly in respect to vegetation, construction noise and traffic impacts. The Sydenham to Bankstown conversion is the result of an extensive process of engagement, analysis and development which stretches back many years.

In 2024, customers will have a new metro train every four minutes in the peak from Bankstown to the city and beyond as part of the Sydney Metro City & Southwest project.

This project includes upgrading the existing T3 Bankstown Line between Bankstown and Sydenham to metro rail standards.

The new metro rail system means changes have to be made to the existing suburban railway west of Bankstown.

Train services on the T3 Bankstown Line west of Bankstown station will need to operate differently to ensure customers can continue to get where they need to go.

Transport for NSW has assessed options for stations west of Bankstown that can be delivered using available infrastructure.

Initial planning has identified a preferred option providing the best travel journey for customers, however Transport for NSW will be engaging with the community to get their feedback on the proposed options in the coming months.

Information about the preferred option, two alternatives, and a form through which the public can provide initial feedback, is available at <https://yoursay.transport.nsw.gov.au/west-of-Bankstown>.

The options provided as part of the consultation have been developed from customer feedback and a thorough analysis of travel patterns. The analysis considers the most effective solution in terms of meeting the needs of the vast majority of customers, while minimising the impact on the rest of the network.

None of the options will provide direct services to the city via Lidcombe for every single station west of Bankstown, but the options align with the way most customers travel.

The preferred option proposed by Transport for NSW would provide regular direct services to the City via Lidcombe for most of the stations west of Bankstown (Liverpool, Warwick Farm, Cabramatta, Carramar, Villawood, Leightonfield, Chester Hill, Sefton, Regents Park and Berala).

Implementing this option would ensure the majority of customers west of Bankstown will continue to receive direct access to the City once Sydney Metro City & Southwest arrives and will also have the option to transfer to the Sydney Metro service at Bankstown.

Birrong and Yagoona customers would be required to interchange at Bankstown for Metro services for faster journeys to the City, or travel to Lidcombe for access to other destinations.

Recommendation 6

That the NSW Government ensure that all heritage aspects of the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor, including train stations themselves, are retained and protected for future generations.

NSW Government response

The NSW Government's submission to the Inquiry made it clear that the Sydenham to Bankstown element of the project has been significantly modified in response to community feedback.

The heritage character of stations along the 125-year-old T3 Bankstown Line will be retained following community feedback.

Sydney Metro has developed a design solution to be able to retain heritage buildings and concourses while providing lifts at every station. Design development is still in progress, and as such impacts to heritage may be subject to change. However, other than two small buildings at Sydenham station, all state heritage listed buildings will be retained.

Reflecting community feedback, the project will reuse and retain existing station features relating to heritage and landscape.

Heritage buildings will be used for station operations and heritage platforms will be retained and made level to deliver a fully accessible metro railway. Other than the two buildings at Sydenham, all current heritage listed items at stations will continue to maintain their heritage listings on State and local registers.

Recommendation 7

That Sydney Metro and Transport for NSW review the design for the Bankstown interchange, in collaboration with the Department of Planning and Bankstown Local Council.

NSW Government response

Under the conditions of approval for the Sydenham to Bankstown element of the project, Sydney Metro is required to consult with Council to prepare a Station Design and Precinct Plan for Bankstown, which includes a master plan for the transport interchange at Bankstown Station.

Work on the master plan commenced in 2019. Canterbury-Bankstown Council, NSW Government agencies (including Transport for NSW and Greater Sydney Commission) and local stakeholders were involved in the development of the master plan through collaborative design workshops and information sessions.

This process enabled a review of the station and interchange design resulting in an improved design with a cross-corridor pedestrian connection that aligns with Council's broader planning policies for Bankstown CBD and responds appropriately to Council comments received during exhibition of the EIS.

Subsequently a planning modification report was prepared in consultation with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to reflect proposed design changes and publicly exhibited for two weeks commencing 20 May 2020.

The station design and masterplan work is continuing and is envisaged to be completed in 2020.

Sydney Metro will continue to collaborate with the City of Canterbury Bankstown and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on the design of Bankstown station and interchange.

Recommendation 8

That the NSW Government provide additional resources to Inner West Council and Canterbury Bankstown Council for the purposes of collaborating on the Metro Southwest project, to ensure optimal project outcomes can be achieved.

NSW Government response

Transport for NSW is continually improving the way it engages with stakeholders to make working with Transport for NSW easier, to enhance relationships and to make engagement as efficient and effective as possible for all parties, including Councils.

Sydney Metro has worked with local Councils since development of the project began, and will continue to do so through delivery.

Sydney Metro undertakes regular meetings and briefings with local councils, including to seek council's feedback and input. Frequent access is provided to relevant subject matter experts to ensure local councils are able to receive the information and answers they require. Sydney Metro welcomes further discussions with Inner West Council and Canterbury Bankstown Council regarding ways to promote collaboration in support of the efficient delivery of the project.

Recommendation 9

That the NSW Government review the biodiversity management strategy for Metro Southwest, including vegetation and fencing requirements, to ensure that all wildlife and vegetation in the affected rail corridor experience minimal project impacts and are adequately protected and supported in recovery.

NSW Government response

The Sydenham to Bankstown element of the project has been significantly modified in response to community feedback, including a significant reduction in the impact on vegetation in the rail corridor, with 390 fewer trees identified to be removed.

The planning approval requires the project to replace any tree removed at a ratio of 2:1. Sydney Metro is committed to replanting and will be working with relevant stakeholders (i.e. Council and other neighbouring government landowners) on potential locations close to the rail corridor and the areas where trees are removed.

Sydney Metro is looking at upgrades to the existing fencing where required to support the future fully automated metro operation. A number of fencing design options are currently under consideration. Factors such as the protection of wildlife and safe train operations will be further assessed during the design process.

The Biodiversity report for the EIS determined that operation of the project would be unlikely to change these impacts in a way which would impact biodiversity values.

Further, the Submissions & Preferred Infrastructure Report states that the project area is currently a substantial barrier to the movement of ground-dwelling fauna, due to the presence of a wide area of cleared land, barriers such as bridges and fences and regular train movements.