

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (METRO RAIL) BILL 2008

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Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Campbell.

Agreement in Principle

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL (Keira—Minister for Transport, and Minister for the Illawarra) [4.38 p.m.]:
I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Transport Administration Amendment (Metro Rail) Bill 2008 to the House. The objective of this bill is to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to enable the establishment of a Sydney Metro Authority. This authority will be put in charge of developing and managing the CBD Metro and any potential future stages of a Sydney metro system. This bill enables the New South Wales Government to get on with the job of creating a new mode of public transport for Sydney. Not only will the metro be a great new form of public transport, it will also link to buses, rail and light rail, and improve the overall transport system meaning less waiting, less crowding and more reliability.

As members are aware, the New South Wales mini-budget allocated \$1.8 billion in the forward estimates to start developing a metro system for Sydney. The mini-budget is about taking financially responsible decisions, and that is why the Government has put aside sufficient funds to commence a metro system for Sydney in which the CBD Metro is the number one priority and the first stage. In these tough economic times we must be realistic about what we can deliver. That is why the Government has earmarked enough money in the mini-budget to start a metro system for Sydney and it will continue working closely with the Federal Government to see how a potential co-contribution through Infrastructure Australia could enable further expansion of a metro network.

Members on this side of the House have made it clear that the New South Wales Government is certain that a metro system is part of this great city's future. Despite the budget constraints, we want to proceed with the CBD Metro as quickly as possible to ensure we have the transport capacity for growth and jobs in the central business district. The latest estimate is that by 2036 there will be six million people living in Sydney. Providing them with a new metro system starts with the CBD Metro, which is clearly the enabler of future metros. It will be the spine of the Sydney metro system and other routes can be attached to it.

It is pivotal that the metro works in an integrated manner with the other modes of transport to maximise the public transport network. That is why the Government is actively pursuing the integration of the metro system with the redevelopment of Central station to cater for a smooth London tube-style interchange bringing commuters from the west through the central business district. We are also planning a bus interchange in Rozelle, so that commuters travelling on buses on the Victoria Road corridor can interchange swiftly from one mode of transport to another, thus increasing capacity and reducing bus traffic on busy CBD streets.

The Government is committed to making this happen, which is why we are establishing the Sydney Metro Authority, whose only focus will be on delivering this new public transport mode for Sydney. Metros represent the future of Sydney's transport. The CBD Metro is the first phase, with the creation of a dedicated, focussed authority that will ensure the effective delivery of a world-class Metro product. As well as providing the foundation for a network of metros, the CBD Metro will provide a much-needed new high-capacity transport corridor through the city,

relieving passenger congestion at Town Hall and Wynyard stations.

It is important to understand that presently there are capacity constraints through the CBD, with Central station effectively acting as a bottleneck during peak hours for trains to and from the south, the south-west, the west, and the north. With the CBD Metro, the CityRail network will be able to schedule more trains into Central from the west for quick and easy interchange to the CBD Metro. One cause of the major bottleneck at Central today is that the 15 platforms in the country and interstate section at Central are underutilised. By making more use of this existing infrastructure and linking it with the CBD Metro, the Government is maximising its transport infrastructure investment.

It is plain to see that the CBD Metro will provide relief to the congested CBD. It provides for a substantial increase in capacity on the existing CityRail network and it provides for future expansion of the metro network. The principal functions of the Sydney Metro Authority will be to develop safe and reliable metro railway systems for Sydney. The proposed Sydney Metro Authority will be the governing body responsible for the development and delivery of the CBD Metro and possible future schemes. The Sydney Metro Authority will have overall responsibility for management of delivery and commissioning of the CBD Metro by 2015; management of the development of other metro lines as directed by Government; and oversight of ongoing CBD Metro operations including dictating service delivery and standards to any private operator.

It is important to understand that once a metro line is established and operational, Sydney Metro's role will change and it will dictate service delivery and service standards to the operator as well as undertake further planning for potential expansion of the metro network on behalf of the Government. Sydney Metro Authority will be established under governance arrangements similar to those applicable to other statutory authorities under the Transport Act such as the State Transit Authority and, following the passing of the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail and Ferry Transport Authorities) Bill 2008 in the upper House last night, RailCorp and Sydney Ferries. To achieve maximum value for the taxpayer, it is essential that the New South Wales Government have an organisation that can draw from specialised, international expertise in the design, construction and operation of metro systems.

It is also important to ensure that the Government has an organisation that is focused solely on the demands of delivering a world-class metro system for Sydney. The scale of the investment, the need for tight project control and the need for rapid performance to deliver the CBD Metro and future extensions all combine to necessitate the establishment of a special authority. Importantly, the authority will focus on the long-term success of the metro service, not just the construction phase. The New South Wales Government is determined to take this very significant next step in public transport infrastructure for Sydney. Metro will provide immediate benefits to the CBD's transport capacity, and will pave the way for further enhancements to a Sydney metro system. For these reasons, the Government has introduced this bill and I commend it to the House.