

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (METRO RAIL) BILL 2008

Second Reading

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Parliamentary Secretary) [10.12 p.m.], on behalf of the Hon. John Della Bosca: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The objective of this bill is to amend the Transport Administration Act 1988 to enable the establishment of a Sydney Metro Authority, which will be put in charge of developing and managing the CBD Metro and any potential future stages of a Sydney metro system. The 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 also will link to buses, rail and light rail, and improve the overall transport system—less waiting, less crowding, more reliability.

As the House will be 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 we have 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 economic times we have to be realistic about what we can deliver. That is why we have earmarked enough money in the mini-budget to start a metro system for Sydney and we 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.

This side of the House has 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 CBD. 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, and the CBD Metro 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 we are 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 CBD.

We are also planning a bus interchange in Rozelle so that commuters coming in on buses on the Victoria Road corridor can interchange swiftly from one mode of transport to another, increasing capacity and reducing bus traffic on busy CBD roads. The Government is committed to making this happen. That is why we are establishing the Sydney Metro Authority, whose only focus will be delivering this new public transport mode for Sydney.

Metros represent the future of Sydney's transport. The CBD Metro is the first phase and the creation of a dedicated, focused 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 also 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 the underutilisation of the 15 platforms in the country and interstate section at

Central. 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 government 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.

The Sydney Metro Authority will be established under governance arrangements similar to those applicable to other statutory authorities under the Transport Act, such as State Transit Authority and, following the passing of the Transport Administration Amendment Rail and Ferry Transport Authorities Bill 2008 last week, RailCorp and Sydney Ferries. To achieve maximum value for the taxpayer it is essential for the New South Wales Government to 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 have a 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, which I commend to the House.