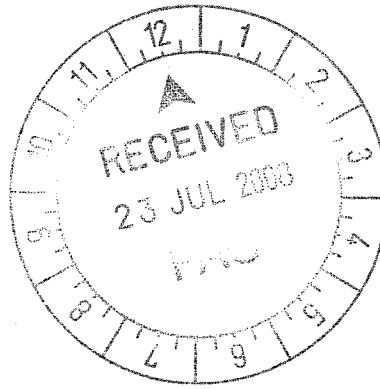




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Mr Paul McLeay
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY NSW 2000

21 JUL 2008

Dear Mr McLeay

Re: Auditor-General's Report on Connecting with Public Transport

I write in response to your letter of 11 June 2008, regarding the Auditor-General's Report, *Performance Audit – Connecting with Public Transport*.

The Ministry has found that the audit process and the recommendations of the audit have been beneficial to the development and implementation of policies which would lead to improved effectiveness of interchanges, and subsequently increased use of public transport.

The attached summary outlines the progress that the Ministry has made in implementing the recommendations of the audit. Many of the recommendations are interrelated.

Overall, the audit has demonstrated the complexity of issues associated with the strategic planning and management of multi-modal transport. The Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development is now established and significant work has already been undertaken in relation to the expansion of the rail network. The Ministry is still implementing the bus network plans identified in the Review of Bus Services in New South Wales. Consequently, the implementation of the recommendations of the audit needs to be undertaken in stages and progressively evaluated to ensure the achievement of stated outcomes. The Ministry is addressing a number of issues in the short term including the condition assessment of interchanges, development of interchange guidelines, and improvements to the information on the 131 500 website.

The Ministry will continue working through the specific issues raised in the audit to ensure the achievement of the government's objectives for public transport.

Should you require any further clarification please contact Mr Peter Scarlett, Executive Director, Transport Services Group on telephone 8836-3101.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Glasson
Director-General

Recommendations in the Performance Audit - Connecting with Public Transport

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| 1 | <p>establish a coordinating and oversight entity to assess interchange standards, monitor interchange performance, plan access to the public transport system, and plan whole of network development</p> | <p>The Premier's 2006 Urban Transport Statement established within the Ministry of Transport (MoT) the Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development, which, in consultation with the Transport Planning Division of MoT, is responsible for transport network planning and development.</p> <p>The Urban Transport Statement also strengthened the role of the Transport CEOs Cluster Group to coordinate the planning and network development phases of all transport related projects.</p> <p>Direct responsibility for oversight of infrastructure such as interchanges and commuter car parks funded out of the Parking Space Levy rests with the Service and Capital Funding Group of MoT.</p> <p>MoT has established an internal Infrastructure Steering Committee to ensure co-ordination across the range of infrastructure projects being delivered.</p> | <p>The Ministry of Transport continues to co-ordinate whole of Government efforts to improve the operation and efficiency of transport interchanges. The Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development was set up over 2007 and is now fully functional, tasked with coordinating a product focused approach to the development of Sydney's transport network.</p> <p>The Infrastructure Steering Committee is monitoring progress on projects under development and delivery. The role of the Committee also incorporates monitoring of infrastructure for which the Ministry of Transport has ongoing maintenance responsibilities.</p> <p>In addition, the Ministry has also established a Commuter Car Parking Project Control Group (PCG). The PCG is chaired by the Ministry of Transport with membership from Roads and Traffic Authority, RailCorp, Department of Premiers and Cabinet, Department of Planning and Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation. The PCG is responsible for Developing Government commuter car parking policy and acting as a forum for key agency discussion on commuter car parking policy and planning.</p> |
| | | <p>MoT is developing a work program to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compile a comprehensive list of interchanges and the organisations responsible for these interchanges; | <p>MoT has progressed the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive list of interchanges compiled. Interchanges have been categorised by strategic locations that align with the categories in the NSW Metropolitan Strategy. Ownership is being determined, initially |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare minimum standards for interchanges; • arrange for interchange inspections and the development of works programmes to carry out necessary works; • prepare a database of the interchanges in a form suitable for use on the Ministry's website and through the 131500 service in order to provide commuters with an accurate description of the facility and its use. | <p>though a review of land ownership. Once details are established then "owners" will be consulted to agree on operation & maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum standards guidelines document has been prepared. The guidelines have been developed to outline minimum facilities for each interchange type and is titled "Guidelines for the Development of Public Transport Interchange Facilities". Consultation has occurred with transport agencies responsible for the planning, design, development and delivery of transport interchanges. A final draft is under review and is expected to be completed in August. • RailCorp is undertaking a Station Access & Planning Audit which will identify station features (easy access, station entrances and layout) and interchange facilities (car parking, taxi and bus zones, bicycle parking). In addition, tenders have been called by the Ministry of Transport to undertake a detailed review of the 40 most significant interchanges. The 40 interchanges have been selected primarily based on patronage. The review compliments the work undertaken by RailCorp and will clarify agencies responsible for maintenance, assess current condition of the facility as compared to standards set in the Interchange Design Guidelines, and it will allow for the development of a works program for each location. • The database is currently under construction. High resolution aerial photographs for preparing detailed maps have been purchased. Initial data has been compiled on the selected 40 interchanges |

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| | | <p>MoT is committed to meeting best practice standards for interchanges across the network as a means of meeting the Government's public transport targets as set out in the State Plan, Urban Transport Statement and Metropolitan Strategy.</p> | <p>which displays their location and ownership. Inspection study results will allow finalisation of interchange facilities for "mapping" of interchanges and linking maps to 131 500.</p> |
| 2. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish clear responsibilities for interchange "ownership", operation and maintenance | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with Recommendation 1.</p> | <p>As per Recommendation 1.</p> |
| 3. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ set performance objectives for interchanges such as demand levels, connectivity offered and cost-effectiveness achieved | <p>MoT will incorporate this recommendation into the development of all future interchanges.</p> | <p>The Ministry of Transport has developed an interchange ranking framework that takes into account their contribution to transport objectives as set out in the State Plan and Urban Transport Statement.</p> <p>The evaluation criteria incorporates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribution to the Metropolitan Strategy which supports the State Plan, • contribution to transport policy and transit network hierarchies; • existing passenger numbers; and • ease of implementation, including alternate sources of funds. |
| 4. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop multi-modal transport plans to improve interchange planning and overall effectiveness | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in the development of minimum standards for the interchange categories identified in MoT's interchange evaluation and ranking criteria.</p> | <p>As per Recommendation 1 the Centre for Transport Planning and Product Development has now been established. The Interchange Ranking Framework and Interchange Design Guidelines will ensure that multi modal transport plans are considered in determining both the location and level of facilities of transport interchanges.</p> |

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| 5. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ further develop the 'quality gap' assessment using facility inspections against a set of specific standards and risk assessments | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with Recommendation 1.</p> | <p>This recommendation is being addressed in the inspection study for the selected 40 interchanges referred to in Recommendation 1.</p> |
| 6. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop and publish a ten year rolling plan for interchanges | <p>MoT will continue to prepare forward programmes of capital works in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Government.</p> | <p>The Ministry of Transport has developed an interchange ranking criteria to identify interchanges for upgrade or renewal.</p> <p>During 2007/08 the Ministry has conducted 25 scoping studies examining options for interchange upgrades. It is planned to undertake a further 20 interchange scoping studies during 2008/09.</p> <p>The scoping studies prepare initial concept design for possible upgrades. The finalised Guidelines for the Development of Public Transport Interchange Facilities will be utilised to inform detailed design for approved upgrades.</p> <p>Upon completion of these studies a program of works will be developed, progressively expanded and incorporated into the Ministry's Total Asset Management Plan in accordance with Government Guidelines.</p> |
| 7. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop and issue Best Practice Guidelines for different categories of interchanges, including arrangements for integrated emergency and security response | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with Recommendation 1.</p> | <p>As per the information concerning the Interchange Design Guidelines in Recommendation 1.</p> |
| 8. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ carry out a review against Best Practice Guidelines to assess the quality of the present interchange arrangements | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with Recommendation 1.</p> | <p>As per the information concerning interchange inspections in Recommendation 1.</p> |

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| 9. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ work in partnership with local stakeholders to identify ways of ensuring good quality multi-modal interchanges, particularly those where quality falls short of the Guidelines. | <p>MoT will work with key stakeholders to ensure interchanges meet minimum standards outlined.</p> | <p>The draft Guidelines for the Development of Public Transport Interchange Facilities were developed in consultation with key transport agencies responsible for the planning, design, development and delivery of transport interchanges.</p> <p>In addition, the Ministry of Transport works closely with local stakeholders in undertaking scoping studies for potential interchange upgrades. Consultation occurs with local bus operators, local councils, coach and taxi operators, police, the Roads and Traffic Authority and rail agencies.</p> <p>The guidelines for interchanges document will be updated/upgraded progressively as new guidelines are developed/required by circumstances.</p> |
| 10. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide better information to the public, such as by including on the Transport Infoline 131500 website details of interchange layouts, transport services, kiss and ride facilities, park and ride facilities, taxi ranks and amenities | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with Recommendation 1.</p> | <p>Recommendation 1 above outlines the work being undertaken to supplement existing interchange “maps” included on 131 500 web site.</p> |
| 11. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ enhance the Transport Infoline 131500 website journey planner such as by adding an ability to plan part of the journey by taxi or car, as a means of encouraging a change in travel behaviour | <p>MoT will investigate this option during its Integrated Transport Information System contract review process.</p> | <p>These suggested enhancements have been included as part of the requirement specifications for the re-tender of the 131500 Transport Infoline services. A public tender process will be underway from October 2008, with a view to entering a new contract during the second half of 2009. The enhanced services would be introduced from the first quarter of 2010. Recent improvements to the 131500 Transport Infoline services include the re-launch of the website, enhancing the trip planner functionality and moving to a more user-friendly layout. Improvements to the accessibility of the site were included as part of the re-launch, including an accessible services trip planner.</p> |

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| 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop a strategy to assess and, if necessary, improve brand awareness of the service | <p>MoT will continue to actively promote the Transport Infoline (131500) and will develop a brand awareness strategy.</p> | <p>The brand awareness strategy will form part of the new contract. However, the service continues to be promoted during all major events. An i-frame, or internet portal has been developed for use on any website. The i-frame will be offered to all government departments and other stakeholders during August 2008. This will create further awareness of the service.</p> |
| 13. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish and maintain an accurate inventory of existing facilities, site ownership by facility, transport services provided, capital amenities provided, identification of access attributes, capacity, utilisation and costs | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with Recommendation 1.</p> | <p>Actions concerning the establishment of a database are under recommendation 1</p> |
| 14. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ link the facilities inventory to a map including existing and planned bus, rail and ferry routes and services to develop a context for placing new facilities or expanding those already in existence | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with Recommendation 1.</p> | <p>This relates to Recommendation 4. Further, the database of interchanges being established under Recommendation 1 will be able to assist in the planning associated with the expansion or improvement of existing interchanges.</p> |
| 15. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish an evaluation process framework with performance objectives, performance monitoring and post evaluation to establish the impact of the interchange facilities on public transport | <p>MoT will establish a post evaluation process for all future projects.</p> | <p>The post evaluation framework will commence upon completion of the Interchange Design Guidelines.</p> |

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| 16. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establish a means of systematically reviewing the frequency and character of transport service provided at individual facilities to ensure that it is adequate for the purpose | <p>MoT will arrange a systematic process for reviewing each facility for its adequacy against current transport service delivery.</p> <p>New bus operator contracts require annual service reviews to ensure services are meeting needs of the public, including the adequacy of services to existing and proposed new transport facilities.</p> | <p>The Ministry has commenced a process of evaluation of interchanges in accordance with the priority ranking under the Interchange Ranking Framework.</p> <p>Bus operators are providing annual service reviews as required under their Service Contracts.</p> |
| 17. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ forecast long term funding requirements for development, operations, maintenance and security | <p>MoT will continue to prepare its funding requirements based on the works programmes submitted to Government.</p> | <p>Long term forecasts are prepared in conjunction with the State Infrastructure Strategy and Total Asset Management Planning process. Long term funding of infrastructure projects is dealt with in this process. Projects are listed on the program after approval by Minister of recommendations of scoping studies identified through interchange ranking process.</p> |
| 18. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ clearly state funding objectives and options for interchanges such as minimising the cost to commuters, minimising the cost to public agencies or promoting joint development | <p>MoT will continue to develop performance objectives, minimum interchange standards and evaluation criteria to guide future funding decisions.</p> | <p>The Interchange Guidelines will provide a base for clearly identifying objectives and options for interchanges. See comment at Recommendation 1.</p> |
| 19. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promote joint development of interchanges using a more market-oriented approach | <p>MoT will review on a case by case basis, opportunities for joint development and other initiatives in the delivery of interchanges.</p> | <p>The Ministry is currently conducting a study into funding options for new commuter car parks (which was committed to in the Urban Transport Statement) which should also have a level of applicability to transport interchanges. The aim of the study is to undertake a review of opportunities for private sector investment in commuter car parks in metropolitan Sydney.</p> |

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| 20. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ continue to improve transparency in how Parking Space Levy funds are allocated to infrastructure projects by the use of criteria (including extent of achievement of the object of the PSL legislation) and evaluation of the relative merits of alternatives | <p>MoT has established criteria for ranking interchange proposals and will further enhance those criteria as suggested in the audit report.</p> | <p>The Ministry of Transport has developed an interchange ranking framework to identify interchanges for upgrade or renewal. The framework is based on criteria as set out in Recommendation 3.</p> <p>Scoping studies on potential interchange upgrades are currently being undertaken on projects identified through the use of the criteria in the ranking process.</p> <p>The Ministry will review the outcome of the scoping studies to assess whether the criteria need to be developed further.</p> |
| 21. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify and assess the adequacy of funding sources for interchanges, including for operations, maintenance and security. | <p>This recommendation will be dealt with in conjunction with recommendation 17.</p> | <p>See Recommendation 17.</p> |
| 22. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify, secure and leverage further funding sources as necessary to address any shortfalls | <p>The overall funding will continue to be assessed in the development of forward programmes.</p> | <p>See Recommendation 19.</p> |