

**Submission
No 21**

COMMUTER CAR PARKING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation:

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Position:

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Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into Commuter Parking
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Commuter parking is itself a major component of road and transport systems and of urban planning across our towns and cities. Therefore, parking schemes need to be developed in unison with road, transport and urban plans that address traffic congestion and public transport service issues.

These issues continue to escalate, due largely to rapid capital-city growth and subdued expansion elsewhere, driven by a predisposition towards city-centric development over decentralisation.

This submission explains how road and transport systems can evolve to address the issues with productive and affordable capital-city projects, and by increasing infrastructure and services in regional areas. It is set out as follows:

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Proposed strategies include more parking close to town and suburban centres, new bus services for main road systems and shuttle bus services to better connect major centres with nearby parking and public transport.

Improving parking and alternative transport would result in greater choice, with more travellers parking closer to home and either walking or using other modes to reach destinations, so reducing car-use.

The strategies would benefit entire metropolitan areas, while fostering a fairer, whole of State position and showcasing NSW in that light.

I urge the Committee to consider this perspective as it relates to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, particularly current government policies and programs, the location of parking and alternative travel modes.

I am happy to provide further information and answer any questions arising.

John Morandini, Gymea Bay NSW

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Traffic congestion is increasing year by year. And the bigger a city gets, the more congested it becomes, despite great efforts to fix the issue, including enormous investments made in new urban road and transport infrastructure.

What is going on and how can the problems be solved?

The dilemma is that: Firstly, car ownership far exceeds the capacity of road systems to handle all the vehicles, leaving cities vulnerable to demand peaking effects and growth; Secondly, the alternative transport provisions are typically a poor substitute for the car; and Thirdly, the main effect of new motorway, railway or other transport infrastructure is to stimulate growth. In large cities, these projects only add marginally to overall travel capacity, making it virtually impossible to solve traffic congestion problems in this way.

In Australia, the situation is amplified (compared with Europe, the U.S. and most other advanced economies) because a greater portion of our population is concentrated into large cities, exposing a high percentage of Australians to traffic delays.

This effect is accelerating and has greatest impact in and around the biggest capitals of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

The lion's share (some 65%) of the entire population of New South Wales resides in Sydney. As well Sydney is estimated to gain over 80% of all growth in NSW into the future, and traffic congestion is officially forecasted to worsen too.

So while Sydneysiders want new infrastructure to reduce traffic delays, that is implausible with such concentrated growth. In addition, there are the long implementation times, disruptions and enormous costs of city-centric infrastructure to contend with.

It raises some serious questions. For one, isn't it counterproductive to keep fuelling faster growth in the biggest cities, at great cost, without addressing worsening traffic congestion? For another, why continue down this same costly path when it involves ever-increasing taxes and charges and lost opportunities to create a more decentralised Australia?

The widening gap in the growth of Australia's bigger and smaller cities is influenced by infrastructure priorities. And while much new infrastructure is locked in, the next round of projects is still an open question and crucial to how our towns and cities will fare in future.

Some changes are on the agenda, mainly around additional funding sources and new technologies. The proposals include more "congestion pricing" on our roads and "value capture" land taxes on properties near new transport infrastructure, as well as trialling of "on-demand buses" and "autonomous vehicles".

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However, project-selection processes also need to identify and assess alternatives based on proven arrangements that would fix traffic congestion within foreseeable timeframes and at affordable costs.

In that regard, one case stands out. During the 2000 Olympics Sydney's road and transport systems operated exceptionally well, providing a full-scale demonstration worthy of further consideration. Sydney doubled public transport capacity, shrank traffic volumes and lowered traffic congestion levels, enabling unprecedented demands to be met (including more person-kilometres travelled on the road system). The strategy hinged on doubling the bus fleet by borrowing thousands of buses from regional NSW and interstate, increasing train services and relying on more parking (mostly on-street) close to numerous transport hubs.

But these were temporary measures and after the Games Sydney's troublesome traffic re-emerged and has only deteriorated further in the intervening years.

Now as then the challenge is to rapidly boost public transport over whole cities, which are dominated by sprawling car dependent suburbs, where most travel occurs but where public transport is in short supply.

A practical variation of the Olympic case would be to comprehensively lift bus fleets and services, to deliver high quality public transport permanently. Thousands of new buses would be rolled out, to raise service levels on existing routes and to create high-frequency, limited stop routes across the main road network as well. This would mimic the metro wide traffic shrinking effect achieved during the Olympics, by giving car travellers more choice and triggering a significant shift to public transport.

At the same time, support facilities would be enhanced including more car parking within walking distance of suburban centres, walking and cycling ways, improved access to bus stops and rail stations and new modernised bus stops too. Generally, newly dedicated bus lanes would be unnecessary because of the traffic shrinking effect.

For major business centres, high frequency shuttle buses are needed, to provide easy access within each centre and to interconnect with key transport nodes (like nearby rail stations, car parking facilities and other bus services). In the biggest CBDs, the shuttle services might be developed into rapid bus transit (bus right-of-way) or light rail operations.

Under this type of plan, whole city metropolitan areas would be served by quality public transport, including improved access to major business centres.

And for a city like Sydney, it would be doable over a 5 to 10-year timeframe at a cost akin to that of one major roadway or rail line project, with the potential for outstanding value for taxpayers given the scale of the benefits.

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A plan of this kind is outlined below for Sydney, noting that it includes:
Implementing seven north-south and six east-west main road bus routes as illustrated;
Running buses at least every 5 minutes from around 5am until 10pm on all these routes;
Upgrading existing bus, walking, parking and cycling systems; and
Providing quality shuttle services in major business centres.

Sydney currently has hundreds of bus routes, providing major centre to major centre links, suburban connectors and local services, with some high frequency operations and bus priority infrastructure (such as bus lanes and bus priority traffic signals).

In total, the bus network moves around 5% of all person-kilometres travelled annually in Sydney (while approximately 80% go by car, 11% rail, 2% walk-only and 2% by other modes including bicycle, motor cycle and ferry).

The existing bus network caters mainly for shorter trips while car and rail trips are longer.

Main road bus services would represent a new category and bring longer and more direct bus trip options, avoiding congested centres (as far as practically possible) and mirroring the way that many cars travel from one part of the metropolis to another. Main road buses would stop once per suburb to pick up and drop off passengers (at a bus stop within walking range of the suburban centre, and of the parking and other public transport services nearby).

The plan would indeed result in freer-flowing traffic, speeding up road-based trips and increasing public transport capacity and interchanging opportunities.

It would help to absorb much of the growth in travel demand through the 2020s and enable Sydney to evolve into a city with ample public transport options. Car dependency would be much less of an issue than it is now, clearing the way for the expansion of on-demand buses and car-share and bike-share schemes as well.

Then by 2030 Sydney could reasonably aim for mode shares in the order of 50% car, 20% rail, 20% bus, 5% walk-only and 5% other modes, signifying a much-improved trajectory into the future.

The current emphasis on building large-scale parking stations adjacent to major rail stations would, with the advent of widespread public transport, give way to more parking in the suburbs. The suburban parking could include a greater take-up of on-street parking, use of vacant blocks and private property park-share arrangements. In turn, other emerging modes (such as ride-share, on-demand buses, bike-share, car-share and autonomous cars) have the potential to reduce parking demands in future.

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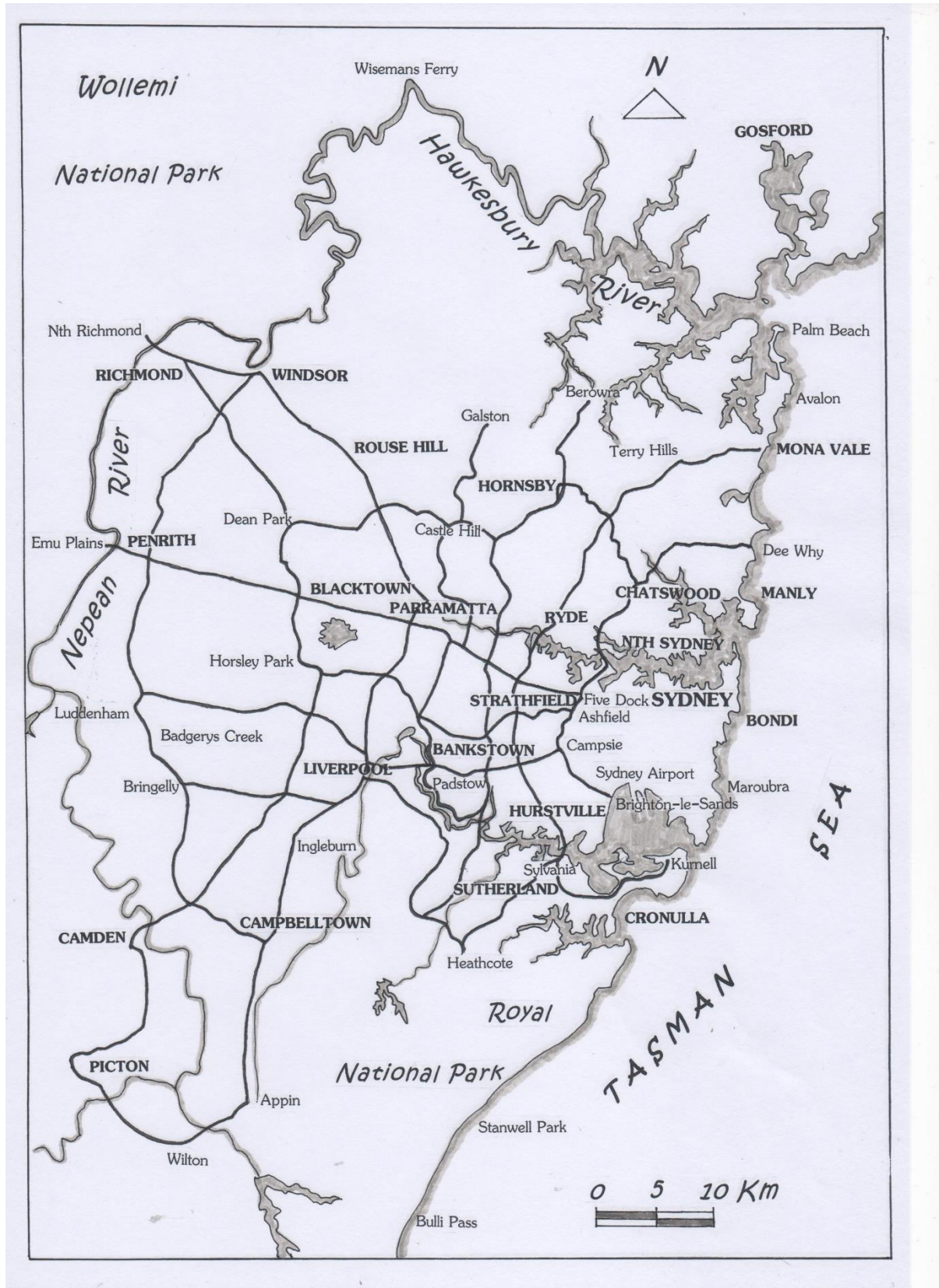


Illustration of a new main-road bus network for Sydney

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ILLUSTRATED NEW NORTH-SOUTH BUS ROUTES

- **WINDSOR – CAMPBELLTOWN:** via The Northern Rd, Narellan Rd.
- **RICHMOND – PICTON:** via Blacktown Rd, Richmond Rd, Rooty Hill Rd, M7, Wallgrove Rd, Cowpasture Rd, Camden Valley Way, Remembrance Driveway.
- **NORTH RICHMOND – APPIN:** via Windsor Rd, Cumberland Hwy, Hume Hwy, Campbelltown Rd, Appin Rd.
- **GALSTON – PADSTOW:** via Galston Rd, Old Northern Rd, Windsor Rd, James Ruse Dr, Woodville Rd, Henry Lawson Dr, Davies Rd.
- **BEROWRA – HEATHCOTE:** via Pacific Hwy, M1, Pennant Hills Rd, Silverwater Rd, Alfords Pt Rd, Heathcote Rd.
- **MONA VALE – KURNELL:** via Ryde Rd, Homebush Bay Dr, King Georges Rd, Princes Hwy, Port Hacking Rd, The Boulevarde, Captain Cook Drive.
- **DEE WHY – BRIGHTON-LE-SANDS:** via Pittwater Rd, Warringah Rd, Boundary Rd, Pacific Hwy, Epping Rd, Centennial Rd, Burns Bay Rd, Victoria Rd, Lyons Rd, Frederick St, Brighton Ave, Bexley Rd, Bay St.

ILLUSTRATED NEW EAST-WEST BUS ROUTES

- **CHATSWOOD – DEAN PARK:** via Boundary Rd, Eastern Arterial Rd, Burns Rd, Junction Rd, Ingram Rd, Pennant Hills Rd, Castle Hills Rd, Showground Rd, Windsor Rd, Memorial Ave, Sunnyholt Rd, M7.
- **FIVE DOCK – EMU PLAINS:** via Queens Rd, Gipps St, Great Western Hwy.
- **ASHFIELD – HORSLEY PARK:** via Hume Hwy, The Horsley Drive.
- **CAMPSIE – LUDDENHAM:** via Canterbury Rd, Milperra Rd, Newbridge Rd, Elizabeth Drive.
- **SYLVANIA – BRINGELLY:** via Princes Hwy, Heathcote Rd, M5, Hume Hwy, Camden Valley Way, Bringelly Rd.
- **APPIN – PICTON:** via Appin Rd, Wilton Rd.

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Similar plans would also be developed for the proximate regional cities located along the Newcastle-Sydney-Canberra corridor, for further-away towns and cities and for the intercity highways which connect towns and cities together.

City-centric infrastructure would be less imperative, allowing more regional projects (like highways, railways and airfields) to be funded. Overall, decentralisation would be reinvigorated, making larger cities more liveable and smaller ones more viable.

Implementing such plans would reduce the costs and environmental impacts of travel delays and herald a new era in urban road and transport productivity.

In the longer term, bus and rail network service levels can be further increased to keep road and public transport productively a step ahead of growth.

Also, as roads approach their optimum capacities, the busiest bus routes can be upgraded to rapid bus transit ways or light rail lines.

Interurban transit can evolve variously, for example from conventional rail to higher speed options like tilt trains (such as currently operate along the Northeast U.S. Corridor between Boston, New York and Washington, serving a population of 55 million).

Proceeding as outlined above would be affordable and sustainable, providing value for taxpayers and getting the best from existing (and currently committed) road and rail systems, before having to fund more extraordinarily costly city-centric infrastructure.

All in all, road and public transport issues can be turned around and there are opportunities to do much better in this area of endeavour just as Sydney demonstrated during the 2000 Olympic Games.

Submission by: John Morandini, transport author and advocate; and retired civil engineer with over 40 years of service in NSW agencies, including in transport policy, planning and operations.