

**Submission  
No 6**

## **SYDNEY METRO WEST PROJECT**

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## Reference a) – The original business case

Apart from the claimed benefits listed on the Sydney Metro web site <https://tinyurl.com/2a5j62hv>, when the project was announced to the media for public consumption in March 2019, its purpose was expressed to be to—

- (a) reduce the journey time between Parramatta and the CBD to 20 minutes; and
- (b) provide more capacity on the T1 Western line which would be at capacity in the next 15 years.

At the time, the premier and the Transport Minister announced an injection of \$6.4 billion into the project. <https://tinyurl.com/24qs9ywm>.

By October the figure had grown to \$20 billion. <https://tinyurl.com/2byf2xvu>. The growth continues.

### • Aim (a) A quicker journey

The final cost is likely to be more, but even if it is no more than \$20 billion, the investment cannot be justified to shorten the journey in this way.

Is there a demand for a quicker journey or is it a solution looking for a problem? Has this assumed demand been tested with passengers who would be prepared to pay more for a quicker journey?

Vast areas of the metropolitan area are not served by rail yet are remote from the areas of well paid jobs. It is almost obscene that consideration is

## *The project tries to achieve two conflicting aims — at unnecessary cost*

being given to a costly and risky project to shorten the journey times for those already served.

But the practice of replacing existing public assets with the proceeds of the sale of other public assets was the core activity of the previous government and is seen again clearly in this project.

Major retailers left the CBD for the suburbs more than 50 years ago. Chatswood, Macquarie Park and Nor-West are still situated in the “Global Arc” <https://tinyurl.com/2dh3gsgt> despite the words not being used recently.

Advances in communications have reduced the need for activities like the stock exchange, financial service providers, business registries and the Land Titles Office to be centrally located. Macquarie Street no longer has its former significance for the medical profession.

If the idea of three cities is to be promoted, future emphasis should be placed on activating the other two cities. These are closer to where people live and give credence to the aim of the 30 minute city policy.

*In short, the **Central Business District** is becoming a relatively less necessary or desirable work destination.*

Given—

- (a) the cost and time involved in commuting;

- (b) the community resources needed to cater for it;

- (c) the widespread deployment of the NBN; and

- (d) trends in changes in the type of work being performed,

the COVID epidemic may have hastened a trend to working more remotely either at home or in centres closer to where people live.

This was reflected in reduced public transport use that has not completely returned and will take longer to return to trend. Population growth figures have been revised downwards.

### • Aim (b) Capacity on the T1 line

If this need exists, is substantially duplicating existing lines with metros the best technology for T1 journeys which are longer than those travelled on traditional metros?

The population of Paris is about twice that of Sydney. Paris has metros and heavy rail.

Authorities are expected and have the experience to ensure each type of transport plays to its strengths.

When the Berejiklian government reneged on Premier O’Farrell’s promise to use traditional double-deck carriages on the North West Rail Line, it went into overdrive to promote single deck metros as “modern” and above all

“world class”. The propaganda continues.

This is despite international experience where their use is usually found for short journeys on comprehensive, multi-node networks that allow for more flexible trip plans than is the case in Sydney’s centralised network topology.

Meanwhile more international transit authorities are adopting double deck carriages.

The previous government repeatedly damned Sydney’s double deck carriages as “obsolete”. Since then, the Liberal thinking has promoted metros as the answer to every transit need.

The most frequently cited disadvantage was dwell times on double deck carriages. This is hardly an issue as trains progressively pick up passengers as they approach the CBD.

When it comes to loading many passengers at a single station, the experience during the Olympics and at CBD stations after New Years Eve fireworks and Sorry Day bridge walks when vast numbers are moved quickly is conveniently forgotten.

But if this does not satisfy, did the decision makers consider technologies such as the trains used on Paris’ RER A on our existing inter-urban tracks? <https://tinyurl.com/2yqyghtw> and <https://tinyurl.com/y4gha53z>

Dating from as recently as 1998 with its three-door double-deck cars [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MI\\_09](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MI_09) and modern signalling, that line carries as many passengers as the whole Sydney

network.

Their use would remove the need for more tracks and stations given the project, like the South West metro, is largely intended to serve existing locations.

Given the huge cost saving, terminating at Central for the added comfort would be a cheap price to pay as new development is likely in the south end of the city. If more development is the fate of the already crowded CBD, it should take place at the southern end.

### Reference b) – Route selection: a work in progress

Transport infrastructure projects in NSW have a habit of being commenced in haste before all aspects of the project have been resolved.

A recent example is the L2/3 light rail to the eastern suburbs which suffered delays, costs overruns, litigation, as well as loss and distress to affected businesses.

Metro West is already showing signs of exceeding its originally announced cost and that is before the belated discovery of the desirability or even the necessity of serving more locations.

*The problem arises from the attempt to serve long distance and inner city closer settlements with the same technology.*

The project should have been split in two in order to serve its different needs.

One part using RER type double deck carriages to serve the high passenger loads coming from greater distances running on existing inter urban



tracks.

With cost and risk reduction in mind, the second part would allow planning for a solution intended to cater for inner city areas with more closely spaced stops thereby catering for more passengers.

With the shorter distances between stops, light rail would be a better solution especially as these are cheaper to build than metro stations.

### Reference c) – Cost blow-outs

Cost blowouts were inevitable due to the obsession with trying to justify the unjustifiable—high volume, long distances with few stops and lower volume, closer stops.

It is inevitable that blowouts will be greater when plans are changed after

construction has started.

These different needs required different solutions.

A study by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development has found that: *“The transport network is catering for different trip purposes through the day. In the morning peak when the network in large cities is handling peak demand, only a third of people are on their way to work.”*<https://tinyurl.com/2bpoark5>.

More closely spaced stops helps serve the other two-thirds and promotes public transport use in more congested inner city areas.

### Reference d) – Consideration of other benefits?

If the Minister considered more widely, information about such considerations does not appear to have been shared with the public

### Reference e) – Other matters

Metro West seems to be another project devised by those with an agenda apart from finding a solution to the stated problems. It has been rushed to commencement in anticipation of avoiding scrutiny and to be safe from cancellation by a later government.

*The Asset Recycling program has run out of assets to recycle.*

Despite the social housing problems brewing even when the project was announced in 2019, the neglect of governments’ traditional role in providing public housing has now consumed the public debate and cannot be ignored any longer; there is much catching up to do.

Much time was lost in preparing for a zero carbon economy. Even now the enormity of the task and the funds needed are barely discussed.

### In short: Value for Money is no longer Optional.

Linking Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 at Carlingford station to the T9, Central Coast and the metro lines at Epping would make better use of existing infrastructure.