

**Submission
No 26**

SYDNEY METRO WEST PROJECT

Organisation: Sydney Olympic Park Business Association Inc.

Date Received: 19 September 2023



18 September 2023

Lynda Voltz MP
Committee Chair
Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure

Re: Submission to the Inquiry into Sydney Metro West project

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into the Sydney Metro West project.

The Sydney Olympic Park Business Association is an independent membership-based body representing the interests of companies, organisations, and stakeholders of Sydney Olympic Park and surrounding suburbs.

Established in 2000, our mission is to maximise the potential of this iconic precinct and address issues and opportunities to ensure its growth, access, and sustainability by advocating and influencing key decision makers to meet the collective needs of our members.

The Business Association works closely with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, the City of Parramatta Council, and all levels of government to realise the vision for Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula.

Sydney Olympic Park has continued to grow since the Master Plan 2030 (Review 2018) was released. Currently, approximately 5000 people live in just over 3,000 dwellings. Under the Master Plan 2050, which is close to being finalised before going on public exhibition, this will explode by 2030 to 23,500 residents across close to 11,000 dwellings.

The plan is also expected to deliver 34,000 job opportunities and 100,000 square metres of additional retail space.

As Australia's premier events precinct, Sydney Olympic Park regularly hosts major events across multiple venues, often concurrently. This can mean 140,000 people in attendance in the course of a day. The Sydney Royal Easter Show alone has over 800,000 people visit this event over a twelve-day period in Autumn every year.

Events are a major driver of economic uplift to NSW and patrons need reliable, accessible, and efficient public transport to be able to attend.

Sydney Olympic Park were delighted to be able to do the heavy lifting for the recent FIFA Women's World Cup 2023. The only hiccup was a disruption in the train transport on one of the busiest nights leaving thousands stranded for hours which was a huge dampener for many on their otherwise joyous experience.

Sydney Metro West will play a key role in providing public transport to accommodate everyday visitation and mass attendances for major events in Sydney Olympic Park.

This project is an investment in critical infrastructure that will be the game changer for Sydney Olympic Park and the broader Olympic Peninsula to realise its potential after years of neglect in its public transport connectivity.

Businesses and residents have chosen to locate and be based or invest in the area on the promise of public transport.

The residents of Wentworth Point and Carter Street, Lidcombe, look to the Metro with a station at Sydney Olympic Park for connectivity salvation from their high-density, fast-growing suburbs which are sadly lacking reliable, accessible, efficient, and regular public transport options. They have already been waiting years.

We are confident that this inquiry will assist this NSW Government to deliver this monumental project by 2030 and be a blueprint for best practice to continue to deliver vital infrastructure and connectively for all of greater Sydney into the future.

Please find following some items for consideration:

Cost Blowouts in Project Cost and Timelines

It seems that cost blowouts are the biggest impediment to the efficient delivery of this project.

It is understood that supply chain and logistic constraints, and resourcing, are challenging in the current economic environment and these factors are a consequence of COVID-19 to a certain extent, albeit historically, the costs of Government infrastructure projects were regularly blowing out prior to the pandemic.

We acknowledge that partnerships with the private sector are important in the delivery of mega-projects and confidentiality can apply to these arrangements.

We encourage the government to be transparent in their contract arrangements to ensure trust with the taxpayers and the future generations who will be funding the debt from this vital infrastructure.

It can be difficult for the average person to understand why the cost for any Government project is so significantly more than it might be.

The NSW Government is urged to be diligent when engaging the private sector so complex contracts are open to more than a small handful of firms with the capacity to deliver which results in less competition. Breaking contracts into smaller bundles should be considered where possible to ensure competition and subsequently competitive pricing to provide the best value. This would also provide smaller local companies with the opportunity to scale up and offer their services to Government. Where feasible, we support the use of local manufacturers and service providers.

The use and engagement of consultants charging fees well above what would pass the 'pub test', should be carefully scrutinised.

Streamlined and holistic project management with genuine and transparent consultation with all stakeholders to provide efficiencies and accountability across the project, must be of the highest order. The inclusion of incentives, consequences, and performance indicators being factored into any contracts with the NSW Government might be worthy of consideration.

Integrating to Place

The Sydney Olympic Park metro station will be centrally located and is the catalyst to create a vibrant new town centre over and around the immediate station site.

It is important that the station also connects and integrates sensitively with other areas in the park including the Abattoir Heritage precinct in the corner between Herb Elliott Avenue, Showground Road, and Dawn Fraser Avenue. The Metro station in Sydney Olympic Park should channel and extend foot traffic for the benefit of all businesses and the ease of access for all workers, residents, and visitors.

At all times the design should consider elements that encourage, facilitate, and allow an active and colourful 24/7 economy.

Extensive community consultation will be needed to test design concepts and identify valuable insights from stakeholders.

Genuine Community Consultation

There is some cynicism amongst the Sydney Olympic Park business community around community consultation with Government which can be perceived as box ticking. Our members have contributed their time and input significantly to many of these engagement exercises over the years across many projects including the Master Plans only to be advised after the exercise when a decision is already made or 'deal is done' on matters of importance to members of the Sydney Olympic Park Business Association.

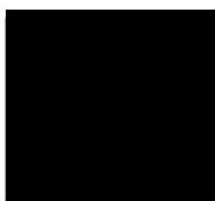
This is no criticism on the people who are conducting these workshops or the public servant personnel who believe in the process. Sometimes it is out of their control with decisions being made higher up in Government.

We believe more consultation is needed and community input genuinely incorporated into decisions aligned with the community the decision will impact. We encourage one on one consultation with our members in preference to or, if needs be, in conjunction with the usual workshop process.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission. We look forward to the findings of this important review and ongoing communications.

Please contact me if you require any further information from us.

Yours sincerely



Allison Taylor

CEO

SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK BUSINESS ASSOCIATION INC.

Level 1, Building A, Abattoir Heritage Precinct, 1 Herb Elliott Avenue
SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK NSW 2127

T 02 9746 1200

W www.sopba.com.au