

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF THE CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

Responses to Supplementary Questions

Hearing – 20 August 2018

Who, within the government, signed the final contract with ALTRAC?

Response:

The Sydney Light Rail Project Deed (SLR Project Deed) is publicly available on both the Transport for NSW and NSW Treasury websites.

The SLR Project Deed was executed on behalf of Transport for NSW by its authorised delegate, Christopher Lock.

What was the estimated travel time from Randwick to the CBD when the project was first announced?

- a) What was the average travel time from Randwick to Martin Place, during peak hour, on bus routes 373 and 377 when the project was first announced?

Response:

From 2013 to 2018 the average journey time from Randwick to Martin Place has increased from 30 to 34-35mins on bus routes 373 and 377. By 2031, about 780,000 trips will be made to the city centre each weekday, 150,000 more than in 2013. Existing infrastructure cannot keep pace – Sydneysiders need better transport options and a fully integrated system. We're building light rail as it will provide increased capacity and reliable journey times from the South East to the CBD.

Planning documents estimate end-to-end journey time of the CBD and South East Light Rail from Kingsford/Randwick to Circular Quay at 34-38 minutes, which TfNSW still considers indicative.

Traffic signalling detailed designs are being finalised. This work is expected to be completed soon, meaning end-state traffic modelling can be undertaken, including further headway, journey time and speed zone analysis.

Traffic movements change over time, making it necessary to undertake detailed traffic modelling closer to light rail operations beginning to ensure the latest network demands are considered. This is standard practice for transport projects.

We need to balance the needs of the new light rail with existing road users, and up-to-date traffic modelling will ensure that we get that balance right.

What was the estimated travel time from Randwick to the CBD in 2014?

- a) What caused the change in travel time, if it did change?
- b) What was the average travel time from Randwick to Martin Place, during peak hour, on bus routes 373 and 377 in 2014?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What was the estimated travel time from Randwick to the CBD in 2015?

- a) What caused the change in travel time, if it did change?
- b) What was the average travel time from Randwick to Martin Place, during peak hour, on bus routes 373 and 377 in 2015?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What was the estimated travel time from Randwick to the CBD in 2016?

- a) What caused the change in travel time, if it did change?
- b) What was the average travel time from Randwick to Martin Place, during peak hour, on bus routes 373 and 377 in 2016?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What was the estimated travel time from Randwick to the CBD in 2017?

- a) What caused the change in travel time, if it did change?
- b) What was the average travel time from Randwick to Martin Place, during peak hour, on bus routes 373 and 377 in 2017?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What is the most current estimated travel time from Randwick to the CBD?

- a) What caused the change in travel time, if it did change?
- b) What is the current average travel time from Randwick to Martin Place, during peak hour, on bus routes 373 and 377?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What was the estimated capacity of the line per hour when the project was first announced?

a) What was the capacity of bus lines 373 and 377 when the project was first announced?

Response:

The CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR) will increase public transport capacity between the CBD and South East.

As outlined in the Environmental Impact Statement 2013 (EIS), peak city bound express bus routes will remain in service, also supported by some all-stops and cross-regional routes. A new bus plan, based on actual origin and destination information from the Opal system, will be developed to accompany the introduction of light rail services.

The EIS predicted a capacity of up to 12,000 people per hour on the light rail (6,000 in each direction).

The EIS modification Report and SLR Project Deed (2014) have both been clear that the capacity when the light rail is operational is up to 13,500 passengers in both directions per hour (15 services each direction hourly, with a capacity of up to 450 passengers on each service).

Frequency can accommodate up to 20 services an hour in each direction as demand grows, reaching up to 9,000 people each way, each hour.

Once operational, light rail with a redesigned bus network will see in the morning peak more than a 10% increase in capacity from Kingsford, and 30% from Randwick. It will also double the morning peak capacity to UNSW and the Hospital precinct.

The peak hour average capacity of the 373 and 377 ranges from 791-861 passengers between 2014 and 2017.

What was the estimated capacity of the line per hour in 2014?

- a) What caused the change in capacity, if it did change?
- b) What was the capacity of bus lines 373 and 377 in 2014?

Response:

The CSELR will increase public transport capacity between the CBD and South East.

When operational, 15 services will operate each direction hourly, moving up to 13,500 passengers in both directions.

Frequency can accommodate up to 20 services an hour in each direction as demand grows, reaching up to 9,000 people each way, each hour.

Once operational, light rail with a redesigned bus network will see in the morning peak more than a 10% increase in capacity from Kingsford, and 30% from Randwick. It will also double the morning peak capacity to University of NSW and the Hospital precinct.

The peak hour average capacity of the 373 and 377 ranges from 791-861 passengers between 2014 and 2017.

What was the estimated capacity of the line per hour in 2015?

- a) What caused the change in capacity, if it did change?
- b) What was the capacity of bus lines 373 and 377 in 2015?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What was the estimated capacity of the line per hour in 2016?

- a) What caused the change in capacity, if it did change?
- b) What was the capacity of bus lines 373 and 377 in 2016?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What was the estimated capacity of the line per hour in 2017?

- a) What caused the change in capacity, if it did change?
- b) What was the capacity of bus lines 373 and 377 in 2017?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

What is the current estimated capacity of the line?

- a) What caused the change in capacity, if it did change?
- b) What is the current capacity of bus lines 373 and 377?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.

Why was the EPA not included at any stage of the process, considering its role as an independent regulator?

Response:

The NSW Environment Protection Authority has been a part of the Project since the EIS was undertaken in 2013 and continues to have a role in the project as a regulator of the Environment Protection Licence.

In an answer to a question on page 10 of Hansard, Ms Prendergast said: Ms Prendagast: “Sure. The original schedule set out start and finish dates for each zone. Six to nine months is not really what it was. The maximum was up to 380 days in some zones.”

- a. Did the Minister's announcement of the original schedule which was published in May 2015 state that 20 of the 31 zones were supposed to be occupied for nine months or less?
- b. According to the original schedule, how many of the 31 zones were supposed to take the maximum of up to 380 days?

Response:

Please refer to Attachment B.

Ms Prendagast continued: “Due to the utilities and the other heritage issues that we have encountered, obviously some of the zones have been delayed.”

- a) If only some of the zones have been delayed, which of the 31 zones have not been delayed?
- b) How many days delays were attributable to “the utilities” and how many to “heritage issues”?
- c) In the case of Ausgrid utilities, how many of these had been identified by Transport for NSW prior to the award of the contract?

Response:

Detailed construction staging of fee zones is dependent on a number of constraints, including heritage, environment, utilities and weather.

Building down one of Sydney's oldest streets, we always expected to encounter challenges including utilities and heritage.

Under certain circumstances, ALTRAC will be able to make a claim for an extension of time for delays in accordance with the terms of the SLR Project Deed.

Claims on large infrastructure projects are anticipated and are business as usual. These matters are managed in accordance with the SLR Project Deed.

Any commercial arrangements with ALTRAC Light Rail are managed with strictest confidentiality under the SLR Project Deed.

Ms Prendergast continued: “The first two zones we occupied in October and December 2015, being zones 5 and 6 in the centre of the city between Market and King and King and Park. We were actually opened in December 2017. We have opened zone 15 in Surry Hills. We are just going back to do final finishing works but we have had place making there since Christmas.”

- a) When did the Minister’s announcement of May 2015 state that zones 5 and 6 would be completed?
- b) How long was the construction supposed to take in zones 5 and 6 and how long did it actually take?
- c) How long before August 2017, when you say the delays became apparent, were these zones originally scheduled to be completed?
- d) according to the original schedule announced by the Minister when was zone 15 supposed to be completed?
- e) How long before August 2017, when you claim the delays became apparent, was the zone supposed to be completed.
- f) Can you please provide the following for all 31 zones:
 - i) The original scheduled start and completion dates according to the Minister’s announcement in May 2015;
 - ii) The actual start dates for each zone; and
 - iii) When each zone has been or is predicted to be completed.

Response:

We always knew this would be a complex and challenging project, particularly in the centre of the city, and would require ALTRAC and its contractor to look at each zone on a case by case basis. This is why ALTRAC commenced building in zones 5 and 6 between King and Park Street.

TfNSW published a construction schedule ahead of construction commencing to give businesses advance warning of proposed start dates.

An updated schedule was published in January 2016 after a recalibration of the program, with some zones starting later than anticipated.

Zones continued to be occupied in line with construction activities underway, with ALTRAC progressively entering fee zones as construction activity ramped up. Major civil construction work was completed in three zones in December 2017 and they were reopened.

As expected, building light rail down one of the oldest streets in Australia's biggest city has presented some challenges, such as utilities and drainage. We’ve always acknowledged these challenges and the need to adjust the schedules of individual zones.

The small business assistance program was established in August 2017, to assist small businesses on the light rail alignment who believe their operations have been negatively financially impacted by the construction of the Sydney Light Rail project taking longer than originally expected.

ALTRAC has announced construction barriers along the light rail alignment will start being removed or reduced from November 2018 and civil construction will be substantially complete by the end of 2018.

We continue to work with ALTRAC to ensure the community is kept up to date as construction progresses and to ensure the project is completed as quickly as possible.

Please refer to Attachment B.

Committee Member: “I notice that the actual program to compensate businesses—perhaps “compensation” is the wrong word—or to provide ex gratia payments to businesses started in August 2017. Can you give us an understanding as to why it started at that time and not earlier?”

Ms Prendagast: “Yes. It did not start earlier because the delays had not become apparent. The zones had not been occupied for a lot longer than was originally envisaged.”

- a. Of the 10 zones on George Street, how many had experienced delays before August 2017?
- b. Cumulatively, what was the extent of the delays across the 10 zones on George Street?

Response:

Refer to answer provided above.