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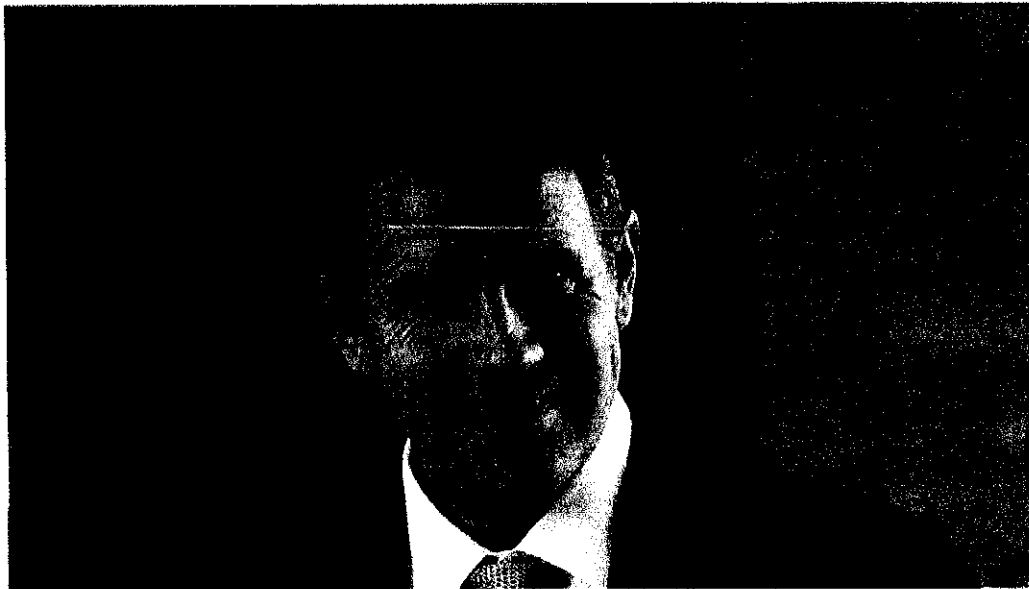
# NSW issues tender for Hong Kong high-rises at new Sydney Metro train stations

By **Kirsty Needham** State Political Editor

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The Baird government has taken the first step towards the Hong Kong private railway model, issuing a tender for the design of high-rise towers above six new stations on the Metro City and Southwest line.

The sites include valuable Martin Place, Pitt Street and Barangaroo real estate in the city, as well as Waterloo in the inner east, Victoria Cross in North Sydney and Chatswood.



Plans in motion for MTR development: Premier Mike Baird. JOHN VEAGE

Companies have been asked to submit concept designs for the development of the airspace above the stations, which could cover technical and engineering advice

on what was possible, to market testing of what the real estate was worth and likely tenants.

Hong Kong's railway was built by private company MTR in exchange for property development rights in the airspace above each station. Typically these stations are integrated with high-rise residential towers and retail complexes.

MTR is also building London's Crossrail, with 12 major property developments over and around stations, covering 280,000 square metres of office, retail and residential space.

MTR is part of the consortium that will operate Sydney's first private railway, the Metro Northwest, but that contract doesn't include air rights.

The company has lobbied the Baird government to adopt its "value capture" model for future projects, which potentially lowers construction costs in exchange for the property development.

The design tender will allow Transport for NSW to determine how the stations can be built so that commuter access to the underground Metro City and Southwest platforms are not impeded by high-rise footings.

"Transport for NSW is investigating the feasibility of over-site development opportunities at some of the proposed new Sydney Metro railway stations," a spokesman said.

"This tender will help Transport for NSW put in place an appropriate delivery strategy to maximise any over site development opportunities as part of delivering Sydney Metro."

The Baird government hasn't announced whether property development rights above stations will be awarded in a separate contract to the station construction.

An industry briefing in December found "significant interest" in property development opportunities above the stations, particularly in the CBD.



**Kirsty Needham**



Kirsty Needham is China Correspondent for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age.