

**REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE**

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 - TRANSPORT AND  
CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION**

<b>UNCORRECTED</b>
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**At Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney on Wednesday, 6 November 2019**

**The Committee met at 10:15**

**PRESENT**

Ms Abigail Boyd (Chair)

The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. Catherine Cusack

The Hon. Antony D'Adam

The Hon. Wes Fang

The Hon. Rose Jackson

The Hon. Shayne Mallard



**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the first hearing of the inquiry into the planned conversion of the Sydenham-Bankstown line from heavy rail to metro as part of the Sydney Metro City and Southwest Project. This inquiry will examine various issues including the adequacy of the business case for the project, the suitability of the Metro system, the public consultation process, tendering and planning process, impact on the environment and heritage conservation and the impact on commuters over the next five years.

Before we commence, I acknowledge the Gadigal people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders, past and present, of the Eora nation, and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present. Today we will hear from Inner West Council, Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce, the University of Sydney and a number of community groups and organisations.

Before we commence I will make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing. Today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. A transcript of today's hearing will be placed on the Committee's website when it becomes available. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, while members of the media may film or record committee members and witnesses, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside of their evidence at the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments they may make to the media or to others after you complete your evidence, as such comments would not be protected by Parliamentary privilege if another person decided to take an action for defamation. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat.

There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time, or with certain documents to hand. In those circumstances witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. Witnesses are advised that any messages should be delivered to committee members through the Committee staff. To aid the audibility of this hearing may I remind both committee members and witnesses to speak into the microphones. The room is filled with induction loops, compatible with hearing aid systems that have tele-coil receivers. In addition, several seats have been reserved near the loud speakers for persons in the public hearing who have difficulty hearing. Finally, would everyone please turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing.

**EMMA JONES**, Executive Officer, Campus Infrastructure and Services, University of Sydney, affirmed and examined

**GREGORY FRANCIS ROBINSON**, Director, Campus Infrastructure and Services, University of Sydney, sworn and examined

**CHRISTIAN WATTS**, Divisional Manager, Property and Development Team, University of Sydney, affirmed and examined:

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**EMMA JONES**, Executive Officer - Campus Infrastructure and Services, University of Sydney, affirmed and examined

**GREG ROBINSON**, Director Campus Infrastructure and Services, University of Sydney, sworn and examined

**CHRISTIAN WATTS**, Divisional Manager - Property and Development, Campus Infrastructure and Services, University of Sydney, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** I invite you to make a short opening statement.

**Mr ROBINSON:** On behalf of the university we would like to thank the Committee for allowing us the opportunity to provide evidence on what we feel is a very important inquiry for the future of Sydney. The university's main campus sits within the Camperdown Ultimo collaboration area recognised by the Greater Sydney Commission as one of Sydney's economic engines and the most mature of its health and education precincts. Despite this the Greater Sydney Commission also recognises that the area's future growth is likely to be curtailed by a lack of public transport with **the university of Sydney and the RPA hospital surrounded by congested roads**, limited cycle paths and one rail station, being Redfern, which is aged and over capacity during peak hours.

We see that the proposed Sydney Metro, city and south-west line will remove more direct train services to Redfern for commuters who live west of Sydenham on the T3 Bankstown line. The alignment will lead to an increase in travel times of between 15- and 26 per cent for our estimated 2,000 staff and students who use this line. This proposal also follows on the back of a **number of recent timetable changes** which have further reduced services to Redfern and is yet another blow to the accessibility and connectivity of the Camperdown area which, despite an increase this population and economic growth, is not slated for any new major public transport infrastructure. The announced Redfern station refurbishment, which we welcome, is for disability and compliance upgrades but will not materially improve future capacities of the station.

We are asking the New South Wales Government to not only consider the projected growth of the University of Sydney but also the projected growth of the Royal Prince Alfred, the Australian Technology Park, which is about to open offices with the Commonwealth Bank for over 10,000 new employees, the redevelopment of north Eveleigh and the growth of the CBD corridor with the newly announced central precinct. These are all initiatives which the university supports in terms of the growth, but initiatives that will require an integrated transport solution to make them work if we are going to have that sort of level of growth. We have strong support from the Camperdown-Ultimo alliance, which includes the Inner West Council, City of Sydney, the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, ourselves, University of Technology Sydney and Notre Dame.

That alliance has been formed to work on initiatives with the Government around integrated transport to try and take the recommendations from the Greater Sydney Commission. It is our argument that if we are going to deal with this growth we have to have another heavy rail solution within this precinct. **Our suggested response has been on a number of occasions that the Government** consider a metro station within Camperdown, whether that is an extension to the Sydney Metro West route or it is an alternate switchback, it does not matter. What does matter is that there is a mass transit solution. We are seeing this inquiry as an opportunity for us to both give feedback about the Sydenham to Bankstown line and at the same time look at the reality of the transport deficit in the collaboration area.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I would like to hear a little bit more about the research you have done as a university into how many students, staff, other people who use the precinct more generally, would be effected by the proposed change and specifically the removal of Redfern?

**Mr ROBINSON:** Some of that has been included in our report. There are other reports that we reference that have been done by consulting firms that we have employed to do this. Over the last three to four years we have had numerous reports produced for the university around the issues of where our students are, what is the

Please refer :

State of Transport in Camperdown :

22-11-18  
Camperdown Transport Status report.

State of Redfern :

06-12-17  
Overcrowding at Redfern Station Report.

Other service reductions :

28-09-18  
Central Coast to Newcastle

Blue Mountains Letter

Metro West Submissions :

24-3-17  
GSC Submission  
08-06-17  
Alternative Route Alignment  
22-11-17  
Fostering Innovation through Connection.

accessibility for them. In this particular case we flagged in our submission that there are just over 2,000 staff and students who are affected by the Bankstown line within one kilometre of the stations along that route. There is a further 1,000 if you take that radius out to two kilometres.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** It has been suggested earlier, I do not know if you have been here for the evidence, that it was not of concern because there are alternative transport options for the students than Redfern. I am interested in your comment about the viability of those alternative options. They would be changing at Sydenham or coming back from central is what people had in mind. I would like a comment on how you feel about those as meaningful alternatives for your staff and students?

**Mr ROBINSON:** I guess it was raised earlier in the evidence I overheard about the fact there are two phases. One is a construction phase and then there is a phase after that. The construction phase worries us more so than the end solution because it is in that period of time where our students would need to be in already congested road systems to be able to get from these stations to the campus. Our evidence is that our students in the final solution are going to be inconvenienced rather than not having an alternate route. That inconvenience obviously starts to mount up in terms of the percentage of time that it requires them to do their journey and it starts to reflect on their productivity as a student in terms of the time they have available for study that they have allocated. Most of our students need to have a job of some sort. They are balancing between work life, student life and the movement to and from those activities becomes problematic for them.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** How important is it to the university overall in terms of its broad strategic goal and vision for its role in the city and the State that it be transport accessible? Is it not a big deal, a minor footnote to your vision, or central to the vision you see for the university and its growth and the role it plays?

**Mr ROBINSON:** If I could speak on behalf of the alliance, of which I am a member. The alliance has just recently confirmed that our number one issue for the success of the collaboration area in Camperdown-Ultimo is actually an integrated transport strategy. One of the things that is happening within the university sector is we are now being evaluated on student experience. It is becoming part of the formula in which we receive revenue from the Federal Government for our student placements. Things like transport become significant issues for our students in terms of the way they feel that the university is providing that experience for them. Their experience, as you would expect, starts from home and ends at home and everything that goes in between it. It is a critically important issue for us getting transport sorted.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Have you done any research on how students, perhaps staff as well, from different areas of Sydney, access the university? I am asking whether you have any evidence or research that contrasts how people, the 2,000 to 3,000 that you mentioned, access the university verses say people coming from the eastern suburbs or North Shore? Have you done research on that?

**Mr ROBINSON:** We have very detailed research on that. Obviously we keep data on our students in terms of their place of origin, as well as our staff. We have heat maps in terms of where our staff and students live. The majority of our students live along the train lines because of the need for transport. When you look at those heat maps and you follow out any of the heavy rail lines within Sydney you will find clusters of our students there depending on which particular station. It obviously varies. Yes, if you look at modes of transport, which is an important way of understanding the university, we continue to grow. It is the desire of everybody that the collaboration area does actually grow and meets the teaching and research demands that the city has, certainly on the University of Sydney.

As we do that we are capped with the number of car spaces we have on the university campus. I think we have 2,600 car spaces. They have not changed in the time I have been at the university. In fact, we have reduced car space numbers. As our student numbers grow the choices of what transport solutions they have go to bus, effectively rail, and more importantly what we are working with the City of Sydney and Inner West Council on is trying to improve cycleways and pedestrian ways so that is encouraged as well. As much as possible we are trying to find alternatives. We are also thinking through and working with Transport for NSW on the future forms of transport as we start to look at electric scooters, which have arrived in most cities in the world.

We have put our hand up to work with transport to trial to see if electric scooters breach what we call the last mile. Our issue, when you look at where we are placed away from central and Redfern, is that we are trying to close a gap which we call "the last mile". It is one thing to make those heavy rail and metro systems work and work effectively, it is another thing to be able to close that gap in terms of getting the student from the station to the campus. Unless we put a station inside the campus—we were hopeful we would before it was allocated to Waterloo—there isn't really any other choice but to try to look at this integration and to get these last-mile gaps closed as best we can.

The University's Institutional Analytics Department has reviewed student post code data to understand the number of students within certain distances of each station - refer 20-9-19 Sydenham to Marrickville Distance and Number of Students to Stations Report


**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Where would a prospective station be located?

**Mr ROBINSON:** We put some technical solutions on several occasions. There are two sites which are very plausible within the university where we have offered to Transport, through submissions, the land and the corridors to be made available for that. One is under City Road, adjacent to where our Wentworth buildings are. We are actually committed to demolishing buildings to allow for the station box to be built on Maze Crescent. We have another location, which is down where our veterinary hospital is on Parramatta Road, where again we have made commitments that we will clear and make available the land for a station box if the Government was to move the Metro line so that it could go to Camperdown.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That would involve a significant adjustment, though, to the West Metro proposal.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** And the Bays Precinct, I think.

**Mr ROBINSON:** One of the opportunities that is available at the moment is that as the Bays Precinct comes into the city, where you terminate at the city or terminate at Camperdown. One of the choice sets would be what I call switch back to the university from the CBD and effectively use that as the terminus point. It makes more sense to be terminating at a destination like the university rather than in the CBD. You actually want to move the Metros out of those places. That is one of the things that we have put forward to the Government to consider—at a time in the future does it make sense to connect the Metro West so that it comes to the campus?

 Our studies and the information we have provided shows **that there is a really strong economic benefit if you link to Westmead,** which is where the university's aspirations for building a significant second campus are—we are already embedded into the hospital. If you link the two innovation precincts of Camperdown-Darlington with Westmead you get a significant multiplier effect. We have been asking the Government to consider those benefits as being able to justify effectively that link back from the CBD to the campus.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I commend you for campaigning for a station at the university. There are clear economic benefits to our State and to our nation to do that. But there are competing interests, as you know from the last decision. I want to drill down to the specifics of the Bankstown line and your submission. I am sorry I missed your opening statement. I was in my office but I did hear some of it. What were the number of students and staff that you identified that would be impacted by not being able to get off at Redfern from that Bankstown line? Did you identify that?

**Mr ROBINSON:** I did. It was 2,077 in our submission. I said around 2,000 earlier.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Per day?

**Mr ROBINSON:** Per day.

**The CHAIR:** Students.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Yes.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I am very familiar with the area. I was a councillor there for 12 years and I have a place down there. The Waterloo station is literally—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Eight minutes walk.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I was about to say it is 300 or 400 metres, maybe less, from the new proposed western end of Redfern station—and you announced a connection across to the university walk there.

**Mr ROBINSON:** We have certainly examined that. Our consultants have given us information about what the travel distances would be from the Waterloo station. It is still is a significant deficit in terms of time. You are better off to walk from lots of areas on the campus to Central than you are to try to get to Waterloo.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** There are huge numbers walking from Central—I see it every day—down to the university, so that is an active transport walking route.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Not as active as the Redfern one. The majority of our students arrive from Redfern. They do not use Central because the time difference between the two is somewhere between 10 and 12 minutes extra if you were to walk from Central. That is part of what the alliance is looking at the moment. With the rebuild of Central precinct, when you look at people's walking distances there are two pieces to it. One is physically how much distance you are walking. The other one is the environment you are walking in. If you have a good pace-making solution in people's minds you can shorten the time that the journey is taking.

Please refer to : 22 11 17 USYD Sydney Metro West TFNSW Submission v15\_final Page 6 which indicates a BCR of 2.17 if a Usyd stop replaces White Bay or 1.7 if an alternative spur line or equivalent is used to connect the University.

Please refer : 14-08-18 Economic Impact Report by DAE indicating impact of lack of transport on the Collaboration area potential.

At the moment it is an arduous journey, both from Redfern and from Central. It is acknowledged by Transport and everybody else that if you could fix that and do some things to accelerate the way that people could move in an environment which is conducive then you would make it more attractive. But as it is at the moment, people are voting with their feet. They are rejecting the Central to Camperdown option over Redfern. That is increasing the amount of foot traffic at Redfern. At the moment we have an issue on Lawson Street, which is the heaviest desire line. Our data counts show that there are 2,000 students every 15 minutes trying to make the journey along what is a footpath no wider than about a metre and a half on Lawson Street to get to the campus.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** That will be addressed with the announced western connection.

**Mr ROBINSON:** That will improve things because that will change people through to Wilson Street—one of the reasons we are very supportive of that upgrade.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Did you say 2,000 per minute.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Two thousand per 15 minutes.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I just want to finish with one thing, if I can. When I was on the city council we looked at the issues of light rail. There was a strong campaign to extend the light rail down Broadway to University of Sydney as a solution to the transport issues there, too. Are you still interested in pursuing that?

**Mr ROBINSON:** We are interested in any solution, to be honest. We are transport agnostic. What we are trying to do is to get an integrated solution that allows for our students to get to and from the campus in the most timely fashion that we can get them there.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Can I just ask one quick question.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Ms Cusack.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Going back to what you were asking earlier in terms of the inconvenience, you talked about 15 per cent extra travel times for the students. Can you tell me how much time that is in actual times?

**Mr ROBINSON:** I can take that on notice and provide the Aurecon report. I am happy for you to have a look at how the calculations were done.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Is it like half an hour?

**Mr WATTS:**  It is about 15 minutes.

**The CHAIR:** I have a few questions in relation to alternatives. As I read your submission it is talking about the proposal as it is, converting the entire Bankstown to Sydenham heavy rail to Metro. How would your submission change if the Metro stopped at Sydenham—so if the Sydenham to Bankstown remained heavy rail. Have you done any analysis on how that would impact on travel times? Was that thought about at all?

**Mr ROBINSON:** Yes. That is what has been factored in. You have to do a change in Sydenham.

**The CHAIR:** Right.

**Mr ROBINSON:** You get off the Metro onto the heavy rail to Redfern and off the heavy rail, or you get off at Waterloo and walk up from Waterloo.

**The CHAIR:** So if the Metro stopped at Sydenham then we would not see this increase in travel times.

**Mr ROBINSON:** You would. The travel times reflect that change. At the moment if a student gets onto a train at Bankstown and goes directly to Redfern that is what we would call the current state.

**The CHAIR:** Because they would still be changing at Sydenham.

**Mr ROBINSON:** They are either changing at Sydenham, changing at Central or getting off at Waterloo and walking. They are the three steps.

**The CHAIR:** From the perspective of people who are going to Redfern then it makes very little difference whether the Metro stops at Sydenham or at Bankstown because you are having to make that extra change regardless.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Where it gets more important for our students is that it does affect them at Bankstown because if they live further down the heavy rail line from Bankstown and if they are coming to Bankstown they have to change at Bankstown to get on the Metro then change off the Metro at Sydenham or Central.

Please refer to Report Titled USYD SW Metro Impacts - Page 4 which states an additional 17 minutes to Redfern if coming from Liverpool. The timing varies dependent on journey origin.



**The CHAIR:** Understood. If the Inner West line was restored, which, as I understand it—I apologise for my ignorance of the Inner West line—went to Redfern as well, when it used to come from Liverpool, would that improve? On the assumption that the conversion occurs as planned, but then we also have some of that Inner West line restored so that you can get direct to Redfern trains from Liverpool and the nine stations west of Bankstown, do you have any idea as to how many people that would help?

**Mr ROBINSON:** We would need to specifically look at the modelling for that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I was going to ask that question. How many students travel from those nine stations that are affected west of Bankstown. Are you able to provide some data on notice?

**Mr WATTS:** It was 30 per cent of the 2,000.

**Mr ROBINSON:** It was in our submission. About 30 per cent of the 2,000 come from out that way.

**The CHAIR:** Did you get any data in that survey about what people are actually doing when they are on these trains? I am always quite interested because I have always commuted well over an hour to everything I have ever been to, whether it is the university or a job, and I use that time productively. Do you have any data on whether students are doing study on their mode of transport or anything like that?

**Mr ROBINSON:** Chair, it will all be anecdotal.

**Mr WATTS:** A lot of the trains are at standing capacity at the moment.

**The CHAIR:** So they are standing anyway.

**Mr WATTS:** I do not think they can sit down and work on their laptops and do work.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Everyone is on their phones these days, Madam Chair, and have their headphones in.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Do you want to know what students are doing on the train? They are not studying.

**The CHAIR:** Clearly they are not diligent students, like I was.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I was.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** I used to read a paperback, but that was a while ago now.

**The CHAIR:** My other question is in relation to students with a disability and accessibility needs. Do you see any benefits or detriments of the conversion proposal when it comes to those students?

**Mr ROBINSON:** There are two things. One, we would acknowledge the upgrade of Redfern station, which is designed around disability access, which we have been calling for for a long time. We absolutely welcome that because that will improve life generally for our students with disabilities. In terms of having a student with a disability—and I am not sure if in that 2,000 students we have, students with a disability, particularly a mobility issue, in which they would require to be able to move through lifts and things. Again, it is about that changing. It is obviously an inconvenience. If they have got to get on at one station and end up at their destination where they have got accessibility sorted by lifts, that is fine and that, I guess, would be the minimum status quo that we would see starting. But then if you are asking your student with a disability to get on, change—so if they are coming into Bankstown, then having to change at Bankstown, then having to change at Sydenham, is a significant inconvenience to them.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I wanted to ask about students living in the north-western area, which is now serviced by the Metro Northwest. Do you have any statistics on that?

**Mr ROBINSON:** Not yet, because the transport that is there is what I would call settling down, in that people are starting to change their transport patterns as a result of the metro arriving. We did have some feedback about the bus services, which the Government has moved to address the concerns that were happening about that. We are probably due to now do a piece of work to have a look at what that has meant in terms of modal splits on the north-west. Again, we would only have anecdotal information at the moment.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** But instinctively, would you say that it has improved public transport access for students living in those areas?

**Mr ROBINSON:** You would naturally think so, because we have a lot of students who live in that corridor.

Our consultants advised us on 4-12-19 of the following:

579 students catch the train West of Bankstown

Restoration of Inner West line would 'slightly improve' travel times of between 3 - 6 minutes dependent on limited or all stops service.



**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I know.

**Mr ROBINSON:** A significant draw for us from that area, and we have always had issues to do with connectivity. It is only going to be better.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** My son lived on campus and unfortunately got himself a job at the Macquarie Centre bowling club, and it was an hour and a half, I think, each way. I guess the suggestion is that somehow the University of Sydney is being cut off from public transport. But in actual fact, the issue more is about the connectivity.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Our students will migrate to public transport. That is what students do, because it is the most cost-effective form of transport for them. They have not got an ability, really, to park cars on campus, so the choice set of having a vehicle and using a vehicle just is not there for them. So if they are not living at home and they are independent—and this is all of our international students, as well as domestic students living out of home—they gravitate to where the public transport is.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** And this affects their accommodation, obviously, quite significantly.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Yes.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Congratulations on the campaign to get the transport solutions. I just wondered if you might mention that there is actually a number of universities and facilities; I gather that you are working collaboratively with them.

**Mr ROBINSON:** We are.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Could you describe that precinct that you are seeking a solution for?

**Mr ROBINSON:** The collaboration area?

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Yes, and who are the members of it.

**Mr ROBINSON:** The alliance currently has got the Inner West Council, the City of Sydney, University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney, Notre Dame and TAFE. The Greater Sydney Commission and Transport for NSW are invitees, effectively, to the conversations because they are the main focus areas. As I said before, the main focus area for that alliance is the integrated transport solution. What there is a recognition of is that there are three nodes under the Greater Sydney Commission's place-making strategy for this collaboration area. It is this third node that is the one that is problematic, which is where the university and the Royal Prince Alfred [RPA]—sorry, the other party that is involved; I knew I missed one. RPA are also in the alliance.

Please refer :  
2018 Investing  
for Innovation  
flyer for more  
detail on the  
three hub  
approach.

It is the third node, which is the bio hub that we are trying to create along Parramatta Road, where there is real problems in terms of the transport linkage between the three nodes. To get the collaboration area firing at its economic best, to have good connectivity between those three nodes—the Sydney tech hub node, which is on Central; the emerging Redfern deep tech node; and the bio hub node on Parramatta Road—you need to connect all three. It is that third node where there just is significant issues with getting people from the hospital and from the university to transport.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Thank you for mentioning the three nodes. I just want to give you the opportunity to emphasise the transformation of the whole area in terms of education and technology investment that is happening.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Yes, no question. The plan that everybody has signed up to, I think, is an amazing plan for the reconfiguration of the city. What we are taking is what is, by all measures, the most innovative and research tech ready precinct in Australia, and we are actually trying to take it to a new dimension. We will not get to the full dream if we do not solve some of the issues along the way, but the journey is well underway. We would acknowledge that as a partner in delivering on that ambition, that we are making good inroads.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I think it is really exciting. I do not think the metro is going to be the solution here, but this has been a good opportunity to air that again. What is the solution, other than the metro?

**Mr ROBINSON:** We do not know. It is a rapid transport solution to link that third node with the other two nodes. What that looks like—as I said earlier, the university is transport-agnostic. There has been many options; there was a suggestion before that, at one point in time, light rail was going to run down Parramatta Road. That has been taken off the table. That would have been an acceptable solution.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** It would be a brave government at the moment.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** To connect to Central?

**Mr ROBINSON:** To Broadway/Central.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** You mentioned earlier that students will migrate to public transport; they will just work in around the circumstances that are presented to them. I suppose the other choice point might be to not attend university altogether. In relation to this inquiry and the accessibility of the University of Sydney to students on the Sydenham to Bankstown train line and, in particular, those west of Bankstown who will not even be directly on the metro line, I wondered if you had any reflection on whether, because of the increased time it will take to access the university and the inconvenience of that, there may be students who opt out of attending university altogether.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Are you serious?

**Mr ROBINSON:** I think it would be more that they would opt out of the University of Sydney. There are choices.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** What impact does that have on the University of Sydney if students from a whole part of Sydney—for example, south-west Sydney—no longer choose the university and it is only students from, for example, the eastern suburbs or the North Shore that are attending university?

**Mr ROBINSON:** From a diversity perspective, that would not be a good thing for the university. We pride ourselves on being the university for Sydney. We pride ourselves on the fact that anyone who is in the metropolitan area of Sydney can have access to our university. We enjoy the diversity that we get from being so accessible. So that would be problematic.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** It is part of the university's diversity goals and strategic goals to include, for example, students from low socio-economic backgrounds and students who are first-time university attendees in their family, is it not?

**Mr ROBINSON:** Yes.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** And you would have concerns if increasing numbers of students from those particular groups were no longer attending the University of Sydney and the way that that would impact the makeup and the feel of the university?

**Mr ROBINSON:** The concern would be the equity issue. It is an equity issue. What that comes down to is that as a university we wish to remain as equitable as we possibly can. If there are constraints in terms of the ways in which the students can access the university, that would probably bias where we would put scholarship money and where we would try to close that gap. Because we would try to close that gap. But it would be problematic.

**The CHAIR:** Conversely, you would assume that if an area had less connectivity to the university that perhaps that area would not be as desirable? If you are trying to improve the living quality within an area, the connection to the local universities or closest university being worse is not going to be very good for the area's economic uplift. That is more of a comment than a question. I apologise.

**Mr ROBINSON:** You are right. The work we have done recently around the student experience, particularly to do with accommodation, says that our students are right on a very thin line in terms of price point for accommodation. The number one thing in all of their responses to us was about price point when it comes to where they can live or where they can get accommodation. That is the driver. The second thing is transport and connectivity.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Has any student said to you, "I am going to drop out of university because my travel time has increased by 15 minutes?"

**Mr ROBINSON:** Not that I am aware of.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Do you think it is likely that they will drop out of university for that reason?

**Mr ROBINSON:** I think they will make choices. It goes back to that choice set. And they do it now. We have done a lot of research into the university's decision to build a second campus at Westmead. Part of that conversation was: Would Westmead be more attractive than Camperdown in terms of people's decision? In other words, if you are currently travelling 40 to 50 minutes to get to Camperdown, if we build a second campus at

Westmead would that change your decision and would you go to Westmead because it is only 15 minutes away? The feedback that we got from that was that as long as the Westmead campus was equivalent to the Camperdown campus, they would chose the Westmead campus for that travel time.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** But the Camperdown campus is full. That is my understanding.

**Mr ROBINSON:** No, it is not full. It has the ability to continue to grow. We have approved plans for another 220,000 square metres of space. But are we at a stage where we are looking at what our final student numbers would look like at Camperdown? That is an active conversation within the university. A decision has not been arrived at. But at the moment there are—and I think it is in our submission—around 70,000 enrolments. Of those, the majority are taught at Camperdown Darlington. We are moving two of our campuses back on to Camperdown Darlington. We are moving our students from health sciences from Lidcombe back to Camperdown. We are also moving the Sydney College of the Arts. We are still growing and still have growth. Whether that is another 15 to 20 years really depends on our decision at Westmead and how quickly we decide to ramp up what we are doing at Westmead.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Mr Robinson, as I said at the beginning, I admire the desire to have a station there. But you have a pretty big competitive advantage over the other universities. You have the metro rail at Waterloo when that opens, which is within an active transport distance to the university up through Redfern. You also have Redfern Station, which you acknowledge will not service the Bankstown line when the conversion occurs. Then you have the metro at Central. The students who catch the metro train can get out at Central—like people do on the heavy rail—and then go down Broadway. You have the heavy rail at Central and you have an amazing new interface with the light rail, which goes out to the University of New South Wales and back through the city. Ideally you would have one at the university, but you have a very good catchment of public transport options. Students on the Bankstown line—if it is converted—could get out at Central and do the same walk that thousands and thousands of students do now.

**Mr ROBINSON:** I would question your number of "thousands and thousands". Our research says that that is not correct. It is not Sydney University students from Central that are creating that foot traffic. It is actually University of Technology Sydney and University of Notre Dame students. Our students are getting off at Redfern.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** We can interrogate that but, nonetheless, it is well serviced by public transport. I am not denying your desire to have a station there. That is a good outcome if we ever get there. But I am just pointing out that there are still good options there compared to other universities. Macquarie University has only just got a station. In my day it was a 12,000-car carpark. It was the biggest carpark at a university in Australia. When I went to Macquarie there were no public transport options.

**Mr ROBINSON:** We would acknowledge that we have got transport that is servicing the area at the moment. The issue for us is about the aspiration of the collaboration area. If we are going to grow the number of jobs that the New South Wales Government wants to grow, along with the partnership with the parties in that collaboration area, you are going to have more and more demand on those existing systems, particularly Redfern. The work that we have done on Waterloo found that whilst, as you say, that is in an active catchment, it is right at the extreme end of the active catchment.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Yes. It will require bicycle hire arrangements and the City of Sydney doing good bike connections for you and that type of thing.

**Mr ROBINSON:** Hence the reason we have been transport agnostic.

**The CHAIR:** Sometimes when we are thinking about extra travel times, particularly for students, we are thinking about students who are relatively privileged. We talked about students listening to music or whatever on the train. You painted this image of people who do not have much else to do. Earlier I touched on students with disability, for whom an extra commute time is clearly another level of inconvenience when they will have to travel the 400 metres at Bankstown between the heavy rail and the metro. Do you have any statistics on how many of your students, particularly those students in that area, also have caring responsibilities or jobs that they have to get to where an extra 15 minutes would actually make a huge difference to their lives?

**Mr ROBINSON:** No, we do not have that level of data.

**The CHAIR:** If only I ran a survey company, I could find out all this information.

**Mr ROBINSON:** That is why we are trying to make all of our data accessible to everybody so they can be mining it.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I am amazed. I come from rural communities, where—

**The CHAIR:** Where you get to drive everywhere.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** If there are no further questions we will break for afternoon tea. Thank you for all your answers to our questions. You have 21 days to answer any questions taken on notice. The secretariat will be in touch.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**