



Sydney Metro West Link - Connecting Sydney's Growth Centres

Current Sydney Rail System – Key Issues

Sydney double-deck trains currently convey, and will continue to convey up to 2021 and beyond, the vast majority of commuters into / out of the city:

- There are already capacity constraints on the all lines within the Sydney metropolitan network particularly in the areas bounded by Sydenham – Granville and North Sydney.
- The network with its current configuration will NOT be able to cope with government's projected commuter growth beyond 2021
- The outdated station design at Town Hall and Wynyard is the reason both these stations are unable to adequately handle current passenger numbers. As a result the dwell time at these two stations determines city underground track capacity and train headways. Dwell time for double deck trains at all other stations on the network would be no different to that required for metro trains.
- The current passenger congestion problems at Town Hall are exacerbated by its current role as the major interchange point with the Eastern Suburbs line for passengers travelling to North Sydney – St Leonards and Chatswood. Town Hall station was not designed for this use. This will be overcome if the new metro train is routed via Martin Place, thereby relocating the North Shore / ESR interchange to that station instead of Town Hall.

- If the signalling on the existing Double Deck network was upgraded to allow closer headways the double deck trains could also achieve a higher through-put than the current restrictive 20 T/P/H. The Government can hardly claim it is a fair comparison between metro and double deck services when the double deck services are operating on an antiquated signalled network and a track configuration with merging and flat junction conflicts, whilst the metro is operating on a \$17 billion new network with the latest technology free of the impediments double deck trains encounter.
- One can reasonably claim that if the Government had spent \$17 billion on upgrading the existing double deck system by improving signalling and providing track amplification at critical pinch points, it would have got a better overall result by providing improved train throughput per hour and increased network capacity for the total double deck network than it has from building one new metro line single deck rail corridor into the city. The metro could have been built far cheaper with more sensible planning.
- Metro trains, are best suited to highly populated, densely trafficked commuter areas over short journey times, NOT to long, park & ride journeys as is the North West Line from Rouse Hill.
- Any new system needs to add value by adding to existing capacity, NOT by taking away part of the existing network in the name of progress.
- The new metro will do nothing to relieve the network capacity issues between the Western and Northern trains which merge at Strathfield nor address the fact that the six tracks between Strathfield and Sydney Terminal / Central Electric will almost be at saturation by 2021 as will the City Circle, the Eastern Suburbs Railway, and North Shore lines via the Harbour Bridge.

Government Plan

The Government has announced the route of the next stage of the Sydney Metro.

It plans to run the line from Chatswood at grade to St Leonards then in a tunnel from St Leonards, under the Harbour, through the CBD to Sydenham then at grade to Bankstown.

The section between Sydenham and Bankstown shall replace the current heavy rail line with a rapid transit system.

Government's Claims

The Government has announced that the new line shall:

1. Reduce congestion on the rail network by 60%.
2. Increase the number of trains entering the CBD in the morning peak from around 130 to 200 trains per hour.
3. Increase the number of commuters by 100,000 per hour in the morning peak.

- From the scant information in the public domain about the Government's proposed improvements to the double deck network one can only draw the conclusion that such announced proposals can only be viewed as stop gap and short term measures, as they do little to address the long term issues so urgently needed to reconfigure the Sydney train network to meet projected passenger demand for the next 40 / 50 years. One can also only conclude these band-aid measures are a waste of scarce public funds because announced proposals do not add value or resolve the long term network capacity problems

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Released under NSW GIPA Act

Our Concerns

As former rail executives we are very concerned that:

- A. There is no evidence to support the claims 1. 2.& 3. above.
- B. The plan does not address the major long term issues of the network.
- C. Removal of heavy rail on the Bankstown Line will cause:
 - Major disruption to the efficient operation of the network, resulting in
 - Reduction in network flexibility & reliability
 - 19,000 commuters will have to change trains for the first time since the network was built. Resulting in longer journey times for commuters from the Southern stations between Liverpool/Lidcombe turn-back and in between stations from Carramar, Villawood, Leightonfield, Chester Hill, Sefton (11,000) and Berala, Birrong, Yagoona (8,000) to Bankstown, as they will need to change trains into metro services to the city.
 - Services on the Illawarra line will be required to stop at St Peters and Erskineville resulting in increased train journey times and a reduction in line capacity of the Illawarra line.
 - Loss of network flexibility as the Bankstown Line also acts as a relief line for the following lines during times of major disruption for:
 - Western Lines
 - South West Lines
 - South Line

Whilst delays and congestion would occur under such circumstances it nevertheless reduces the need for transhipping and bussing of thousands of commuters.

Following the takeover of the Bankstown line by the metro train the relief valve for the network is gone and will result in the network having no escape route.

D. When Bradfield designed the Sydney underground network he built it only after studying other overseas city networks and with the view of commuters NOT having to change trains at the outer rim terminals but instead travel either around the city circle or through the city across the Harbour Bridge. His wise vision has lasted 100 years with subsequent rail managers tweaking the network by adding the ESR Line and operating double deck trains to accommodate the passenger growth.

There is no such luminary vision being shown by Government at this critical juncture which now requires a total review of total network operations to find solutions which will meet the challenges of commuter growth for the next 40/50 years.

The Government plan's lack of vision severely restricts the ability of the heavy rail system to not only cater for growth but also improved service. Nor does it take into consideration commuter growth in the outer interurban areas nor services between the city and the planned Badgerys Creek Airport

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E. Both metros and heavy rail systems have their place in an integrated transport system and must if their full potential is to be achieved must operate separately and independent of each other.

Past performance and experience indicates the life cycle of the current double deck fleet with refurbishment is in the order of 40 years before the need for replacement.

It is therefore most unlikely Government is going waste public monies before it is necessary. This would indicate that it is most unlikely that the Sydney commuter network will transition to metro operation quickly. In addition Government has not experienced commuter reaction to the new single deck trains, so the jury is still out. It could easily find a voter backlash which requires it to provide increased seating to overcome adverse public reaction and then find the new service falls far short of its carrying capacity projections.

F. Merely replacing one rail system with another when there is so much to be done is wasteful of limited resources. In a strategic sense the policy decision should be to consider the use of metros in denser areas not well serviced by heavy rail or another form of public transport.

Metro expansion should supplement heavy rail, not replace it as metro trains are not suited to long distant journeys serviced by the Sydney rail and outer suburban network

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G. In addition, open access will require Government to continue to allow other operators such as freight and historical / tourist access to the Sydney network on all major corridors as well as operate its intercity, interurban country and interstate passenger services so it can never achieve a pure metro network clear of other operators.

H. The Government's Sydney Metro plan, estimated at approximately \$17bn, will:

- Not achieve the required capacity of the network necessary for the long term 40/50 year horizon
- Result in degradation of the robustness and reliability of the existing double deck network
- Ultimately lead to the total network becoming gridlocked and unworkable

THIS IS A ONE-OFF OPPORTUNITY TO:

- APPLY GOOD PLANNING AND VISION
- IMPROVE THE NETWORK, BY
- REDESIGNING IT TO SERVICE SYDNEY'S RAPID GROWTH OVER THE NEXT 40/50 YEARS

Our comments are based on publically available information. We would be pleased to provide the detail behind our position on each of the points we have made and discuss these comments with Government planners and Operations personnel.

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