

**INQUIRY INTO REMOVING OR REDUCING STATION
ACCESS FEES AT SYDNEY AIRPORT**

Name: Mr Dudley Horscroft

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From: Dudley Horscroft
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Subject: Submission re access fees at Sydney Airport Stations

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Dear Sirs/Mesdames

Regarding the invitation "to make a submission to its inquiry into removing or reducing station access fees at Sydney Airport." I make the following submission:

Terms of Reference:

- a. current patronage on the airport line, **No Comment.**
- b. the impact of a fare reduction on patronage at Green Square and Mascot, **No Comment**
- c. the impact on patronage if the station access fee was removed or reduced at the airport stations,

I would expect that the patronage would be very substantially increased. As evidence, I would submit our experiences when we returned from a holiday in Canada on the day of the Bali bombings.

When the plane landed, instead of going to one of the aero bridges, it was parked nearby, and we had to walk or take a bus to the International Terminal. After processing, we went to the concourse to get to the Domestic Terminal. We found a state of chaos - wounded were being brought through, walking or in wheelchairs, and there was a queue for the buses to the Domestic Terminal and elsewhere. The surcharge of, I think, \$12 each we considered ridiculous, and we waited in the queue for the free interterminal bus - along with several thousands, or so it appeared, of others. Had there been a more reasonable fare of perhaps \$2.00 we, and many others, would have taken the train. Had we known how long it would take to get to the bus, we certainly would have forked out the \$24. I noted at the time that the congestion on the International Terminal was such that a bomb in the terminal would have made the Bali death toll look like a mere slap in the face. This leads me to believe that patronage would greatly increase, to the benefit of all passengers using Sydney Airport, and as passengers went straight to the train, there would be less congestion in the terminal.

- d. the funding implications of removing or reducing the station access fee, **Without access to actual patronage data, I cannot make an estimate, other than to say that it is conceivable that the fares paid by those using the rail service for interterminal transport could be as much or larger than the loss in revenue from an abolished access fee.**

e. the contract provisions in relation to the station access fee, **No Comment.**

f. potential benefits to Port Botany and congestion on roads in and around the airport, including the M5,

It is logical to assume that if passengers transfer from car travel to rail there will be benefits by way of reduced congestion on the roads. This will probably be balanced by other car drivers changing from back street rat-runs to the main roads, so little congestion reduction will be noted.

g. other measures to increase patronage on the airport line, It could be desirable to install a crossover west of the International Terminal so that, if desired, an additional shuttle service could be run between the Airport termini and either Circular Quay or Sydney Terminal. This would alleviate problems with the through peak hour trains, which are believed to be uncomfortably crowded by the time they reach the airport stations.

and

h. any other related matter.

I draw your attention to the existing rail line from Parramatta to Sydney Airport. East of Lidcombe Station a line diverges to the north, but then curves around to pass under the main line. This is known as the "Metropolitan Goods Line" (MGL). It runs in a generally southeasterly direction parallel to Centenary Drive, passing to the east of a major marshalling yard to which it is linked by a triangular junction, and then under the intersection of the Hume Highway and Centenary Drive. It then runs between Wentworth St to the west and another major marshalling yard to the east. Eventually it meets the suburban lines west of Campsie Station, though no track connexion is made and there are no platform faces on the MGL.

The line then passes Canterbury and Hurlstone Park Stations, which may have a platform interface on the westbound MGL, but not on the eastbound. Just before Dulwich Hill Station was a triangular junction to the section of the MGL being converted to the Inner West Light Rail. At Marrickville Station, the Illawarra Road bridge is the limit of electrification.

At Marrickville Station the MGL splits, with one branch running to join the main line close to Tempe Station. The other branch runs first NE then SE, passing SW of Sydenham Station. The line (now the Botany Goods Line) crosses the canal then runs parallel to Airport Drive, then Qantas Drive, on the north and east borders of Sydney Airport. Just before crossing Robey St the line is singled, and then continues over O'Riordan St to Port Botany.

It would be feasible, providing that the bogies have sufficient clearance for a sharp radius curve (approx 125 m radius) to run a branch from the single track between Roby and O'Riordan Streets round via Sir Reginald Ansett Drive and Keith Smith Avenue to a suitable terminal location over Keith Smith Avenue or Shiers Avenue or both.

If this were not possible, it would be feasible, and probably cheaper, to site a station immediately east of O'Riordan St, on a siding off the main line, with a platform roughly on the site of the existing hoardings. From here a "Never Stop Railway" could take

passengers around via a unidirectional loop to serve all of the Domestic Terminal buildings.

Operation of this service would require electrification from Marrickville to Kingsford Smith Terminal, estimated very roughly at 4 km of double track. It would require a platform at Kingsford Smith Terminal on the siding and, for best advantage, platform faces, or a bi-directional face, at Dulwich Hill, where there would be a connexion to the Inner West Light Rail as well as the suburban lines. Of value could be a bi-directional platform at Sydenham with an elevated pedestrian walkway to the main line station for interchange with other lines. Track should be in near-perfect condition, being used for the heavy freight trains from Port Botany, and needing no alteration other than the siding at Kingsford Smith Terminal. Signalling may need improvement to enable passenger and freight trains to run at close intervals. A non-stop service would be provided between Lidcombe and Dulwich Hill stations. The only station requiring to be staffed would be Kingsford Smith Terminal.

The "Never Stop Railway" was invented by Adkins and Lewis, and submitted in 1920 for a competition organized by the City of Paris. They were awarded a share in the prize, but the system was not constructed. In 1922 their proposal was submitted as a means of internal transport for the 1924 British Empire Exhibition. They built a successful demonstration line at Southend, and then a 2.2 km line with 88 cars at Wembley. Cars were accelerated and braked by a rotating spiral, varying in pitch. In stations, at 176 rpm, the cars were moved forward one foot for each revolution, giving a speed of 2 mph, approx 3.2 km/h. The spiral opened out to a ratio of 8 to 1, so that at full speed the cars moved at 16 mph. In stations the cars touched each other - guaranteeing safety as the line was unmanned. Power required was 180 kW. However, the line could be operated at speeds of 4.8 to 38.4 km/h. (3 to 24 mph). No drivers and no signalling was needed, as cars were automatically kept the correct distance apart by the spiral.

A modern version would also use a similar spiral for accelerating and braking the cars, but for line haul it would be preferable to change to cable haulage. At the end of a spiral, a grip under the car would clamp itself on a cable and be hauled by it until it reached the next spiral, where propulsion would be changed to spiral haulage or braking. Over a substantial distance this should be cheaper than a spiral. The original system used rubber tyres on a cast steel track, with additional wheels engaging with a guide rail to steer it along the track, but it is suggested a modern system would do better with steel flanged resilient wheels and normal steel rails, to lower rolling resistance. The original system, however, had such low operating costs that for the second season, 6 months in 1925, no fares were charged.

The cars on the Wembley line carried 18 seated and 12 standing passengers. Film shows that the platform side was open - no doors, while there was a continuous bulkhead on the other side. For modern susceptibilities it would be desirable to have doors on the platform side which would be opened by weighted levers raised by a ramp, and closed by gravity at the end of the ramps. Passengers had no difficulty in boarding from a stationary platform to the car moving at 2 mph. In two operating seasons it carried about 2 million people without accident.

Details regarding the "Never Stop Railway" are from "*Passenger Conveyors*", John M. Tough and Coleman A. O'Flaherty, Ian Allen, London, 1971, pages 61, 62 and 128, and plate 8. Further references are given.

A film of the railway, showing people boarding and alighting, and views of the track ahead from the car when running at full speed is at: <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/never-stop-railway>, and, including shots of the arrangement to turn the cars at a terminus <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/wembley-exhibition-reel-2>, this being from 08 32 to 10 08 into the film.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee strongly recommend abolition of the access fee at the Sydney Airport stations.
2. That the Committee strongly recommend that NSW Railways extend electrification from Marrickville to Sydney Airport and construct either:
 - (a) an elevated branch from a point in the vicinity of Robey and O'Riordan Streets via Sir Reginald Ansett Drive and Keith Smith Avenue to a suitable terminal location over Keith Smith Avenue or Shiers Avenue or both, or
 - (b) a station on a siding east of O'Riordan Street, together with a unidirectional Never Stop Railway loop from the opposite side of the station platform to stops suitably disposed around the domestic terminals,
 - (c) a loop east of the station referred to in (c) to give flexibility of operation of the freight service when the passenger service is operating.

Yours faithfully

Dudley Horscroft