

## **THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH-WEST SECTOR**

**Organisation:** Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS)  
**Name:** Ms Alison Peters  
**Position:** Director  
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## Council of Social Service of New South Wales

66 Albion St, Surry Hills NSW  
phone 02 9211 2599 fax 02 9281 1968  
email [info@ncoss.org.au](mailto:info@ncoss.org.au) web [www.ncoss.org.au](http://www.ncoss.org.au)

abn 85001 797 137

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The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Director

### **Transport Needs of Sydney's North-West Sector**

The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) is the peak body for the social and community services sector in New South Wales. NCOSS works with its members on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities towards achieving social justice in NSW.

NCOSS provides an independent voice on welfare policy issues and social and economic reforms and is the major coordinator for non-government social and community services in NSW.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the transport needs of Sydney's North-West Sector.

#### **General**

The NSW Government has made commitments to increase the utilisation of public transport in NSW. The 2006 *Urban Transport Statement* set a target to increase the number of daily trips on public transport, while the 2006 *A New Direction for NSW State Plan* established a priority for increasing the "share of peak hour journeys on a safe and reliable public transport system." Therefore planning decisions for the future of Sydney's rail system should aim to meet the goals established by the NSW Government.

It is the view of NCOSS that public transport is a key element of a well functioning city and must be integrated into broader planning that focuses on connectivity and the role transport plays as an enabler of community participation, as a means of breaking down social isolation, of linking people to services and to promoting well being through optimal homes/jobs/transport alignment. NCOSS has previously expressed its concern about public transport infrastructure announcements that appear to be "one offs" and disconnected from an overall plan for sustainable improvements. This is not helped by a tendency to change the scope of the announced projects which increases public cynicism about the value and worth of many projects. NCOSS supports open and transparent consideration of individual projects to ensure that they meet the needs of the people and communities they are designed to serve and that they are consistent with broader planning objectives.

NCOSS has been broadly supportive of previous proposals to extend the North West line and while the North West Metro will provide some benefit, NCOSS does not believe that it will be as beneficial as the replication of the North West line in the first instance. However, the Government has appeared to be committed to prioritising the Metro. Therefore planning for this Metro should be

integrated adequately with existing and new transport networks and services, and meet community expectations.

NCOSS recommends that all new stations be fully accessible (e.g. featuring booking offices and hearing loops, ramps and lifts where required). Integrated planning should aim to incorporate urban design that enhances physical accessibility of new and existing station surrounds.

### **Transport Needs of Sydney's North West**

The North West sector features poor connectivity to public transport services with a strong reliance on motor vehicles: approximately 80% of journeys are by car in the region, with 1.7 cars per household.<sup>1</sup> Connectivity is compromised in some areas by poor local planning and infrastructure: for example there is an absence of footpaths in many areas, and a lack of shelters or timetabling information at bus stops.

It is vital that the Metro connects with existing transport options and where such options are limited these should be improved. For example the previous North West Rail Line proposed Burns Road Station would have provided a vital interchange with the North-West T-Way allowing residents around Blacktown to speedily connect with the North West line (and hence access jobs, education and services in the northern 'global arc') as well as allowing new residents around Rouse Hill to connect effectively to the metropolitan rail system.

#### *Integrated Transport and Land Use Planning*

Integrated transport land use planning will be made more difficult in this area as the metro link and stations will be constructed through areas that have already been developed, with the challenge to encourage change in existing travel behaviour through integrated service planning, and appropriate accessibility and development near the metro line. Nevertheless, NCOSS would encourage close liaison with local communities to ensure that the new metro link is adequately linked to existing transport infrastructure in established areas, and that planning for new development in the region works to optimise accessibility to the rail line.

### **Conclusion**

NCOSS welcomes the NSW Government commitment to expanding the metropolitan rail system, and commitments to improving the share of public transport usage for Sydney. It is hoped that the comments in this submission will be considered in order to improve the social sustainability of the proposed developments. For further information on this submission, please contact Samantha Edmonds, Deputy Director Policy and Communications, on (02) 9211 2599 ext 111 or [samantha@ncoss.org.au](mailto:samantha@ncoss.org.au).

Yours sincerely



Alison Peters  
Director

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, *Metropolitan Strategy: Discussion Paper*, 2004, p8.