

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

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Date Received: 8 July 2018

Submission: Upper House Parliamentary Inquiry CBD Light Rail

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As residents of Kensington we have been impacted negatively by the CBD Light Rail project. We experience anxiety and grief as a result of the tree loss as well as loss of public parklands at Moore Park.

The CBD Light Rail process has been disappointing and frustrating. It has become clear that the NSW Government was going to push ahead regardless of informed advice or community concerns and used the CBD Light Rail as a criteria to justify the knock down and re-build of Sydney Football Stadium and create a Sports and Entertainment precinct on the parklands*.

This was not a project residents asked for, as our bus service was gold class. Organisations representing corporate interests such as UNSW and SCG Trust lobbied for the project. These organisations are identified as “stakeholders”.

The CBD Light Rail has resulted in the loss of amenity, the loss of convenience, loss of ease of travel, loss of local businesses. The secrecy and lack of real community feedback and consultation has been devastating and disempowering. It is important to note my concerns are not about “change” as our area changes daily with development. This is about needless and widespread destruction.

The project was awarded on December 17th 2014 before detailed designs were completed and before the Department of Planning had reviewed and assessed Modification No 1 which included changing the carriage length to 67 metres, the change of route to north Alison Road which saw the removal of all the trees on Alison Road. The feedback time for public submissions was 14 days before Christmas when most people are busy with end of school, Christmas etc. This was not enough time to be informed.

The Member for Coogee Hon. Bruce Notely-Smith said the following in November 2014

“Notes that this project will link Randwick and Kingsford to Central Station and Circular Quay using a dedicated corridor, separated from traffic, making it faster and more convenient for residents of Coogee to move around the electorate and to the city” (Parliament Papers south east light rail project 12 November 2014)

However, unlike the Inner West Light Rail the CBD Light Rail is road sharing for most of the route. 67 metre carriages will cross over 70 intersections. It does not have signal priority, journey times are Cabinet-in-Confidence and unlikely to be faster for residents of Coogee as we will need to take a bus to High Cross park and alight to then board the CBD Light Rail adding more time and inconvenience to a journey.

This statement is not an accurate description of the CBD Light Rail. Nor did the Member for Coogee inform his constituents of the upcoming tree loss.

As a State Significant project, the NSW Government was not required to provide detailed cost benefit business case. There is no cost benefit rationale underpinning this project. The economic assessment was never published.

Three criteria were used to justify the project. Based on the following information, unlikely any will be met:

1. **Improved capacity-** Unlikely to be realised based on the EMM Anzac Parade Corridor future Light Rail station and System Capacity analysis 20 January 2017

“It is a significant concern that the proposed Light Rail system capacity will actually be lower than the capacity of the existing peak hour bus services which are currently using Anzac Parade and Todman Avenue and the future corridor public transport system will effectively be operating at full capacity from the commencement of operations in 2019. This will require a significant number of existing peak hourly bus services (mainly the existing express bus service) to be retained if the system is to provide adequate public transport capacity for all the relevant areas of Randwick LGA in the future”

2. **Faster journey times-** These times are unavailable to the public as they are cabinet-in-confidence. The CBD Light Rail does not have signal priority.

3. **Improved congestion-** by removing 220 buses from CBD – these buses will be deployed elsewhere in the network thereby creating congestion somewhere else.

The term State of The Art light rail has been used to describe this project. I feel cheated by the NSW Government because the poles and wires are ugly and dominate the vista.

Infrastructure NSW recommended against the CBD Light Rail. Just as the community warned about building a light rail in Sydney, so too did Infrastructure NSW “An Infrastructure NSW report- released in October 2012 by Mr Broad and then Chairman, former NSW premier Nick Greiner- alerted the Government to potential financial disruptions and lengthy delays” (ABC Fri 13 April 2018) Why were their concerns ignored?

The NRMA also voiced their concerns in their submission , the NRMA wrote “Through the removal of parking and restriction of east-west movement and right turns along the project corridor, NRMA believes the CSELR will adversely impact all motorists who live, work and visit the Randwick LGA’

“Since the Strategy does not identify these impacts, we expect there will be many people right across Sydney who will be unaware of the full extent of the TfNSW proposals to significantly reduce the numbers of traffic lanes, and increase the number of turn bans at intersections.”

The NRMA have been correct, the access for motorists has been severely impacted and has increase stress levels. What was once an easy to navigate area has become

very difficult with narrow and slewing lanes. The difficulty will only increase when the CBD Light Rail is running as trains the length of jumbo jets will be sharing the roads.

Tree Loss

The Environment Impact Statement had scant reference to the historical significance of Anzac Parade as a living memorial. The consultants, including Elton Consultants who undertook this work did not properly inform of our most important living memorial, Anzac Parade. The public was also unaware that this avenue planting would be destroyed because State Significant over rides state heritage. The magnificent avenue planting along Anzac Parade consisted of Port Jackson figs that were dedicated to the sacrifice of World War 1 soldiers. (www.daughtersofanzac.org)

Experiencing this catastrophic tree loss has been traumatic. Like many others, I experience anxiety and grief when I pass the area.

The loss of many of Sydney's most significant trees has diminished the feel and amenity of the area. The offset tree replacement is inadequate and does not properly account for or compensate the communities along the route as the tree canopy loss is greater than the offset replacement.

Aboriginal Artefacts

Passing the site of the Aboriginal artefacts at Randwick is also distressing. It is now the stabling yard, covered with cement poles and wires.

Recommendations

All papers classified as Cabinet-in-Confidence including journey times should be released in full to the public.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) investigate whether appropriate anti-corruption safeguards are in place to protect the planning and delivery of the state's infrastructure projects.

I hold concerns about the independence of private consulting firms commissioned to give the government advice. I question how the practice of declaring documentation and correspondence as Cabinet-in-Confidence can promote Parliament's or the Publics confidence in Government decisions.

A Royal Commission into the CBD Light Rail be called This would include the role of the influential SCG Trust and their role in the CBD Light Rail.

That the community is given the appropriate number of offset trees asap and these should include Port Jackson figs.

NB: Please note, my sister Katey and I researched and wrote a Light Rail fact sheet (see attached) in 2014 that was distributed to residents and action groups in the Kensington, Randwick and Coogee areas in Sept 2014 that earmarked all the problems with this Light Rail project.

NB: Please note: Attachment 2 is the EMM Report commissioned by Randwick City Council into the Light Rail. The extract below is key:

EMM REPORT - EXTRACT:

RCC's future LR capacity analysis says this - LR capacity lower than bus services - in a nutshell - not supportable - needs heavy rail!!

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6.1 Light Rail system capacity

This assessment has undertaken an overall review of the future Light Rail system capacity to determine the future ability of the additional public transport capacity along the Anzac Parade route to support future residential growth in accordance with the projected dwelling growth (including the Kensington and Kingsford town centres and other areas further south towards Maroubra, Matraville and La Perouse).

It is a significant concern that the proposed Light Rail system capacity will actually be lower than the capacity of the existing peak hour bus services which are currently using Anzac Parade and Todman Avenue and the future corridor public transport system will effectively be operating at full capacity from the commencement of operations in 2019. This will require a significant number of existing peak hourly bus services (mainly the existing express bus service) to be retained if the system is to provide adequate public transport capacity for all the relevant areas of Randwick LGA in the future.

The key conclusions in relation to the study analysis are: The overall LGA and K2K dwelling targets The currently proposed dwelling targets for Randwick LGA and the K2K town centres are achievable, (RM???) subject to the provision of adequate public transport capacity. A significant proportion of the existing corridor bus based public transport system will need to be retained for reasonable corridor morning peak hour average passenger crowding levels to be maintained, in both the interim year 2020 (first full year of the system operations) and the longer term year 2031 LGA residential strategy full development scenario.

In 2020, with approximately +4,040 additional dwellings forecast to be constructed in Randwick LGA and the peak hour Light Rail (tram) frequency at eight minutes, the future northbound corridor peak passenger loading (between Kingsford and the University Station) will exceed the Light Rail system capacity by approximately 1,000

passengers per hour and an additional 26-29 buses per hour will be required travelling north of Kingsford through to the Sydney CBD or other equivalent destinations.

In 2031, with +15,150 additional dwellings forecast to be constructed in Randwick LGA and the peak hour Light Rail (tram) frequency at 6.5 minutes, the future northbound corridor peak passenger loading (between Kingsford and the University Station) will exceed the Light Rail system capacity by approximately 1,500 passengers per hour and an additional 35-40 buses per hour will be required travelling north of Kingsford through to the Sydney CBD or other equivalent destinations.

In the longer term beyond the year 2031, or earlier if it is not considered feasible by TfNSW and City of Sydney to retain significant peak hour bus services travelling to or from the Sydney CBD from relevant areas of Randwick LGA, an extension to the Eastern Suburbs (Bondi Junction) heavy rail line would be required,.....