

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 9 July 2018

Partially
Confidential

MY PERSONAL DETAILS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you for the opportunity to make a Submission to the Inquiry.

Parliamentary Inquiry into the Sydney CBD and South East Light Rail project Submission by:

I am local resident of Randwick who commutes to the city. I have numerous issues, complaints and concerns with the way the Light Rail project has been managed.

However, I do want to first state that I support public transport and encourage governments to invest in better systems to ensure the public can get places quickly, efficiently and for a reasonable fare to facilitate healthier communities and encourage less people to drive. Unfortunately, the Light Rail has been a tragic disappointment on all fronts.

My concerns are numerous, so in brief here are just some of the:

Design • It has a “heavy” footprint, both on the ground (it has taken so much land space) and vertically (the poles and wires are a significant environmental mess; it is hard to accept that they are so large when they could have been underground as in George St). Clearly there are tradeoffs in design and cost, but we have an expensive system and terrible design. • There are light rails in many parts of the world that are built in crowded urban areas, amidst heritage buildings and are largely unobtrusive (eg in western France and Belgium to mention a few). • The side lanes, shelters etc are all huge and obtrusive • With better design it need not have snaked its way back and forth across Anzac Pd and Alison Rd. • It should have gone down the south side of Anzac Pde the whole way – the benefits would have been: o Built over existing hard surfaces and avoided cutting into Centennial Park lands and cutting down significant and numerous trees, o allowed passengers to alight at the racecourse (supposedly one of the main reasons for this rail system), o not crossed near Darcy Rd hence avoided what is going to be huge traffic delays as the lights will be stopped for the trams to cross, o therefore been less expensive, easier to design and quicker to implement. o Instead, rumour has it that the racecourse would not allow it to cut into their land as they have plans for more development and so it was agreed by someone, with no community agreement, that it be channelled along the parklands requiring massive tree removal • With all this huge fiasco and lengthy construction time, if the light rail was going to be built it would have made sense to continue it to the end of the lines (Coogee and Maroubra/Little Bay) – not only did the trams used to go there so the roads are wide enough (with appropriate design), it would have saved what will probably be an eventual lot of new work and cost in some years time when a politician realises that it is inconvenient for commuters to catch buses from Coogee and Maroubra, and then have to change at the terminus. There is no logic to building “half a line” when the route was so short anyway

Management • I have not reviewed the specifics but from the press it is clearly significantly over budget and over time. I resent my taxes being wasted with such poor management • The extra time delay, poor management has caused and is still causing so many traffic delays in the area. What used to take about 20-30 minutes into the city on the bus now takes 40-60 minutes. If I attempt to drive to the city or Redfern at peak hour, I sit in bumper to bumper traffic for virtually the whole stretch of Alison Rd. It can sometimes take 3-4 traffic light cycles to get through on Alison Rd

Contracting • While I am sure most tax payers would insist on a contract such as this to be awarded based on merit, it is unlikely that there was no Australian consortium that could have managed this project. • It is a huge shame that a foreign company was awarded the contract – as firstly, it reaps the rewards of our taxes (would be better to keep in our own economy) and secondly, now they are suing the NSW government, any further proceeds or fines go offshore

Environment • Lastly, but most importantly, is the desecration of so many significant trees. • 100+ year old fig trees cannot be replaced. No matter how many saplings are supposed to be replanted, it is no replacement for these iconic trees, home to many thousands of animal, bird and insect life. • They formed an historical Anzac memorial and a clearly visually attractive avenue. • The trees along Anzac Pde and Alison Rd provided a cooling effect to pedestrians and cyclists – if you had ever ridden your bike along there it cooled noticeably when cycling underneath • It is so ironic that at the time when our NSW government was chopping these irreplaceable trees down, other governments around the world – indeed even our OWN government has been spouting the benefits of ‘greening’ our built up environments – for the many obvious health benefits including improved air quality, better and more harmonious visual environment; better for bird and animals; and even meditative qualities (ie the scientifically proven benefits of being in green areas) • I am not a typical “greenie” but have literally cried on many occasions going down Alison Rd and Anzac Pde witnessing the discretion of such beautiful trees

This Sydney East Light Rail has been disastrous – from conception, to design, to construction. The fact that it is still not finished and is way over budget adds “insult to injury”. The fact that it is as obtrusive and ugly as you could possibly imagine is unfortunately the last straw.

The major irony of all this is that (while I support public transport), this corridor from the Coogee/Randwick area was already served so well by buses, especially with the dedicated bus lane along Anzac Parade, that there was no need to build anything new!! I accept that UNSW students faced lengthy delays with public transport, but this could have been solved quite simply by scheduling more buses – a totally flexible and cheap fix.

As well as a resident of the area who commutes to the city so has seen the entire project unravelling over the past few years, I am a civil engineer and business executive so feel well qualified to comment on how poorly this project has been designed and executed.

Yours sincerely,

Please Note the photos at the following link which are indicative of the environmental vandalism and terrible project design and management. Unfortunately there are many more photos like this that could be provided to make the same point.

<https://www.facebook.com/savingsydneytrees/photos/a.1690765857837016.1073741828.1690755601171375/2145322592381338/?type=3>

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