

**Submission
No 3**

INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Name: Mr Antonio Serbati

Date Received: 17 September 2019

17th September 2019

Portfolio Committee No.6 – Transport and Customer Service
NSW Legislative Council
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Portfolio Committee No.6,

Re: Inquiry into the Sydenham-Bankstown Line conversion. Terms of Reference; (j) the adequacy of temporary transport arrangements during the conversion process, including for people with a disability.

I am writing you this letter, not only as a community member of the suburb of Campsie (Electorate of Canterbury) though also as a professional in the Community, Health & Disability services industry, delivering services in the affected area.

The previous plan to close the Bankstown line for six weeks, every School summer holidays and two weeks in the July School holidays. Which would have resulted in line closures for up to two months each year for five years from 2019. Eventually led to a community outcry, which ensured the plan be amended to better suit community needs. In saying this, the primary proposed approach unquestionably shows the current governments lack of insight, research and undoubtedly an absence of community consultation.

Furthermore, the plan to replace the train service with buses over the Christmas Holidays will without a doubt have an impact on congestion, quality of transport services as well as unforeseen effects on those living with a Physical and Psychosocial Disability.

With the planned closure of the Bankstown and Illawarra line, a predicted 100,000 passengers will be affected between 24th to 28th of December and following this 28,000 Bankstown line Passengers will be affected daily until the 5th of January. The plan to remedy this situation is to place 200 extra buses onto Sydney roads during the largest holiday period between the 24th – 28th December and 90 extra buses a day between the 29th December to 5th January. The impact this will have on congestion, not only on Sydney roads though also surrounding train stations and bus routes will be preposterous. If the Government believes that Bankstown Line passengers affected, will not travel to other functioning stations such as Ashfield and Burwood. Which are already highly congested stations to avoid the replacement bus services, this shows their lack of consideration and once again community consultation.

The impact of congestion will undoubtedly lead to a decline of quality services received by residents on Sydney's public transport system. Resulting in increased dissatisfaction, timetable delays, increased travel time and reduced access to those living with a physical and psychosocial Disability.

Working as a Project Lead / Team Leader coordinating and overseeing the delivery of Psychosocial Disability services in the affected area. I can undeniably state that service recipients have disclosed their personal concerns of relapse, re-hospitalisation and reduced health during the Christmas Period. Many of our service recipients utilise the public transport system daily, whether it be to travel to work, supports, medical appointments or social engagements. The disruption of closures, with increased congestion, reduction in services or options will impact the health and wellbeing of those living with a psychosocial disability. Their levels of anxiety, confusion, paranoia and unwanted negative treatment will surely increase during this period.

Furthermore, other stake holders in the industry have raised concerns in regards to those with a physical disability. Their major concerns are the lack of access for those living with a physical disability during the closure of train services. Though buses will be replacing train services, have those with a physical disability been taking into consideration? With the increased congestion, busses will make it difficult for those living with a disability to comfortably access transport. Busses may become overcrowded and result in either the individual living with a disability to have a reduced level of service and assistance as well as issues in regards to consistently accessing bus options.

As a Community member of wider Sydney I am not against the development and progression of our City. I do believe that our transport system requires an extensive modern upgrade, though I do not believe this should be achieved by undermining the citizens it may affect. As I have highlighted, the biggest issue I believe is the Governments lack of community consultation with the citizens affected especially those who are most vulnerable. This unquestionably will lead to Challenges and issues in regards to the organised coverage of replacement transport over the next 5 years.

Kind Regards,

Antonio Serbati