

**Submission
No 53**

INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

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Portfolio Committee No.6 – Transport and Customer Service
Sydenham-Bankstown Line Conversion Inquiry
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2193

Dear Committee Members,

I'm Jim Morris and I oppose the T3 Bankstown Line conversion.

INSANITY or BLOODY-MINDEDNESS

Lidcombe termination, not Bankstown too! To isolate the Sydenham-Bankstown section from the Heavy Rail network cannot be for efficiency and cost effectiveness reasons. Termination of the Bankstown train at Lidcombe already delays and inconveniences passengers. It is incomprehensible to me and people I know that added interruption to what had been a logical and efficient movement through Sydenham and Strathfield is proceeding. The installation of an incompatible service between Sydenham and Bankstown is weird. People from Berala Regents Park Birrong and Yagoona would be caught with terminations both ways at Lidcombe and Bankstown.

The Liverpool-Bankstown-City Circle connection would be likewise broken. The Greater It defies the Sydney Commission's "Half Hour City" concept. "Half Hour City" it's a sick joke for Berala-Yagoona and Carramar-Sefton residents. That concept and the two logical heavy rail corridors just mentioned, all dumped for a Bankstown-Rouse Hill Metro is surely the result of insanity or bloody-minded thinking.

An incompatible Bankstown line would take out that extra option available when the unexpected happens.

What's with Rouse Hill? I've never been to Rouse Hill. How many people in the Sydenham-Bankstown actually want to go that way compared to those wanting to go to Yagoona and beyond to Strathfield or to Liverpool, otherwise to St Peters and the City Circle? Having to change trains/buses for an occasional trip towards Rouse Hill is no inconvenience compared to the many daily changes the line conversion would inflict on Sydenham-Lidcombe and Sydenham-Carramar passengers. I would never want to find myself at Rouse Hill, having dozed off.

At the human level On cold wet windy nights, frail people, disabled people and women with young children, coming from west of Bankstown, would have to change trains at Bankstown, and again at Sydenham for St Peters, Erskineville, Redfern and the City Circle, or at Central with a longer walk for a City Circle train.

LIFTS AT ALL STOPS, AUTOMATIC SIGNALS

So much would be saved by simply installing lifts and automatic signalling, the only improvements the Metro would bring, but then, reduced comfort due to vastly fewer seats.

KEEP HEAVY RAIL WITH VASTLY MORE SEATS!

Heavy Rail every 3 minutes would attract more passengers than a Metro because Heavy Rail has so much more seating capacity. When people board trains they want to sit down. Few choose to stand, especially for more than one or so stops. Heavy Rail has seats near the centre of the carriage, important for people who suffer from travel sickness due to sideways swaying. The conversion would in effect turn a passenger service into a livestock operation. We like to sit and read, converse, doze, and nurse rather than bear the weights of shopping, luggage and other personal materials. Thinking through whether others standing should have one's seat would be far more an issue on a Metro than on Heavy Rail. We're not cattle, don't treat us that way.

JOBS! JOBS! JOBS! ... JOB CUTS - JOB CUTS - JOB CUTS ... MAKE UP YOUR MIND!

For whose benefit? NSW Government cannot determine national economic policy but its state planning policies can empower average to low earners more. The 50 year trend is so obvious it can't be denied. High income earners and the rich have done so well since the early 1970's compared to wage earners and people on social security (getting by on ludicrously cheap imports produced by slave labour). It would seem politicians are very much in favour of giving more to the haves and less to the have-nots. What's so wrong about trains with drivers? Heavy Rail trains every three minutes, more drivers, more passengers. Isn't that the idea? Win-win?

Illness, accident, bad behaviour, malfunction: staff on board makes great sense.

Demand driver not supply driver Population growth requires more housing. Migrants and all parents are eager to work. Therein is the demand that fires a demand economy instead of the supply economy we have. The Australian government has power to control of the currency and can issue the quantity needed to meet the demand, and influence investment. Currently we have the world's highest personal debt to GDP, and Australians unable to afford the rents or the purchase prices. Overseas investors, with more money than they know how else to use, own empty apartments. Apartments in vast clusters of bright shiny high-rise squalor is supply side economics.

Allow a more natural change to our suburban centres to occur so that old and new will coexist for the necessary variety needed in residences, businesses and community facilities. It enables rich and poor, profitable and not-so-profitable, youth and aged services, to integrate and evolve healthily.

The Fifth Estate will publish a ***Re-loved Buildings Special Report*** this month, and writes: "The world is running out of natural resources that our built environment relies on. Yet we have growing needs to accommodate more people and more businesses. The most sustainable buildings are the ones we already have." (12th August 2019)

WHERE ARE THE PROBLEMS REALLY?

The Bankstown line creates bottlenecks at Central? Do what was done to the East Hills line, go deep underground for a short city circle to Town Hall and Museum or St James. Problems of overcrowding on the Western line are in the news time and again, not so the Bankstown line. The original Rouse Hill Metro was to go on to Matraville, an overlooked district. A direct line to Miranda also makes a great lot of sense, instead of the

long haul via Sutherland. Such high need options should be taken now. These changes to plans would be expensive but justifiable longterm.

Community survey ignored In my 2017 submission to the *Sydney Metro City & Southwest Sydenham to Bankstown Upgrade Application No. SSI 17_8256* I quoted from:

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-Your-Area/Priority-Growth-Areas-andPrecincts/Sydenham-to-Bankstown-Urban-Renewal-Corridor/How-to-get-involved>

I included comments from residents related to the railway. Not one mention was made about improving our existing heavy rail passenger service. We have put up with frequent weekend rail bus services for decades because we've known they were necessary for the rail's continuing good service. For his faults, Sisyphus paid a heavy price. Sydenham-Bankstown passengers are to pay a continuing price for the greed of people not held to account.

Comments reported from the above-mentioned survey focused on:
north-south rail services to complement the current east-west services;
better feeder services (buses, light rail) to all stations;
the necessity of better commuter parking at all stations;
lifts at all stations.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Government caught short? I heard on ABC/RN this week that the NSW Government didn't have the funds to complete the conversion. I take it this means privatisation of infrastructure. Engineers I spoke with at a Hurlstone Park display made government ownership a major selling point. The Government would build the infrastructure, it wouldn't be privatised. Keep to that commitment, stop the conversion. Heavy Rail improvements to match a Metro are affordable. Switch Metro plans to a southern destination.

Regarding any privatisation of infrastructure. It has happened in Britain and the US, it must never happen here, privatised public spaces policed by private security according to undisclosed rules, that is, according to ad hoc decisions by the security personnel. Homeless kicked off if found asleep. This must not happen in Australia. Public space must never be arbitrarily governed by private interests. The argument that who owns can do whatever they choose with their property must never apply to public space.
<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/jul/24/revealed-pseudo-public-space-pops-london-investigation-map>

COMMERCIAL-IN-CONFIDENCE & DENIAL OF “FOI” (COSTLY ACCESS)

These ploys indicate a determination to act against the better interests of the people. The overseas instances mentioned in the previous paragraph show what lack of transparency can lead to.

Regards.
Jim Morris