

**INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE
CONVERSION**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 4 October 2019

Partially
Confidential

28 September 2019

Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and Customer Service
Sydenham – Bankstown Line Conversion Inquiry
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and Customer Service

Thank you for holding this enquiry into the proposed destruction of the T3 Bankstown line, and for giving us hope that this madness might be stopped.

I am very much opposed to the downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line including the Metro Southwest project between Sydenham and Bankstown, which would not increase capacity, but which would severely negatively impact the travel experience for a huge number of people all along the line from Sydenham to Bankstown and beyond into south-western Sydney.

I am a regular daily commuter to the CBD, and do not own a car. As such, I travel on the trains almost every day. Currently, it is only occasionally that I am unable to get a seat in the morning rush hour. With the huge reduction in seats with the Metro Southwest, I believe that even outside peak times, a seat would be a rare luxury. This would considerably reduce the quality of the travel experience for all concerned, but particularly of course for the frail, the elderly and for families. Travellers will be forced to crowd around poles to hold on for stability, or to overhead straps, which for those of us who we are not tall or who have shoulder and arm problems would be impossible or very uncomfortable. We are told that Metro Southwest would reduce the travel time to the CBD by 5 minutes. Personally, I feel that a journey of 25 minutes comfortably seated is far preferable to a standing journey of 20 minutes.

Further, the period of destruction of the T3 line and construction of the Southwest Metro will result in massive disruption to train travel over a long period of time. I have many years experience of travel during periods of track work at the weekend – not much of it positive - and cannot begin to imagine travelling during peak hour with the numbers of commuters involved. Travel to the city during periods of track work can take up to 4 times longer than normal in my experience.

Further, it does not appear that Southwest Metro will increase capacity. I understand, however, that there are other proposals which would not only do this, but would do it relatively cheaply, efficiently and with no significant disruption. As such, I fail to understand why these proposals have not even been considered.

Finally, I repeat here the points raised by the Sydenham to Bankstown Alliance with which I wholeheartedly concur:

- The NSW Government's refusal to provide justification for wasting of billions of taxpayer dollars to replace a functional railway and deprive areas without trains access to new rail, along with the failure to release the full business case for the project;
- More cost effective and less disruptive alternatives have been ignored including signaling upgrades for the Sydney Trains network that delivers a higher frequency of service (train every 3 minutes) compared to Sydney Metro (train every 4 minutes) for T3 Bankstown Line;

- A lack of empirical evidence supporting the need to downgrade the T3 Bankstown Line, especially as the NSW Government's Sydney Rail Future plan states that the "Western and North Shore Line" are the key bottlenecks (not Bankstown);
- Most commuters being forced to stand for long distances with Sydney Metro having 70% less seats compared to the existing comfortable double-deck Sydney Trains service;
- The loss of drivers and guards on trains resulting in delays and slower response times to emergency incidents;
- The NSW Government's failure to heed warnings from four former rail executives about the loss of the Sydney Trains network "relief valve" and the overall reduction in reliability;
- The downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line in being used as a gateway for privatisation of infrastructure, significant over-development and severe destruction of heritage suburbs;
- A serious lack of transparency in planning and delivery of the project with many important documents being held back from public access including the cost of "Sydenham to Bankstown";
- The NSW Government acting against the spirit of the GIPA Act by using freedom of information as a revenue raising mechanism to increase barriers in accessing information;
- An inadequate Temporary Transport Plan created without the promised public consultation and released "several years" late, that also fails to guarantee 100% accessible services;
- 100,000 commuters every day being forced onto crowded bus services during the downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line (construction of Metro);
- Permanent disconnection from the City Circle (Town Hall, Wynyard, Circular Quay, St James, Museum) and the Inner West (St Peters, Erskineville, Redfern & Sydney University);
- 9 stations west of Bankstown lose all trains to City, forcing 19,000 commuters to interchange twice (Bankstown then Sydenham or Central), having suffered the loss of the Inner West Line (City to Liverpool [& Bankstown loop] via Regents Park);
- The lack of detailed information provided generally and the lack of consultation with all communities impacted especially west of Bankstown (e.g. Cumberland LGA);
- The NSW Government's regular attempts to mislead the public and media into believing that the entire T3 Bankstown Line is being converted into Sydney Metro by making referrals to the project as an "upgrade of the Bankstown Line" and also without always specifying "between Sydenham to Bankstown" in an attempt to cover-up the impact on non-Metro stations (i.e. west of Bankstown and east of Sydenham).

I urge the committee to review these concerns and to listen to the voices of ordinary commuters such as myself, and call a halt to the downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line, in order not only to prevent a reduction in quality of train travel in the area, but also to protect the surrounding communities from over-development.

Thank you for your attention. I consent to the full publication of this submission provided my name and contact details are withheld.

Yours faithfully