

**Submission  
No 60**

## **INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION**

**Name:** Mrs Margaret Fasan

**Date Received:** 3 October 2019

---

## **Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry Metro- Sydenham to Bankstown conversion**

I object to the proposed replacement of the T3 Bankstown Line with the Metro.

Whilst I support the provision of new public transport infrastructure and an expansion of the network, there are minimal public benefits in retrofitting the existing Bankstown Line.

### **Quality of service**

The current train service for the Bankstown line is excellent. With minor changes to the schedule, it has the capacity to accommodate the future growth that is currently planned under Canterbury-Bankstown Council's Local Environmental Plans for the major centres along it, including Bankstown and Campsie.

The metro system will not deliver a higher standard of service as claimed in the EIS as the single deck trains will provide only a limited number of seats and will not take customers to their preferred destinations including Redfern and the City Circle. The requirement to change stations to make these connections will negate any time gained through more frequent services. Further, the heavy rail has the capacity to stop every 3 minutes right now and so it begs the question of why the Metro system stopping every 4 minutes (in the peak hour) could be an improvement over the current service.

It will be particularly difficult for passengers who use the rail network westwards of Bankstown. At present, my 89 year old mother-in-law who lives at Yagoona, can alight a train at Yagoona and travel directly to Circular Quay in a single trip. If the Metro goes ahead she will be required to change from the train to the Metro at Bankstown and then at Sydenham from the Metro to the train to reach Circular Quay. She is frail and this will be an unnecessary burden on her.

Lifts can and should be provided now without a Metro conversion.

The Metro system should stop at Sydenham, which is for all intents and purposes an interchange station now, with the normal Sydney train service to continue beyond. That would ameliorate the need to reconfigure stations to Bankstown and also remove the need to close the line at all, because the section to Sydenham is planned to be a new tunnel.

### **Adverse heritage impacts**

The heritage significance of the historic Bankstown line will be irrevocably diminished with the construction of the Metro. Although all stations are heritage listed, several with rare and exceptional buildings of state significance, most will be altered beyond repair.

The Bankstown railway line opened between Sydenham on the Illawarra railway line and Belmore in 1895. This was the first solely suburban line to open in Sydney as all other rail lines were mainlines carrying traffic into and out of Sydney. In 1909, the line was extended to Bankstown, with intermediate stations at Lakemba and Punchbowl. A new station at Wiley Park opened in 1938.

All of the railway stations are heritage listed either on the State Heritage Register or locally as well as on RailCorp's S170 Register.

Of the early stations between Marrickville and Belmore, the overhead booking office at Dulwich Hill and the 1915 Platform 1 building at Hurlstone Park, which is the more prominent of the buildings, will be demolished. Hurlstone Park will lose almost all heritage items despite its local listing with Council and RailCorp and a 2016 nomination for State Heritage Listing.

Of the second layer of development, the heritage listed stations of Wiley Park and Punchbowl will be totally demolished. This will result in their being delisted as heritage items, despite Wiley Park being representative of the interwar period and the station having "social and rarity values".

The overhead booking office will be retained at Belmore but demolished at Dulwich Hill, Wiley Park and Punchbowl.

There will also be loss of parts of original footbridges, including the removal of Dulwich Hill footbridge (assessed as having high significance within NSW Railway collection) and three moderately significant footbridges will be lost at Hurlstone Park, Canterbury and Wiley Park.

With the exception of some elements at Bankstown, all of the original platforms along the line will be removed resulting in a substantial loss of curved wayside and island platforms, and of brick vertical and battered platform walls. These platforms are also heritage listed.

The glazed security screens on the platforms that are required with a metro conversion will appear incongruous alongside the heritage listed platform buildings.

There is also moderate-high potential for archaeological remains to be impacted by the project (especially around Marrickville and Canterbury).

The Metro will cause Irreversible direct destruction of historic rare, exceptional and high value rail items along the line, having significance locally, regionally and for the state rail network; a reduction in the heritage values and appearances of all stations. Many of the heritage items along the corridor are of State significance, or have been recommended for listing

The heritage assessment of the EIS sums up the devastating impacts for Hurlstone Park as follows:

"The project would remove all original elements at Hurlstone Park Railway station apart from the Platform 2 building, the brick abutments of the Duntroon Street overbridge and sandstone wall on Platform 2. This would significantly impact the integrity, aesthetics, and representativeness significance of the station. The removal of most original elements would severely impact the legibility of the historical values

of the place as one of the original railway stations on the Sydenham to Bankstown line.”

The justification for the massive heritage destruction at Hurlstone Park is the need to straighten the platforms for the Metro, but at Dulwich Hill, where there will also be major heritage impacts, the platforms will not be straightened due to cost and technical factors. This is an example of inconsistencies that underpin the lack of trust and confidence in the merits of this proposal.

The design summary of the EIS claims the project will “Protect and promote heritage through appropriate design, planning, and management controls”(p9) and that the project will “Conserve and re-use heritage fabric wherever possible.” A stated principle is to “Ensure elements and items of heritage significance are appropriately managed and respected” and “ Identify opportunities for heritage conservation to contribute to the celebration of local identity in station design” (p 71, Design summary). In the Heritage Assessment it is stated that the station design has sought “to retain and conserve, wherever possible, elements of heritage significance.” (5.3.8 p 148)

There is no evidence in the EIS to support the above statements.

Contrary to statements in the EIS, heritage items will not be rendered more visible for greater appreciation. At Marrickville, ribbon canopies will obscure the heritage platform buildings. Canopies at Canterbury will have visual impacts, and the only remaining platform building at Hurlstone Park will be less visible.

The function of many of the heritage buildings will be removed instead of enhanced. This is also senseless. The Hurlstone Park Platform buildings have functional toilets, an attractive original waiting room and shading canopies, for instance.

The heritage impacts will be felt locally, regionally and across the historical NSW rail network. The T3 Bankstown will lose its heritage values and ability to demonstrate the historical phases of development of the line.

### **Construction Impacts**

The construction process will be enormously disruptive to the residents.. These disruptions include:

- potential vibrational damage to dwellings
- properties close to the railway line will be impacted by extra noise during construction, sometimes at night and by noisy heavy machinery. This includes many schools and child care centres, as well as homes and businesses. The EIS has flagged that construction is likely to occur outside standard hours.
- some properties, including heritage listed properties, close to the project may suffer "cosmetic" damage from vibration. This includes the Sugar House and the new units backing onto Canterbury Rd
- local streets, acting as “haulage routes”, will have heavy truck traffic, noise and dust during construction periods.
- The lack of a clear strategy for the already congested Canterbury Rd which will be rendered almost impassable for many months.

The temporary transport strategy set out in the EIS is insufficient and will cause delays and stress to the 100,000 commuters who travel the corridor each day during the construction period. The EIS notes that the estimated 101 extra buses per hour required will not be feasible as they would cause traffic congestion through Marrickville and Sydenham. How will people travel to work and school in reasonable time?

### **Summary**

I don't believe that the State Government has made the business case to spend billions of dollars to replace one rail line with another. Capacity and congestion issues are over-stated and could be resolved by alternative means including signalling and timetable upgrades, tunnelling for short lengths in the existing system, and improving (not privatising) bus services.

The real reason for the Metro is to facilitate intensification along the corridor with a possible 50,000 additional dwellings being built over the next twenty years. Such growth occurring in already established areas is unprecedented in Australia and will have a major impact on the character of suburbs along the line and infrastructure provision. Schools, hospitals, green space and the road network will all be impacted as there are no mechanisms in place to address these needs.

The liveability of the inner west will be dramatically reduced if the Government proceeds with the construction of the Metro.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Fasan