

**Submission
No 65**

INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Name: Professor Ian Tyrrell

Date Received: 4 October 2019

Objections to the Sydenham-Bankstown Line demolition and so-called “upgrade”.

I am opposed to the downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line including the Metro Southwest project between Sydenham and Bankstown.

The Metro Southwest project contains significant problems and flaws:

- The NSW Government has refused to provide justification for wasting taxpayer dollars to replace an existing functional railway (T3) and deprive areas without trains access to new rail, and has failed to release the full business case for the project. This secrecy is appalling, and it is designed to ram through a project which is highly questionable.
- A more cost effective and less disruptive alternative has been ignored -- signalling upgrades for the Sydney Trains network would deliver a higher frequency of service (a train every 3 minutes) compared to Sydney Metro (train every 4 minutes) for the T3 Bankstown Line. Indeed, the estimate of a train every four minutes under the “upgrade” is just pie in the sky anyway. Breakdowns are so common already on the Northwest Metro system.
- If the proposal goes ahead, most commuters will be forced to stand for long distances with Sydney Metro having 70% less seats compared to the existing double-deck Sydney Trains service
- The loss of drivers and guards on trains will result in delays and slower response times to emergency incidents. We have already seen glitches elsewhere in the rail system and in light rail wherever there is an attempt to take human drivers off. The London Light Rail is supposed to operate without personnel, but in fact it always has a driver onboard to supervise!
- Especially surprising and unacceptable is the fact that the NSW Government has ignored warnings from four former rail executives about the damage of this change to the Sydney Trains network which the experts have stated will lead to an overall reduction in reliability
- The downgrading (not an upgrading, as is euphemistically put!) of the T3 Bankstown Line in being used to push for significant over-development and severe destruction of heritage suburbs between Canterbury and Sydenham. The loss of amenity, in terms of housing stock and street scape will be immeasurable.
- 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.
- I am appalled to learn that 100,000 commuters every day will be forced onto crowded bus services during the construction of the Metro. I can be sure, in the light of every piece of infrastructure that this government has undertaken that the time taken to complete the project will be way over what they say, and will cause terminal disruption to many areas.
- Even worse for us residents of Marrickville, there will be 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 will 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. This is extremely unfair. The inner west is being crucified for the benefit of big business, real estate interests, and to divert development from Liberal held areas.

- 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)

Finally, I am very concerned about the removal of vegetation in the construction phase. This is already going on. I've seen very large eucalyptus trees bulldozed around the Canterbury Station area. Putting in more seedlings won't compensate for the loss of established trees. The committee should closely investigate the question of biodiversity plans and revegetation.

Also, the provision of security fences that will not allow wildlife to get through will cause a further loss of biodiversity in the Inner West.

I urge the committee to review these concerns and to stop the downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line in order to protect the surrounding communities and the natural environment.

Thank you for your attention. I consent to the publication of this submission.

Sincerely,

Ian Tyrrell