

**Submission
No 72**

INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Name: Ms Tania Mihailuk MP

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Tania Mihailuk MP

Member for Bankstown

9/10/2019

The Hon. Abigail Boyd MLC
Chair
Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and Customer Service
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms Boyd,

RE: SUBMISSION TO THE SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION INQUIRY

I write in my capacity as the State Member for Bankstown and make it clear from the outset that I support my community in opposing the NSW Government's planned conversion of the T3 Bankstown Train Line from heavy rail to a metro between Sydenham and Bankstown stations.

It is clear that the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro is being used as a justification to earmark communities along the train line for significant overdevelopment by large scale increases in density, zoning and building heights - without the equivalent investment in social infrastructure. I make the following submission with respect to the inquiry's terms of reference.

1. Adequacy of the Business Case and Viability of Metro

The Final Business Case for the Sydney Metro City and Southwest highlights that the existing T3 Bankstown line can support the movement of 24,000 people per hour per line, which is a higher capacity than the intended Metro.¹

The Business Case notes that the conversion of the line to a metro between Sydenham and Bankstown will result in a passenger capacity of 17,280 people per hour per direction during peak periods, and 6,912 per hour per direction during off peak periods, with six-car trains running every four minutes in peak and every ten minutes in off-peak.²

The six-car metro trains offer a maximum seating capacity of 378 per train³ and a total capacity of 1,152 passengers⁴, while the current train fleet all hold seating capacities of approximately 880

¹ Sydney Metro, 2016, City and Southwest Final Business Case Summary, October 2016, p. 8.

² Ibid, p. 24.

³ Ibid, p. 51.

⁴ Ibid, p. 24.

passengers or more,⁵ and capacities of 1,187 to 1,290 without passengers experiencing crowding.⁶ In comparison to the existing 24,000 people per hour per line, the Southwest Metro will decrease the current rail capacity by approximately 6,000 people to an average of 18,066 passengers per hour per line.⁷

The 2012 report by Douglas Economics into the capacity of single-deck and double-deck trains states that the nominal capacity of the existing fleet is approximately 1,200 passengers, while the single deck fleet is 900 passengers.⁸ The peak capacity for the existing double-deck fleet and single deck trains are 1,400 and 1,200 respectively. With a peak load, running the maximum number of trains with existing signaling, double-deck trains like those in the existing fleet have the ability to carry 28,000 passengers per hour (with 20 trains), while single-deck metro trains have a capacity to carry only 25,000 passengers per hour (with 22 trains).⁹

Enhancements to existing signaling systems were proposed in this report as a way to increase the capacity of the rail network by allowing 24 trains to run per hour, with a peak load of 33,600 passengers for double-deck trains, or 26 single-deck trains per hour with a peak load of 29,200 passengers.¹⁰

The Business Case fails to outline how the metro conversion will increase the capacity of the existing T3 Bankstown Line. The proposed metro will increase the frequency of trains between Sydenham and Bankstown, with a net decrease in passenger capacity.

The decision to convert the T3 Bankstown Line in place of the T2 South Line is attributed to the T3 Line being “less complex to convert and segregate from the existing rail network”.¹¹ The Business Case also states that less infrastructure work would be required to convert the T3 Bankstown Line in comparison to other lines.¹² The decision to convert the T3 Bankstown Line was not based on increased patronage in comparison to other lines, as the T3 Bankstown Line has less than one third of the patronage of the T2 Airport, Inner West and South Lines and less than half of the patronage of the T4 Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra Line at the time of the report.¹³

The report also cites a rail ‘bottleneck’ at Central Station where the T3 Bankstown Line and the T2 Airport, Inner West and South Lines traverse the Sydney CBD,¹⁴ exacerbated by the T3 Bankstown

⁵ Transport for NSW, Train Patronage – Sydney and Intercity Train Fleet, <<https://transportnsw.info/travel-info/ways-to-get-around/train/fleet-facilities/sydney-intercity-train-fleet>>.

⁶ Based on Transport for NSW Train Loads <<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/data-and-research/passenger-travel/train-patronage/train-loads#tab2>>, with a load factor of 135% at which passengers experience crowding.

⁷ Based on Transport for NSW Peak and Off-Peak Running Times <[https://transportnsw.info/tickets-opal/opal/fares-payments/opal-peak-off-peak-metro/train-fares#/>](https://transportnsw.info/tickets-opal/opal/fares-payments/opal-peak-off-peak-metro/train-fares#/), operating at a maximum of 22 hours per day.

⁸ Douglas Economics, 2012, Modelling Train and Passenger Capacity Report to Transport for NSW, p. 14.

⁹ Ibid, p.12.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 31.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 45.

¹² Ibid, p. 45.

¹³ Transport for NSW, Train Patronage – Month Figures, 2016, <<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/data-and-research/passenger-travel/train-patronage/train-patronage-monthly-figures>>.

¹⁴ Sydney Metro City and Southwest, 2016, Final Business Case Summary, October 2016, p. 40.

Line, as a reason for removing the line from the existing rail network.¹⁵ Despite this, only six of the twenty services running clockwise around the city circle operate along the T3 Bankstown Line and only four of the twenty services running counter-clockwise around the city circle operate along the T3 Bankstown Line, with the remainder operating along the T2 Airport, Inner West and South Lines (see *Figure 1*).¹⁶



Figure 1. Train allocations within the city circle; Sydney Metro City and Southwest, Final Business Case Summary, October 2016, p. 40.

The Business Case lists a number of customer benefits as features of the Southwest Metro, including higher frequency trains, reduced travel times for customers across the rail network and fully-accessible stations. However, travel times for commuters wishing to travel to or from beyond the Metro corridor are likely to exponentially increase as passengers are forced to change from heavy rail to metro services.

The document also states that the Metro services will be “safe and comfortable” for commuters. When compared to the existing service, travel times for commuters from Bankstown will remain effectively unchanged – in fact becoming slower by 1 minute in peak periods – as journeys from Bankstown to Central are currently 27 minutes,¹⁷ increasing to 28 minutes along the proposed Southwest Metro.¹⁸

Commuters currently enjoy a comfortable experience, with ample forward facing seating and sufficient capacity on the train line. The Metro will see trains become full at Bankstown, with limited sideways, forcing many passengers to stand the duration from Bankstown to the CBD.¹⁹

2. The Consideration of Alternatives for Improving Capacity and Reducing Congestion

As outlined above, the Business Case fails to adequately consider alternative options to improve capacity and reduce congestion across the rail network. Alternative options listed within the

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 39.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 40.

¹⁷ Transport for NSW, 2019, T3 Liverpool or Lidcombe to City via Bankstown Timetable, <<https://transportnsw.info/documents/timetables/93-T3-Bankstown-Line-20190907.pdf>>.

¹⁸ NSW Government, 2019, Sydney Metro, Bankstown Station Travel Times, <<https://www.sydneymetro.info/station/bankstown-station>>.

¹⁹ Based on Transport for NSW Peak and Off-Peak Running Times <<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/data-and-research/passenger-travel/train-patronage/train-loads/train-loads-by-line>>.

Business Case only include options to convert the existing T2 Airport, Inner West and South Line or the T4 Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra Line to a Metro line. Other alternatives have been proposed to the Government, including the reinstatement of the Liverpool via Regents Park Service along the T2 Inner West Line to alleviate congestion and increase capacity along the T3 Bankstown Line, allowing for more substantial and significant rail upgrades across the network,²⁰ however, the Business Case fails to adequately assess alternatives relating to improvements to existing heavy rail lines.

Alternatives to improve capacity and reduce congestion outlined in the Business Case include regulatory reform, governance reform, and better-use reform and interchange upgrades, however, are not fully scrutinised or elaborated within the Business Case.

3. The Factors Taken Into Account When Comparing the Alternatives and the Robustness of the Evidence Used in Decision Making, and the Consultation Process Undertaken With, and the Adequacy of Information Given to, Community, Experts and Other Stakeholders

The community of Bankstown has been subject to minimal and merely tokenistic consultation by Sydney Metro throughout the planning process for the Southwest Metro.

A single consultation process was undertaken for the Environmental Impact Statement in 2017 and a single consultation process for the Preferred Infrastructure Report in 2018. No community consultation was undertaken during the preliminary stages, and the community was neglected throughout the preparation of the Business Case and subsequent planning and construction phases.

Consultation for the Environmental Impact Statement received 563 submissions, which outlined 27 key issues.²¹ Concerns surrounding stakeholder and community consultation were raised 109 times, issues surrounding alternatives and options were raised 230 times, and concerns surrounding project need and justification were raised 1,080 times.²² Submissions which raised concerns surrounding the adequacy of consultation undertaken prior to the exhibition period outlined that the community felt that the entire Southwest Metro project has been marked by poor and inadequate consultation, and that information presented was often biased and misleading, with a large proportion of the community unaware of the project.²³

Submissions also highlighted the lack of community consultation on strategic alternatives and options beyond the construction of the Southwest Metro. Responses provided by Transport for NSW failed to address these concerns. Concerns that were “noted” by Transport for NSW²⁴ include the need for the project, the impact of removing the final remaining direct train line to the city for numerous commuters, the project was not well planned and appeared to have been expedited in order to satisfy developers with minimal community consultation, and that the project is not in the public interest.

A number of submissions to the Environmental Impact Statement requested further consultation on issues raised, notifications to any changes to the proposal, further consultations on more

²⁰ Sydney Metro City and Southwest, 2016, Final Business Case Summary, October 2016, p. 45.

²¹ Sydney Metro City & Southwest Sydney to Bankstown Upgrade – Submission and Preferred Infrastructure Report, 2018, – Submissions Report, p. 4.1

²² Ibid, p. 4.5.

²³ Ibid, p. 5.6.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 5.14.

appropriate alternatives, information surrounding the construction timeline, and further information about the potential impacts upon business and residents.²⁵ In response to this, Transport for NSW advised that it would “engage closely with stakeholders and affected properties, owners, and occupiers, through all stages of design, planning, and construction” (sic).²⁶

A second consultation process was undertaken in 2018 for the Preferred Infrastructure Report. This received a total of 390 submissions from members of the community. Of these, 340 submissions objected to the Sydney Metro while only 32 submission were in support. Thirty-six submissions raised concerns with respect to stakeholder and community consultation, while concerns surrounding the need for the project were raised 20 times.

Despite assurances that Transport for NSW would work closely with stakeholders and effected residents, submissions from residents highlighted that the public engagement process failed to consider input from communities, excluded non-English speaking residents, presented information rather than actively engaging communities, provided incorrect and inconsistent information surrounding changes to travel times, and failed to adequately consult communities west of Bankstown.

The consultation process failed to include the community when comparing alternative options to the Southwest Metro, and a significant lack of robust evidence was considered during decision making. Concerns raised by impacted residents and the community as a whole were not adequately considered or addressed. Prior to, during, and following these consultation periods, there has been a lack of information provided to the community about how the project will be delivered, the impact and cost of the project to the community as a whole, and there is still little clarity surrounding the location of the proposed turnback and the impact on local homeowners.

4. Whether Metro Is a Suitable Means of Transport Over Long Distances

A report released by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia states that for longer distance travel within Sydney, heavy rail is the most cost-effective travel mode per trip.²⁷ The use of a single-deck fleet such as the proposed Metro has also been criticised by other experts, with Professor Graham Currie of Monash University’s Institute of Transport studies stating that decreased boarding times only counteracts part of the benefits of the larger capacity double-decker trains currently in service. Dr Phillip Laird of the University of Wollongong states that double-deckers are more suited for long distance transport when compared with single-decker trains. Dr Neil Douglas, a transport economist has also cautioned that the lack of seats available on the Metro may result in lower utilisation of the lines as passengers will not want to stand for long journeys.²⁸

The reduced amount of seating on Metro trains will result in an increased number of passengers standing for the duration of their journeys. Currently, approximately nine percent of the electorate

²⁵ Ibid, p. 5.13.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 5.10.

²⁷ Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, 2014, Integrating Australia’s Transport Systems: A Strategy for an Efficient Transport Future, p. 54.

²⁸ RMIT ABC Fact Check, 2014, Single-decker v double-decker trains: Barry O’Farrell’s claim doubtful, 14 April, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-04-11/barry-ofarrell-sydney-trains-claim-doubtful/5371446>>.

of Bankstown's population, or approximately 2,500 residents, are over the age of 70.²⁹ This proportion is forecast to increase to almost 12 percent by 2036, or approximately 6,800 residents.³⁰ A predominantly standing-based Metro fails to cater for the aging population and mobility impaired residents within Bankstown.

5. The Impact on the Environment and Heritage Conservation

Due to lack of transparency and clarity surrounding the project, the full impacts of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro on the environment and heritage conservation have not been adequately explored and are not known to the community. A 2017 Report released by Transport for NSW states that a turnback will be located "west of Bankstown Station"³¹ and "towards Yagoona" however the exact location has never been specified.³² The location of the turnback may require land and property to be compulsorily acquired, resulting in unaccounted for social, economic and environmental consequences.

It is anticipated that an additional 35,000 dwellings will be constructed along the rail corridor as a result of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro,³³ however, the number of dwellings constructed could be as high as 58,747, with the potential for a total 91,262 new dwellings to be built along the corridor following the construction of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro.³⁴ The environmental and heritage conservation impacts of the construction of these dwellings, while not direct impacts of the Southwest Metro, are additional consequences that have not been investigated.

An additional 58,747 dwellings along the corridor will also result in approximately 180,000 additional residents along the corridor, and an additional 94,000 motor vehicles, the environmental results of which have also not been considered.³⁵ Additional infrastructure to support population growth, such as schools and health facilities, have not been considered within the Environmental Impact Statement or the initial Business Case, however, their inevitable construction will have further impacts on the environment and heritage conservation, which have not been considered.

An additional heritage conservation impact as a consequence of the Southwest Metro is its effect upon the local character of dwellings and communities across the rail corridor which, again, has not been considered.

6. Any Lobbying, Political Donations or Other Influence of the Public and/or Private Sector In Relation to Making That Decision

²⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census QuickStats, Bankstown Community Profile.

³⁰ Forecast ID, 2019, Population and Age Structure – Bankstown, <<https://forecast.id.com.au/canterbury-bankstown/population-age-structure?AgeTypeKey=2&WebID=410>>.

³¹ Transport for NSW, 2017, Sydenham to Bankstown Upgrade, State Significant Infrastructure Application Report, p. 58.

³² Transport for NSW, 2017, Sydenham to Bankstown Upgrade, State Significant Infrastructure Application Report, p. 50.

³³ NSW Government, Department of Planning and Environment, 2017, Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy, Chapter 1, p. 2.

³⁴ NSW Government, Department of Planning and Environment, 2016, Sydenham-Bankstown Corridor Dwelling Take-Up Analysis, p. 17.

³⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census QuickStats, Bankstown Community Profile; based upon average people per household, average motor vehicles per dwelling.

The Southwest Metro is expected to create significant population and housing growth along the corridor, potentially generating significant profits for potential developers. While there is a need to cater for the growing population statewide, the influence of developers and the private sector appear to have taken precedence over the needs and interests of the communities along the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor.

A planning proposal considered before the Canterbury Bankstown Local Planning Panel for a new Western Sydney University Campus seeks to amend current land use zoning to increase height restrictions and floor space ratios. This proposal cited the close proximity to Bankstown Train Station and the Southwest Metro as justification to do so.

The planning proposal states that students attending the university will likely commute from suburbs such as Bankstown, Greenacre, Punchbowl, Yagoona and Condell Park, and be able to commute to the campus using the Southwest Metro,³⁶ however a majority of these suburbs are not in the Metro corridor.

7. The Tender Process for Appointing Private Operators

I understand the tender process for the design of the Southwest Metro commenced on 6 December 2018 and closed on 11 February 2019,³⁷ and a contract was awarded to Metron T2M on 28 May 2019³⁸.

Despite the first shutdown period for the construction of the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro occurring on the 28 and 29 September 2019,³⁹ the tender is currently open for modifications to the existing stations along the T3 Bankstown Line.⁴⁰ An invitation to respond was open between February and March 2019 for interested parties to lodge registrations for position appointments for the mechanical gap fillers which are required at various stations along the Bankstown Line.⁴¹ Despite these mechanical gap fillers being crucial for the Southwest Metro to operate, no expressions of

³⁶ Canterbury Bankstown Local Planning Panel Meeting Agenda, 2019, Item 1: Planning Proposal: 74 Rickard Road and Part 375 Chapel Road, Bankstown

³⁷ NSW Government eTendering, 2018, Sydney Metro City & Southwest – Southwest Metro Design Services – SM 2018/005, <<https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.rft.showArchived&RFTUID=A6E186EB-BF51-D52D-009065A144F48FC4>>.

³⁸ Sydney Metro City & Southwest, 2019, Contract Awarded on Bankstown Line Metro Upgrade, <<https://www.sydneymetro.info/article/contract-awarded-bankstown-line-metro-upgrade>>.

³⁹ Sydney Metro City & Southwest, 2019, Notification – Bankstown Line Metro Upgrade, September/October 2019.

⁴⁰ NSW Government eTendering, 2019, Sydney Metro City & Southwest – Bankstown Line Station Upgrades – SM 2019/015, <<https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.rft.show&RFTUID=90481507-A0C6-775B-40E41C1E0F71ADA2>>.

⁴¹ NSW Government eTendering, 2019, Sydney Metro City & Southwest – Mechanical Gap Filler and Platform Screen Door – SM 2019/002, <<https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.rft.showArchived&RFTUID=8E2C9786-AF20-9607-A515E16E90671179>>.

interests or requests for tenders are currently proposed,⁴² however, the T3 Bankstown Line will be closed from 24 to 28 December 2019 for upgrade works between Campsie and Central stations.⁴³

The tender process appears to have been conducted haphazardly, with no foresight of, or thorough consideration for, the impact on commuters. Initial works for the Southwest Metro will begin in December 2019, despite no contracts being awarded for the mechanical gap fillers to ensure that the service is accessible as per the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport, nor any contracts for upgrades to stations along the metro corridor that currently do not have wheelchair access.

8. The Contractual Arrangements Entered Into In Respect of the Project

I understand that a contract has been awarded for the design phase of the Southwest Metro, however, due to the exceptionally limited amount of information publically accessible surrounding the planning and construction of the project, it is not possible to comment on the contractual agreements entered into with respect to the Sydenham to Bankstown Metro project.

9. The Adequacy of Temporary Transport Arrangements During the Conversion Process, Including for People With A Disability

Temporary transport plans are currently only publicly available for the possession periods until the 3 January 2020.⁴⁴ The temporary transport plans do not cater for mobility impaired passengers traveling toward the city or Lidcombe as they require commuters to transfer from the existing heavy rail line to a replacement bus service at Punchbowl station which is currently not wheelchair accessible.⁴⁵ The temporary transport arrangements across the Christmas and New Year period effectively remove access to the city for any residents in wheelchairs or with limited mobility who require lift access to be able to utilise the public transport system.

Temporary transport plans have not been released for any further possession periods, particularly the final possession period which is expected to last between three to six months in duration.⁴⁶ The temporary transport arrangements are inadequate for all commuters, particularly for people living with a disability.

10. The Impact on the Stations West of Bankstown

Stations west of Bankstown that are currently serviced exclusively by the T3 Bankstown Line include Yagoona, Birrong, Sefton, Chester Hill, Leightonfield, Villawood and Carramar. The most recent publicly available data indicates that approximately 13,760 commuters use these stations on a daily

⁴² NSW Government eTendering, 2019, Proposed Tender List, <<https://tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.rftproposed.list>>.

⁴³ NSW Government, 2019, Sydenham to Bankstown Upgrade, <<https://www.mysydney.nsw.gov.au/SydenhamtoBankstown>>.

⁴⁴ Transport for NSW, 2019, Buses replace trains for the T3 Bankstown Line upgrade, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Transport for NSW, 2019, Punchbowl Station, <https://transportnsw.info/stop?q=10101400#>.

⁴⁶ Transport for NSW, 2017, Sydney Metro City & Southwest Sydenham to Bankstown Upgrade – Technical Paper 1 – Traffic, Transport and Access p. 5.

basis,⁴⁷ however it is estimated by former rail executives that the current figure is closer to 19,000 passengers.⁴⁸

In 2013 the stations along the T3 Bankstown Line lost their direct access to the inner west when the Liverpool via Regents Park Service which ran along the T2 Inner West and Leppington Line was removed during timetable changes.⁴⁹ Stations west of Birrong (Sefton to Carramar) also lost their direct access to Lidcombe during these changes.

The replacement of the existing heavy rail line with a Metro will result in stations west of Bankstown losing their last remaining direct access to the City Circle. Commuters travelling from west of Bankstown will be forced to endure changes from the heavy rail service to the Metro at Bankstown, and from the Metro back to a heavy rail service to reach stations along the existing network. The impacts of an additional 19,000 commuters using Bankstown as an interchange have not been adequately examined in the planning of the Southwest Metro.

The commute will also vastly increase travel times for residents living west of Bankstown. For example, for those living in Villawood, a direct peak hour train journey takes 45 minutes to reach Town Hall Station. Following the conversion of the T3 Bankstown Line to a Metro, this journey will take a minimum of an additional seven minutes each direction with interchanges and additional walking times, provided there is minimal waiting time at the interchanges. Journeys from Chester Hill Station to Redfern Station will increase by a minimum of 12 minutes each direction not including waiting times.

The conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor of the T3 Bankstown Line entirely disconnects the residents west of Bankstown from the City Circle and the wider rail network, imposes additional interchanges and increases travel times. No alternative direct travel options for commuters west of Bankstown have been proposed once the Southwest Metro is constructed, such as timetable adjustments or alternative bus services, leaving no alternatives for residents west of Bankstown.

11. Any Related Matter

The Southwest Metro will result in only one guaranteed outcome: the mass residential overdevelopment of all communities between Sydenham to Bankstown with no material improvement in the rail capacity or level of service offered. The project and its planning processes have not been communicated in an open and transparent manner, with only tokenistic consultation undertaken.

The Sydenham to Bankstown corridor is already well serviced by the existing T3 Bankstown Line that is under capacity. Conversion to a metro line will not expand the existing Sydney rail network, nor would the conversion ease congestion along the current network. Alternative options to the Metro

⁴⁷ Transport for NSW, 2013, Train Statistics 2014, Everything you need to know about Sydney Trains and NSW Train Link, p. 69

⁴⁸ J Brew, R Christie, B O'Loughlin, D Day to Transport for NSW available at: <http://restoreinnerwestline.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Former-Rail-Executives-Expose-Major-Issue-with-Metro-Southwest.compressed.pdf>

⁴⁹ Transport for NSW, 2013, October 2013 Timetable Changes, <<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/newsroom-and-events/articles/october-2013-timetable-changes>>.

more adequately address capacity issues for the entire network to meet the needs of Sydney's growing population. However these were not given adequate consideration.

Since 2011, the community of Bankstown has consistently been ignored by the NSW Government with respect to social infrastructure upgrades to meet existing need, including upgrades to Bankstown's Hospital, Schools and existing train stations/services. The NSW Government should stop the planned Metro from Chatswood at Sydenham – scrapping the planned conversion between Sydenham and Bankstown. Long term investment into the rail line should be subject to a cost-benefit analysis which does not take into consideration value capture sourced by the gross rezonings and height increases along the rail line. Our current public transport needs would be more cheaply and effectively met by the installation of easy access lifts, restoration of the Liverpool via Regents Park service and the exploration of alternative option to expand the network to cater for population and utilisation growth.

Yours sincerely,

Tania Mihailuk MP
Member for Bankstown