

**Submission
No 73**

INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Name: Ms Louise Dortins

Date Received: 9 October 2019

I oppose the Metro Southwest conversion of the T3 Bankstown line because:

- 1. the NSW Government has provided no convincing justification that it will contribute to an improved public transport network for our city**
- 2. it will provide poorer service to users of the T3 line**
- 3. there are safety issues**
- 4. there will be heritage and environmental impacts**
- 5. the Temporary Transport Plan is inadequate**
- 6. the conversion will impact adversely on me and my extended family**

1. Justification

There has been a lack of transparency since the announcement of this project. Neither a business case nor detailed costings have ever been released. One justification, that the project would relieve a bottleneck has not been supported by transport experts including former rail executives, who have advocated cheaper alternative solutions, including signalling upgrades. The second main justification is that the Metro would increase that number of services along the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor to every 4 minutes. Experts argue that this also could be achieved or even bettered by digital signalling.

Experts have also been critical of huge expenditure on a project that provides no addition to Sydney's transport network and in effect deprives those living in areas with poor public transport which would benefit from additional expenditure. There is a lack of evidence that alternative route options from Sydenham, or improved signalling have been considered.

2. Downgraded Service

As mentioned above the more frequent services made much of in the glossy Metro brochures could be achieved more cheaply and without the disruption involved with the conversion.

Less publicised has been the reduced seating capacity of Metro carriages. This will mean many commuters will have to stand for the length of the journey. Commuters joining and alighting at Bankstown will include those from the 9 T3 stations west of Bankstown, meaning there will, especially at peak times, be a lack of seating for residents on the line east of Bankstown

The loss of access to stations now served by the T3 that would not be available to Metro Southwest is also poorly understood I believe. Metro trains will bypass St Peters, Erskineville and Redfern. This will impact on many and especially Sydney University students who now walk to and from Redfern. It is not clear which line will now service those stations.

Residents would also be deprived of direct access to City Circle stations. The loss of access to Circular Quay is probably the most problematic. It is both a cultural hub and transport hub, so visits to the Opera House and ferries for example will be far less convenient and will involve either an interchange or an 800 metre walk.

For those living along the line west of Bankstown this will be in addition to the change required to join the Metro at Bankstown. There has been little consultation with these communities.

3. Safety considerations

There will be no drivers or guards on Metro trains, so slower response times to emergencies, which may include breakdowns or assaults.

The automatic door closing period of 30 seconds is an issue for the elderly, the disabled and parents of small children, especially with the absence of guards. There have already been cases of children separated from their parents on the North West Metro

4. Heritage and environmental and amenity impacts

While the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor must accommodate its share of additional population, development to date has not inspired confidence that increases associated with the Metro will adequately consider current density, available health and educational services, passive and active recreational facilities, green space, urban heat bank effect and traffic.

While there are opportunities for carefully considered development, in consultation with the community in suburbs such as mine in Hurlstone Park, speculative development would be disastrous to its heritage character. Residents are mistrustful of promised protection when corporations are involved, remembering the impact of Westconnex on heritage listed properties in Haberfield.

5. Temporary Transport Plan

The temporary transport plan over an extended period, beginning with a closure of the line for 2 weeks in the forthcoming summer school holidays will be very disruptive to residents. Omissions in detail for this initial closure include a bus service from Hurlstone Park Station. The huge number of additional buses required will add to already serious traffic congestion. Trains on lines to which buses will feed will be more crowded.

6. Impacts on my family

I am in my 70's, and rely heavily on the very adequate public transport available to me from Hurlstone Park. I cannot drive at night and because of a medical condition find standing for prolonged periods painful. My husband too is in his 70's. We value the train service available to us and the access to the city it gives us, enabling us to access concerts, meet friends from

other parts of Sydney and travel to family on the Central Coast, as well as to take grandchildren to all the city has to offer small children. The loss of direct access to Circular Quay will be a huge loss to us.

The relative lack of seating will also be a problem to me especially.

The temporary transport arrangements will affect us adversely, especially as reliability and travel times will be unpredictable.

We have family living members living close to both Erskineville and Redfern stations and visits to them and from them will be much more complicated and time consuming.

All this is particularly galling as we are gaining nothing, except more frequent services which could be available anyway with improved signalling.

Suggestions.

The business case, detailed costings and contractual arrangements should be released. Closed meetings with vested profit corporations and developers should be revealed and stopped.

The project should not go ahead unless it can be shown to be the best option to the transport network as a whole, when costs and alternatives such as improved technology and alternate routes from Sydenham are considered. The project could be stopped underground at Sydenham while alternatives to unserved areas are considered.

Safety at stations can be improved by installing lifts and other upgrades without proceeding with the Metro.