

**Submission
No 84**

INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Organisation: Save Marrickville

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Save Marrickville Resident Group Submission to the Metro Southwest project

The Save Marrickville resident group represents over 500 direct members from the innerwest region of Sydney. We welcome the opportunity to submit this response to the inquiry into the T3 Bankstown Line including the Metro Southwest project between Sydenham and Bankstown.

The Save Marrickville resident group formed in response to the Revised Marrickville Plan that saw uplift and rezoning around Marrickville Station associated with the conversion of the T3 Bankstown Line between Sydenham and Bankstown to a metro system. We had significant concerns about the overdevelopment of the innerwest as foreshadowed in the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban renewal plan, which included a short-term housing target of 5,900 dwellings for our area between 2016 and 2021. Most of these were to be in medium and high-density buildings. While we acknowledge the need for more housing in the greater Sydney area, the plans formulated by Government and private enterprise had little or no consideration for the retention of the character and liveability of Marrickville.

SAVE Marrickville sees the conversion of the existing train line to a metro system as a gateway for privatisation of infrastructure, significant over-development and severe destruction of heritage suburbs as was the case for the NorthWest Metro which was under the control of MTR. For example, 1900 units were planned at Castle Hill Showground, 11,000 at Tallerwong, a 42-storey tower at Victoria Cross, 29 and 39 storeys at Martin Place Metro and controversial tower heights at Waterloo. MTR has a history of upzoning projects around its lines and stations.

Development proposed in the Revised Marrickville Plan extended 800 m from the station into areas of single storey Victorian and Federation streetscapes, and further away along industrial corridors that were seen as having potential for uplift. We feel that the heritage destruction is embedded in the Metro plans as the Metro is linked to urban renewal and transit-orientated development. The Metro is being used to force high-density, poor quality development onto low density, established, heritage-rich and vibrant neighbourhoods. To date this has only resulted in poor quality development and heritage destruction.

Concerns have been raised regarding State finances and the fear still remains that greater density will be needed to pay for the conversion of the heavy rail service to a metro service. While the business case presented includes “benefits” related to the increase in residents and businesses along the corridor, there are no additional funds for the related infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, open space, and community space.

SAVE Marrickville is also concerned about the negative impacts to local businesses and residents during the five-year construction period related to traffic congestion, noise, and environmental impacts such as tree removal and loss of biodiversity. The area around Marrickville station is lacking in trees and any tree removals will have a significant impact on the existing sense of place. Existing valuable canopy trees should be retained because it takes decades to establish good tree cover.

Should the Metro go ahead, a full heritage/character appraisal of the corridor must be completed before the project goes ahead. The Department of Planning and Environment has stated that local character is to be respected and enhanced (Circular PS-001 dated 16 January 2018). An embargo should be placed on planning “upzonings” and medium/high rise development until after the completion of the Metro and other infrastructure needed for increased population densities is in place. InnerWest Council should have control over all development applications in the LGA. The government must consult early with communities regarding station precinct design. Railway heritage must be preserved including the station buildings, platforms, station entrances and booking offices.