

**INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE
CONVERSION**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential



As a resident of the Canterbury area for over 50 years, I wish to strongly object to the unwarranted, unnecessary and uncalled for downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line including the Metro Southwest project between Sydenham and Bankstown.

I believe that this conversion will have a negative effect and be detrimental not only to the environment, but the community as well for the following reasons:

Overdevelopment, high rise, loss of heritage and green space:

Over the past few years, I have been dismayed and greatly concerned by the many unwelcomed changes which have occurred in the surrounding suburbs, in particular, the unsightly development and ill designed monstrosities which have been allowed to be built by the former corrupt Canterbury Council, making Canterbury Road and its surrounds resemble a ghetto.

- If the Metro SW project went ahead, **it would be the catalyst for further unwanted and unsightly development in the area**
- It is believed that MTR, based in Hong Kong and owned by the Chinese Government will have operating rights for the SW Sydney to Bankstown Metro.
- It is also well known that MTR is heavily into property development and would, therefore, to make their venture more viable, seek to have exclusive development rights around the Metro Stations.
- Obviously then, the implementation of the Sydney Metro South West line, is a “land grab” opportunity. The land around the proposed Metro stations will be re-zoned by the council, with the blessing of the State Government, to appease a foreign company and the developers’ vested interests, thus, allowing for more high density housing, providing patronage to MTR.
- This will undoubtedly pave the way for developers (and the government) to line their pockets while enhancing their dreams and quick rich schemes. However, in doing so, ironically, will destroy the dreams of the long term residents in the area, many of whom are elderly and wish to live their twilight years in their own homes, peacefully and in tranquillity, without the threat of being displaced, manipulated and coerced into selling their homes, by unscrupulous developers.

- It would be shameful as the area's history and our Australian way of life will be destroyed. Whole suburbs will be demolished and heritage will be lost. Single storey homes almost 100 years old which have stood the test of time will be torn down and high rise towers, shabbily and cheaply built which are likely to fall down in 5 years, will take their place.
- There will be a loss of green space due to the impending development along the railway corridor, with many mature trees and native vegetation removed, forcing many animals from their natural habitat.
- Sadly and more importantly **the major threat** for the community would be the development of the open green space of 35 ha. - **Canterbury Racecourse** – which would be a developer's delight, should it be sold.
- Unfortunately, although the Racecourse is protected by a *moratorium*, preventing its sale until 2021, it has come to light that the Australian Turf Club has tried to circumvent this and has lodged a Development Application for a parcel of land (Area 6) the ATC owns and has already received 8 million dollars from Mirvac, for the obvious reason of developing the land into high rise buildings.
- If Area 6 is allowed to be developed and subsequently the Racecourse is sold because of its prime location and close proximity to Canterbury train station, then not only is the much needed open green space lost but the area would most certainly not be able to cope with further development as the overcrowding and congestion has already become a major problem.
- Canterbury Rd has already become incredibly difficult to traverse due to the congestion which has been created. This will be exacerbated more so with the addition of condensed housing, giving rise to pollution and the inability for local infrastructure such as water and electricity, roads and medical services, to cope with the increase demand.
- Furthermore, quality of life will be eroded as it is well documented that high density living is well known to have a harmful effect on a person's mental health and well being.
- It is imperative, therefore, that whatever green space exists in this area, **particularly the Racecourse, should be preserved and remain as open space**, to be used for recreational purposes and to provide some relief and freedom from the bedlam and constraints associated with high density living which will be thrust upon the community if the Metro SW project goes ahead.

Safety:

The safety aspect of the Metro is also a major concern. It appears that the safety of the commuters has not been given consideration at all.

- Recently, in Singapore, to improve safety and reliability, drivers and guards have been put BACK ON the driverless trains and yet, here in Sydney, we seem to have taken a backward step, by launching and spending \$7.3 billion so far on a Metro System which since its introduction early this year has been plagued by problems. Not only has passengers' safety been at risk, the jobs of fellow Australians who have quite competently operated our train system throughout the years are being eliminated.
- The safety of commuters should be paramount and yet, with no drivers, guards or evacuation staff on board to ensure this, what would happen if a passenger is attacked or threatened and no-one in authority is there to come to their aid, particularly in a long, dark, narrow, winding tunnel?
- Furthermore, in the event of the train being stuck inside a tunnel due to sabotage, a fire, a derailment or a power failure how would the 1,000+ passengers on board escape as there are only two exits through the front and the rear of Metro windscreen. It would be a harrowing, traumatic experience, causing havoc, panic and a stampede. These tunnels are death traps in the making.
- There have already been many issues and ongoing problems associated with the Metro North West in Sydney.. More than 30 significant disruptions such as power failures, urgent mechanical repairs and track work which have seen the Metro replaced by buses making travel time longer and arduous.
- Automatic doors have slammed on passengers because they have not been able to get off and on the Metro in the 30 seconds before the doors shut.
- There have been 10 incidents reported where young children have been left stranded and separated from their parents, simply because they could not get on or off the Metro fast enough .
- Also, it is very difficult and a safety hazard for parents with prams, the elderly, the frail and the disabled to get on and off the Metro in the given 30 seconds, particularly in a crowded situation creating further panic and anxiety for some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

So, in light of the above, where is the logic in proceeding to introduce the Metro Southwest system when we already have a safer option, the existing T3 line,

which has serviced the area for over a 100 years and provides commuters peace of mind as well as jobs for fellow Australians?

Other reasons for opposing the SW Metro:

- **Less seating:** currently, the T3 Bankstown line runs double decker trains with 70% seating capacity. The Metro only has single decker trains with 30% seats only. As there is much less seating, the elderly, the disabled, small children and the tired worker will be disadvantaged.
- **Longer journey times,** particularly for commuters from stations west of Bankstown as they will have to change twice (or three times) if they wish to go into the City. Once again this will impact on families, the elderly and the disabled.
- **The direct City Circle Link will be lost.** . This will not only be an inconvenience for many who work in the city, but it would most certainly be a nuisance for families with young children who would have to change at two or three stations if for example, they wish to travel to Circular Quay to hop on a ferry to visit the zoo or Manly or simply just spend a day or picnic in our beautiful Botanical Gardens. It is difficult travelling with young children as it is. If the trip is too bothersome, then families may wish not to travel at all.
- **Loss of direct route to Redfern –** This proposal is absolutely ridiculous, given the fact that many students who travel on the T3 line and attend Sydney University alight at Redfern station. Why would the Metro not stop at Redfern, and instead stop at Central, inconveniencing the students and stressing them out because their trip is unnecessarily longer?

The above points reinforce the reasons why I oppose the downgrading of the T3 Bankstown Line including the Metro Southwest project between Sydenham and Bankstown. Millions of dollars have been allocated to uproot a perfectly adequate train line which has serviced this area for 122 years and replace it with a Metro which will create nothing but problems, bring thousands and thousands of people into an already congested area due to overdevelopment and compromise our safety and well being. The money instead could be spent where it is needed most (upgrading the facilities at Canterbury Hospital come to mind).

It is ludicrous and inconceivable that Sydney should be ruined in this way just to satisfy the insatiable greed of the foreign developers and the “powers of be” who instigated this foolish venture in the first place.

You see, we live in a city that was once the envy of the world, with its beautiful harbour, the wide suburban streets and now, it resembles any other concrete jungle for example Hong Kong where ironically, your developers come from. Of course to them, it may seem normal, however, to us, it is not what we aspire to nor should we have to comprise our lifestyle because of someone else’s greed.