

**Submission
No 96**

INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION

Organisation: Jihad Dib MP Member for Lakemba

Date Received: 11 October 2019

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC
Committee Chair
Inquiry into the Sydenham-Bankstown Line Conversion
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Boyd,

**RE: NSW Upper House Transport Committee Portfolio Committee No 6 -
Transport and Customer Service**

I write in my capacity as the Local State Member for Lakemba in making a submission into the Inquiry into the Sydenham-Bankstown Line conversion. Once again, I am placing on record my opposition to the Sydney Metro, in its current form. This submission comes 16 months after a previous submission to the Sydenham to Bankstown Preferred Infrastructure Report Overview, June 2018.

As the local State Member of Parliament for three of the stations along the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor- Punchbowl, Wiley Park and Lakemba, many residents have shared with me their concerns about the Metro project and proposed rezoning along the corridor.

Over the past 24 months, I have had many residents share with me their concerns regarding the proposed Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy. I have also had many people share with me their visions, suggestions and recommendations about the future of our community.

My comments are structured in line with the terms of reference outlined in the Inquiry.

(a) the adequacy of the business case and viability of Metro,

In the June 2018 submission I made, I stated that my community has been given no other detailed information regarding the overall business case for the conversion of the line. We are simply advised; the T3 Bankstown line causes a bottleneck on the Sydney Rail Network. We have not been given further details on this problem and no information on what alternatives Transport for NSW (TfNSW) could put in place to address this bottleneck. I remain unconvinced as to why a Metro line, which requires commuters to change trains to access the City Circle, is the most effective solution for this problem.

(c) the factors taken into account when comparing the alternatives and the robustness of the evidence used in decision-making,

Rather than accessing the city faster, it appears the Metro only promises to move people between Bankstown and Sydenham more frequently. There is a lack of detail on the proposed direct access to Martin Place, Pitt Street and Central Station. Removing direct access to and from the City Circle for thousands of commuters is not an ideal situation for people living and working along the train line. We are being promised a train every 4 minutes, though we have no information on how frequently trains to and from the city will service Sydenham.

It is also unclear from these plans what will be done to prevent overcrowding at Sydenham and how this will make access to the city any faster than it already is.

(d) whether metro is a suitable means of transport over long distances,

The suitability of the metro on the T1 Bankstown line is questionable and is best suited to highly populated and densely trafficked commuter areas over short journey times.

(f) The impact on the environment and heritage conservation

Provision of adequate green space in urban areas is paramount due to the extensive evidence pointing to the value of green space, associated with physical and mental health benefits with a range of positive social, environmental and equity outcomes.

Currently, the draft plans only make room to improve existing sites and green spaces. With proposals to encourage high and medium density living, I am disappointed to see no clearly identified new green and open spaces.

With an estimated 100,000 residents along the corridor, additional investment in parks and playing fields is required to accommodate this growth. Open and green space is also so important to those living in unit blocks and already some of our suburbs, particularly Lakemba, are lacking in neighbourhood parks and green space. I encourage those involved in this process to work together to resolve this problem as it stands, while planning for future growth of our community.

The ecological and environmental impact of this plan is also not to be underestimated. Medium and high density living has the potential to create 'heat sinks' and 'heat islands', whereby excessive heat is absorbed by the building materials, therefore increasing temperatures in urban areas. The Department of Planning and Environment should be considering these factors when planning for re-zoning. I am not confident developers will prioritise environmental considerations.

I am also calling on The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to make our local ecology a priority in plans for landscaping and improvements to green and open spaces. Preserving and planting new native trees and smaller plants means that native fauna, such as small birds, insects and reptiles can thrive. When designing landscaping, opting for native plants will bring greater, long term benefits to our community and environment.

The current amount of open space is only 5% when the recommended is 15% for the current residential population. Recreation and Open Space Guidelines for Local Government by the NSW Department of Planning 2010, states that "about 5% of inner urban Sydney is classified as open space".

Although the City of Canterbury Bankstown has approximately 1141 hectares of open space representing approximately 10.3%, this is not evenly distributed with many areas of the City having an open space deficiency.

This is particularly evident along the Bankstown to Sydenham and Canterbury Road corridors. The area between Canterbury Road and the train line (running from Bankstown to

the city) falls short of provision guidelines from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Open space currently occupies less than 6% of the urban area (as opposed to the 15% recommended). Additionally, the Review noted that these parks are poorly distributed with poor walking access for local residents. This will be further exacerbated with the proposed residential and urban intensification in the corridor.

Council's Urban Design Study for the Canterbury Road Review recommends new open spaces connecting the train line and Canterbury Road, specifically from Punchbowl Station (Rossmore Ave), Lakemba Station (Haldon St), Belmore Station (Burwood Rd) and Campsie Station (Beamish St). It recommends green streets to improve these connections and an urgent program for land acquisition to allow the corridor to be viable for residential intensification.

There is an urgent need to address the critical open space and social infrastructure deficit in concert with urban renewal. Without an urgent program of acquisition of land for open space there will not be adequate spaces to support urban and residential intensification.

(j) the adequacy of temporary transport arrangements during the conversion process, including for people with a disability,

Temporary transport arrangements during the conversion process will be disruptive to local residents. Stations between Campsie and Sydenham along the T3 Bankstown Line will temporarily close between 24 December 2019 and 5 January 2020 while the train line is being upgraded to metro standards. During this period, up to 90 buses in the busiest part of the day will operate to provide extra services between Punchbowl and Central Stations to keep customers moving over the holiday period.

Punchbowl Station accessibility

An upgrade at Punchbowl station is urgently needed to ensure access to jobs, education and medical services. Punchbowl station is a station. It is apparent that the upgrade of the station has been delayed due to the metro proposal which is inequitable. Punchbowl was ranked the 80th busiest station by barrier counts according to data from the Bureau of Transport Statistics.

Punchbowl Train Station is yet to appear on Transport for NSW (TfNSW) Transport Access Program list, as recently as 16 September 2019. Punchbowl has effectively been given a plan for lifts at the station under the Metro development. The community is in immediate need of the lifts now and my community feel that they are being held at ransom- accept the Metro line and be granted ease of access, or else Punchbowl station will continue to be left off the Transport Access Program list. Given the compelling case for ease of access at Punchbowl Train Station, I am calling on TfNSW to adopt the plans for ease of access at Punchbowl Train Station, prior to commencement of works for the Sydney Metro line.

(I) Any related matter

Commuter carpark

There is a need to ensure that commuter parking around train stations are upgraded. Train stations in my electorate have an insufficient amount of commuter parking which results in congestion of parked vehicles in suburban streets during the day.

Preparing our suburbs for future growth means we need to have the planning vision to prioritise upgrades of amenities and services. The fact that commuter parking has been overlooked as part of the plans by TfNSW) reflects that such vital upgrades are not considered a priority for our suburbs.

Corresponding social infrastructure investment

There is a need for corresponding social infrastructure investment into hospitals and schools in response to the growing population.

Conclusion

The Sydenham to Bankstown corridor is already well served by the existing T3 line, and the suitability of the metro on the TI Bankstown line is questionable and is best suited to highly populated and densely trafficked commuter areas over short journey times.

The Sydney Metro Sydenham to Bankstown line project remains an insufficient plan that gives no consideration to much needed social infrastructure. For this reason and for the reasons I have outlined, I cannot support the Sydney Metro in the current form.