

**Submission  
No 105**

## **INQUIRY INTO SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION**

**Name:** Ms Jo Haylen MP Member for Summer Hill

**Date Received:** 24 October 2019

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## **Submission: Inquiry into the Sydenham-Bankstown Line conversion**

Jo Haylen MP, Member for Summer Hill

The liveability of our city and suburbs is dependent upon meaningful investment in public transport.

Delivering substantive transport options to as broad a cross-section of the community as possible is also a touchstone of an equitable and sustainable city.

As our city grows, it is increasingly important that we expand transport services to meet growing demand and that we invest in infrastructure that will encourage more commuters to choose public transport options over private vehicles.

The consequences for our city of failing to do so are dire:

- Increased congestion on our already congested streets;
- Mounting pressure on existing transport infrastructure;
- Intensifying carbon emissions, escalating the impacts of climate change; and
- Growing inequity as communities are excluded from access to jobs and opportunity.

As our city grows, we must consolidate and expand our transport network. But we must also respect the community's strong demands to retain publicly built assets as publicly owned assets.

We must not ignore that our inter-suburban railways are lifelines for our communities, built for the benefit of future generations.

Like so many of my constituents, I am a passionate advocate for public transport, but it must be the right kind of public transport that meets a clear community need.

I am concerned that the Government has done little to justify the need to replace the existing T3 Bankstown heavy rail line with a Metro service.

Instead, the project has been coupled with the Government's flawed proposal for mass rezoning along the line.

**I categorically oppose any move by the Government for mass rezoning along the Sydenham to Bankstown Line, and share the community's concern that the Metro Southwest is nothing more than a Trojan Horse for development along the line.**

**While the Government has shelved plans for the meantime, the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor plans remain on the Department of Planning's website and the community is right to be concerned they remain a live prospect.**

## KEY ISSUES RAISED BY THE COMMUNITY IN RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED METRO SOUTHWEST CONVERSION:

### 1. Justification for the project:

Residents are concerned that the government has predominantly used commuter capacity on the T3 Sydenham line as its principal justification for embarking on this project.

While commuters on the line understand that there are broader capacity constraints across the network and that the T3 Line is subject to overcrowding at certain periods, they also understand that the western T1 line is the busiest in Sydney and requires more urgent upgrade.

It is clear that establishing a metro line to Sydney's west must be a priority if we are to meaningfully connect the three cities laid out by the Greater Sydney Commission in their most recent draft plans.

Residents are also incensed at revelations that the Government excluded any consideration of a Western Metro line when considering the \$16.8 billion WestConnex motorway, a decision which vastly improved the rationale for the toll-road.

### 2. Construction impacts

- a. **Construction noise and vibration:** The construction timetable proposes that residents along the line will be subject to noise, vibration, dust and disruption until Q4 2024. The interaction between the project and associated stakeholders - including utilities - must be more clearly and strongly regulated in any condition of approval. We have learned from projects including WestConnex that loopholes allowing utilities to conduct work during the night has made a mockery of mandated respite periods and subjected residents to round the clock disruption.
- b. **Parking and haulage routes:** Overall, there is very little information provided on worker parking, and I am concerned that the vague commitment to "investigate" additional parking outside of the construction sites themselves will result in nothing more than local streets being jammed with worker's parking. Parking in Marrickville and Dulwich Hill is already at a premium with local council recently required to introducing residential parking schemes in the Station precincts.
- c. **Cross-over with WestConnex and other development:** There is little information as to how the Metro project will interact with WestConnex, development proposed under the formerly proposed *Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor* and other major infrastructure including the Eastern stormwater channel connecting Sydenham to the Cooks River.
- d. **Water quality and local hydrology:** The project predicts to use 1,000,000 litres of water at Marrickville and Dulwich Hill alone. These communities lie within the Cooks

River's riparian zone and residents have raised concerns with the impact of construction and operation on the Cooks River and the interaction between the project and the fragile and overburdened stormwater infrastructure owned and operated by Sydney Water. The construction site for Marrickville sits wholly within a flood-plain that once formed the Gumbramorra Swamp. The area around Carrington Road regularly floods and is highly sensitive to any development.

- e. **Upgrades to existing train stations:** The community accepts the important need to improve accessibility at inner west stations and this work is welcomed, so long as important consideration is given to retaining heritage aspects at all affected stations;
- f. **Replacement buses and shutdown periods:** There is significant community concern about the use of replacement buses during shutdown periods. The community can already foresee significant delays on these replacement buses, especially when combined with road detours and other construction impacts. These buses will also cause traffic chaos on our local roads, with streets like Marrickville Road to see up to 1,020 replacement commuter buses a day in some periods at the same time that heavy vehicles will be using the road as a haulage route.

### 3. **Opportunities for active transport**

The Government must commit to safeguarding a corridor along the rail line for use as an active transport corridor, particularly for separated cycleways that would encourage more commuters to cycle to and from the city. Developing meaningful active transport corridors is vital to encouraging sustainable transport, and also allows for greater connections between modes of transport.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Mass rezoning of suburbs like that proposed in the *Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor* must be ruled out.**
2. The pressures of growing our city and delivering equitable transport demand that the Western Metro be prioritised above the conversion of the T3 Bankstown Line.
3. Any proposal to replace the existing heavy rail line on the T3 Bankstown Line with a metro line must also include a definitive guarantee that the line will stay in public hands. Our community will accept nothing less.
4. Similarly, a guarantee must be made that there will be no loss of seating for passengers, particularly for vulnerable passengers such as seniors, parents with prams and people with disability.
5. Clarity on the interaction between the impacts of this proposal and the deluge of construction facilitated by the associated mass rezoning plans must be forthcoming, and exhibited for public comment.

6. Construction along the rail corridor must be limited, and interaction with associated utilities properly managed to ensure residents are not subject to round the clock construction or disruption.
7. A detailed temporary transit plan must be provided and subject to public exhibition.
8. A guarantee must be provided that the project will have no impact on water quality or the fragile hydrology of the region around Marrickville and Sydenham Station.
9. Heritage must be at the heart of any refurbishment of stations along the line, and a rock solid guarantee must be made that Marrickville and Dulwich Hill stations will not be subject to over-station development.
10. Stations should reflect the unique heritage and character of each community, rather than the "brand identity" of Sydney Metro.
11. Any approval must be conditional on an active transport corridor being reserved along the length of the line.

Yours sincerely,

**Jo Haylen MP**  
**Member for Summer Hill**