

**REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE**

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 – TRANSPORT AND  
CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**SYDENHAM-BANKSTOWN LINE CONVERSION**

**CORRECTED**

**At Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney, on Thursday 7 November 2019**

**The Committee met at 9:30**

**PRESENT**

Ms Abigail Boyd(Chair)

The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. Catherine Cusack

The Hon. Anthony D'Adam

The Hon. Greg Donnelly

The Hon. Wes Fang

The Hon. Natalie Ward



**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the second hearing of the inquiry into the planned conversion of the Sydenham-Bankstown line from heavy rail to metro as part of the Sydney Metro City and Southwest project. This inquiry will examine various issues, including the adequacy of the business case for the project, the suitability of the metro system, the public consultation process, tendering and planning processes, the impact on the environment, heritage and conservation and the impact on commuters over the next five years. Before I commence I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to Elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present. Today we will hear from several transport consultants and community groups as well as the National Trust of Australia, Marrickville Heritage Society and Cooks River Valley Association Inc. At the end of the day we will also hear from Transport for NSW.

Before we commence I will make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing. Today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. A transcript of today's hearing will be placed on the Committee's website when it becomes available. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, while members of the media may film or record Committee members and witnesses, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside of their evidence at the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments they may make to the media or to others after they complete their evidence as such comments would not be protected by parliamentary privilege if another person decided to take an action for defamation. The *Guidelines for the Broadcast of Proceedings* are available from the secretariat.

There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or certain documents to hand. In these circumstances witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide that answer within 21 days. Witnesses are advised that any messages should be delivered to Committee members through the Committee staff. To aid the audibility of this hearing, I remind both Committee members and witnesses to speak into the long microphones. The room is fitted with induction loops compatible with hearing systems that have telecoil receivers. In addition, several seats have been reserved near the loudspeakers for persons in the public gallery who have hearing difficulties. Finally, could everyone please turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing.

**MATHEW HOUNSELL**, Transport Analyst and Planner, affirmed and examined

**ALEX WARDROP**, Railway Operations Researcher and Consultant, affirmed and examined

**JOHN AUSTEN**, Transport economist, retired, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** I welcome our first witnesses. We are looking forward to hearing your evidence this morning. I invite you to make a short opening statement and ask that you keep that to a few minutes.

**Mr AUSTEN:** Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and speak to the inquiry. My principal interests are western Sydney and what governments say about transport. Metro harms western Sydney and no amount of stuff about three cities, driverless trains, turn up and go, or anything else changes that. The reason is that metro makes it more difficult for westies to participate in the best opportunities Sydney has to offer. It lacks the seats they need. It ruins chances of other trains providing adequate seating. Take the recent reports of crowding on the western line. Some 9,000 people stand on 20 actual trains between 8.00 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. On metro's hypothetical peak capacity, 75 per cent more people would be standing. Actually, they would not be standing; they would drive or stay home.

Many of the official explanations for metro are implausible; some are an affront. For example, a differentiated, integrated, separated system; or forgetting about options like going to Strathfield instead of Bankstown. It is as if there is a competition for outlandish excuses. Meanwhile, the real character of metro—small tunnels, a CBD route and takeover of other tracks—is apparently forbidden. That character undermines western Sydney. Is it necessary? The stupid claims and the avoidance of the issues suggest it is not. Every metro decision is impacted by that type of excuse, and Bankstown is making it worse.

So far Bankstown fits the pattern of metro reasons becoming increasingly bizarre. For example, a given reason for not, instead, going seven kilometres between the CBD and the airport, which has 45 million passengers a year, is overservicing, yet metro is to start 50 kilometres from the CBD and go a further 20 greenfield kilometres to an airport that is yet to be built. The Government boasts of an official long-term plan. That plan does not show future train lines west from Bankstown to Lidcombe or Cabramatta. It is like I am in Alice's wonderland. In inner areas Sydney trains operate like rapid transit and metro is to run a parallel commuter service by having wider gaps between stations. That is an upside-down world. It is not to criticise the metro system; it is to criticise the explanations we are getting. That is why this inquiry is so welcome.

I am independent. My claims are about what I consider rubbish masquerading as transport policy. They are written, they are referenced, so people can check them. I am not interested in gossip. I am not interested in innuendo. I am not interested in individuals. My concerns are western Sydney and democratic accountability. From my perspective, they deserve more respect.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** Thank you for being invited to address the Committee this morning. This is my first Committee so please be gentle. I would like to make a statement about the big picture first. Cities are humanity's engines for building wealth. Businesses leverage their city's infrastructure to compete with different businesses in other cities. They work to drive down their input costs and improve productivity. Poorly targeted government investments drive up the input cost for businesses and make a city's businesses less competitive. To keep existing businesses and draw new ones, Sydney needs to be the complete package. We need to be well-connected, high-skilled, low-cost and with an excellent quality of life. Remember: Sydney is competing with Melbourne, Frankfurt, Shanghai and New York. This is not the nations competing; it is the city regions.

The priority for Parliament in this term must be to improve Sydney's quickly slipping international competitiveness. The world has invested heavily in creating high-skilled workers, many of them taught in Sydney. Every city is competing to attract and keep these high-skilled workers and prosper from the wealth they create. To tolerate the longer international travel times—a minimum of eight hours to get to the nearest Asian megacity—international, skilled workers demand we improve the quality of life across the entire city. Sydney burns far more valuable land, resources, energy, labour and capital than our competitors just to keep our city running. Compared to European and Asian cities, Australian cities operate less efficiently. Skyrocketing building prices in areas with good transport drive down the quality of life for workers and drive up the input costs for businesses.

Sydney needs to implement low-cost options for improving our existing infrastructure and make our city more efficient and, thus, liveable. When Bradfield designed our heavy rail network, he created a core that has kept our city competitive for 80 years. We desperately need to invest in our core, which is struggling under the strain

of over 1.2 million journeys per day and growing; for example, the long-planned Homebush to Lidcombe amplification and prioritising modern railway signalling to deliver a 50 per cent increase in capacity.

Sydney needs low-cost expansions of our existing railway network to connect more places such as Victoria Road, Dee Why, Bonnyrigg and the north-south corridor between Strathfield and Hurstville. We also need to give our buses priority and expand segregated active transport. London, Paris, New York, Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing—all of the world's major cities are investing billions in upgrading their existing public transport networks. They are making their streets more active and liveable because they know that cities that do not invest in productivity lose their competitive edge. If Sydney invests poorly over the next few years we risk missing out on a global future. As such, funds should be prioritised to enhance the existing infrastructure that we have and build a new western relief line. I do not believe that the Bankstown conversion is the highest priority at the moment.

**Mr WARDROP:** Thank you for inviting me to make a submission to your inquiry. I have been in the railway and public transport industry for 50 years. My experience ranges from developing railway operations software, participating in the Sydney Area Transportation Study and similarly the Sydney Airports Project Team, planning Canberra's bus service, participating in the Sydney to Melbourne Railway Electrification Study, identifying the Epping-Chatswood rail link, participating in the east coast very high speed rail study, being an expert witness on the Waterfall disaster inquiry, planning the Glenfield-Leppington rail link and planning the Northern Sydney Freight Corridor. I am currently writing a book comparing the development of the Melbourne and Sydney suburban railways.

The prime focus of my submission is what I regard to be the inadequate business case for the metro-isation of the Bankstown line per the inquiry's terms of reference 1 (a). Transport for NSW overplays the capability of the proposed metro and underplays the capability of the existing suburban railway. It does so in the following areas: patronage estimation, with metro estimates way out of step with regional population estimates; realistic levels of train accommodation, with metro assuming permanently crush-laden trains, whereas half the planned standee densities would be more appropriate; deliverable service frequencies, where the cited service frequencies could also be delivered by suburban trains on better terms to passengers; and lack of railway line capacity. I can demonstrate that capacity still exists on the city railway. However, Sydney Trains in its digital systems program is currently planning to increase line capacity by 20 per cent by 2024—that is, within the term of the conversion. As a consequence, Transport for NSW has not properly considered alternatives for improving capacity and reducing congestion, per the inquiry's terms of reference 1 (b).

I believe that Transport for NSW has lost strategic direction, since construction of new railways or metros should be directed towards increasing total public transport patronage rather than cherry-picking existing patronage. I would thus say that the decision-making in the proposed conversion of the Bankstown line has been far from robust, per the inquiry's terms of reference 1 (c). The choice of rail passenger vehicle depends upon its duty. If passengers only travel four kilometres to eight kilometres, such as on the London Underground, then a high-standing-area car is appropriate. On the other hand, if passengers travel 18 kilometres, 19 kilometres or more, such as on Sydney Trains, then a high-seating-level car would be appropriate.

This metro in its current form is a completely inappropriate mode for suburban rail travel, per the inquiry's terms of reference 1 (d). Finally, the proposed metro-isation would sever suburban railway connections between Sydney Train's two main lines: the Illawarra line running south and the main suburban line running west. Passenger connections between the Bankstown line and Parramatta, which is supposed to be paramount in the future, could be eliminated. It would also remove strategic network connections used for rolling stock transfers and emergencies, per the inquiry's terms of reference 1 (k). I commend my submission to the Committee.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much. Perhaps this question is primarily directed to you, Mr Austen, but I would be very interested to hear from everyone: As a transport economist, can you explain the Mass Transit Railway [MTR] business model and the potential impact of that business model on government decision-making?

**Mr AUSTEN:** My answer is no, but I do not want to seem rude about it. My interest and my expertise is only in transport. That is all I want to talk about. I am not interested in business models and that sort of stuff. My essential point is that I do not believe what I am being told, what is in the public domain. I give a long list of reasons for what I do not believe. Therefore, I conclude that because the people engaged in this are not complete fools and incompetent that there are other reasons behind this—and that may be the business model. I cannot comment on whatever the business model is. I have not looked at it. I am not particularly interested in looking at it. I can say from a transport perspective that what is going on is irrational. It is completely inexplicable and I do not believe a word of it, basically.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Wardrop, did you have a comment on that? To elaborate, we had a number of submissions that talked about MTR, the business model of MTR and the potential for that to be driving some of the decision-making. I just wanted to get some sort of expert view on that.

**Mr WARDROP:** It is not my area of expertise. I think MTR has come from quite a different background from metropolitan Sydney. It has come from an area of very high population densities and land values. From its Hong Kong background it has achieved a lot from land capture, which certainly does not seem to be an available prospect in Sydney. I think the stewardship of the Melbourne suburban railways has been patchy. Of course, all capital development in the Melbourne system is being done by Government, not by MTR.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Just a point of clarification, and it was on a news article last night so it has been confirmed as well, MTR has not got the contract for this line yet.

**The CHAIR:** That is a fair comment. I think I should clarify what I mean by that. Rather than talk about MTR as a particular entity, what we are talking about is the existence of metro operators both in Australia and also in other countries that also have a property development aspect to them or have a property development arm, particularly given that the Sydney Metro corporation has also been set up with property acquisition and development powers. There seems to be a model that has been used elsewhere as well. I am just interested in that model.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I will just reiterate that MTR has no contract to operate this line.

**The CHAIR:** Fair enough. I take that clarification.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is a reasonable supposition that they will—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** No, it is not. It was clearly stated last night that they have no contract for the line.

**The CHAIR:** The particular company is not the point of my question. My question is in relation to that business model of combining metro with development as being a—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I just wanted that clarification.

**The CHAIR:** That is fine. Was there anything else you wanted to add on that aspect, Mr Wardrop?

**Mr WARDROP:** No, I have said my piece.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** The public statements that the Sydney Metro corporation has made regarding this matter are that the development of these stations will be paid for essentially, as far as I understand it, by the State and then the development rights over the station on what they call the "plinth" will be then tendered to market. From the 2009 business cases for the Sydney Metro corporation, whatever the agency was back then, there was an expectation that the State would retain the rights to tender out development over each individual station. The direct applicability of Hong Kong MTR business model is very different. I do not think it is directly applicable to this case. However, there is a perceived conflict of interest within the community with the State and the infrastructure developer and the entity profiting from the said development. I hear a lot of community concerns.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** That is the people of New South Wales though, it is not the Government.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I hear community concerns. As to the issue about whether MTR runs the line, it would be, as far as I can tell, practically impossible to have two operators on the same line. So whichever entity at the end of the conversion wins the tender or has the rights to the entire line—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** For clarification, to which business case are you referring?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** There was a draft business case for the Sydney Metro agency written in the 2009 for the western metro and the CBD metro.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Which is scrapped.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** Which is scrapped.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** The relevance of that is?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** That was under another government's—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** It was scrapped with the Rozelle.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Yes, and that was cancelled and it had to hand back the money to the Federal Government.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** Yes, the business case was scrapped. However, the business case both had the same pattern of State and private action in that the Treasury and the State wished to retain the rights to develop over the stations, and then tender out to market for each individual station to optimise the returns to the State.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** To the people of New South Wales?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** To the people of New South Wales, yes, via the State.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Wardrop, I have a broad question about how metro got currency in the bureaucracy. I do not understand how suddenly metro emerges in the later part of the naughties as an option that then started to get a lot of traction in the bureaucracy. Given people's reservations and this notion that the system becomes disintegrated with different lines running with separate operators, I do not know whether you have any comment on what led to metro becoming the ascendant, sort of, proposition in terms of rail in New South Wales?

**Mr WARDROP:** It is a difficult one. Frankly, there is no technical reason to promote metro in Sydney because it does not have an urban structure that is conducive to metro operation. The places where metros flourish have high urban densities, restrictions on uses of cars and a necessity to rely on public transport and that metros are part of a transport mix. You will probably find that, say, in London the buses carry more than the underground as an example. In Sydney's case I am mystified. I have some very private opinions.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It strikes me that there is a metro faction that has become ascendant in the bureaucracy and its view is now hegemonic in terms of transport planning.

**Mr WARDROP:** From the outside that is what it looked like to me.

**Mr AUSTEN:** Can I add something? In my submission on page 28 I have briefly documented what I have gathered from public sources on a bit of the history of the metro which started, from what I can make out from the newspapers, in about 2005. You might want to have a look at that. I have a more detailed thing on my website which I am happy to—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I think 1995 Labor announced a metro plan.

**Mr AUSTEN:** Sorry, I am saying from the readily available public sources—because my test is what is the public being told? What is in the currency? So rather than going to the archives and do a PhD on it, I go back and say "I will check this claim, I will check that claim."

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** It is 1995?

**Mr AUSTEN:** Yes, so 2005 after the Olympic Games there was a switch in the Government from planning for transport infrastructure being in the Department of Transport, moving to the Premier's department. That seems to be the recent origin of it and it was undoubtedly true that in 1995 something went on then as well.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Can we clarify that because that is interesting to know? You do not give any weight to the announcement in 1995 being in the public domain? It was a Government announcement at the time.

**Mr AUSTEN:** My explanation is that I am not researching in-depth all this type of stuff. The question was: From where does this stuff bubble to the surface? I think it bubbled to the surface, the most recent emanation, in 2005. In 1995 to 1996 the railways were—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** It was announced by the then Labor Government.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Point of order:

**Mr AUSTEN:** In 1996 the railways were broken up into four—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I think the witness is answering the question and the member clearly has an agenda of trying to get him to concede something around 1995. I would submit the member is almost at the point of badgering him in regard to that. I think he should be allowed to answer the question.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** To the point of order: I meant no disrespect to the witness at all. I apologise if that was inferred in any way, I merely meant to clarify with vigour and energy, as my colleague often does. I meant no offence at all but I want to clarify that point in particular about 1995.

**The CHAIR:** I do not think the point of order has been made out. The member will continue to be cautious and allow the witness to respond.

**Mr AUSTEN:** To talk to that clarification, I actually joined the bureaucracy in 1993. In 1995 and 1996 the big issue in New South Wales transport was to split up the railways into FreightCorp, State Rail, Rail Access Corporation, State Access Authority, the Railway Services Authority and the National Rail Corporation. So from personal recollection when I was the principal economist in transport in 1995, metro was not the topic. It may have been a government announcement but the big issue at the time was the split up of the railway which then was put together back in 2003. There was a very controversial national competition policy announced. It is a whole different story. All my time and effort, all the economic studies and stuff was done on how do we separate and restructure the accounts for the split-up in the railways.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** If I may, there were repeated announcements by the Government at the time. I understand that you are saying that was a discussion about the set-up of the bureaucracy and I appreciate that but it is fair to say that metro was in the public ether and was being discussed in 1995. Is that not a fair statement? There were three announcements at that time by the then Government.

**Mr AUSTEN:** I would not know. From my perspective the big thing in the public ether was the split-up of the railways.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** That was within the department, is that what you are talking about?

**Mr AUSTEN:** Yes, and my perspective is undoubtedly coloured by my position in the bureaucracy. But the big focus in 1995 was how do we structure the accounts? How do we make the access regime work? How do we deal with National Rail? Access rights were a completely new concept at the time. No railway had been split up since Margaret Thatcher split up British Railways. The Victorians were looking at what we were thinking of doing. It was a radical thing to do.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I just want to be clear on that. There was discussion by Labor about having those access rights as well. There was a very public debate about that at the time, was there not? I accept that it might not have been in your sphere and that you are saying there was another focus. Clearly, it is the case, is it not that there was a public discussion at the time about metro because of the announcements by the then Government and because of the discussion about the split up of air space and the sharing of rights.

**Mr AUSTEN:** I am sorry, I am not talking about the split-up of the airspace; I was talking about the split-up of the railway.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Yes, I know that. You talked about—

**Mr AUSTEN:** If there was a public discussion, as the chief economist, I did not participate in it. It was not a matter of prime interest to me.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** To you.

**Mr AUSTEN:** I have not tracked back all of the ins and outs of the history of metros and transport policies in New South Wales.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Mr Austen, when was the last time you did work for the department?

**Mr AUSTEN:** I worked for it in 2000 for what it called the transport safety and reliability regulator, which was the railway part of the department with the rail expertise in the department, until, I think, 2007.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Can I take you back to the comments that you gave in response to the Hon. Natalie Ward's question? I am paraphrasing here but you said, "My views are clouded by my experience in the department." Is it possible at all that the negativity that you have against this new metro line is somehow derived from that experience that you had in the department?

**Mr AUSTEN:** Let me answer that in two parts. First of all, when I said "clouded", I did not mean biased. I said my attention was focused on something other than government announcements about metros. By "clouded", perhaps I used the wrong phraseology. It was directed to what was told to me by my supervisors as a more pressing and an important issue than the government announcement or whatever it was. That is naturally what I focused on. Secondly, am I biased against metro? That is for people to judge. As I said, I have documented all my stuff. I have given you references so you can all check. I do not make statements outside those references. It is up to you. I do not consider myself biased. Of course, I would say that. It is up to other people to judge.



**The Hon. WES FANG:** I have read each of your submissions thoroughly and it seems to me that in all instances there is a lack of acknowledgement that part of the reason that we are going down this path is that the Sydenham line itself, where we merge six to four, creates a bottleneck on the network. The installation of the metro lines to replace the T3 will unscramble that bottleneck. Secondly, it allows those who are out west to access new parts of the CBD. Have you factored in those things at all?

**Mr AUSTEN:** Yes, I have factored them in. What I look at is what is in the public domain. If I go back and look at the Sydenham junction thing, that was originally presented as part of the reason for the airport line. That is, we built the airport line from a railway perspective, not to service the airport but to bypass Sydenham junction. I think one of my colleagues here has done a lot of details on Sydenham junction and things. My question is not about, in that sense, the inappropriateness of metro. In fact, I am saying that metro may have been a good thing to do to put into the airport and free up Sydenham junction that way. What I would point to, though, is what seems to be of this confusion about the word "line".

Sometimes we use the word "line" in the term of track; in other terms of the use the word "line" in the term of service pattern. For example, I will give you one where the other day I said we only have two lines going to the CBD. I assume that was right. We cite four lines to prove we have two. There is this confusion about operations and infrastructure, which comes up in the terminology.

**The CHAIR:** Is that the inner west line, for example? It does not mean a whole new track; it means using the existing—

**Mr AUSTEN:** Yes. If we are bit more precise—because I am just sort of commenting on this stuff—about what we mean by the word "line", then we can determine that we do not have a network tangle; we have a tangle of traffic on the network. We do not necessarily have to build lines to untangle that. We can move traffic around and things. Then we can analyse how the Sydenham-Bankstown conversion reduces capacity utilisation on the city circle. It does not increase the capacity of the city circle. When you go through those steps, you come to the conclusion that if you are actually interested in decreasing capacity utilisation the most—that is, making the most available capacity on the city circle or through Sydney on Sydney Trains—you would put metro—or convert to metro, if you are that way inclined—those lines that are the busiest, simply because you have the greatest reduction in capacity utilisation. So you would go the western line, you would go to the East Hills line, you would go the airport line. The very last one, because it is the least busy, is the Bankstown line. That is why I say that when I look at the stuff, I am not saying it is necessarily wrong; I am saying I do not believe what I have been told.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** It is that statement that you have now made a number of times that really concerns me because it is almost as if, if Transport provides a response to a situation, your immediate response to that is to treat it with—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is there a question?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Yes, there is. Do you have a set bias against the responses that are provided by Transport to the line?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You still have not asked that question.

**Mr AUSTEN:** No. What I say is that if someone comes to me and says, "I have a separated and integrated system", I would scratch my head. I would go, what are you talking about? I do not criticise everything in there but when I see stuff that is pivotal to the argument saying, "We decided to have an integrated metro as the way to go", and then Infrastructure assesses something that is standalone, I am scratching my head going, what is going on?

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Let me rephrase it then into this: What parts of the arguments provided by Transport do you agree with?

**Mr AUSTEN:** I agree that there may be a need for a metro somewhere in Sydney. I agree that there is a problem with capacity utilisation. I agree that there are problems with train loads. I agree that there are potentially problems with scheduling. If you want to list things off or propositions I agree with, I am happy to do so.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I am talking specifically—

**The CHAIR:** Mr Fang, I think it would be useful on that question that you asked, if we could allow Mr Hounsell or Mr Wardrop to also comment on that idea of the bottleneck.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Absolutely, the bottleneck. I am also interested to know what the panel—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Point of order: We have been asking one question, one question initially and now they have asked four questions or five questions in a row. It might be useful to share around.

**The CHAIR:** Could I suggest that we allow the other witnesses to respond to the question about the bottleneck idea, then the Hon. Mark Banasiak would like to ask a question and then I will go back to the Opposition.

**Mr WARDROP:** If I may comment, there is not a bottleneck problem; it is a spin problem. Historically, there were capacity issues on the Illawarra line. That is a line that runs from Sydney down towards Sutherland and beyond. Lots of effort was expended very unproductively in the late 1940s and 1950s that did not solve the problem. The creation of the airport line basically took away the bottleneck because it diverted a substantial portion of the traffic on the Illawarra line away from it and directly to the East Hills line.

There is still an issue about the ability of the eastern suburbs railway to absorb Illawarra traffic but that is not the subject of this inquiry. As far as I can see there is not a bottleneck on the approaches. There is a high level of use of the various city railways both in terms of trains and passengers. I am not sure whether it is appropriate. I have done an historical analysis of the use of the various lines during peak period from 1924 to 2018, if that is of interest to the Committee.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** What is a spin problem?

**Mr WARDROP:** Somebody trying to market an idea as distinct from arguing a point of fact.

**The CHAIR:** Can I clarify, did you want to table that information?

**Mr WARDROP:** It is just this page.

**The CHAIR:** We can copy that and table it. Mr Hounsell, did you want to respond on the bottleneck problem?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** My fellow panellists are quite experienced and they do have a strong point that there are six track pairs; if we wish to use a different terminology to simplify things. There are six track pairs going into Sydenham, four track pairs coming out. As the airport line has significantly transferred traffic around that junction there is probably more than enough capacity through these four track pairs between Sydenham and Erskineville to handle the current load and possibly an increased load into the future. If we wished to enable more sectorisation within the network, in my submission I talk about the 1920s through to 50s how construction of the additional two track pairs between Sydenham and Erskineville was started but not finished.

It was proposed in 2004, and then in 2008 with the global financial crisis the spending was held. That is not a significant expenditure. Ron Christie identified that as about \$100 million back in in the early 2000s, which with inflation would be around \$250 million by today's standards. There is not an irresolvable bottleneck. That is not to say that the metro is not actually going to assist passenger flows. Whether or not the metro should go to Sydenham is irrelevant because it is. It is already under construction. I live there, there is a very large depot, the diver is already there and the tunnel boring machine is past Waterloo. The metro is going to go to Sydenham and it is going to have a significant positive impact on transport within the city because we will see a lot more people being able to travel quickly from the Sydenham junction through to the North Shore which is the second harbour crossing that has long been desired.

Whether or not it needs to go on to the Bankstown line is a matter for discussion. The problem with transport is that you can take all of this and we can get into long and complex arguments and still all be largely correct. Because when you take into account Hume's guillotine there is descriptive statements and prescriptive statements. We can describe the reality of six track pairs going into Sydenham and four track pairs coming out and then we get to the prescription, which is there should be six track pairs coming out. That prescription is all based on our interpretations and our value systems and our evaluation of various options.

There is no way to logically transfer, according to David Hume, one of the founding philosophers of western thought, from a descriptive statement to a prescriptive statement. We can all sit here and argue the point for hours on end because we will never be able to cross that bridge, to cross that dichotomy. There is a perceived bottleneck. Is it an irresolvable bottleneck? No. Will the metro assist in moving passengers? Yes. Is the conversion of the Bankstown line the only way to resolve that bottleneck with the metro going to Sydenham? No, that is not the only way to resolve the bottleneck.

**The Hon. MARK BANASIAK:** Mr Wardrop, going back to one of your statements you spoke about poor patchy stewardship by MTR in Victoria. Given your historical knowledge of both Sydney and Victorian rail systems—you said you are writing a book—what are the lessons this Government needs to learn about the mistakes that were made in Victoria and potentially the mistakes that have been made by MTR with the Northwest metro. I reference Mr Constance saying that he was not happy with MTR's performance. What are the lessons that this Government needs to learn going forward if we are embracing metro?

**Mr WARDROP:** Are we talking about embracing metro or embracing the provider of the metro services?

**The Hon. MARK BANASIAK:** Regardless of whether it is MTR or another provider, if we are going to use a private provider, what are the lessons we need to learn? What are the mistakes that were made in Victoria that we need to be mindful of in Sydney?

**Mr WARDROP:** As a general comment, when you franchise an operation you want to have the franchisee deliver services to a particular specification. The continuing difficulty in franchised operations—not just Melbourne—has been the ability of franchisees who have bid a particular price to offer these services, to offer the services even if they find they cannot afford them. The most obvious example of this unfortunately is the current expose on aged care. Clearly people have been bidding down to a price and the service quality has plummeted. This is the continuing problem with franchise operations. Because you have asked people to bid a price to deliver a service over a relatively long period, more often than not they struggle to deliver. There perhaps needs to be a different kind of model to ensure that service quality is maintained. Perhaps also to identify what the service issues are, either the level of services, the frequency of service, the level of accommodation, the robustness of operation, the lay prone or recoverability of operations. These are the things that should be taken into account.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can the panel explain in layman's terms the city circle problem? One of the key justifications for the metro is we need to free up capacity in the city circle, we have over crowded stations at Town Hall and Wynyard, the western line is at capacity and so we need to take services out of the city circle. Are you able to explain that process and why the removal of the Bankstown line is or is not a solution to that problem?

**Mr WARDROP:** I can try. Very simply, there are currently only three ways in and out of the Sydney CBD by rail. You have the eastern suburbs railway, which comes in from the east, comes down through the city and then heads out to the south via the Illawarra line. You have the city railway itself—Bradfield's ultimate creation—which joins up services from the west of the CBD, takes people around and distributes them right round the CBD, and then drops them south, also along the Illawarra line. Finally, there is the connection of the North Shore line to the Main Western line. Any current discussion about capacity or otherwise has to hinge on the use or otherwise of those three corridors through the city.

Metro is going to add a fourth corridor, but it is going to—well, hopefully it will create a new market. To build another railway just to take existing people is a huge waste of money. If you are going to build expensive new infrastructure, you really want a patronage payoff. As to whether removal of some services will free up capacity, the Bankstown line currently presents 10 trains an hour during the peak to the city railway. That table that you will have there lists the numbers of trains that use the lines during peak hours. So the current total for Sydney, not Melbourne, is that there are something like—Eastern Suburbs & Illawarra Line runs 17 or 18 trains an hour, so there is room for another few there. The city east or the city west—the city east is those tracks that run through St James; city west are those tracks that run through Town Hall and join up at Circular Quay. We are only seeing 16 or 18 trains an hour at the moment on those lines, so we are certainly not up to current measures of capacity.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** We have to build for the future, do we not? We should anticipate increasing numbers going into the city.

**Mr WARDROP:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** While we might not be at capacity, we want to have more capacity for the future if the city is going to grow.

**Mr WARDROP:** Exactly. I went to a presentation of the railway technical society on Monday, where the so-called Digital Systems program was presented—this is Sydney Trains. They are saying their program will add 20 per cent to the capacity of existing railways through the city. The time frame is to deliver this by 2024. Howard Collins has been reported as saying that he believes capacity can be further pushed to a 40 per cent

increase, but I have not actually seen any sort of hard details to verify that. So you are right; we do need to search for capacity. There are technological solutions that are currently available that allow suburban trains to do that. I actually undertook a field trip to Paris in 2003, I think, to observe the operation of the RER line A, which runs 30 trains an hour with 10-car double-deck trains. So there are the means available.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What about this proposal—I think, Mr Hounsell, you canvassed this—about having the north-western metro connect up with the western metro? Has the horse bolted on that?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** The horse has bolted on that. Well, it is still technically feasible but it would be more expensive than simply leaving the metro going to Sydenham. There are alternative destinations after Sydenham; I am not saying that we just stop the metro at Sydenham and wait. I just want to come back to your previous question, to answer your subsequent question and previous question as well. Town Hall Station and Wynyard Station—I have done a lot of research there in cooperation with Sydney Trains, because they are very congested and a lot of that is about passenger behaviour in the narrow platforms. Mr Christie recommended digging out the additional rock at the north end of the platform to provide more space, and there are possible physical infrastructure changes that could be done to increase the capacity there.

But the main issues at Town Hall are the Illawarra line and the Western and North Shore line. The City Circle line—Inner West line at that stage—at Town Hall does not suffer as much of the crowding problems. They do not have as many of the platform problems as the Illawarra line does. The Illawarra line platform is very narrow and it gets very congested quite easily. Part of that is the fact that they are mixing stopping patterns. By changing their operational model to have an all-stops out of Town Hall or to basically say to the passengers, "The next train will go to Redfern and Erskineville. Just go to Redfern and Erskineville, where there is plenty of space, please, and then catch the train that you want just to get you out of Town Hall"—those kinds of operational changes could relieve a lot of the congestion. The digital signalling, in theory, could result in a 50 per cent uplift and certainly could do a 40 per cent, which would give us an extra 10 trains an hour through the City Circle. So there are plenty of options to increase the capacity.

Also, the other option is the Bankstown line. I know the community does not want me to say this, but the Bankstown line could terminate at Redfern. That is not an ideal situation, but you terminate at Redfern for two years and you start looking at the fact that there are spare platforms above the Illawarra line at Central. There are new paths to run through the city. If you were to build a western heavy rail line instead of a western metro, you could take the south-western express trains and other trains—the western express trains—through that corridor and have them running up the Sussex Street corridor back to Barangaroo and then running express at 120 kilometres an hour out to Parramatta. The big thing with the rail system is it is actually quite flexible; it just takes quite a while to build stuff. So there are plenty of options here and plenty of capacity for the future.

The metro provides a fourth corridor and it will transform the way a lot of people travel. One of the problems with platform 4 is people wait on the Illawarra line to get a fast train to the Wollli Creek junction to then get a fast East Hills line train. That is because people find it faster to do that than to go via the airport. Additional services that are express to the south-west would attract people to use an alternative mechanism. It is about changing passenger behaviour and providing additional services. Taking the metro to Wollli Creek is feasible as well. There are thousands of options here. If you take four transport planners and put them in a room for two hours, if you do not come out with 16 options then I would be very surprised.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Mr Fang, I have one question and then we will go to Ms Ward, who is waiting patiently. I picked up, in some of the submissions, that there was a suggestion that converting the T3 into metro could actually harm capacity on other parts of the network. Did I read that correctly? It was a suggestion in Mr Wardrop's submission that the conversion could block efficient suburban train rolling stock transfers from around Sydney.

**Mr AUSTEN:** Yes. Could I go back to the last question to give an introduction to that answer. While the question is about how we fix up the Bankstown line and stuff, the strategic question is: how do we allocate the precious harbour crossing capacity, which is not interoperable with the rest of the system? Where do we allocate that to the south path. From an economist's point of view it is not, "What can I do at Bankstown?" It is, "What can I do in a metropolitan area to make sure that vital resource of the harbour crossing—and whatever we have done in the CBD, this is a different issue—is allocated to the best use?" That is the economic question. Now I will hand over to Alex.

**Mr WARDROP:** I have to agree with John. In fact that was part of my opening submission—that if we are going to spend money on this very expensive infrastructure we seriously want to get some patronage returns from that investment.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So where should it go?

**Mr WARDROP:** Not the Bankstown line. I have been musing. I am wondering whether it should go down through Sans Souci, Rockdale, Kogarah and areas like that.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** While I respect your musings, Mr Wardrop, your musings are against an EIS and studies by New South Wales Transport.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Fang, there was not a question in there and I would really like to understand the idea of the conversion potentially having an impact on other aspects of the network in a negative way. Could we get back to that point?

**Mr WARDROP:** What we have at the moment is a connected railway network for passenger trains and for freight trains. At this stage freight has not appeared as an issue but the railways have to serve freight as well as passengers. The Bankstown line and corridor is a way of connecting the railways that come from south of Sydney—the Illawarra and South Coast districts—to the western parts of Sydney and beyond. If you metro-ise the Bankstown line there is no efficient way in which you can transfer rolling stock between the East Hills line and the Illawarra line to the western line.

**The CHAIR:** Understood.

**Mr WARDROP:** I say that wearing my train operator's hat. Wearing my passenger's hat, I have not seen any explanation as to how travellers who currently use the Bankstown line all the way from Liverpool and Lidcombe down through Bankstown to the city would be facilitated with a metro that stopped at Bankstown. The Bankstown line, as far as I can see from origin-destination information from Opal, caters for a substantial number of people who travel within the Bankstown line that do not even go to the city. They travel in and around the Bankstown line. There is a substantial number of people who originate from Liverpool and come into the Bankstown line catchment. The current proposals I have seen do not offer any insight as to how their travel needs would be served. Finally, with the development of the current urban strategy of the three cities, if we want to develop Parramatta to a significant degree, Parramatta will have to draw people by public transport from places like the Bankstown line, and the metro will chop those opportunities off.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I want to quickly address Mr D'Adam's question. At page 15 of my submission I have the short list from the previous Government's analysis of the options. I know it was scrapped but it was done as a rigorous analysis by the department using analysis by third party persons. The situation has not changed a lot. They did identify that the Sans Souci-Kogarah corridor is a major priority corridor. They also identified Strathfield to the airport. In my additional submission I note that the Sydney Metro corporation, in discussion with news.com has suggested that it also wishes to create a new metro down the Sans Souci-Kogarah corridor. I think the secretariat received that additional submission. I hope you received it as well. That is one possibility but there are plenty of other ways to boost patronage by providing new services.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I have a number of questions from notes that I have taken, so excuse me if I jump back and forth. Mr Wardrop, you spoke earlier about patronage payoff. I think we all have that in common; we all want to see better outcomes for passengers, so I appreciate those comments. I am interested in your views because it seemed that, in saying that, you were referring to franchising and the difficulties of franchising—that there has to be a patronage payoff in franchising. Is that not the case with the north-west metro—the one that has just been rolled out. There is, I think, higher customer satisfaction and 10 million people on them. So we are not seeing that demonstrated in that particular one. Do you agree with that?

**Mr WARDROP:** No, I do not.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Why not?

**Mr WARDROP:** I will try and unravel your question a bit.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** There are a lot of people and they seem to be quite happy. I am trying to reconcile that with your statement that this is not working.

**Mr WARDROP:** First off, when I talk about patronage payoff I am thinking solely in terms of increasing the numbers of people who use public transport—and in particular expensive public transport like light rail. We have reached a situation of about 400 million passengers a year on the existing suburban railway network. If we believe Infrastructure Australia and its forecasts, we have to head towards 500 million and 600 million passengers a year. So we need a network, and it has to be an outgrowth of the existing network to gather that kind of patronage. That is what I mean by "patronage payoff". We want infrastructure that will deliver these massive changes in patronage that are supposed to attend the massive changes in population.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** We need to unlock capacity, do we not? Is that not true? We have got an increasing population—

**Mr WARDROP:** Yes. Quite frankly, there is existing signalling technology that will add 50 per cent to current capacity. It is pretty well available now.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** You spoke of the east line and said there is room for another few in there. What do you base that on? You talked about the number of trains per hour and said we would get out a few more. What evidence do you have that we could just flick a few more?

**Mr WARDROP:** Currently we have a benchmark of 20 trains an hour as being feasible with the existing trains and the existing signalling. I have to say that the old fellows were doing much better: They were getting between 24 and 30 trains an hour, although—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Mr Wardrop, with respect, that is not an answer to what I am trying to get to, which is future capacity.

**Mr WARDROP:** What I am saying is that we can get capacity on the existing system but I am saying that is not enough if we want to serve the population changes that people are talking about.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** That is right.

**Mr WARDROP:** We also need network development. If we just cherrypick existing patronage, we are not actually creating a situation where we can make these significant changes.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** We cannot just add on a couple more trains. That is not going to provide for the future and an integrated network that actually takes pressure off those lines.

**Mr WARDROP:** No, we need new lines.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** So I should not interpret your statement that way?

**Mr WARDROP:** No. What I am saying is that in serving the Sydney CBD there is some room to grow without changing technology.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Do you agree we need to unlock capacity across the network?

**Mr WARDROP:** To unlock capacity we have to change the technology.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Would you agree with the statement that upgrading the Bankstown line is not just about that Bankstown area; it is about the capacity and taking pressure off the rest of the network. Is that not correct?

**Mr WARDROP:** No.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Do you not think that that will have an impact anywhere else?

**Mr WARDROP:** I do not think so because the Bankstown line—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** That is not what the evidence shows, does it—

**The CHAIR:** What evidence?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** —if you are taking pressure off that particular spot? My next question is: If not that spot, then where?

**Mr WARDROP:** The Bankstown line currently contributes about 10,000 passengers an hour out of a total take of, I think for the city, about 150,000 passengers an hour.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Surely, if you are reducing the bottleneck there, you are assisting with ensuring that there are no delays in other areas.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Would a western metro not be a more effective contribution?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I think it is actually my tune.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is on the same issue about freeing up capacity and where the priority should be.

**Mr WARDROP:** I think you have both made important points. There is capacity on the existing railway network and there are technological solutions that will allow you to increase that capability but the Sydney region

is growing away from the Sydney CBD so any new infrastructure has to be away from the Sydney CBD. The Bankstown line is very localised.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** If not there, where else? Is it not better to disentangle this network, rather than keep adding on to the complication?

**Mr WARDROP:** The network is not particularly entangled. It is an unfortunate device that appeared round about the time of Minister Costa. We need more cross connections. I think we need connections from, say, Hurstville to Strathfield and on towards Parramatta. We need a river line—in other words, a new railway line running east-west to the north of Parramatta Road.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** Victoria Road?

**Mr WARDROP:** No. That area has very limited patronage because it is confined by the Parramatta River on one side and the Lane Cove River on the other and the national park.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** But we will have an east-west connection.

**Mr WARDROP:** Yes, and that is good.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In ten years time, 12 years time.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Yours was supposed to be delivered in 2015.

**The CHAIR:** Can I clarify? There seem to be some comments or a line of questioning here about unlocking capacity and whether the conversion of the T3 line unlocks capacity. Are you saying that that conversion to metro would not unlock capacity, or are you saying that there are other ways you can achieve the same capacity on the T3 line as what has been proposed by the metro?

**Mr WARDROP:** The latter. I think there are better ways to use what we already have on the T3 line, but the really serious capacity increases are needed outside the Canterbury-Bankstown area. We have to really look at the development north of Parramatta Road. We have to look at development probably west of, say, Woodville Road and all that middle-western area of Sydney.

**The CHAIR:** To be absolutely clear, before I go back to the Government members who can argue between themselves as to which of them wants to talk, if we look at the T3 as it is—if there is digital signalling, an improvement in timetable and whatever else needs to happen on the existing line—would that achieve the same level of extra capacity as the metro would, or does the metro have additional potential for extra capacity in the future that upgrading the existing line would not have?

**Mr WARDROP:** The existing line, even without signalling changes, could easily give you a 50 per cent uplift in the—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** How?

**Mr WARDROP:** What do you mean "how"?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** It is 124 years old.

**Mr WARDROP:** It has only 10 trains an hour at the moment.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** So we should not do anything. It is fine.

**Mr WARDROP:** No, we should certainly boost that to 15. I believe there is capacity on the Sydney railway to take that.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Can you explain how, though? How can we increase that capacity? How on earth would that work? All these experts have done all this work and you are telling us we do not need this. I am genuinely interested in how you think we can do that.

**Mr WARDROP:** I am squeezing the pips here but there is certainly room for another five trains an hour on the Sydney railway.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** When we have a population in 2056 of millions of people more, another so many trains will deal with that? Seriously?

**Mr WARDROP:** No. But not all of those people will want to come to the Sydney CBD. That is why I am saying that the next area that we have to look at is Parramatta and the growth of that as a major CBD. Parramatta has 60,000 employees whereas the current Sydney CBD has 300,000.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** But if we do not increase as—

**The CHAIR:** I would like to clarify that point. If you have a metro running at whatever it can run at, at its maximum—imagine that that metro is the best it can possibly be on that line—versus the current line with the available upgrades, additional trains and different timetabling, is there more capacity on the metro than what you could get with the existing line?

**Mr WARDROP:** No, the existing line would deliver the same and probably more.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** But based on what? Can you clarify what you base that on?

**Mr WARDROP:** All right. Increasing the number of trains—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Is that an evidence-based view?

**Mr WARDROP:** That is evidence.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** On what?

**Mr WARDROP:** On my own operational analysis of signalling systems.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** What does that mean, your "own operational analysis"?

**Mr WARDROP:** That is my job.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That is his expertise. That is why he is here before the Committee.

**Mr WARDROP:** That is my area of expertise.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I am entitled to ask.

**Mr AUSTEN:** There are a couple of things. First of all, when we talk about capacity—exactly what we are talking about—at the moment we are talking about trains per hour. From the western suburbs, trains per hour does not matter. What matters is the number of seats. But from a strategic perspective, again, it is the same question as: I have got this enormously expensive harbour crossing; where do I allocate that to for the next 100 years? Because "turn up and go" means there is only one line that it is going to. It is a very serious decision. It may be to Bankstown because you may want to develop Bankstown, but it is a very serious decision. It is not just about Bankstown. It is: where do I allocate the cross-harbour capacity?

If it was interoperable, we would not have that question. There are pros and cons for interoperability but if it was interoperable you could allocate, say, that to the west straightaway. You cannot now because it is coming up at Sydenham and it cannot be used in another form or for another function. So if you are talking about expanding or connections or cross stuff, the strategic choice is: are you having a bunch of separated, isolated, different-gauge railways in Sydney or are you having a network?

If you are going to unlock capacity, the logic goes: it is easier to unlock capacity if you focus on the network, rather than augmenting it through an isolated line, which is demonstrated by the conversation we are having. We would not be having this conversation if the harbour crossing was interoperable because we could just allocate it anywhere and we could develop Bankstown and put in the automatic signalling, and run single-deck trains on there—single-deck trains used to run through Sydney—but run metro-style trains, we could have driverless trains. All that type of stuff could happen if it was interoperable. There may be good reasons for it not being interoperable but, by making that choice, which is what economists focus on, we deny ourselves those opportunities. And it is those opportunities that need to be costed, not the financial cost. How are we shaping Sydney by not having interoperable infrastructure?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** What do you mean by "interoperable"? Is it that they cannot change over? There are different gauges or something?

**Mr AUSTEN:** No, you can. You can run a single-deck or a double-deck train on it, to put it simply. So you have got a bigger tunnel.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Are they all the same now? Or are they different gauges now?

**Mr AUSTEN:** No, they were all the same until metro. So metro, reportedly, has smaller tunnels.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Are you sure?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I thought you said the gauges are different.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** Yes.



**Mr AUSTEN:** Yes. They have six-metre tunnels.

**Mr WARDROP:** It was designed, regrettably, to a smaller loading gauge so that it has its own rolling stock.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** As to the question about where the investment could go, I refer you to my submission again—1971, the Sydney Area Transport Study. I believe the river line is what we are now referring to as the western metro. Again, I do not wish to be mode-blind because we really should think about the system in terms of corridors, rather than, necessarily, any particular service. Then, when we look at what the Sydney Metro corporation is proposing in the additional submission: the western metro continuing out to Westmead and then going on to the Norwest, out to the eastern suburbs; the north-south corridor, especially between Strathfield and Hurstville; and the suggestion of an additional line between Strathfield and Macquarie Park also has strong merit—it has been a long proposal of the Department of Transport; Parramatta to Epping, again; and Parramatta down to near Hurstville is also another major proposal.

We could sit here and discuss this for hours but I want to just come back to the point that investing in the north-south corridor, especially—I did a strategic transport analysis for Rhodes. There is a lot of people who travel to Rhodes as a central location. The Department of Transport said to us they did not want to add more people into that area because they did not think there was enough transport capacity. They wanted more investment and the Government to budget the actual investment before they would support it. But there is a significant amount of passengers who travel to Rhodes from Liverpool, from Gosford, from Hurstville, from Sutherland, trying to get to this one central location. To create a new north-south line between Hurstville and Strathfield, just that line alone would allow a lot of people who live on the south to go to the north and bypass the CBD. So we need to think about the city in terms of strategic corridors shaping the flow of people.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Can you gentlemen explain to me the Basta campaign and what role, if any, you play in it?

**The CHAIR:** This was the question you needed to ask?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Yes.

**Mr AUSTEN:** No, I cannot explain it. I do not play a role in it, except when I look up their website—quite a lot—when I see things which I consider to be wrong or ill-informed, I try to correct them. And that is on both ways. So when they say, "metro is bad because I hate it," or "because it is property developers," I will say, "Well, where is the evidence?" And you can check it out on the Facebook page.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Okay. Mr Hounsell?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I have no familiarity with the acronym.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** You do not? Okay. I remind you that you are under oath.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I am sorry, honourable member. I do not know what "Basta" means.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Okay. The Basta campaign is run by EcoTransit. It is the campaign against—

**The CHAIR:** They are the next witnesses.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Yes, I know. I am wondering how much connection these witnesses have to the campaign, given some of the linkages between what has been written and given in testimony and what is on EcoTransit's published information.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** In that case, I am currently a member of EcoTransit.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** So you should be aware of the Basta campaign. I remind you—

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I would like to finish my answer please. I am a member of EcoTransit. I am not familiar with that campaign and the specifics of it. I am a paid member. I do read the mailing list occasionally. I do not read all my emails. So, under oath, I can assure you I may have provided input into it if they have read my submissions, and I have occasionally provided comments previously, many years ago, when I was a co-convener, but, under oath, I can assure you that I am not involved in that campaign.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Mr Wardrop?

**Mr WARDROP:** Until now I had never heard of Basta I am not involved in EcoTransit. I maintain an independent line of analysis.

**The Hon. MARK BANASIAK:** A conspiracy theory.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** He is putting it to them simply for procedural fairness.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I just wanted to highlight that part of the Basta campaign is to influence the terms of inquiry and frame questions to MLCs about the New South Wales upper House inquiry.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You have had your question, Wes. That is a statement.

**The CHAIR:** People who are aligned in their views, coming together—my goodness! We know what the Liberal-Nationals Coalition thinks about that kind of behaviour. We have not had the Opposition speak for some time. Do you have a final question?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** This may take some time. I particularly want to ask about the stations west of Bankstown and, in particular, whether you have a view about what the reasoning might be behind the metro not extending to Lidcombe, as initially proposed, and whether technical issues, that you might be able to elaborate on, might be a factor in why the decision was made.

**Mr AUSTEN:** I have the simplest view of this. I am the simplest person on the panel. If you have two destinations, you cannot have turn-up-and-go. That is one point. Second, the longer a line is, without junctions or bleed-offs or something, the more fragile it becomes in operational terms. So the longer it is, the more incidents you get. The people who manage these things are very professional, they are very good, they are dedicated, so I am not knocking that at all. It is just a fact of life that as a line gets longer it is harder to maintain reliability on it.

**Mr HOUNSELL:** They also are relatively low patronage.

**Mr WARDROP:** Part of the general connectivity of the Sydney railway network—if you sent the metro Lidcombe you would chop off any freight connections between Enfield and Clyde and Auburn. You would destroy a productive railway network.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Mr Hounsell, thank you for your evidence. You seemed quite evidence-based in your responses and your submission. I want to ask about your views on the other options the Government considered. I think they are all publicly available in the environmental impact statement [EIS]. Can you comment to the Committee about your views on those other options Government considered?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I looked at the alternatives outlined in the strategic business case yesterday. I do not remember them off the top of my head from the EIS.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Can I ask you to take that on notice perhaps, if you would like the opportunity to look at it?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** If you want me to take it on notice, yes, I can take it on notice.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I am interested in your comments now, just briefly for the Committee, but I will ask you to take it on notice also and comment on the other options that are in the EIS. However, if you could just give us a quick view?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I think it is better if I comment on notice, if you wish to specifically get me to address those options.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Just given the discussion around this, are there others that jump out at you that you think would be preferable or that you have a comment on?

**Mr HOUNSELL:** From the strategic business case, I saw that—no, actually, I think it is probably best in addressing the options—from the general perspective of the overall system, I think the investment into the western metro is a higher priority. I have said that. The investment into a north-south line is a higher priority. As for alternatives once it gets to Sydenham, I think there are thousands of options there. It is really a case of deciding which, as the economists and the experts say, is the biggest bang for buck.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** But I am asking you to specifically address those ones that are in the EIS because I am interested in your views—

**Mr HOUNSELL:** I do not remember off the top of my head. I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** No, not now, but on notice. That would be very helpful. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Given the time, we will need to wind up. Thank you very much. It has been incredibly informative and interesting. The Committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice be

returned within 21 days. If you have agreed to take any questions on notice the secretary will be in touch with you. Thank you very much.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**JIM DONOVAN**, Secretary, Action for Public Transport (NSW) Inc., affirmed and examined

**JOHN YOUNG**, Director-Strategy and Communications, EcoTransit Sydney, sworn and examined

**COLIN SCHROEDER**, Co-convenor, EcoTransit Sydney, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** I would like to invite witnesses to begin by putting forward a very short opening statement. No more than a few minutes would be excellent.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** To EcoTransit, introducing metro to Sydney has never been about improved public transport; it is always been about real estate and over-development. The Government often uses lies and mistruths to justify the building of a metro network in Sydney to expand Sydney's rail network. One lie was that metro could run with a train every four minutes, whereas double-deckers could not run at those intervals. We know now if you just observe how the trains are running that the double-deckers are running every three minutes. Double-deckers can easily run at the same frequencies as a metro can. In fact, the Paris Réseau Express Régional [RER], which is more equivalent to the Sydney network, runs a double-decker every two minutes.

EcoTransit asserts that instead of destroying the T3 line by converting it to a metro—because you have to remember it is not just Sydenham to Bankstown that is the T3 line; it is Sydenham through to Liverpool, Sydenham through to Lidcombe. In destroying the line by converting it to a metro you disenfranchise people west of Bankstown. These people will not have good public transport if the line is converted. We maintain that if you are going to build a metro, build it to other areas that are not served by good public transport. We have had a proposal to divert the metro from Sydenham to Miranda via San Souci. This would not only provide those areas with better public transport but also take pressure off the Cronulla line, provide faster services from the Sutherland shire to the CBD and actually add capacity to the Illawarra line. You would achieve all those things with that simple diversion.

We are not opposed to metro per se. We are not mode blind. Metro does have its place, but what we are building here is not really metro. Metros typically run through medium to high density areas with maybe 500 metres between stations. I think the Paris metro averages about 520 metres between stations, whereas the metro we are building here is about 3.5 kilometres between stations on average. It is not really a metro. It is basically an underground suburban rail system with metro-sized cars on it. EcoTransit is also not really opposed to development. You might think from what I have said before that we are opposed to development, but we are not. We are opposed to inappropriate development and over-development. This proposed Bankstown line looks to build mini-Hong Kongs at each station to support the metro. It is over-development and inappropriate development in what are now very nice suburban areas.

**Mr YOUNG:** I do not really want to add to Mr Schroeder's statement. I will pass it on to Mr Donovan.

**Mr DONOVAN:** We want more people riding on public transport. We do not like seeing busy railways closed, even when it is supposed to be for an upgrade. We think the Bankstown line should be left running. One thing that has not come out from anybody else that I know of is that another disadvantage of cannibalising existing railway is that you inherit its constraints as to where it goes. The Committee heard yesterday about missing Redfern. More to the point, we do not want all lines running through Central. If you just convert the Bankstown line, all the interchanging is at the Central area. I want Sydney to end up with a network of metro lines, and to do that they will not all run through Central. The sensible thing to do is to start planning. As I said in my submission, we have not seen the document that the Government seems to be working from—if it has one, because it is refusing to release it.

As we said here a few minutes ago, the metro spine from Chatswood to Sydenham has more capacity than the Tallawong line needs and more than the Bankstown line needs. It could support a branch east from Chatswood towards Dee Why and a branch south-east or south from Sydenham. No one has raised the south-east branch that I am aware of. There are very good possibilities there through Eastgardens to Kingsford or Maroubra; there it would have the advantage of supplementing the light rail that is about to open. The light rail is going to be heavily loaded because it has been badly planned. Supplementing it with a railway to Kingsford or Maroubra would start to open options for the light rail to form a network around the south-eastern suburbs, which I think could be quite good. The advantage of the southern line from Bankstown through Dolls Point towards Miranda that has not come out yet is that it goes to the Prime Minister's electorate. I noticed on the news last week that the Government proposes asking Canberra for money for the western metro. It could put a page on the back for an extension to the Prime Minister's electorate and they might get that up.

The other thing I missed in transport planning with the metro was that a lot of hospitals have moved or grown and in no case do they seem to be towards railways. If you look at the Northern Beaches Hospital that could do with a railway obviously coming from Chatswood and going to Dee Why. North Shore Hospital was rebuilt recently and turned its back on St Leonards railway station and then the metro from Chatswood decided not have a stop there. If you are at Royal North Shore and you want to go to the railway you end up walking—you follow the mortuary signs and go out the backdoor. It is not very encouraging towards public transport. Royal Prince Alfred Hospital has been building a car park for 996 spaces. Why cannot they have a metro station? Recently Sutherland Hospital moved to Caringbah and sort of backs on to the railways but hospitals are just one thing that seem to be overlooked in transport planning that is such an obvious thing for good public transport.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I am not sure if you heard earlier evidence about the city circle, the capacity issues and the question of untangling. Will you elaborate further on your submission in relation to how the conversion either helps or does not make much of a contribution to this question of freeing up capacity on the city circle?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** You still have to provide services through St Peters and Erskineville. Those services will have to run around the city circle. Even if you take the Bankstown trains off, you still have to provide services to those inner city stations. Where they come from, we do not know. Transport for NSW and the Minister has not been able to tell us where they are going to come from. They need to come from the Illawarra line or from T8. Yes, you will be providing a few extra services on those lines but they will still run around the city circle. You are not providing a lot of extra capacity by diverting the Bankstown trains because you still need to provide services around the city circle. You are not going to be able to bring trains off the west around the city circle, for instance, because you are going to be occupying those spaces.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Effectively there will be minimal benefit?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Minimal. You would have had probably much more capacity uplift if you had built the tunnel under the harbour as a full-size integrated commuter rail line. You could have diverted some Bankstown trains via that line and have the Bankstown line train still servicing the city circle and St Peters and Erskineville.

**The CHAIR:** The EcoTransit's submission contained discussion about the idea of value capture and the business model of combining metro with property development. Can you elaborate on that?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** This is the business model that MTR Corporation in Hong Kong has established and run very well with. They get 70 per cent of its revenue from real estate property development. In essence, it is a development company, not a railway company, from where they can get most of their revenue. MTR Corporation has been pushing to get metro into Sydney and its business model into Sydney for many years, and now it has actually succeeded. You will see that the legislation to corporatise Sydney Metro almost mirrors the MTR business model because it gives the ultimate power to develop and acquire land around the stations, around the stabling yards for development.

It is something that leads to property over-development. There is the opportunity now to value capture all along the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor and building basically what is going to be mini Hong Kongs at each of the railway stations. The people of Hong Kong have taken a protest against this. There has been massive protests against MTR in Hong Kong about its—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Are you saying that the protests in Hong Kong are about the MTR?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** No, not at all. But there have been protests against what MTR is doing there because of the over development.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** There have been quite a few protests in Hong Kong recently.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I thank all of you for appearing, for your evidence, your interest and your energy. I think we all have in common the best interests of passengers and best outcomes for Transport for NSW. Mr Schroeder in your opening statement you referred to Paris and the RER. I also am a fan. Do you know the population of Paris?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** It depends on where you draw the ring. It is around eight million if you draw the ring a reasonable distance around the city.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** If you are looking at Paris that uses this not central but within the arrondissements extending to the further line, it is actually about two and Sydney is about five. We are not really comparing apples and oranges are we when we talk about Paris and Sydney?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** You are because it is taking people from the regional areas into the centre of Paris into the central business district.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** You referred to stations being 500 metres apart and that is quite a different concept when you compare two million people to five.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** No, the Paris RER and the Paris metro are totally different. The Paris metro is basically like an underground Light Rail system with very close stations and it is serving medium to high density areas. The RER is a regional service which brings people in from outlying areas into the centre of the city. They are comparable distances. It is 45, 50, 60 kilometres from the outlying stations to the centre of Paris and that is similar to the distances we have here in Sydney. You could argue that the inner city services on the heavy rail network should be metro but the north-west metro is far too long for metro-style trains because they have limited seats. A metro train has about 390 seats, a Waratah train has 895 seats.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I take you to your submission. I think you compared the travel times in the city circle stations Museum, St James, for example. You then talked about after the metro is built. Have you ignored the new stations that will be built right now at Pitt Street and Barangaroo and the new platforms at Martin Place. Is that misleading?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** No, I do not think it is misleading.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** You are not taking into account the four new stations and platforms.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** But what we are really looking at was people going to those stations they are used to going to, where they want to go to now. It will add travel time because they have to change trains.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Why do you assume they do not want to go to the new stations?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Some of them may but people now base their travel patterns on where they work, where they study. As you know, as it has recently been said in the newspapers, people going to Sydney university will have an extra 15 minute travel time when the metro is built.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I want to clarify that. There is no station at the moment in Pitt Street. There will be a new one so I may well choose to go there.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** And that is fine.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Is it not fair for the evidence before this committee to compare apples with apples? I am asking that you take into consideration those additional stations and platforms when making comparisons.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** There may be people wanting to go to those stations. I have no problem with that, of course there may be, but there are a lot of people now that travel to the existing stations on the city circle and their travel times will be increased.

**The CHAIR:** I refer to the earlier question about the value capture model in that business model. I think it is fair to assume that people want to live near train stations and if we were to put in a new station we would see development around that area. And new stations lead to revitalisation of whole areas. Will you explain what is objectionable about a model that has both a metro element operating with a train element as well as a property development element to it?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** You do not have to have metro to have property development. You can have the property development with an improved heavy rail service. Metro is not necessarily needed but also too you can have development around these railways stations that are having over development. If you look at the plans to develop along the Bankstown line you have apartment blocks of 30 plus stories in certain circumstances. In our opinion this is over development. The residents of those areas do not want that development. There is ample scope in those suburban shopping centres for appropriate development.

**The CHAIR:** Can you explain the difference between having an operator who is putting in place a rail service of whatever kind and separately having development occur as opposed to having development and rail operation within the same entity?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** What you are looking at with the MTR business model is to get their revenue, which as I said 70 per cent comes from property development, real estate, they need to over develop to get that revenue. If you have a separate developer to the rail operator, the rail operator is not relying on that property development revenue.

**The CHAIR:** Are you saying that the operator subsidises their income from the property development?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** The operator has to rely on the revenue of the fares, not from the value capture.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** What evidence do you have that Sydney Metro will give development rights to the MTR?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I have no evidence that that will happen.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** You put it in your submissions.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** If you look at everything that has been happening that is the conclusion we draw.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** This Committee is tasked with looking at the evidence before us. There can be conjecture about what may or may not happen, but we have to use an evidence based approach and we are trying to do that. If you would like to take it on notice you are most welcome, about what evidence you have that development rights will be given by Sydney Metro to the MTR, because presently that is not the case.

**Mr YOUNG:** Could I answer that now?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I am asking Mr Schroeder. I will get to you in a moment, Mr Young.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** There is a lot of conjecture around this, it is obviously of interest. I would like to get some facts.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I will take it on notice. This is an article by Kirsty Needham, a political editor, on 20 February 2016: New South Wales issues tender for Hong Kong style high-rises at new Sydney Metro train stations. This actually mentions MTR lobbying the Government.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you want to tender that document?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I can table it now.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Mr Schroeder, why do we not look at the tender document rather than at speculation in media articles, of which there is much?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Of course.

**The CHAIR:** Can we let Mr Young contribute?

**Mr YOUNG:** Yes, it is quite interesting to see what has been going on at the Sydney Metro line at St Leonards and North Sydney and Crows Nest. There has been a lot of talk about the Government developing the opportunities over those stations, over platform, in the surrounding area. The corporatisation of Sydney Metro was set up specifically in 2018 to allow that to happen. The only missing part of the postulation is who is going to end up owning Sydney Metro corporation. We have done a timeline looking at the relationship between the New South Wales Government going back to 2011 up until now. The relationship between MTR and the New South Wales Government shows there is a clear trend towards MTR being a likely investor in whatever the entity is that will operate initially Northwest metro, which is essentially Sydney Metro because that is the only line they have got.

We have looked at the business model of selling off a slice of the Sydney Metro corporation which would allow the Government to actually fund the construction of the Sydenham to Bankstown leg of this metro. There is so much inference in the correspondence, in the announcements from the Government, in statements from the Minister, that everyone is expecting that MTR Hong Kong would be a likely investor in the Sydney Metro corporation. This is exactly the same business model as was used for WestConnex. They actually built WestConnex and they sold a slice of it to a private corporation to operate it. It is almost an identical business model that we can see happening.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** On that, what evidence do you have that MTR will be relying on fare revenue as part of its business model to operate the metro?

**Mr YOUNG:** It is essentially the fact that everyone knows that—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Everyone does not know.

**Mr YOUNG:** —operating public transport is not a profit centre. There is not a single public network in the world that I can think of that generates a profit. If you are going to be privatising it, the operation of that

network, either you negotiate a deal which compensates the corporation operating that or you give the entrepreneurs who are operating the rail network other sources of revenue.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Does not the current arrangement retain fare revenue for the State, is that not correct?

**Mr YOUNG:** I beg your pardon?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Fare revenue is retained for the State, is that not correct?

**Mr YOUNG:** I do not know, I have not seen any publication of that. Do you happen to know that for a fact?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** You are making the assertion, Mr Young, and I am trying to establish what the facts are for the Committee to form a view. You have asserted that there will be some form of profit. I am trying to get to where that would arise from and fare revenue is not part of that business model.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** It is certainly not.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** It is retained for the people of New South Wales, is it not?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Under the current model the fare revenue goes to the government and the government pays the operator an agreed contract sum to operate it.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** But fare revenue is not touched?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** The operator is not having to subsidise the line, the Government has to subsidise the line at the moment.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** That then proves our point.

**The CHAIR:** Can I clarify, if the Government retains all the fare revenue but they have a contract where they are giving a certain amount of money to the operator, and the operator has a KPI that requires a certain patronage it is an indirect pressure on the operator to achieve a certain number of fares, right?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Am I a witness in this inquiry?

**The CHAIR:** No, you are not a witness. I am genuinely interested.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I think that is basically the model that works. But, if they sell the metro or a slice of the metro does that model stay? That is the thing. Then they have the ability to get revenue from other sources because the metro corporatisation Act enables them to acquire properties and develop along the corridor at their stabling yards and the air rights over the stations. That enables whoever purchases Sydney Metro, in our opinion MTR Corporation, would have the ability to gain a lot of revenue from development.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Do you have any evidence that it will be privatised? What do you base that on?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** No, I do not have any evidence that it will be privatised.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** It is just a vibe?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** If you look at past government projects like WestConnex where Sydney Motorway Corporation was corporatized so it became opaque and we could not get any information on it.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Have you read the tender document for this project?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** For Sydney Metro corporation? For the sale of it?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Have you read the tender documents in relation to Sydney Metro.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Which tender document? There have been a lot of tender documents for Sydney Metro.

**The CHAIR:** Do you mean in relation to the Sydenham Bankstown line?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Have you read any of them?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Yes, I have. There are very few tender documents out for the conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown line.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Which ones have you read?



**Mr SCHROEDER:** There was one for the design and that is the only contract that has been let. The only other contract that has been let for the conversion so far is the conversion of platforms one and two at Sydenham.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** And in those tender documents is there anything about privatisation?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** No, but there does not need to be.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** There is no evidence presently anywhere to say that is intended?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** There is no need for evidence of privatisation there because that is a totally different thing to selling the whole corporation.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** It is a vibe?

**Mr YOUNG:** I think the evidence is actually in the statements of transport Minister Andrew Constance who at a public forum with one of the institutions about four to six weeks ago said he does not see the Government operating any public transport in three or four years time. The Government wants to get out of it completely. I think that is pretty cast-iron that they are looking to privatise Sydney Metro.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** But fare revenue is retained in New South Wales. That is very clear. That is not in question, is it?

**Mr YOUNG:** That does not make the profit fall. I am not challenging that. I am making the statement that there is a very clear pattern from previous behaviour of this Government to sell this asset.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** That is really what we are talking about, is it not: this distrust of the Government. I read the submissions from both gentlemen and it is one conspiracy theory after another.

**The CHAIR:** Is this a question?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** There is a question. Just wait.

**The CHAIR:** Please get to it.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Point of order: The imputation that the evidence is conspiracy theory is not acceptable.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** That is what I am about to test.

**The CHAIR:** I remind members to be respectful of the witnesses for giving up their time. Please come to the question.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Mr Schroeder, your submission has a list of facts and fiction components to it.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Point of order: Once again, the imputation is that it has got fact and fiction.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** It actually says "fact and fiction". It helps if you read it, Greg.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Point of order: The Hon. Wes Fang should refer to the Hon. Greg Donnelly by his correct title.

**The CHAIR:** That is correct. I remind all members—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I have got his submission here.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Have you read it?

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Yes.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Then you will see it has "fact and fiction".

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Wes, I will keep taking points of order.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Point of order: The audience should be quiet. They should either watch in silence or they can leave.

**The CHAIR:** Order! I remind members of the audience to please watch quietly.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Silence!

**The CHAIR:** I remind members not to refer to people in the audience. I remind members to take a bit of a breath.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Well, I—

**The CHAIR:** No, I am still talking. If we could take a breath and calmly address, with respect, the witnesses. Mr Fang, please continue with your questions.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Mr Schroeder, your submission contains a number of asserted facts and asserted fictions. How many of these asserted facts and asserted fictions can you provide by documentation?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I would have to look at that. I will come back to you and take that on notice.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** You will take that on notice? Can you please provide for me documented proof to support every single fact and fiction that is addressed in your submission?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Okay, that is no problem at all. I will take it on notice.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Mr Young, in your submission you seem to indicate that the MTR organisation is going to be developing the Sydenham to Bankstown line. What proof do you have to assert that in your submission?

**Mr YOUNG:** It is the pattern that they have done elsewhere, particularly—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** What proof do you have?

**The CHAIR:** Let the witness answer the question, please.

**Mr YOUNG:** It has been their business model in Hong Kong and the way things are being set up, it looks like it is going to be the way it is done here.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** It is a feeling, is it? It is what you think?

**Mr YOUNG:** No, it is more than the feeling.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Point of order—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We do not operate on feeling.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We operate on facts.

**The CHAIR:** Order! I will hear the point of order.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** The member is obviously agitated and is being extremely rude and disrespectful to the witnesses. This is not the way in which we go about this. You can ask the question; the answer comes back, but you then do not stacks-on because it does not meet what you were hoping the answer would be.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, I understand the point of order. Again, if we could be respectful. I think it might be helpful if we could go to the Opposition for a question.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Point of order: I remind the audience again that they have to be quiet.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, absolutely. Thank you, Mr Fang. That is correct. I ask audience members to please sit in silence. Mr Fang, if you could not look at them it might help.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I did not; I can hear them.

**The CHAIR:** Mr D'Adam, did you have a question?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I do, yes. In the previous session we heard evidence, I think from Mr Wardrop, about the capacity of the existing T3 line vis-a-vis the metro. I am not sure whether you were here to hear that evidence. I wonder whether you would offer some views about whether you concur with that view that, effectively, with signal upgrades the existing line could perform at a higher capacity than the proposed metro.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I totally concur, because I have done some work on that. Even without changing the current Sydney system, you can put another four trains an hour onto the Bankstown line. Four trains an hour—that would give at least 13 trains. Between seven and eight it would be 14 trains, and between eight and nine it would be 13 trains an hour if you put four additional trains on. If you have 13 trains per hour, you would have a higher capacity than you would running the metro at 15 trains per hour.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Donovan, in your submission you mentioned the potential misuse of the word "metro".

**Mr DONOVAN:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Could you elaborate on what is metro and what is it that is being proposed in the Sydney network?

**Mr DONOVAN:** That is a very good question. Mr Staples was asked what a metro was and he said something about being separate from road traffic; well, quite. All heavy rail is like that. There is an interesting article in Wikipedia about metro systems, which seems to me to be being mainly edited by Americans. They have a large table of metro systems worldwide, showing the name and the date it was built and what colour the wheels are, and then the number of stations and the total length of track. I wanted an extra column where you divide the length of track by one less than the number of stations to see what the average space in between stations is. I did that on a spreadsheet myself and it turned out to be very informative. The Lausanne metro was one of the shortest—I think I say so in my submission—at 700 metres. Paris is a bit more; London is about a kilometre. Then, from Chatswood to Tallawong, you have 13 stations in 36 kilometres. You divide 36 by 12 and you get three kilometres between stations. There is a whopping 6.5 kilometres from Chatswood to North Ryde, and that is in the inner suburbs. I do not think that should be regarded as a metro.

I think the criteria for deciding whether it is a metro is the job it does in your city. After all, we are building a city here. At 6.5 kilometres or even three kilometres between stations, you are not going to attract people to carry short trips because they might as well walk from wherever they are going. One thing I have looked at in the past is the London Circle line. The loop part of that is 18 stations. Within that loop, you cannot get more than 500 metres from a railway station. In Sydney, if you want to get 500 metres from the nearest railway platform, you go to the KFC in Railway Square and you are at least 500 metres from every heavy rail platform at Central—at least. That is in what we call Railway Square.

We should be addressing this. The first thing to do would be to call it Roadway Square or Busway Square or something like that, and people would be able to understand these huge gaps that are in the Sydney railway network at present. We should be doing something about them. There was talk earlier about Hurstville to Bankstown. Good—let's have it. There are plenty of places on both sides of the harbour that are a long way from railway stations, and here we have the metro people skiting that they can get from Sydney to Parramatta in 18 minutes or something or other by not having any stations.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I just wanted to double-check your evidence. I think you mentioned about double-decker trains on the Bankstown line. Was that you, Mr Donovan?

**Mr DONOVAN:** I do not think I mentioned double-decker trains in my submission.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Sorry, somebody mentioned that and I am not quite sure who it was.

**Mr DONOVAN:** We have been hearing about them on my right here.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I think that you had mentioned about increasing double-decker trains on the Bankstown line.

**Mr DONOVAN:** No, I do not think I mentioned that.

**The CHAIR:** I think you do mention, though, the idea of extending the metro beyond Bankstown if it is to proceed.

**Mr DONOVAN:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Can you elaborate on that? Is that going through to stations to Liverpool—if we do have a metro from Sydenham to Bankstown, that really it should take up the whole line, rather than leaving those stations west of Bankstown to be—

**Mr DONOVAN:** We think it is a shame to cut the line at Bankstown and force everybody to change trains. We do not want that to happen at all, actually, but if it must go to Bankstown, it could go a little bit further.

I would like to see another line go towards Liverpool but you have Bankstown airport in the way and there is really not a lot of suitable places. It would just make so much more sense if it did not happen at all.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Sorry, if I could come back to it, Mr Donovan. I am sorry about jumping around, but I think in your submission you talked about adding more double-decker trains to the lines. Is that not correct?

**Mr DONOVAN:** I do not have it in front of me.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Yes, but you are asserting that you can add more of those trains to increase capacity—add more of the double-deckers.

**Mr DONOVAN:** I do not think I say that. I managed to come along without a copy of my submission.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, what page are you on?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I think it is page 5.

**Mr DONOVAN:** I do not have a page 5. I have 3½ pages in my submission.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I am sorry. I might be speaking to the wrong person.

**The CHAIR:** Was it EcoTransit?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Sorry, Mr Schroeder. My apologies.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** You can add extra trains to the Bankstown line.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Thank you. You had referred in your submission to adding more double-deckers to the Bankstown line.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** That is right. And I addressed that, I think, when I answered the Opposition's question.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Yes. I am sorry. I just picked it up in here and I did not see who it was. My apologies, Mr Donovan. How would you deal with those around the city line?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** There is spare capacity around the City Circle at the moment, even in peak hour—not a lot, but there is.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** There is nothing we would have to do to add those? You can just add more on?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Yes, you can add a limited number on.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Are you referring to the line itself, or the stations and the platforms—as in the capacity for people on the stations and platforms?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** If you had more services around you improve the capacity on the stations, because you are clearing the people off.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** So the double-deckers can get around the city lines.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Yes, of course.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** No problem at all?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Yes. At the moment if you go to platform 6 of an afternoon, in the peak hour—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** From Bankstown?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** —running through there. They come off Bankstown and also they are going around to the airport. On platform 6 of an afternoon trains are going through every two to three minutes. So there is no reason why you could not run them at least every three minutes. There is spare capacity there. There is not a lot but you can.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Around the city line.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Around the City Circle there is spare capacity at the moment.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** How much spare capacity is there and what do you base that on?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** What do I base it on? You just get the timetable out. It is signalled so you can get at least 20 trains an hour around. The whole Sydney system is basically signalled for 20 trains an hour.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Have you done a study on passenger movements at, say, Town Hall station?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** No, I have not done that because we do not have the capacity to do that.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Is perhaps the movement of passengers to and from on the platforms and the capacity of the station to handle the increased number of passengers a limiting factor?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Yes, but as I said, if you have more services you are clearing those people away more quickly.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** But you also need to get people on and get people off every three minutes. We know there are limitations on the number of people we can get in and out through Town Hall station. Do your assumptions have any bearing on how we get more people in and out at Town Hall station through the—

**Mr SCHROEDER:** You are already getting trains every three minutes through there.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I know, but if you want to move more people through there—if we want to increase the capacity on the City Circle, we can assume that it will increase the number of people who are moving through those stations. We know that Town Hall is already at capacity for physically getting people on and off trains, hence if we put metro in—where it goes to Pitt Street, Martin Place, Barangaroo, we have new stations increasing the capacity—

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I have no problem with new stations, but they do not have to be metro. They could have been built as heavy rail. Why does it have to be built as metro?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Why can't it be built as metro?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Why? Why build it as metro? Why have it as a separate system when you could have integrated it with the existing system and you could have diverted some Bankstown line trains there if—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We are integrating it with an existing system.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** It is not integrated.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We are integrating it with the Sydney Metro Northwest.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** With the north west metro, but that was not an existing system.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We are integrating it with an existing system.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** The Government came into office promising to build a heavy rail line. If you look at all the literature and all the publicity—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We are not here to discuss history; we are here to discuss the terms of reference, which includes—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Point of order: Mr Fang should be asking questions.

**The CHAIR:** I will hear the point of order.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The point of order is that Mr Fang is involved in a discussion rather than asking questions.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We are teasing out the situation.

**The CHAIR:** I will go to Ms Ward.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I was interested in growth capacity, Mr Schroeder. If we have 20 trains an hour now and we are adding on how do we plan for growth into the future? We can only add so many more to that system.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** You can add on more by improving the signalling. You heard from Mr Wardrop this morning that you could increase it by 50 per cent with new signalling.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** How do you plan for sheer growth in numbers of people? You can only add on so many more trains per hour. The spinning jenny was perfectly fine in the 1800s.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** You need to build new lines. We have no argument about building new lines. We would encourage the Government to build new lines like the Sydney West metro, although the West metro is not going to do anything for people west of Parramatta. It is not going to improve their journey times because they are going to have change trains at either Westmead or Parramatta if they want to use that line.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I am no expert; you know more than me, but as I understand it, double-decker trains can have 20 an hour. Metro can already have 30. So why wouldn't we—

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Paris RER runs them every two minutes. That is 30 per hour, no problem at all by comparison. Why is it a problem here? As I said, if you go to platform 6 of an afternoon you will often see the trains, when there has been a slight disruption to one, banking up to every two minutes. They are going through every two minutes.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Maybe we should get an Eiffel Tower here while we are at it!

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I was going to ask about this issue around mechanical gap fillers and whether you could elaborate on that, and the question around straightening platforms.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** If you look at most metro designs around the world—now, being built new—they have platform barriers with doors which line up with the doors on the trains. There are normally straight so that you do not have big gaps. The floor of the train is very close to the edge of the platform. When you put it around a curve—on the existing line from Sydenham to Bankstown most platforms are curved—you cannot get that close connection between the floor of the train and the platform edge.

So I questioned Mr Tim Parker, who I think is still the project manager for the conversion, about this and he introduced the idea of mechanical gap fillers. So when the train stops, as the doors on the platform are opening a gap filler goes to close that gap. The time that that gap filler will take—increasing dwell time—will depend on the furthest projection it will have to go.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is this going to be an issue with all the stations on the Bankstown to Sydenham line?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Most of the stations on the Bankstown line are curved.

**Mr DONOVAN:** Canterbury is straight and one of the others too.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Wiley Park.

**Mr DONOVAN:** Yes, Wiley Park is very nearly straight.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** If you look at them, most of the platforms have curves. Marrickville has a curve on it. Dulwich Hill is the biggest problem. It has the biggest curve. Punchbowl is curved. Most of them do have curves on the platforms.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So that will affect the dwell times, will it?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** That will affect the dwell times.

**Mr DONOVAN:** I have to add to that. In some of the cases it has been possible to widen the platform by taking land at either end to reduce the effect of the curve but in at least one of them that was not going to be possible. Was it Dulwich Hill or Marrickville? I forget.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I think Dulwich Hill. The original idea was to straighten most of the platforms. In fact, I think when they first looked at converting the line—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Has that idea been abandoned?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I think so. They came with the metro light plan to leave the platforms as they are and introduce these gap fillers. With the gap fillers the horizontal plane is one thing, but when you get a big gap between the side of the train and the platform barriers there is always a danger that people could slip or fall into that gap. Because you are constricted on both sides that could delay trains, or people could be injured. If there is no platform barrier people could just step back or fall back.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How does that work with a driverless train if there is an incident like that?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I believe that on the North West line they always have someone in attendance on the train. That was always our main fear—safety on a driverless train. If there is someone on board—a passenger

service attendant—they could take care of that, but it is a danger. I do not know how they overcome this problem—whether you have vertical gap fillers, as well, where the vertical gap is too large. That is adding mechanical complexity to the system. What happens if these gap fillers break down?

**The CHAIR:** I guess—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Well, we should not build anything then.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Spinning jenny was—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Complexity.

**The CHAIR:** Just to elaborate on that—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Point of order: Can the gratuitous comments—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We are having a conversation. We are just comparing notes.

**The CHAIR:** Could you do it quietly?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Yes, sure.

**The CHAIR:** There are the gaps and there is the possibility perhaps of someone getting stuck between the screen and the train.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** That is right, where the gap is very large enough to do it.

**The CHAIR:** Presumably that could be fixed with some kind of sensor system potentially.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** Maybe the gap filler—I do not know.

**The CHAIR:** But this additional complication I guess—did you say there are examples of it being used elsewhere in the world, or would it be custom-built for us?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I have seen reference to gap fillers in other parts of the world. I think in London on some of the lines, they are using gap fillers where there is a big gap between the floor of the train and the platform. But they usually are used in certain sections of the platform to allow for easier access for people with mobility problems.

**The CHAIR:** How big is the gap? Could you put your foot on it? Is the idea that you could put your foot on it before the platform?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** If you look at the existing system, there are some large gaps between the double-decker floors and the platforms. This is not a new thing. With the metro, one of the safety aspects of the metro is that you do not have the gap. The only way that can cover that is by having these gap fillers.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Just before we finish up, I would like to take Mr Schroeder and Mr Young to the organisation EcoTransit itself. Mr Young, you are listed as the Director of Strategy and Communications for EcoTransit. Can you explain to me a little bit about the Basta campaign? Can you please highlight any of your EcoTransit members who have given testimony to this organisation? What coordination efforts have been put into—

**Mr YOUNG:** Could I have the questions one at a time, please?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Sure.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I remind the witnesses, through the Chair, that as part of these proceedings, if you wish to take any of the questions on notice for your consideration before you answer them, you are welcome to do so.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Donnelly.

**Mr YOUNG:** EcoTransit is an organisation that started off about 25 years ago as originally the Wollie Creek Preservation Society where it set up a campaign to stop a motorway being built up to Wollie Creek, which eventually ended up with that motorway going underneath as the M4 or the M5—I just forget the numbers now. About 1992-93, that particular organisation splintered off or changed its direction to become more interested in all sorts of public transport, including rail, light rail and active transport. Eventually it changed its name. The organisation that split off became EcoTransit. EcoTransit has existed since then. We are typically somewhere between 50 to 80 members. We also now do a lot of work with external organisations or partners through a network organisation. We operate on a consensus model. We have a committee of eight to 10 people who run the

day-to-day operations. We have a monthly meeting where we review what projects we have got underway. Increasingly we are doing that work with other organisations such as Save T3, Sydney Bankstown Alliance and others that I will not mention here at the moment.

When we saw what was happening on the Bankstown line, we realised that we are actually up against a very powerful organisation in the Government and all the backers of that organisation—what I colloquially refer to as "the top end of town"—who have pretty amazing public relations and marketing resources behind them. We decided that we should put in place a very focused campaign to get a message out to the community along the Sydenham-Bankstown corridor and, by extension, west of Bankstown all the way to Liverpool. We started working with the Sydenham-Bankstown Alliance and I heard a lot of comments from these people about their frustration of getting information out of Transport for NSW about exactly what was going on and what was going to happen to their community. There was a lot of fear and doubt and uncertainty about the development side of the project, which I think is far more serious for consideration than the actual rail technology. We actually needed to focus this attention. I looked at Bankstown-Sydenham and I came up with the word "Basta". "Basta" is an Italian word that means "enough".

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I have read your stuff.

**Mr YOUNG:** Thank you.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** The other two parts of the questions that I had asked—you asked for them in separate parts—were that—and you can take them on notice—could you indicate that of the people that we have heard from over today and yesterday, how many people are members of EcoTransit or are coordinating with EcoTransit? Could you outline what those coordination steps are?

**Mr YOUNG:** Barbara Coorey is a member of EcoTransit now. Roydon Ng is a member of EcoTransit. No-one else is actually a member for EcoTransit but we do exchange information via the network quite extensively. We are probably drawing information from about 200 people in the community of Sydney, many of whom are planners or economists or architects or people with all sorts of skills.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Have we heard from any of them today?

**Mr YOUNG:** Yes. I actually read John Austen's publications. I get them publicly through his own website, The Jaded Beagle, and also the John Menadue website.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** In section 5 of the "Major elements of the Basta campaign"—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Point of order: That was the last question. We are past time.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** —you have said:

Economic Analysis of the Sydney Trains Network compared to Sydney Metro

Written by a former economist, staff and consultant to NSW Govt and Australian Govt

Can you identify who that person is?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Point of order: The time has elapsed for questioning.

**The CHAIR:** We did start slightly late. I will allow a quick answer. Mr Fang, if you could come to the point—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** No, I just asked the question.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I should add: Matt Hounsell is also a member, which he did say today. But Matt has deliberately removed himself from any activity within EcoTransit when he took up the appointment at University of Technology Sydney.

**Mr YOUNG:** I will answer the question. John Austen is the economist.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** So John Austen is the person who wrote that?

**Mr YOUNG:** No, he did not. If it is in our paper, I have either written it myself or Mr Schroeder has written it. If it was written by John Austen, it will be in quotes.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I have two very quick questions, Mr Schroeder. The first is about the mechanical gap fillers. You commented about those. Can I ask your qualifications?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** I am a mechanical engineer by qualification.



**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Thank you. I understand they exist in Japan and Korea. Is that correct?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** They could. I do know they do have them in some stations in London.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I assume the answer is "no", but have you had the opportunity to visit the ones in Japan or Korea?

**Mr SCHROEDER:** No, I have not.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I understand they apparently work quite well. I have not been there either.

**Mr SCHROEDER:** They quite possibly do. I am not disputing the fact that the gap fillers may work. It is just the fact that they will add to the dwell time.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you all very much for your time. In relation to any questions taken on notice, you have 21 days to respond. The secretariat will be in touch in relation to that.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Luncheon adjournment)**

**SCOTT MACARTHUR**, President, Marrickville Heritage Society, affirmed and examined

**GRAHAM QUINT**, Director, Conservation, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** I invite you both to make a short opening statement and ask that you keep that to a couple of minutes.

**Mr QUINT:** The National Trust acknowledges and appreciates that the July 2018 *Preferred Infrastructure Report* has pulled back from previous plans to demolish large sections of the heritage-listed railway stations along the rail route from Sydney to Bankstown and that most of the heritage fabric of these historic places will now be retained. However, the report's Appendix F—heritage assessment—did not deal with the heritage impacts of likely rezoning of large swathes of land around the rail corridor, as originally proposed in the 2017 Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy. The sale and redevelopment of this land could lead to demolition of a considerable quantity of historic suburban fabric.

There are major differences in the way that the councils along the railway route recognise and protect their heritage. The former Marrickville Council has 36 heritage conservation areas listed on its local environmental plan but Canterbury's local environmental plan has only one heritage conservation area and Bankstown's local environmental plan has no heritage conservation areas listed. This might wrongly suggest that the Canterbury Bankstown local government area [LGA] has little heritage, but a 1996 National Trust study, examining inter-war period housing in 20 Sydney local councils and two New South Wales country local government areas, found that the two Sydney local government areas with the highest number of identified heritage precincts were Ku-ring-gai, with 23 precincts, and the former Canterbury City Council area, with 24 precincts. Three precincts were also identified in the former Bankstown City Council area.

Over the next seven days the National Trust will be making a formal submission on Canterbury Bankstown Council's publicly exhibited local strategic planning statement—Connective City 2036. The trust would be pleased to provide a copy of the submission to this inquiry.

**Dr MACARTHUR:** On behalf of the Marrickville Heritage Society, I would like to thank the Committee for acknowledging our submission by inviting me to appear here today. The society was spurred to make a submission over two main concerns: firstly, that the letter and spirit of current planning laws and processes, particularly in relation to the management of heritage assets, were not followed in the development of the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor or the renewal corridor strategy. This led to inaccurate and wildly unpopular rezoning proposals that were strongly and thoroughly critiqued by the community, particularly in the suburbs of the former Marrickville LGA that are rich in heritage items and character areas. The response was so negative that the proposals were eventually withdrawn.

Our second concern was that the strong urban resilience of our area was ignored by the Department of Planning. Urban resilience enables communities to successfully adapt to change through established social and community networks. Marrickville and Dulwich Hill have demonstrated their resilience over the past century as they have thrived through waves of immigration, industrialisation, deindustrialisation and gentrification. Established personal, occupational and neighbourhood networks stabilised our diverse communities through these changes.

The proposed replacement of low-density residential precincts with over 35,000 dwellings in 20 years, without supporting social, community and environmental infrastructure, would disrupt and overwhelm these networks. The Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Strategy would provide the future residents of our area with a harsh, mean and poor existence. Our intention with our submission was to draw attention to the failings of the urban renewal corridor strategy so that better solutions could be found for future residential uplift zones around Sydney's many new transport infrastructure projects.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. One of the criticisms levelled, particularly, at some groups who are anti-development in a particular area, is that heritage is used as a way of protecting one's own property, as opposed to having any objective value. Could you explain to the Committee how heritage is determined and, particularly, in relation to the area that we are talking about, what makes a property a heritage property or something that is either currently listed or could, potentially, be listed as a heritage property?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** That can be the case where heritage is used as a very blunt weapon. We were disturbed that there were inadequate studies done—proper studies, commissioned from experienced heritage consultants that worked through a process which is generally established by the New South Wales heritage office,

or division, as it is now called. They go into the field, they analyse documentation, they interview people about the stories and the associations of properties that have potential heritage significance. There is a very formal process that identifies significance and then implements management policies to guide change, which is the essence of heritage listing—managing change and making change a positive, rather than a negative.

**The CHAIR:** If you were the owner of a property and you thought that it would benefit, potentially, from protection from a development, or benefit from having a heritage listing, are there negatives also? For example, once you have a heritage-listed House, are you then restricted from what you can do in terms of renovating that house? Is it something that you think would be flippantly done or is it done because people really believe in the heritage characteristics?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think people applying to have their own properties listed have a deep connection with that property and they have a deep understanding of it. They understand that there are elements of significance that should be preserved within that property and, through the listing process, I hope they would be made aware of the opportunities as well—that good conservation acknowledges that there will be change, that there will be adaptive reuse, there can be appropriate extensions, there can be removal of intrusive items within a heritage property. So, certainly, a heritage listing is not a *carte-blanche*, preserve-in-*aspic* order. It would, potentially, make a large-scale development on a single residential lot problematic but there is a very good process in place, through the heritage network and the heritage regulations, to govern that sort of development.

**The CHAIR:** In your experience, when other projects have gone ahead or been proposed for particular areas, does the department commonly look at not only what is already heritage listed but also what could, potentially, be heritage listed in making its planning decisions? Or should the owner already have listed the property if they want that to be taken into account?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think the key thing is that heritage evolves, so the associations or importance of items that were assessed, or not assessed, 10 years ago may have changed in the following 10 years. So, saying that once you have missed out on a heritage listing, or not been included in a previous survey, fails to acknowledge that heritage and our lives and our communities are changing all the time. We were very disappointed—and I think the National Trust pointed this out as well—that there was very little investigation of unlisted heritage precincts for the development of the strategy. The community had to go out and say, "What about this church? What about this row of Federation villas? Why are they not being looked at?" So, that was a disappointment.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Why is it that there was such a disparity between Marrickville, Bankstown and Canterbury in terms of their approaches to heritage? Is that not ultimately the responsibility of the communities to identify the heritage items? Why has there been such a clear disparity between the three former council areas?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** Marrickville has been established as a community for well over a hundred years. It is one of the largest and most populous suburbs in the inner west. There has been an active heritage community group in Marrickville from beyond our time, from 1984 and going back further. I think postwar the Marrickville Historical Society was present and lobbying council, the then Marrickville Council, for protection of items that it identified. Our building stock is older than Canterbury. There was a longer period of recognition and acknowledgement of heritage items in our area as opposed to their area. It is now that we are becoming aware of the significance of inter-war and postwar housing and general building stock that these areas are getting the recognition that they probably deserve.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is that a weakness of the heritage system, that it is dependent on agitation from particular elements of the community?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** It works both ways. That identification of heritage is driven by the community, but also rejection and ignorance of heritage can drive opinion back in the other direction. Development pressures, as opposed to preservation pressures—it is a tug of war.

**The CHAIR:** What is your recommendation going forward? What could the Government do now to better investigate and preserve that heritage?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think that people who are planning the future need to properly analyse the impacts of what they are proposing. That is very multi-level: It is looking at population impacts, it is looking at environmental impacts and heritage impacts. We do not believe that was adequately done in this study, particularly when the outcome was planning without provision for community services, hospitals, parks and local shopping precincts. We were in discussion with the Department of Planning. They said, "No, this is just the zoning exercise.

We are not going to go into where all these facilities are or, in fact, if they are going to be there". I think that is terribly short-sighted.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Thank you very much for coming in today. When I read both of your submissions, it would appear to me that neither of you is against the conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown line to metro?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** Not from a heritage point of view, no. I speak on behalf of our society. Our constitution mandates that we are a heritage society.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I guess the fact that we are repurposing an existing line to convert it into a metro means that in effect a lot of the heritage—we do not have to, say, destroy a lot of the heritage that we would necessarily have to if we were building a new line. Is that correct?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think the National Trust pointed out the impact on the actual station buildings. We were concerned about that, but it was not as germane to our own experience. However, from a broader perspective, that is a collection of heritage buildings from the 1890s onwards.

**Mr QUINT:** Many of which are heritage listed.

**Dr MACARTHUR:** There was almost a disregard for the existing heritage provisions.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I am not sure you could characterise it as that, but that is I guess an interpretation of it. In relation to what it is we are looking at here, which is the Sydenham to Bankstown line, do you have any concerns about the conversion or is this more about the planning process around it and future planning endeavours?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** The second point, definitely.

**Mr QUINT:** From the trust's point of view it is the ongoing parallel pressures that will be placed on the area.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I just wanted to clarify that. Obviously, with different groups we have here some are against the line itself, some are against the conversion, but then we have had other groups that are worried about the planning process around it. I just wanted to characterise where you were. I have never sat on an inquiry into a project like this where heritage concerns have been completely addressed before we get to this point. Is it not always the case that people who find heritage important will always find more to do? Is that fair to say?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think in the context of our evolving society there are always new discoveries. Especially with resources like Trove, the access to historic documentation has become so easy and so widespread that people are able to research and find new information about properties and therefore make historic connections and associations that were never available before.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** But compared to European history, Australia has a very short timeframe of history. When we are talking about buildings built between the First World War and Second World War we are talking really no more than a hundred years old. Is this not really just the evolution of that continuing process that we have been experiencing?

**Mr QUINT:** From the trust's point of view, when we started out in 1946 we were looking just at Georgian-period buildings. When we listed the Lands Department building, that was a major step for us to recognise a Victorian-period building. Now we have come right up to the present day and we have listed buildings from the late 1990s. When you have a major development, if the studies are in place and the council listings are in place than it is a fairly easily flowing process, because they can be addressed.

There are two councils out of all the Sydney councils that have rejected conservation areas outright. There are only two. All the other councils have conservation areas. The particular study that was done was back in 1996 and at that time it was sent to all those councils. We have since gone back to those same councils repeatedly and said, "At you looking at it?" With the new requirements from the Greater Sydney Commission, Canterbury Bankstown Council is looking at that but it will not be doing the heritage review until 2021. While we can feed into that, we have got to address the situation now for possible impacts.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** But that is really more an issue for Canterbury council, isn't it?

**Mr QUINT:** It is, certainly, but every effort we have made has fallen on deaf ears, for whatever reason.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I appreciate that.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I did want to ask about Canterbury council. That seems to be one of the big concerns in your submission. Is all of the Canterbury train station heritage listed or are there just certain parts of it that are heritage listed?

**Mr QUINT:** I would have to check that for you. I think it is heritage listed, yes. It is probably one of the oldest.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I am just surprised to hear that. I know that there are some old parts of it and an old signal box, which I think has been—

**Mr QUINT:** I would have to check, to be honest.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** That would be quite interesting to know. In relation to the heritage studies, do you know how they are being funded by councils? Is that a factor in the delay in doing them?

**Mr QUINT:** There is usually money available coming through from the State Government to assist with heritage reviews. I understand with the Greater Sydney Commission and the requirements for these new local strategic planning statements there is money available for doing all that. That heritage review is part of a whole series of reviews they are required to do.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** We did have local residents and local businesses talking about the decline of lifestyle in the Canterbury area. They were quite excited about the prospect of redevelopment, obviously wanting it to be positive redevelopment.

**Mr QUINT:** Yes, exactly.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** That is pretty much what you are asking for, is it not—redevelopment that is sensitive to those issues?

**Mr QUINT:** Yes, that is right. Exactly.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** How would you see that proceeding? I guess your submission seems to be arguing that the metro should be some kind of a trigger for these studies to take place? Is that essentially what you are arguing?

**Mr QUINT:** I think it is difficult to understand the full impacts of the metro on those areas if the councils already do not have in place the heritage or have not done their heritage reviews. What we are looking at, rather than a 2021 review, we are looking at that being brought up and almost an immediate start at least with the heritage conservation orders. It is really vital.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Yes, I understand. In relation to your meetings with the Department of Planning is there a group that includes the council and the National Trust? I have been in the National Trust since I was 16.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Ten years.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Yes, for the last 11 years. It is branch based. Do you have branches down that way?

**Mr QUINT:** We did. There was a southern Sydney branch. We only have one branch in the city. Pretty well all of our branches are now in the regional country areas. There is a Parramatta branch but, no, not in that local area.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** The period on which you are focused in terms of housing, the end-of-war housing, is that contentious? Some of this housing is what people would love to get rid of.

**Mr QUINT:** To put it in context, Canterbury has more end-of-war period Californian bungalows than any other local government area in Australia. Okay, your immediate reaction to that is therefore there is plenty of that because none of it is protected and because there are these major development pressures on that moment. We could lose all of it if it is not protected and none of it is at the moment.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** What are your aspirations? From what I can gather it relates to the fact that it is on the railway line, there was a housing shortage after the war, low-cost housing—

**Mr QUINT:** The original railway line did drive the development of that very—

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** And the garden city, yes. What is the vision of the National Trust for protection of that heritage? It is certainly not all of it.

**Mr QUINT:** We have done the baseline study and now it would require an independent consultant to go back and look at those and see what survives of those over that number of years there will be a lot of very bad impacts.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Changes already—

**Mr QUINT:** On some of them, and there may be revisions of boundaries that would need to be done. And that always happened between when we list something a, say, Ku-ring-gai councillor would do a different boundary. They would go out and research again but it needs to be done.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Even just looking at what developments have already occurred on the rail corridor, it is not particularly pleasant. Do you suggest that all of that housing be saved or do you just want to find the icon parts?

**Mr QUINT:** No. We highlighted back then what we believed to be the important areas. It would certainly now require a qualified consultant to go back and review those areas and determine which of those areas should be listed by the council and what the boundaries of those areas should be. There will always be within conservation areas buildings that are obtrusive and do not fit in but the view is if you have a conservation area, and you have a new development on one of those obtrusive sites, you try to get more in keeping with the general area.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** One of the things driving government policy is redevelopment in the rail corridors and the whole reason these houses are where they are is for the same reason but with different thinking between the wars. You have essentially done the baseline work?

**Mr QUINT:** Yes.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** That is 23 years ago.

**Mr QUINT:** In 1996.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Basically you would like Canterbury Council to inform its consultations with the Government by doing those studies?

**Mr QUINT:** Urgently, yes.

**The CHAIR:** I am interested in the stations from a heritage perspective. A number of submissions referred to the incongruous nature of having these heritage stations with the screens from the metro and the gap fillers. What is the value of those stations? Will you talk to us about which stations in particular and their heritage characteristics?

**Mr QUINT:** Are you able to do that because I would need to pull out those cards?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** The one that leaps to mind is Dulwich Hill station. The original proposal was to demolish the gatehouse, the ticket office. There has been a pulling back. There was quite an outcry about that. The actual stations themselves—I acknowledge that they are transport infrastructure and they particularly need to be updated as transport requirements change and concerns about patron safety changes. Those stations were built with a train an hour or every two hours with 20 per cent occupancy. The intensity of development and the requirement for safety I think means that we have to acknowledge that they have to be modified but it has to be done as sensitively as possible.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** It is my understanding that there is a technical paper that goes with the EIS and that is a heritage impact assessment. Have you had a change to review that? Will you provide some feedback on your opinion of it?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I looked at it a while ago. As we said we were concerned that it was existing listing focused. Apparently that was done in some consultation with the local council at the time which was a bit of a failing, I think, that there was not a better examination of unlisted items and precincts. Unfortunately you do get that—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** But that would require the document to have foresight into what was potentially future listings and the like as opposed to what was listed at the time it was composed. Is that really a failing?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think it is sticking to a particular program of saying "We have heritage listings. These are the only properties that are going to have an adverse heritage impact" which is demonstrably not the case when you have whole neighbourhoods of post-1900 houses that are rezoned medium to high density.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I guess it is the devil's advocate that at some point every property will have heritage value and if we were to try to extend that heritage point nothing would be developed. Is that not correct as well?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I do not think that is the case. As I said, there is a very strict protocol to go through to get heritage listing and it requires identification of significance across seven categories. For State listing you only need to achieve one category. There is an analysis process that goes through for all of those seven categories. It is not easy to achieve one of those criteria. There are lots of properties that would never get heritage listed because of modifications, because they are not of an historic associations, degradation, deterioration and all of those would mean that properties would not get listed.

**The CHAIR:** I am trying to understand how you can have densification of an area as well as retaining heritage properties. Will it end up with high-rise and then post-war bungalows and then high-rise? Is that the proposed solution? How can it be done better to preserve heritage whilst still allowing the increased density?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think that the identification of conservation areas is very important. You have precincts with particular characters. It is not really just about individual houses, it is about the streetscape, street trees, social connection through community buildings like churches and shopping precincts. All of those lend a particular character to an area that makes it a community and attractive for people to move in.

The integration of new development into existing heritage areas is not a mystery. It has been done all around the world and it does require sensitivity, it requires acknowledgment of scale and streetscape values and amenity. You will not have a California bungalow next to a 10-storey building. That is not going to work for anybody, the people arriving in the precinct or the people staying there. There can be modulation. There can be zones of transition from low intensity to higher intensity. As Mr Quint said, there are conservation areas that are already degraded and they do present an opportunity for sensitive redevelopment which can enhance the community's appreciation of a conservation area.

**The CHAIR:** By scoping out the heritage areas and working out so you know exactly where the heritage areas are, those that have been identified as significant, then smart planning would say we have got X amount, we need to preserve some, it makes sense to do it here. We can have this development over here, taking into account all the other things that we need to. It is not saying we have heritage property so leave us alone and do not come and develop us, it is we need to make sure that the development is clearly structured in a way that we can preserve whilst also increasing density.

**Dr MACARTHUR:** Yes.

**Mr QUINT:** And directly around the railway stations you will have shops and they will probably be two storey Edwardian period shops and again some of those will already be listed and development that has taken place at Marrickville would be high rise at the back of the property. You can certainly increase the density but it is a question of knowing ahead of time what are the important things that you should be keeping.

**The CHAIR:** If a bunch of properties that are potentially heritage listed, but have not been yet, has not been determined by the time you do the planning then obviously that raises concerns.

**Mr QUINT:** The position we put: Simply, a better heritage analysis would have recognised most all those community backed heritage listings. We are talking about the National Trust, Institute of Architects and also an independent heritage assessment of the entire affected property or the unquestionable assumption that these heritage registers, statutory registers were not a complete.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** How would that proceed? Would the council do it as a local government area wide study, is that what you are proposing?

**Mr QUINT:** They could concentrate on the areas around the route knowing they are going to do the whole council wide area, which is a massive area, Canterbury Bankstown. Do the initial study along the route. It is the proposal for the corridor that was put out. The preferred infrastructure corridor.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Do they have any zoning at all for heritage in Canterbury?

**Mr QUINT:** Yes. They have individual places listed.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** You are not confident that they have a heritage master plan?

**Mr QUINT:** It is odd that they only have one conservation area when they have pretty well most of the important architectural heritage of that period in their local government area.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** The whole area, again the residents are saying they think it has been unliveable and it needs urban renewal. That is what they are hoping for in Canterbury associated with this. How do you draw that line between all of those properties that will be heritage listed because of the date or just those quality ones given that has a really big impact on the property owners?

**Mr QUINT:** That is what the heritage study does.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** It is a complex process?

**Mr QUINT:** The heritage study basically works out which are the ones that are degraded, what would better boundaries be and then it goes out for public comment and for the owners to have their point of view and then there may be discussions with the owners about the benefits of listing. There are areas in Hurstville and Paddington where it is advantageous to be in a conservation area because you can make sure that property values are kept by keeping an eye on how the development goes in the area.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** You would like us to recommend that study be brought forward, in a nutshell?

**Mr QUINT:** Yes, that would be a big help.

**Dr MACARTHUR:** Yes, and similarly for Dulwich Hill which was particularly impacted in our area and the lack of acknowledgment of character precincts meant that there was inappropriate, we thought it was inappropriate, development proposed. Better examination of the heritage values of Dulwich Hill area within the corridor would be a very good exercise.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** When you say there was a pull back, the original plan was dreadful but we are hopefully in a better position now. Could you describe that process, how that occurred?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think there was a lot of community concern.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** In relation to what?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** In relation to the intensity of the development.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** There was a plan released by the Government, was there?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** The first stage of the plan was 35,000 dwellings in 20 years, Dulwich Hill was allocated 5,000 new dwellings and Marrickville a similar number for a much larger area. It was very broadbrush. Within 800 metres of the railway line it was high density. You moved out and it was medium density. There was very little acknowledgment in those initial studies of what that impact would be on those places, what would have to be sacrificed, what would have to be changed. The community responded by saying, "This is the impact that it is going to have on me and my neighbourhood".

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** There was a consultation period?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** There was a consultation period.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** By the Department of Planning?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** By the Department of Planning. When people responded to that that was when we were told this is a zoning exercise and there will be no discussion about supporting infrastructure, parklands, hospitals and schools, which is a red flag to people in our area. And, in spite of that there was a reworking of the zoning that made it more selective. In Hurlstone Park they almost completely removed the requirement for new dwellings because of all of the area within the zone near the railway had identified character areas. There were still areas in Marrickville and Dulwich Hill that were not acknowledged.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** The process did deliver some good outcomes. Was that facilitated by council or directly done with planning?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** Planning, through the Department of Planning.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** The zoning was council zoning?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** No, it was the Department of Planning.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Got you.



**Dr MACARTHUR:** Again, the final result is that planning has now been handed back to council for zoning but the overall provision of increased dwellings is set by the State Government, by the Department of Planning.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I understand. What stage is it up to at the moment?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** I think council is developing their own housing dwelling densification policy, that is my understanding.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** That endorses those requirements?

**Dr MACARTHUR:** Those targets, yes.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Is that the same for Canterbury?

**Mr QUINT:** Canterbury Bankstown have until next week out on public exhibition. This plan which includes heritage and the proposed heritage study, that is what we will be commenting on.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** You are making representations to council as well to bring that aspect forward?

**Mr QUINT:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I have one question about the impact of critical State significant infrastructure designation on heritage and how they interact?

**Mr QUINT:** Technically it switches off the Heritage Act. In reality there are still discussions and they do take on what we say. This is a classic example of the pulling back once the community reacts.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is entirely voluntary?

**Mr QUINT:** It officially switches off the Heritage Act but the reality is that we can still liaise and get our points of view across.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you explain to me the difference between a conservation area and individual listing? What is the difference in the levels of protection?

**Mr QUINT:** They are treated differently in that items on a council's local environmental plan, on their schedule of environmental heritage, if they are individually listed items then you go to a section of the local environmental plan that explains what happens to those items. There will be a separate section that explains what happens with urban conservation areas. The fact that a particular building is in an urban conservation area is quite different to, say, a very important 1850 bank building in sandstone. You might simply have a building that is actually out of character to the area and what is being proposed is maybe a slight addition at the back, and so they will just simply say, "Look, that's fine." It is up to each council. Each council has different provisions. You are dealing with a whole area and you might have hundreds of houses in that area. They will have a provision for what should happen in conservation areas, though you should have regard to whatever the value of that area is. The areas will be different depending on what is in the area.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** And this is just a local environmental plan or local council issue? It is not something of State heritage?

**Mr QUINT:** Yes. There are only two State-listed areas—three, actually. There are two in Millers Point and one in Braidwood, and they are the only State-listed areas—the reason being the heritage council has to notify every owner and take into account and would have to deal with or delegate development control for every single property. So it is just simply too hard to deal with.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for attending this afternoon. It was very interesting. As someone who does not know much about heritage, I feel quite a lot more informed. There was one question taken on notice; the Committee secretariat will be in touch, but you have 21 days to provide your answer.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Thank you very much for appearing today.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**JENNIFER NEWMAN**, Co-Chair, Cooks River Valley Association Inc., affirmed and examined

**GARETH WREFORD**, Committee member, Cooks River Valley Association Inc., affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** I invite you to make a short opening statement. Please keep it to a few minutes.

**Ms NEWMAN:** Yes, certainly. I would like to make an opening statement in the form of an acknowledgement of country. I need to announce myself as a Wiradjuri person here on Gadigal country. Mr Wreford and I are co-residents of Wangal country, so we have travelled along old paths and new paths today to come to sit here on Gadigal country. We belong to an organisation, the Cooks River Valley Association, that is a community organisation with a long history in the local area of people caring for country. We think of ourselves as all being Cooks River people. Just as my old Wiradjuri people are walking with me, reminding me to walk with care and respect on this country and to take care of the human and non-human residents who occupy this place, so too I acknowledge everybody else's old people who are with them today. We come to speak about matters to do with the environment. I will not speak for you, Mr Wreford, but if you would like to?

**Mr WREFORD:** Sure. In the tradition of keeping it brief, knowing we have got some time together, our interest is primarily in the environmental aspects of metro. Certainly, from our point of view we primarily are interested in the Cooks River, Cooks River Valley and the catchment, which overlaps largely with this particular project. As we went through the various documents that were released for consultation, we just noticed that it looks to be quite an expensive proposal that delivers a suboptimal outcome but that also does not necessarily seem to enhance the environment. We do not think there is any malicious intent there; it just has not been thought about. It is a level of detail where a very large project just has not always connected the dots in a particularly helpful way. We think some of the proposed landscaping in the corridor could be quite expensive to maintain. We think there is some wasteful use of resources around duplicating fencing, which also then has a negative impact upon the environment rather than a positive one. So there are a few things we would like to discuss with you based upon our submission. Rather than leap on in, we are happy to hand it over to you guys to ask questions. Away you go.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for making your submission. Unfortunately, there were not a lot of submissions that touched on the environmental aspects in detail; particularly, only a couple I saw talked about the impact on wildlife. Could you start by explaining how the fencing impacts on wildlife and whether you have any recommendations for how that could be improved?

**Mr WREFORD:** I suppose the first thing to note with the fencing is that—and I am not sure how well this is understood—there are going to be two fences. There is the existing fence along the 13.5 kilometres of the corridor, which is a six-foot to two-metre fence. Forgive the mixed measurements there. There is an existing fence there. What metro is proposing is a second fence, which will be some 30 centimetres inside the existing fence, and that will be a security fence. That fence is going to be 2.4 metres to 2.7 metres high. The only reason, we understand, that fence is needed is because there are no drivers on the trains. So it is a security measure. Because it is designed to be a security measure, it is made of a fine mesh—not like your cyclone mesh, your traditional kind of tennis court type fencing. It is a fine grid mesh designed not to be climbed. If you cannot get your fingers into this thing to climb it—if you are a frog, a bird, a lizard or anything else—you are walled off on one side or the other of this particular rail corridor. So there is a resourcing issue there in terms of the wastefulness of putting in 13.5 kilometres worth of fence.

There is also, then, the environmental impact of doing that: It will effectively wall off the corridor from the surrounding green space. As Ms Newman mentioned, our interest is in the Cooks River catchment and the plants and animals and birds. They do not think about what is State Government, what is private residential or whatever; they just think about where they can and cannot go. As somebody who personally backs onto the rail corridor, I know the rail corridor is a reservoir of wildlife. It is where the blue wrens live. It is where the blue-tongue lizards live. It is where different plants and animals come back and forth across that particular rail corridor. The existing fence that is there, which is a residential boundary fence, meets the current guidelines for the rail corridor if the trains have drivers.

**The CHAIR:** Is that the fence that has kind of got gaps, like that?

**Mr WREFORD:** It is household. It is about the height, rather than the actual material it is made of. Our fence is a paling fence.

**The CHAIR:** But in terms of the climbability?

**Mr WREFORD:** It is perfectly climbable.

**The CHAIR:** So it has got gaps in it for animals to be able to put their feet into?

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, that is right. For instance, the fence at our place is a wooden paling fence, which is a common residential fence. We back onto the corridor. Most of the residential fences will be just wooden paling. They have gaps, they have palings that fall down and all the rest of it. That is not a mesh fence. It is just an existing good old-fashioned wooden boundary fence on a private property, which is the majority of the fencing up and down the corridor.

**The CHAIR:** So at the moment it divides the rail corridor from properties?

**Mr WREFORD:** Residential land, yes.

**The CHAIR:** So the fences there are really just whatever has been put there by property owners.

**Mr WREFORD:** Whatever is there, yes.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** On what basis do you say that that fencing requirement has to do with driverless trains? It is my understanding that the fencing code that will be implemented if the metro goes in—or when the metro goes in—is just about an updated code of train fencing and has nothing to do with driverless trains at all.

**Mr WREFORD:** No, okay, two things there. One, the existing fence meets the current code. So there is no reason—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** It meets the code when it was installed.

**Mr WREFORD:** It meets the code now.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Are you sure?

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, I am, because a residential boundary fence of up to two metres high meets the current code. The actual detail around it being a security requirement is based upon a verbal conversation with metro staff. They have come round and done some consultation with local residents, and I had the conversation with them. So it is verbal; I cannot see it written down anywhere. I would love to see it written down or have confirmation of it from metro in a more formal manner. But it was based upon a conversation where I said, "Why are we doing this? Why does the fence need to be here?" And it was the detail around the mesh, because I was trying to work out what it was going to look like visually because it backs onto my property. They said it is a fine mesh designed not to be climbed. I said, "is that because we don't have drivers on the trains? Is it a security thing?" Because there are no drivers on the trains, they need a higher fence and a more secure fence than is currently there.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I am not disputing your conversation. My understanding—it is purely my understanding at the moment—is that the fencing is being updated to comply with the latest best practice. While the existing fence may be suitable for the time when it was installed, while they are refreshing the line they will be upgrading the fencing to match the current code.

**Mr WREFORD:** The question would be, is that happening anywhere else in the Sydney Trains network? It is not.

**The CHAIR:** Perhaps we could ask about that—

**Mr WREFORD:** It would be good to clarify so it is a good question. If that is the case, that is the case.

**The CHAIR:** Can I bring you back to the second part of my question, which was: if those fences are going to be installed, how can we improve them for wildlife?

**Mr WREFORD:** If they have to be installed you could provide some small gaps in the fences. It could be redesigned so you have a fence which is not climbable by the likes of you or me, but perhaps at ground level or at different heights throughout the fence there would be some quite regular gaps or spaces which would allow wildlife to come and go as it pleases. It would make sense to have most of those gaps at ground level so somebody could not crawl under the fence but wildlife could move back and forth and have an occasional gap in the fence at height. The challenge may then be whether that provides a foothold or a handhold for somebody else. I do not have a design solution there necessarily but there would have to be a way.

**The CHAIR:** You would think that would have been thought about somewhere.

**Mr WREFORD:** It does not seem to be, because the technical paper on the environmental impact is a massive paper with lots of detail. I cannot see it there anywhere—apologies to metro people if I have missed it—where the environmental impact of fencing is considered.

**The CHAIR:** I guess most of these metros go underground. I am thinking about other cities. These sorts of problems, you would imagine, have been solved elsewhere, but if they are not going overground perhaps that has not been a thing.

**Mr WREFORD:** Maybe. I do not know.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** How much of the track is in that river corridor area?

**Mr WREFORD:** In terms of the number of kilometres?

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Yes.

**Mr WREFORD:** I guess you would say from Sydenham through to Bankstown, roughly.

**Ms NEWMAN:** Yes.

**Mr WREFORD:** It pretty much is. The Cooks River catchment. Probably towards the Sydenham end it does not overlap that much.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** It seems to cross the river. Is that right?

**Ms NEWMAN:** It does cross the river. In terms of the actual Cooks River catchment, where the water flows into the Cooks River, one of the concerns for us is around the metro leading to an increase in development. If there is no decent sustainable urban design around the waste water that could lead to increased pollution in the river and more stormwater going into the river. Our concern is around the impact on the catchment regularly.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Can I just unpack this a little bit?

**The CHAIR:** Sure.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** There are different stages involved with the proposal. They would have different environmental issues, if I can put it like that. In relation to the river, I know that your organisation has done a brilliant job on the de-canalling of the river. Have you been involved in that?

**Mr WREFORD:** We have been consulted, as part of the community, but where the concrete or steel channelling has been removed, to date that has largely been a Sydney Water project.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Sure, but parts of the river that we have been talking about—has that been de-canalled?

**Ms NEWMAN:** Yes, there is some naturalisation.

**Mr WREFORD:** Some naturalisation has occurred.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I guess Sydney Water is a stakeholder in this as well. It is doing all this work to—

**Mr WREFORD:** It is a stakeholder for the river. Whether it is a stakeholder for metro—I think this may come to your question with respect to the intersection of the river with the rail corridor. The rail corridor crosses the river at one point. Apart from that there really isn't a direct impact, necessarily.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** It is just that it is all one thing to me. Why have you got one government agency trying to restore the riverbanks and another agency—these are just intersecting easements, if I can put it like that.

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, you can.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** It seems to me logical that the two would work together because those easements are the areas that we are most concerned about. Am I understanding this correctly?

**Mr WREFORD:** In terms of the water flow into the river, yes, any water flowing out of that corridor would go through Sydney Water infrastructure. That would be my understanding.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** They have spent money, as they should, trying—

**Mr WREFORD:** In places.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** —to restore the environmental values.

**Mr WREFORD:** But that is a separate discussion, outside the scope of this inquiry, in that there is quite an active project at the moment to try and confirm who owns some of the steel piling along those riverbanks. That is caught up between Canterbury Bankstown Council, Sydney Water and a range of other State Government stakeholders. It is not clear at this stage. We suspect that the State Government probably does own them.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** This is a really interesting issue. I do not mean to divert, but I have encountered this on the banks of the Georges River, as well. There is a real lack of clarity and multiple public agency easements.

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** And nobody is really clear on who owns what and where that boundary is, which therefore makes the wholesale projects—for places that are obviously in need of rehabilitation—almost impossible to undertake because of the complexity.

**Ms NEWMAN:** Even on a practical level the intersections of those utilities is a problem. So in between Canterbury station and Hurlstone Park station there is drainage from the rail corridor that runs into the Cooks River. The river has silted up and has covered the end of the drain so now there is flooding—there is back flow that comes when there is heavy rain, into the rail corridor and into the street. The water cannot drain into the river as it would naturally. They do not want to desilt the river but they have a problem now with this drain not being able to work.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** But saying who is accountable for that and who has to rectify it, becomes—

**Mr WREFORD:** You are right.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Nobody knows.

**Mr WREFORD:** In that example, in the space of 100 metres you have a good half dozen stakeholders—Sydney Trains, local government and, down at the river side, Roads and Maritime Services, Sydney Water and the steel pilings on the riverbanks may be on crown land. There are half a dozen—

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** And who removes those?

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, who pays?

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I guess you deal with this as potentially your biggest challenge, and it leaves you as almost the only advocates for the river.

**Mr WREFORD:** There are others. The Cooks River Alliance is a network of the local councils in the catchment. There has also been some State Government money going into doing a catchment management study. We understand that the issue of the steel piling might be considered as part of that. It has also come up recently through the last round of the budget estimates hearings here at the State Parliament where the local member Sophie Cotsis asked the questions repeatedly around who owns the steel pilings et cetera. So it is a topical issue we may not be able to solve it today.

**The CHAIR:** Could I bring us back to your submission. I am interested knowing a little more about the tree replacement and the loss of mature trees. Can you talk through your concerns and what recommendations you might be able to make to improve the situation?

**Mr WREFORD:** It is a tough one because nobody wants to be against new infrastructure and better infrastructure in our area necessarily. The impact on trees has been considered by metro, and they have reduced the number they appear to be removing. It has gone from about 900 to about 500 on their current estimates. That is mature trees—a tree that is defined to be already over three metres in height. Our concerns around those trees is, firstly, that they are being removed. If they must be removed then what replaces them and where do those replacement trees go?

Metro, in fairness, has articulated a two-for-one tree replacement policy. The question then comes down to if you have a mature tree—which might be 30 to 50 years old—and you are replacing it with a large sapling or even two large saplings, you still have to wait 30, 40 or 50 years before it can provide a decent habitat for local wildlife. The other question is where those trees go. There are some mixed statements in the many metro documents. The best I can work out is that those trees look like they can be replaced outside of the rail corridor,

within 500 metres of the rail corridor ideally, often on council land. But that will be determined, we understand, through some of the more detailed design process work that is going on.

The other question we have around the tree replacement is that any of the younger saplings—anything that is less than three metres tall—does not need to be replaced, whether it would grow into something bigger or not. The other concern also would be that you might end up with the same number of trees, or an increased number of trees, in the overall catchment but you will end up with less in the corridor itself. So what you lose is that stepping-stone concept. For any migratory bird or animal you will lose habitat in the corridor and you might, in 30, 40 or 50 years time have more habitat outside the corridor. What you are increasing is that hard barrier for wildlife to move back and forth across.

**The CHAIR:** What would be a solution to that, do you think?

**Mr WREFORD:** Again, it is beyond my ken to say what the metro needs in the rail corridor. Yes, of course, they need sightlines for safety and security, they need access for maintenance—all those things. There are, currently, quite a number of mature trees inside that rail corridor. To me, as a lay person looking on, greater consideration around preserving habitat and mature trees within the corridor would be worth looking at. The other aspect is that, in terms of the project footprint, when you look at some of the maps provided by metro, many of the mature trees are around station precincts, are on council reserves, butting onto the rail corridor, so you often have quite small, linear reserves where you have a nature strip or, it is not quite the size of a residential block, but a small piece of parkland, or whatever, where there is a couple of mature trees. They are often marked out as being construction sites for metro. I know there is one just down the road from my place where there is a strip of trees where metro was saying, at one stage, they wanted to put a crane in to try to fix a bridge, or they might use it as a works area to park trucks and construction materials.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Elbow room.

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, whatever it might be.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** How sad!

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes. In some places, the corridor is quite narrow. In other places, it is quite wide. There should, to me, be space inside the corridor for your construction or in other sites that do not necessarily need to knock down mature trees.

**Ms NEWMAN:** Yes. I would just add to that that the staging of the removal and replanting is, I think, really important so that large swathes of vegetation are not removed, so that whatever relies on that for shelter or food—be it a bird or an insect or a possum—is not just dislocated with no options because, obviously, some things are going to have to be changed.

**The CHAIR:** So, a phased removal?

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes.

**Ms NEWMAN:** Phased removal, yes.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** The understorey is very important, too, is it not?

**Mr WREFORD:** The understorey is a separate consideration. The trees are anything over three metres. The understorey is a bit of a gap, and quite a significant one, we think, in that we know that around the station precincts the environmental conditions for those include replanting with native vegetation. So our question is: If that can happen at the station precincts, why can it not happen for any vegetation which is disturbed throughout the rail corridor, particularly for your understorey? So, again, in the rail corridor, anything under three metres in height is fantastic habitat for all your small birds, frogs, lizards, all the rest of it.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Insects.

**Mr WREFORD:** Insects, your native bees, insects for your bats—all those sorts of things. That is just a gap. It just has not really been considered anywhere, as far as we can see.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Who does look after that? Is it the railways?

**Mr WREFORD:** At the moment, Sydney Trains is responsible for corridor maintenance but what you have now is that, as part of that four-year construction window, metro is already starting to de-vegetate. I know at the back of my place we had quite thick understorey plantings which have all been taken out by digger. They have already gone.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** What was the quality of the understorey?

**Mr WREFORD:** It was a combination of local provenance natives. It was about a metre wide along a 30 metre boundary fence. It added something that was not insignificant. This is the question in terms of what then replaces the vegetation that is disturbed. If you are taking lawn, weeds, blackberries, whatever, and disturbing that as part of the construction of the metro and then replacing it, why not replace it with native plants? Height-wise, they are fine in terms of your sightlines. In terms of the cost, they are also low maintenance. They also then add to biodiversity. There seem to be some quite strong arguments in favour of doing that that simply have not been considered.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** They assist with the runoff as well.

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, that is right. They would.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Would you propose that a vegetation plan for the rail corridor be done by the railways?

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, absolutely.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** By the metro?

**Mr WREFORD:** Yes, and one that considers understorey, not just the trees.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** And the impact of the fencing?

**Mr WREFORD:** And the impact of the fencing as well.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** There is no such plan at the moment?

**Mr WREFORD:** Not that we can see, yes.

**Ms NEWMAN:** And that draws on some of the considerable local knowledge, particularly local experts like Doug Benson who has studied and published—

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** So it fits in with the other things that you are doing, too.

**Ms NEWMAN:** Yes.

**Mr WREFORD:** That is it, and we can certainly find—and it is in our submission—a number of State Government policies and guidelines that talked about—Sydney Trains has a vegetation management guide and it talks about the value of replacing weeds and exotic vegetation with native plants for all the reasons we have just discussed. The old Office of Environment and Heritage had some conservation management notes on corridors and connectivity which is talking about all those stepping-stone, biodiversity-type concepts we like to talk about. So there are guidelines in place. It is just how they can be applied and a plan developed for that.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Because this is metro, do you think that those things are not applying?

**Mr WREFORD:** My understanding is they are not because metro is its own entity. But, then again, at the same time, it is the planning Minister or the transport Minister who sets the environmental conditions of approval, so they could be written in.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** This is something I had not really thought of before: is the ownership of the corridor changing?

**Mr WREFORD:** This may be a question for metro, which would be across this detail. My understanding is that the State Government will always retain ownership of the asset and, long term, it is a lease. So the ownership stays in public hands but, effectively, it is managed by whoever ends up operating metro.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I understand that. When I say "change of ownership", I do not mean losing it from the public. I mean: who in the State owns it?

**Mr WREFORD:** Sydney Trains at the moment.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Coming back to that earlier issue, is it Sydney Water, is it—there is a variety of State authorities that have bits and pieces for different reasons.

**Mr WREFORD:** The four-year construction window is interesting. Sydney Trains does the current maintenance. That maintenance includes maintenance of your native vegetation. Metro is starting to de-vegetate now, ahead of taking over the corridor in 2024, which, I think, is the start date for the actual project.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** They must have permission from Sydney Trains to do that.

**Mr WREFORD:** They are doing it side-by-side at the moment. Sydney Metro has already started de-vegetating the corridor but Sydney Trains still maintain it. So they will be side-by-side for the next four years. That, potentially, also means there is a gap because any tree removed by Sydney Trains does not need to be replaced; any tree removed by metro does. That is our understanding currently. It is a bit hard to tell. Again, unless you are backing onto the corridor—if I get some people in hi-vis and I can holler over the fence to them, I can ask them who they are and what they are doing—you just cannot tell whether it is Sydney Trains chopping down the vegetation or metro chopping down the vegetation, and then what is going to happen to it?

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Have you had both?

**Mr WREFORD:** We have had both side-by-side, within a day of each other.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Do they seem to be working together? Do they wave at each other?

**Mr WREFORD:** We are dealing with work crews at the bottom of the chain. They have awareness that other crews are working. I am not across how they communicate.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** We will find out. That is interesting. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** You also talk about the open spaces and the current ratio and the potential loss of open space. Can you elaborate on that?

**Mr WREFORD:** That is one that goes to what metro is probably trying to do in that we understand metro is an enabler for long-term development across the Sydenham-Bankstown corridor. If that development happens—and we certainly see, coming in here, as an environmental organisation living in the inner-city, we are not against development. What we would like to see is development which is medium-density, high-density where appropriate, but also that enhances the environment. At the moment the provision of open space in the Sydenham-Bankstown area, in the Cooks River catchment area, is largely a local government responsibility, and they just do not have the resources to buy up open space to do something. They can create pocket parks, they can do nature strip gardens, they can do some nice things, but, at scale, it is not making a difference.

One of the big spaces, which we are concerned about the future of, is the Canterbury racecourse site because it shares a boundary directly onto the Cooks River—36 hectares, I think. We know the Australian Turf Club has tried to sell off parcels of that land and, I think, from 2021, they are able to sell that land because they have the freehold. So the future of that parcel of land is one that is of great interest to local residents but also could, if done right, create a regional park of absolute significance—a bit like Sydney Park did, more in the inner city, where you had various State Government agencies who took over a massive site, did some rehabilitation work, and created a massive open space.

In our area, we have a shortage, not only of open space, but also things like playing fields—so passive and active recreation. That would certainly be of tremendous interest. I think the Office of Sport at one stage, with the urban renewal corridor proposals, put in a submission saying, there is a lack of open space. We would like to see Canterbury racecourse as playing fields. We certainly have said, from our Cooks River Valley Association perspective, we think there is tremendous scope there for passive and active recreation.

It is one of those interesting visual things where you think about the river and the linear parks alongside it and think there is a lot of space. However, when you actually aggregate it and do it at scale, there is the river parklands but then there is not much else either side, really. There is the Botanic Gardens, there is the Royal National Park, Wolli Creek and not a lot in between, necessarily, given the population and the projected population of that area.

**The CHAIR:** Were there any other aspects that we have not touched on from your submission? Again, we are particularly looking for recommendations as to how this can be done better. Is there anything else?

**Mr WREFORD:** No, from our point of view it might be a—Ms Newman might have something she wants to say?

**Ms NEWMAN:** I will probably only just emphasise some bigger, deeper philosophical matters about the generally anthropocentric lens through which this whole project is being viewed. It is about humans and moving humans from place to place, without our non-human residents being very present. I think more consideration and more detail about how everything from an insect to a larger mammal is taken into account would add a richness and a usefulness to the planning of the project.

**The CHAIR:** And planning in general.



**Ms NEWMAN:** And planning in general. The metro project is about connectivity and we are about relationality and connectivity in caring for country and maintaining that idea of caring for country. I think that should also take into account the seasonal variations, which seem quite outside the scope of a rail project. Nevertheless, the seasonal movement of people and water and creatures and the seasonal movement of flowering trees and plants, the dispersal of seeds—it is a level of granularity that really is critical to making this the best project it could be in terms of its environmental care.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** It is an opportunity, essentially.

**Ms NEWMAN:** It is a great opportunity.

**Mr WREFORD:** If the project must go ahead and if the State Government can find the money to actually build it, from our big-picture point of view—beyond the environmental stuff, I did go back and started to look at the business case. There does not appear to be a final business case for metro anywhere. But some of the numbers in that just do not stack up. There are assumptions there that the operation of metro will be entirely financed by fare revenue, 100 per cent financed by fare revenue. That happens nowhere in the world outside of Hong Kong. You just kind of go, "Well, okay". Then you get down to the granularity of the wastefulness of the resources. We are all for better and more frequent train services. That could be done by improving signalling, which is rolling out across other areas of the Sydney Trains network.

We do not know why we have been singled out for a really expensive, suboptimal transport option that also does damage to the environment. If it must go ahead, let's look at what concessions we can extract from this point forwards and talk about how it can be used to enhance the environment, rather than create more damage to that environment. Some of the things we have talked about here today, such as trying to reconsider either the need for or design of the fencing, thinking about revegetation of any vegetation disturbed within the corridor—particularly thinking about the understorey—would be incredibly valuable.

**Ms NEWMAN:** The maintenance aspect of any kind of planting—we mentioned in our submission about the ease of whipper-snipping a few things. I brought some show-and-tell for you.

**Mr WREFORD:** If you think about the lifetime of the asset, if you are going to plant turf in the corridor and then have work gangs running up and down every couple of months whipper-snipping, spraying and slashing, that has a cost. If you plant low-maintenance natives, yes, there will be some maintenance at some point, but it might be once every five years or something that you need to do something in there. If you get the right species in the right places you can actually have an environmental outcome. You could also have a cost saving to the State Government.

**Ms NEWMAN:** To add to that, the greater environmental concerns that State governments and Federal governments are trying to address with the reduction of plastic—this is what I picked up two weeks ago walking along the train line from Canterbury Station to home. They are the ends of the whipper-snipper cords from Canterbury council.

**The CHAIR:** Right, I see.

**Ms NEWMAN:** It is a nice little handful. I do not want to make work for council workers. I pick them up when I walk along.

**Mr WREFORD:** Sydney Trains currently—and metro will have to—use a lot of sprays to maintain weeds and keep the weeds down in the corridor. If you have the right natives there you would not need to do that. I know at our place we get spray drift when they spray up and down the corridor. We lose plants on our side of the fence because the spray drifts through.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Are you saying council or the—

**Mr WREFORD:** No, rail.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** The rail people. But council are doing part of it and the rail people are doing part of it?

**Mr WREFORD:** Well, that is outside the corridor. So either side of the corridor—but anyway, the same whipper-snipping is happening inside the corridor. It is just that you cannot get in there to pick up the plastic bits.

**Ms NEWMAN:** You just cannot leave that much plastic lying around forever.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** It ends up in the river.

**Ms NEWMAN:** It ends up in the river—well, it ends up in the food chain.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Do you have a map, by any chance, of the intersection of the corridor and the river or is that something I might find in the metro papers? I can ask the Government for that. I just wondered if you had something.

**Mr WREFORD:** It is an interesting layering of where you have Cooks River catchment. What you will find is Canterbury Bankstown Council boundaries, because they are doing this in consultation—that might be a start.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Is it primarily in the Canterbury Bankstown Council area?

**Mr WREFORD:** Canterbury Bankstown Council area.

**Ms NEWMAN:** I think this has been mentioned before: Canterbury council currently has its Connective City submissions. It has produced this map that shows all sorts of connectivity.

**Mr WREFORD:** Here is Sydenham, this red dot. This is the Cooks River, Wolli Creek and then this is Canterbury Bankstown Council. From Sydenham down to Bankstown, that is your rail corridor and then the river is one boundary of that.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Just for Hansard's benefit, you might just say the name of that.

**Mr WREFORD:** It is the plan for Connective City 2036 from Canterbury Bankstown Council.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Thank you so much.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your time. It has been very useful. We are going to take a short break. There were no questions taken on notice, so you do not need to worry about that. Thank you very much.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**JON LAMONTE**, Chief Executive, Sydney Metro, sworn and examined

**TIM PARKER**, Executive Director, Projects, Sydney Metro, sworn and examined

**HOWARD PAUL COLLINS**, Chief Executive, Sydney Trains, sworn and examined

**MARG PRENDERGAST**, Coordinator General, Transport for NSW, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** I invite you to make a short opening statement if you would like.

**Mr COLLINS:** Thank you very much indeed. Obviously you know the individuals who are here but I would like to thank you for allowing us to appear before the Committee and to take the opportunity to introduce the team in a little bit more detail for just a couple of minutes before we take questions.

On my right is Jon Lamonte, who is the Chief Executive of Sydney Metro. His role encompasses three roles—operating the existing Sydney Metro Northwest, the development of the metro itself and the building of the metro, which includes a number of projects including this one in the city and south-west. Tim Parker, to my far right, is involved in the design, build and construction of the Sydney Metro Northwest but now focusing on the south west. I am sure both Jon and Tim will explain their roles in more detail.

Everyone knows Marg Prendergast, as seen on TV. She is our coordinator general. I am a bit biased because I think she really runs the Sydney coordinating office in a great way and is really responsible for the traffic and transport changes, particularly including the temporary arrangements during those times. We remember the pink shirts and the buses out at Macquarie Park et al. So that is Marg.

Yes, I am the Chief Executive of Sydney Trains but I would like to make a more general point about Transport for NSW regarding public and private transport. Obviously Transport does the job of building and delivering services for customers across Greater Sydney and, indeed, across all of New South Wales. We work very closely with other parts of government ensuring planning and delivery is as integrated as possible, and also about land use and planning. Yes, I have been here in the railway industry for 42 years—just under seven in Sydney—and I have experience of building and operating metro lines in the London underground and heavy rail. I have seen the benefits of metro conversion. I have also seen the key role we have here for heavy rail. I do see that they are complementary, and Jon and I work side by side in this factor—not in conflict—for a better transport network. You have perhaps seen in the media this week that population and employment is growing and there is a forecast for growth significantly over the next decades. In response to that the transport network requires investment to make sure it can continue. Investment is at record numbers and it has to be good around the city.

This investment is critical and it is needed. I am sure no-one argues about that. Last year, some 420 million customer journeys occurred on our electric network—Sydney Trains and New South Wales trains. That is 36 per cent above when I arrived in 2013. It has outstripped every other city in Australia in terms of growth. In fact, if you look back over 160 years of rail operation you see we achieved 300 million, and then another 120 million arrived in the last four to five years. That is a remarkable growth, and we need to ensure that we are ready for even further growth. To meet the demand on Sydney Trains and Trainlink we have maxed out services—3,200 timetabled services every weekday.

If I ask any one of my customers who uses the network every day—myself included—it is pretty busy. People let me know that it is pretty busy on the network. Demand for efficient public transport is there, and our customers deserve that. Last financial year Sydney Trains carried more suburban rail customers than Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria combined. In fact we have seen growth more than any other State—almost by double. We have to improve rail infrastructure; there is no doubt about that. The existing network has worked pretty hard, and the staff who do that job every day have done a great job keeping our rail services going most of the time.

To date we have invested in places like the Rail Operations Centre [ROC] to help us run 80 per cent of the network in an efficient and reliable way. ROC prepares us for a European train control system. I am sure lots of discussion has happened about digital railways. I will try and keep it simple and explain, if questioned, about the difference between metro and digital railway and why we need both. We spend a significant amount of money on upgrading the services, with lots of new trains. We have rid ourselves of the once-known "sweat sets"; we now have a fully air-conditioned fleet. We have not only 24 new waratah series 2, but there are another 17 arriving, starting next July.

The future stages of more trains, more services to harness our capacity improvements of the digital railway system is on its way—firstly, the T4 line on the Illawarra line, the T8 line and then western and northern

T9 line and eventually the South Coast line will benefit. But that is not enough. We do need metro as well. I recognise that when I look around at the cities of the world and see that many of those cities have both types of services. We are desperately in need of greater capacity. We also need to untangle our network. I often refer to it as the macramé of Sydney, where our system has grown over 164 years. Untangling it and allow the heavy lifters to run the main corridors into centres, removing the branches and utilising those on new bespoke corridors through metro, is really the right answer.

People say, "You should be worried about the conversion of the Sydney to Bankstown metro." I really do see it as a great opportunity for us to not only bring in the latest and best technology for the city but also give me the opportunity to upgrade and improve and make Sydney Trains a really great system to complement that. You have seen, in the submission made by the New South Wales Government why the decision was made back in 2012, in terms of a step-change in customer outcomes. The document that was provided in our submission was *Sydney's Rail Future*. Through the course of today's inquiry, we are more than happy to go into the details of the conversion of this railway line. I am sure Jon and Tim have a lot of the answers. The line is 120 years old, and whilst it has served us well, the service is six trains an hour. The service pattern varies between four minutes, eight minutes, four minutes, eight minutes. It is a little bit of a challenge to work out which train to get because we are squeezing out as much as we can on the existing line.

The removing of this line from the existing network makes sense because we are enhancing the corridor. I always say that between Sydenham and Chatswood we really have a four-lane highway equivalent. When we arrive at Sydenham we have to squeeze those six platforms into four immediately afterwards. That is our challenge. Metro provides another two lanes all the way through—an alternative choice. But not only that. Everyone knows how busy Town Hall station is. We are getting additional stations on the metro, so with a quick 100 or 200 metre walk you will be at Pitt Street and have a choice of getting to Sydenham or somewhere else rather than squeezing onto the Town Hall line. Even with more signalling, the great choice of having more stations in the CBD is really good. Both of us are going to exploit the new technology in terms of metro and Sydney trains but I am really keen to say I am a great supporter of metro as well as a great supporter of the work we do in Sydney Trains. I would like to hand over briefly to John, if that is okay.

**The CHAIR:** Will you make it very brief because we are already 10 minutes in, it would be great.

**Mr LAMONTE:** I thank the committee for allowing us to speak today. I want to echo Howard's comment that we are working very closely together to improve integrated transport services to customers. Until this year metro was a bit of a theoretical exercise but now it is here, it is operating right now. Our first line operation Northwest opened in May. We have just marked our 10 millionth customer. We have run 41,000 services and I would be the first to say there have been a few issues bedding in this new railway and for that I apologise to our customers but we are working to fine-tune systems and improve response times. I thank the people very much for their patience.

On the whole, incidents have been very rare and it is a fraction of 1 per cent, 0.04 per cent, considering we are carrying 75,000 people every day and our trains have already covered over 1.6 million kilometres. In September and October our services ran to 99 per cent reliability, and that is a good result for a brand new five-month old railway. We are working with metro Trains Sydney, the operators of Northwest to make sure the service levels continue to improve. I just want to make it very clear that the metro service might be privately operated but the Sydney Metro infrastructure, like the stations, trains and railway, are owned by the New South Wales Government.

Today we are talking about the Sydenham to Bankstown conversion and the benefits thereof. As Howard said, there are benefits to the whole network. Every station gets 15 metro trains per hour in the peak—one train every four minutes in each direction. Right now there are just four trains an hour in the peak at stations like Hurlstone Park and Canterbury and there is room to grow with capacity to add more trains and longer trains well into the future. It means a fully accessible railway—Australia's first. There will be lifts at every station. Right now five of the 11 stations do not have lifts.

There will be level access between platforms and trains at all metro stations. There is no more step-up in to a train. If you want to see the sort of services that the Bankstown line will deliver then please travel up to Chatswood and have a look on the railway and on the north west you will see it for yourselves. It is a train every four minutes in the peak. You do not need a timetable, you just turn up and go. We have got every train air conditioned all the time, platforms that are level with no step and platform screen doors that keep people and things away from the track and only open when the train doors open. Trains with three wide doors for every carriage which makes it easier and faster to get on or off. No internal stairs. You can see from one end of the train to the other. Emergency Help Points throughout the train. Thirty-six security cameras on each train. Video Help

Points on the platforms and stations so that you can talk to someone and see them in the control room if you have an emergency or just if you have a question to ask.

While the Northwest is operational, the extension to Bankstown is under delivery right now. Our 15½kilometre twin tunnels under the city are more than 75 per cent complete. We have awarded hundreds of millions of dollars of contracts which cover in their scope the Bankstown line upgrade, including lifts for stations, the line-wide electrical and track works. As Howard said, this line was first announced in 2012 and received planning approval in 2018 so we have been getting on with the job. During that approval process we consulted with thousands of community members and other stakeholders.

Following the consultation for Sydney's rail future in 2012 we have engaged with the community along the Bankstown line since 2015 - two years before the EIS went on exhibition. We have had 17 community information sessions, distributed 150,000 newsletters, handed out over 38,000 flyers at stations and our material is being translated into seven languages other than English. We have read, we have listened to all the feedback and, as a result, we have significantly changed the design.

The project which was approved over a year ago addressed the issues, minimised the impacts, particularly in respect to vegetation, construction noise and traffic impacts. We developed a design which retains all the heritage buildings and concourses while still providing lifts. We are conscious that construction work will have an impact and the revised project will have significantly less impacts, and much fewer requirements for temporary station closures during construction. When stations are closed Transport for NSW will provide replacement bus services. As much as possible we are planning construction for holiday periods when fewer customers are using the railway line, not just the railway line but the whole transport network. That conversion is the result of an extensive process of engagement, analysis and development which stretches back many years and continues to date.

**The CHAIR:** I apologise for rushing you but we want to get into the questions. Mr Collins, I think the committee has received very clear submissions that we need increased capacity on our network, and I have not heard anyone disagree. Most people have agreed that the metro is a good thing in some places and a necessary part of the mix for Sydney. I have not heard anyone anti-metro. People accept that we need both metro and trains. Most people accept that when you build a new station you get development around that area. Those things have not been questioned by this inquiry. However, I did not hear in your opening statement is that we need the T3 to be converted.

Mr Collins, you talked about heavy lifters needed to run the main branches, new bespoke lines being a good thing so new lines to new areas, if we get this metro it is an opportunity to have new technology and improve the whole network, the service on that line currently being six trains and the timetable as it currently is, and the six to four tracks as being a problem. Also more stations in the central business district which I understand we would have anyway if we stopped the metro at Sydenham and we have other options for those two tracks to become six tracks again. I did not hear anything to the effect that the only way we can increase capacity on the network to a level being promised by metro is with a metro on the T3 line. My question is: Is it the only way or is there another alternative?

**Mr COLLINS:** I think it is the most effective way. Let me re-emphasise that. I think the issue is about, yes we can upgrade a line, even the Bankstown line with double-deck trains with the greatest digital railway system, a maximum of 20 trains per hour, but when you get to Sydenham you have already got—and if we upgraded those other lines—maybe 20 or 24 trains on two major trunk routes coming in. Even the best digital system for heavy double-deck trains with two doors per car, we really could not squeeze in the capacity compared with metro.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Why is that?

**Mr COLLINS:** That is because of the different design. Being and ex-tube man we had tube trains with four sets of double doors per train. Dwell time management—if you look and travel on the T8 line I have eight staff on each platform squeezing people in to the trains because they are great trains for taking people in large volumes but not good at getting people off. Once you get to about a train every three minutes, which we are doing on the North Shore line and the Parramatta line you reach the capacity not only of the signalling system but also the dwell times of getting literally people on and off.

**The CHAIR:** I want to drill down into what you mean by "capacity"? Did you say 20 trains would be possible with the best possible signalling?

**Mr COLLINS:** Best possible with this type of train with digital signalling.

**The CHAIR:** How many people is that because more people can get on a double-decker.

**Mr COLLINS:** We have a lot of seats, 800 and something seats, on most of our trains. On a really crammed train you almost squeeze in 1,600 or 1,700 people. It is much different from metro because obviously they have a lot more standing capacity but the issue is, even if I managed to tweak out 24 trains per hour out of a digital system the dwell time management, the ability to get people on and off when you have literally got 16 double doors to get people out as opposed to three doors per car on metro—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Aren't you moving three times more people per train movement?

**Mr COLLINS:** It is definitely the case that you are dealing with not only the movement of people in and out but the other consequence is the chairs and the stairs. I am sure most of you travel on our network. You always get the last person who suddenly realises they have to bowl themselves down the stairs. We have a target time of a minimum of 30 seconds, most cases a minute, to get people on and off at every station.

**The CHAIR:** If we are looking at 20 trains an hour, with however many people we fit on each train, versus how many for metro per hour?

**Mr COLLINS:** They can turn up the wick on CBTC all the way up to 30 trains per hour.

**The CHAIR:** So 30 trains per hour but how many people?

**Mr COLLINS:** There is probably about 80 per cent, maybe 80 or 90 per cent, the capacity of the network. The issue is not so much the Bankstown line but it is when you get to the junction at Sydenham. Platforms one and two were reinstated quite a few years ago. It is when you get further north than that you are trying to squeeze our services into a corridor. It does make a difference because when people are trying to get to and from work at places like Town Hall—and yes we could have stopped the metro service at Sydenham—but actually it is better to have the relief and the benefits. I think people will look back in a few years time of having the ability for every station to be serviced. Why do we have nonstop services? It is because we are trying to squeeze out as much capacity and speed on the Bankstown line. Ideally we would like to stop at every station. But, the line would slow down even further and your capacity would be restricted.

**The CHAIR:** There has been a lot of opposition. I will not put a judgement on it. There has been opposition to this project by some people and a lot of people we have heard come to this inquiry. Some would say that those people are being precious because they have to change trains. If I take a step back and I look at this project I see a minimal, if any, benefit in terms of capacity, in terms of moving passengers along the line by moving to metro versus upgrading the current line. With the metro we have five years of disruption, we have all of the problems in relation to the environment, we have problems about direct services being cut and people having to change more than once. There is a bunch of things sitting on this side of the ledger. How do you respond to that?

**Mr COLLINS:** Let me emphasise some of those other things because it is not just about theoretical capacity. Remember, it is about customers turning up and sometimes on the existing line waiting for eight minutes or 10 minutes or four minutes. It is about the fact that you will get a really quick, clean, fast journey. You will end up with a lot of new safety features that metro has in terms of screen doors. You will end up with another route in. Forget the technology and whether it is metro or city trains. We are building a corridor, another two lanes of the highway, which will be a fantastically quicker highway than the four lanes we have currently into the core of Sydney. Why leave that at Sydenham? Why not give the people of Bankstown—

**The CHAIR:** Why not go somewhere else with it where there is a whole bunch of other areas that do not have any stations? I think everyone agrees that it is great that it goes to Sydenham but why does it have to go to Bankstown instead of somewhere else?

**Mr COLLINS:** Because it minimises the disruption. The disruption for customers, Mr Lamonte and the team have worked pretty hard on understanding when the line is going to be closed. We are going to operate that line right up to a time to very quickly hand over to metro. It is not as if there is five years of complete chaos where people have to travel on buses. We will provide a great bus alternative for the shortest time. I cannot tell you. I think if you travel out to the north-west and you see some of the benefits that metro gives. Yes, it is converting a line. It is a good way of giving that corridor a boost in terms of train service. It has always been one of those branches and routes which has had limited capacity. It takes away pushing 20 trains per hour into a corridor in that main trunk from Sydenham up to Chatswood.

**The CHAIR:** If you were designing this from scratch, if the metro conversion had not already been agreed to, is that the option you would have gone with for improving the capacity of the network?

**Mr COLLINS:** Mr Parker will tell you, and many others, in the 2012 *Sydney's Rail Future* we considered all sorts of options, I understand. Certainly when I arrived in 2013 we considered all those options. It is about moving our people, it is about getting our people on. To be honest, look across the world and you will see in Paris, London, Copenhagen, even New York, there is a mixture of technologies.

**The CHAIR:** No-one is debating the mixture.

**Mr COLLINS:** Some of which is metro, some is heavy lifting, we need both and that is why I think metro is the best option.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I wanted to ask about the nine stations west of Bankstown. I will put this to you: Those 19,000 commuters are fundamentally disadvantaged by this project, they are worse off, aren't they?

**Mr COLLINS:** We are looking certainly at a number of options for those stations west of Bankstown. It is a very complicated and historic railway with railway triangles and branches and services to and from Lidcombe to Bankstown as well as Liverpool. We are really working hard with Transport for NSW.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You acknowledge that they are worse off?

**Mr COLLINS:** I think at the end of the day, once the metro opens, there are really two great viable options which will make them better off. One is making that very short level platform connection to get on the metro to get into places they have never got before. The second one is we are really considering what those options could be to give these people service provision into the city from those remaining stations.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What kind of options are you looking at? Are they the same kind of options dealt with in the 2013 document? There is a document entitled "Sydney's Rail Future: Implementation plan 2013". You are aware of that document?

**Mr COLLINS:** Yes, I am.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It identifies a range of options which include buses replacing the heavy rail for those stations, Carramar, Villawood, Leightonfield, Chester Hill, Birrong and Yagoona; is that an option you are considering?

**Mr COLLINS:** No, absolutely not. We have a good rail network, obviously lots of future options in the long-term but in the short-term I believe we have to continue to service those stations west of Bankstown. There will be benefits for many, there may be one or two disadvantages for the few. You talk about 19,000 commuters daily using these services and we intend to operate a train service. We are just going through those service plans now.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is one of those options restoring the connection to the inner west line?

**Mr COLLINS:** There are many options we are considering.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is that one of the options?

**Mr COLLINS:** It could be one of the options, but there are many options we are considering.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is a viable option, is it not, because that proposal is included in your temporary transport plan? You are using the inner west line as an option when the T3 is closed down for conversion?

**Mr COLLINS:** From a Transport for NSW point of view obviously you look at the strategic service plan and given that strategic plan I think there are a number of options. One of the other things I believe will happen is we will talk and consult with the people who are in that area to understand what those options could be. I would say it is too early to say yes or no to various suggestions being made. We will share our plans with the community.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You can see there is a lot of anxiety amongst the community. You can give assurances but ultimately the viability of those lines is threatened by the conversion?

**Mr COLLINS:** Just look at the fact that we have gone from 300 million journeys to 420 million, rail is the chosen option. There are 10 million customers already on metro. My view, and certainly the view of my colleagues in transport, is that rail is the viable option to be utilised in that area and we will look at what plans we can put in to ensure that we maximise that benefit.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Why is it that the metro did not go all the way to Lidcombe, as initially proposed, or further to Liverpool utilising the other stations on that line?

~BREAK/

**Mr COLLINS:** Obviously, a lot of plans were considered at the time of Sydney Metro rail future. I do not know whether any of my colleagues, Mr Parker or Mr Lamonte—lots of options were considered.

**Mr PARKER:** Bankstown is obviously a regional centre, so that was a good start. When you get past there and you get towards Lidcombe, you actually get a mixed use. In actual fact, that track is used for both passenger and freight. You cannot mix a metro with a freight because of the different signalling systems. That is why it was stopped on the dedicated passenger part of the line.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That is a significant argument against the conversion, I would have thought, because you are basically breaking up the capacity for the system to work in a seamless way.

**Mr COLLINS:** The difficulty, I think, is that we have so many options. We have so much infrastructure. The difficulty is that it is actually getting those core corridors working properly and then looking at what alternatives we have. We know that if you have too much infrastructure, if you have too many options of where the service goes, every five minutes the timetable may change, or people's options. We want to give people a regular service. We have certainly demonstrated that on the North Shore line. We are certainly doing that on the T1 line as well on a regular frequency. I think when I first arrived, we had over 20 different stopping patterns down the North Shore line and you needed a computer to work out which train you were going to catch. It is really simplifying the network, making it easier for people to understand and providing services, which does mean some form of interchange at key points, but as best as we can giving people the services they need.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What about the option of connecting the north-west metro through to the proposed western metro? The evidence that we have heard so far is that the western corridor is the busiest one. It is the one that is creating the most congestion on the City Circle. Why prioritise this project over the western metro?

**Mr COLLINS:** I think Mr Lamonte can answer about the future for metro.

**Mr LAMONTE:** Thanks very much. This was planned—the next stage of the city through to Bankstown. Metro West has just been announced. I just wanted to emphasise the point about capacity, because there is a little bit of discussion around that. The fact is at the moment if you were at Wiley Park and you are experiencing four trains an hour, then when you are getting 15 trains an hour on metro it is a big difference. The second point around that, of course, is that the system is perfectly capable of getting up to 30 trains per hour. If you compare that with—even if we got to 20 trains an hour with the Sydney Trains option, we would be up around 34,560 people able to be carried. If we added an extra two carriages, which it is capable of doing because it was built for eight-car, then we would be up at 46,000 people able to be carried. So there is an awful lot more capacity options.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There are a lot of "ifs" there as well.

**Mr LAMONTE:** If you are at some of those stations where you have got far fewer services, you have got a big improvement in your options and opportunities and you have got new stations to get into in the city as well.

**The CHAIR:** Which you would have anyway, though, because that is going to be part of the metro plan regardless.

**Mr LAMONTE:** Of course, but it is straight access to those. And for people who want to go round to Macquarie University, you are one line all the way through.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Thank you for your submission and for your great work. I think we are all agreed that we want better capacity and a great customer service. There are lots of different views about that, but ultimately our goal is to get people to places. I appreciate your work in that regard. I just wanted to pick up on one of the comments about the dreaded Sydenham to Bankstown area. I think, Mr Parker, it might have been you that mentioned community feedback and that some changes had been made to design and construction in response to community feedback.

**Mr PARKER:** Yes.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Could you tell the Committee what that has been? What changes have you made?



**Mr PARKER:** Sure. We put an environmental impact statement [EIS] out.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** My follow-up will be that the EIS had other options, did it not?

**Mr PARKER:** Yes. The EIS is a document that puts up—and it is a genuine consultation process. We put up a proposal and we received about 563 submissions. One of the fundamental feedbacks we got from that community was they did not want us to take what they had, which was nice small heritage stations, and completely trash them and start again. We also received feedback on the impact of the construction, in that they said, "This is a perfectly good railway. Why are you doing all this work and all this impact to us?" It was pretty forceful, I will be honest. I went to a number of the community sessions and I got given some honest and frank feedback.

As a result of that, we have changed the strategy quite significantly. We are now making the existing stations work. We are retaining all the heritage buildings. We are coming up with some innovative solutions so that we can actually convert these lovely 124-year-old stations, keep the stations, keep the integrity of the heritage, reuse and readapt it where necessary, but also get all the benefits of a metro operation. That was the fundamental feedback. As a result of that feedback, we are doing less work in the corridor, which means that there is less construction and less possessions. We are retaining all the heritage. We are adapting it where we can, as I said. It was a good process and I think we have come up with a solution which is better for the community and certainly reflects the strong feedback that we received.

**The CHAIR:** We have heard quite a lot about gap fillers.

**Mr PARKER:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Can you talk to us about how that works? Someone was saying that in some places the gap fillers will actually be quite large and there could be quite a large gap between the metro screen at the end of the platform and the train itself. Can you explain a bit more about that technology?

**Mr PARKER:** Sure, very happy to explain. A number of the platforms along the Bankstown line have curves. Some of them are straight and some of them curved. The metro product is fully accessible. What that means is, as Mr Lamonte and Mr Collins have described, we want people to be able to go level—so, from platform onto the train. We do not want there to be a gap either. We have a very small gap on the north-west. We want to provide exactly the same quality product for the Bankstown line. The gap filler is part of the door process. In fact, a slide comes out as the doors are opening and that slide fills the gap. Then, when the doors close, the slide retracts and that takes the gap so the train can then go on.

**The CHAIR:** Does that increase the delay of the boarding time?

**Mr PARKER:** No, the two work very well together because they do not work sequentially; they work in parallel. We have looked at these devices. They are currently in use in both Japan and Korea in exactly the same type of installation, with a door and a gap filler. As I said, it is not new technology; it is taking technology that is being used successfully elsewhere and applying it. What it means is that we can retain our stations with their quirky heritage buildings and everything else, but we can actually provide that really quality product, which is the ability to go straight from the platform straight onto the train. That aids all sorts of people who do not like the gap.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It increases dwell time, though, does it not?

**Mr PARKER:** No, it does not increase the dwell time. As I said, the action of the doors opening and the slider coming out all happen in parallel so there is no increase in dwell time.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I apologise if you have covered this already; I was absent briefly. We talked about integration. I am interested in the Sydney Metro City & Southwest project. Could any of you speak to the benefits of that to the Committee? I am sorry if we have covered it already.

**Mr PARKER:** The City & Southwest is about almost doubling the capacity in the city. We are bringing in a new line; we are bringing in new stations in the city, out to Bankstown, and then obviously the conversion of the Bankstown line. The real benefits are just that huge lift in capacity. The other benefits include—at the moment, because of the way that the existing network has grown, if there is an issue on the existing network often it knocks on to others. One of the things about why the two systems work so well together is that they are independent. They are totally independent. If we have a problem on one, we have the other one. At the moment, if we were to have a problem on the Harbour Bridge, there is no other choice than to put people on buses. In the future we will have two means of transport. We will have a new tunnel under the Harbour connecting up. We talked about capacity. People get very fascinated with trains but, obviously, when the trains come in they have to have somewhere to go. We have got new stations at Barangaroo serving a slightly new area; a new station at Martin

Place, which will interconnect with the existing for easy interchange at Martin Place; new stations at Pitt Street and Central.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** My question arises because we have heard other evidence today that we could also increase capacity by just putting on more trains. If there are 15 an hour we can put on 20, and we can do timetabling and signalling. Just increase capacity that way and we do not need to do this.

**Mr COLLINS:** I wish it was that easy.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** I was wondering about that; I thought it was just me.

**Mr COLLINS:** No, I wish it was that easy. It is true that we are absolutely at the capacity of the timetable and the infrastructure we have today. We have a safe but traditional signalling system. Yes, we are, through a whole series of more trains, more services program, enhancing that with greater capacity signalling but it cannot achieve the numbers of trains per hour with the current infrastructure, the stations we have and the complementary back-up and addition of Sydney Metro for the CBD. The other thing I would mention is that when we are doing this upgrade it is actually good to have the metro present because we will have to do some of that work in the evening, and while the capacity is there metro will take those customers to and from that core while we are working on the existing line to upgrade. So there is an additional benefit there.

To upgrade our line will take work and will take several years. We are focusing on the T4 line, which everyone knows is one of the most crowded lines at the moment, and upgrading the T8 line, which was built with a 10-train capacity in 2000. We are upgrading that, hopefully to a 20-train capacity.

**The CHAIR:** Can I clarify? Mr Collins I am listening to your answers very carefully. In response to the question just asked to you, you referred to the limitations with our current infrastructure. I am interested in knowing, what would happen if we were to put investment into upgrading the current line. I am talking about the current heavy rail line with the double-decker or whatever you want to call it and make timetabling changes and considered all the other things the metro is doing to still be happening—the new stations and whatever is not relevant. I am looking at just that Sydenham to Bankstown. Are you saying that we could not increase the capacity sufficiently to achieve the same thing as what is being proposed by the metro?

**Mr COLLINS:** I seriously do not believe that that is the case, because that particular corridor has a number of branches off it—Bankstown branch, Waterfall, Cronulla. It is carrying freight through it as well. That is the other thing people have to remember. So some of that corridor further down carries freight. We move in and out—

**The CHAIR:** Does it carry freight on the Bankstown to Sydenham bit?

**Mr COLLINS:** We move diesel trains in and out of that corridor of Meeks Road, right next to Sydenham, as well. There are a number of movements of trains in that area.

**The CHAIR:** But is that between Bankstown and Sydenham? I understand that there may be other changes that need to be made, but that actual section between Bankstown and Sydenham, if we had a willingness to upgrade by digital signalling and smarter timetabling or whatever else we needed—if we had all of that great investment—could that not achieve substantially the same thing as the metro?

**Mr COLLINS:** We have that investment to upgrade our network but investing on the Bankstown line for 20 trains per hour will not give you the core capacity, even with a digital signalling system that you need to improve the services for the Bankstown line and the core corridor. Let me make that clear. Upgrading the Bankstown line is not just about the technology. It is about the platforms, the capacity of the double-deck trains, their ability and dwell-time management and bringing that into one of our busiest corridors, as a branch into the core corridor, despite upgrading, which we will do, the T4 and the other lines which are serviced in that area, will not give us the capacity. My view is that the better and best solution is to allow metro to run that brand new corridor—yes, it might be considered irrelevant—but also provide its opportunity to link those customers on one of the branches and give those customers on the Bankstown line a superb improvement to what we can achieve, even if we upgrade the line.

**The CHAIR:** Could we not achieve the same thing if we built those two extra tracks from Sydenham through to Erskineville?

**Mr COLLINS:** That is very difficult to do. Certainly, where do you put them? You need to put them into a new tunnel. What have we done? We have built a completely new tunnel all the way from Sydenham under serving stations like Waterloo and Central—an additional benefit for Central itself—through to the city. There

were plans, I remember, in the seventies and eighties—I found them—where you drive the trains further up and then try to squeeze them in with another tunnel somewhere into Central. This is a pretty elegant solution.

There are many other places on our network we can really enhance our services. I think in a few years' time people will understand the services they are getting on the core corridor. It is not just about the Bankstown line. It is not just about that; it is about the whole picture of this city. What I want to do is to make sure that some of those core corridors can run successfully—getting people from the South Coast; getting people from Cronulla, where they are crowded; getting people from Penrith. It is all about looking at what is the best option. On our multi-track lines it is definitely heavy rail with a digital signalling system. Where we have branches and other historical reasons why we have all these alternative routes then we simplify the network and make it easier for people to understand and also make it easier for people to get into the city.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Ms Ward, I did interrupt you again.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Thank you, Chair. They are good questions. I was interested in one other aspect—cars. We heard some evidence somewhere about metro causing additional cars to be on the road. I cannot reconcile that. Is that the case? If not, how many cars can we expect to be taken off the roads?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** The EIS would have outlined traffic reductions but I can tell you the experience with the Epping to Chatswood line. Obviously we closed that for seven months to upgrade it for Sydney Metro Northwest. We had 124 pink buses in operation. We found that we did not have a huge dip in patronage. We know that traffic got busy. Some people did convert. The businesses obviously changed their flexible working and stuff to support us. But in essence we have come back with metro introduced, post that bus operation, and what I can tell you is that traffic has reduced and the congestion at Macquarie Park. It is a combination of metro, the improved bus services—everyday bus services, not our special ones—plus the work we did at signals et cetera. Resoundingly we hear from the businesses at Macquarie Park that, post station link, there is less traffic on the road. Obviously we are seeing 75,000 people travelling on Sydney Metro Northwest. So it has actually reduced traffic.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** So just to be clear, this project, in your view, will not result in additional cars on the road and it is highly likely to result in less cars on the road.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** There is natural growth with Sydney growing and with traffic movement—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Sure, but as a result of this project.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Absolutely not. There will be a transfer to public transport, particularly when you look at metro. What this will open up for the people of Bankstown, Sydenham and Waterloo is access all the way through the employment centres of the CBD, North Sydney, Macquarie Park—

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** Barangaroo.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** Barangaroo, of course. So it opens up so much more opportunity. For Macquarie Park, once this is in play, people can come from Sutherland in a much quicker travel time. It opens up the employment pool for different centres and gives people better access to more jobs around the city.

**The CHAIR:** In the interests of time could we go to Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Collins, you are familiar with the Future transport strategy 2056?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In that document on pages 50, 51, 110 and 111, there are network maps that appear to remove the stations Carramar, Villawood, Leightonfield, Chester Hill, Sefton, Berrong, Yagoona from the rail network.

**Mr COLLINS:** I do not have the map in detail. Sometimes those stations disappear because of scale and printing the diagram, but as far as I am concerned the intention in the future for those locations is to remain as rail-served stations.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Given that undertaking, can you give us an indication of when the commuters in those areas will know with some certainty about the service levels that they will be provided?

**Mr COLLINS:** I will certainly take that on notice but I know Transport for NSW is working on those alternative options for the rail service. As I said earlier, we will consult with the community on that, and as soon as they are available we will obviously—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are they likely to be available soon, or in six months, 12 months? What time frame can we expect?

**Mr COLLINS:** I would have thought that within the next 12 months we would certainly be ensuring that we are well planning the future of, obviously, the current and future heavy rail network.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Lamonte and Mr Parker, is it the current intention that the Bankstown station will be built underground?

**Mr LAMONTE:** No. The intention at the moment is that it will be an extension of the current platform, so what it will allow is straight access from Sydney Trains coming in to the metro train.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What about the extension to Liverpool? Is it the intention that that would be an underground system as well?

**Mr LAMONTE:** The Government announced that planning would start on Bankstown to Liverpool, as an option, and we are starting to look at that work now.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Have there been any land acquisitions for the turnback facility?

**Mr LAMONTE:** There have been no additional land acquisitions for that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So you do not have a site for that at this stage?

**Mr LAMONTE:** At the moment we are turning back at Bankstown.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** At the station?

**Mr LAMONTE:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I also ask about economic loss for businesses in those affected stations? Has any consideration been given to the economic loss experienced by businesses and customers disadvantaged by the changed arrangements?

**Mr PARKER:** I think the answer is one of the feedbacks from the EIS was actually reducing the amount of closures. As I said, again, as far as footfall goes and things like that, that is where the buses will be, so people will still be there, and so we do not believe there will be a material economic loss.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You do not think there is going to be any economic impact on the businesses?

**Mr PARKER:** I said that I did not believe there would be any material impact on those businesses.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Collins, are you aware of this document signed in the name of Messrs Brew, Christie, O'Loughlin and Day, that has been tendered in evidence in this inquiry?

**Mr COLLINS:** I have not looked at that document in detail. There are a number of documents. Is that part of the submission?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is an attachment to Mr Ng's submission, I believe—submission No. 102.

**Mr COLLINS:** I have not looked at that document in detail.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** One of the issues the submission EIS raises is that the T3 is, effectively, a relief valve for the rest of the system if there are major disruptions, particularly on the T4 line. Do you have a view about the implications of the conversion, the impact it will have in terms of the functionality of the T4 line in the event of major disruptions? Because, generally, if there is a big disruption on the T4 line, there is a capacity to route trains down through T3.

**Mr COLLINS:** I cannot comment on that document. I travel on the T4 every day. I do not think I have ever been via the T3. That does not work, so maybe it is a different line you are referring to. But I would say one of the difficulties is the cross-contamination of delays. Yes, if there is a delay on one line, it looks like a sensible solution to put trains on another line. The difficulty is it brings down both of those lines and customers have difficulty on both networks, as opposed to one.

We have actually worked very closely with Marg Prendergast on some of the options that we can consider when we get disruption, but the most important thing now, with the investment we have in the Rail Operations Centre, with the more reliable train services, with the focus on our performance, we know that our strategy for

the heavy rail network is to sectorise in the long term and work through the options of making sure we retain those core corridors. Whilst it does feel useful to have a bolthole to get a train in and out of, what often happened—and happens—is that you actually cause more disruption on the line which was working perfectly well. So, therefore, just generally answering the question, I do not believe, certainly when it comes to the T4 line, that the T3 is a relief line.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I ask about the numbers in the Transport for NSW submission about raising the capacity to the CBD from 120 an hour today to 200 services? Can you unpack that? We have had some evidence that only 10 services run into the CBD from the Bankstown T3 line. The numbers do not seem to correlate. If you pull those 10 services out, how do you get to the 200 services that you talk about in your submission?

**Mr COLLINS:** Was that from the 2012 future strategy document, part of the submission?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** This is your submission.

**Mr COLLINS:** I have seen that picture of the funnel one that we were talking about, I think it is? Obviously, it serves a general comment about a number of services, as I have talked about earlier, trying to squeeze into a narrower corridor. I will not get into the details of what that number is but we know—and I have hopefully been explaining—that, literally like a funnel, we have a limited amount of ability to get all these converging branches in through the core corridor of Sydney. We have one two-track over the Sydney Harbour Bridge. We have narrow corridors, certainly, coming from the Sutherland shire on the South Coast—two tracks into four tracks. There are limited numbers, and you know we have had a program over 20 or 30 years of widening some of those two-track corridors on the north shore and the north main.

So the brilliant advantage of metro is it does give us, as Tim described, an alternative and viable route, north to south. It opens up another highway of public service from all the way through to places like Chatswood all the way down to Sydenham, and that gives us a great benefit. If you are trying to squeeze in more tunnels and more opportunity on the current infrastructure, it is very difficult. We would have to build tunnels. We would have to look at taking apart Central. Metro provides a good solution with a new technology as well.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But you would get that benefit even if the metro stopped at Sydenham?

**Mr COLLINS:** You would get some benefit but what we still have is a problem of actually creating greater capacity for those other lines which are serving Sydenham and the Bankstown line because you are still trying to squeeze three, in effect, branches into one route.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But the relief on the City Circle would be a consequence of the metro running through to Sydenham anyway?

**Mr COLLINS:** A little bit but, again, my view is this is a complementary and supportive service. We are building more trains, more services. We are upping the capacity, using the best technology for a heavy rail system. In addition, we are building separate lines and converting existing lines to provide that self-contained capacity.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is not very persuasive for those 19,000 commuters in those stations that are going to be significantly disadvantaged by the change.

**Mr COLLINS:** I think if you examine the strategy, going forward, and the strategy for the long-term benefit of Sydney, there are, obviously, further plans afoot to improve services for a number of customers across the whole of both the eastern CBD city, the city of Parramatta and also western parklands.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So there is 19,000—

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Sorry, Madam Chair, there are two minutes left and I have waited quite patiently for my opportunity.

**The CHAIR:** Just a moment. Ms Ward did take a long time before. Mr Donnelly has had his hand up for a bit. Then we will come to you, Ms Cusack.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** One of the clear learnings from the inquiry into the CBD and South East Light Rail project—an inquiry that I was on—was the absolute manifest failure of the Government and the management of the whole project to understand and deal with the impact of the project on business and, specifically, small business. It was quite excruciating to sit through the evidence from a number of business operators—many of them quite small business operations—where the impact had been—

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I am sorry, Madam Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Can you come to the question please, Mr Donnelly?

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** Can I ask some questions, given our time is so limited?

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Do you want me to start again? I am asking my question. I do not get told how to ask my question. Should I go back and start again?

**The CHAIR:** Please do not.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** That was one of the key learnings from that and it was reflected in recommendations in that report. I am wanting to know, given how it was so manifestly clear that this was failed to be apprehended and planned for and ultimately a strategy was put in place to deal with the impact to mitigate the effect on business, what is the comprehensive plan to deal with that in the context of this project because it is just not possible, and it will be completely unacceptable, for this to be repeated again in other project like this?

**Mr COLLINS:** I might ask Ms Prendergast. Mr Lamonte can help with that.

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** In terms of the south-east inquiry, in which I participated as well, the finding was that it was the delay that actually impacted businesses. There was a lot of support provided to businesses. To date we have provided those businesses—180 of them—with over \$41 million in business support during construction. We can now see the transformation that has occurred. We supported them with activation, with marketing, with services to help them with their business—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Ms Prendergast, I have sat on that inquiry and I can go through the alternative position of people who were at the brink of being medicalised because of the impact of the stress and a whole range of other things. I could go down the other side of the ledger. My question is: With respect to this project, what is going to be put into place—the comprehensive plan—to prevent this happening again?

**Ms PRENDERGAST:** We appreciate that. Light rail is a very different construction to metro: It is at surface, it is right in front, it is disruptive. We acknowledged that during the last Committee. We did a lot of mitigation and we have learnt from that. I will hand now to metro but it is a totally different build.

**Mr COLLINS:** In fact, we are keeping the same tracks and most of the overhead wiring. It is pretty different.

**Mr LAMONTE:** I should say that there has been an enormous amount of consultation, including with businesses, to get to this point and we have reflected in the way we have approached the comments that have come in to reduce the length of any closures that we have done, and done all of that in holiday times. We have done that. We have tried wherever we can to accommodate what people have told us. There is much more to plan that.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** The corridor is owned by Sydney Trains at the moment. Does that change under the metro strategy?

**Mr COLLINS:** It is actually owned by RailCorp technically. Mr Lamonte, do you want to explain what happens?

**Mr LAMONTE:** Thank you. It will convert—as most assets have been converted, like the Epping to Chatswood line—to Sydney Metro. It is still owned by government. That is the key point.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** I understand that. In terms of who people can talk to about the environmental management of the corridor, are they talking to Sydney Trains or are they talking to the metro?

**Mr COLLINS:** At the moment Sydney Trains is definitely accountable for the environmental management. We do have metro working on that corridor at the moment.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** That is right. That is the issue. I am sorry, Madam Chair. It is a really simple thing to get some clarity around.

**Mr COLLINS:** I would say, first stop, I am accountable. If there is anything that people want to raise regarding the current corridor, it is certainly Sydney Trains and its environmental team.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** They want to understand, is there an integrated plan in managing the vegetation in the corridor between the works that are being undertaken and the maintenance?

**Mr COLLINS:** There is. There are two different plans: One is maintaining an existing corridor for safety and maintenance purposes and then we are working with Mr Lamonte on the plan to ensure that his contractors, when they need to do work, have access and deal with the environmental impact.

**The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK:** How is that being managed—I am sorry, Mr Fang, you go.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** No, I cannot.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you so much. It is very clear that we could have spent a few hours talking to you. We would have enjoyed it anyway. Our time is up. If there are any questions taken on notice, there is a period of time of 21 days. The Committee secretariat will be in touch in relation to that.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**The Committee adjourned at 16:32**