

Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 Camellia to Sydney Olympic Park

Comments on the Environmental Impact Statement

The proposal as outlined in the EIS is inconsistent with the announcement by the then Premier, Mike Baird, on 8 December 2015 to the effect that the Western Sydney light rail network would connect Parramatta's CBD to the key hubs of Sydney Olympic Park, Westmead Hospital, Western Sydney University and Strathfield. That announcement also referred to a branch line to Carlingford to replace the existing heavy rail line.

I accept that a light rail link between Sydney Olympic Park and Strathfield is unlikely to be feasible.

The proposal in the EIS to link Parramatta CBD and Sydney Olympic Park via Rydalmere, Ermington and Melrose Park is absurd. It entails a journey of 38 minutes, the construction of fourteen light rail stations over a distance of ten kilometres and an expected cost well in excess of \$602 million.

It appears that passengers travelling from Olympic Park to a destination beyond the Parramatta CBD, in North Parramatta and Westmead, will need to change services to do so.

The proposal is justified with reference to the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula (GPOP) growth precinct. However, the fact is that Ermington and Melrose Park are not part of this precinct. The major attractions listed in the EIS as being located along the route are all located in Sydney Olympic Park; none are in Rydalmere, Ermington, or Melrose Park. Access to Rosehill Racecourse is already provided for under Stage 1.

Earlier studies identified nine possible routes for the proposed Parramatta light rail network. Ermington and Melrose Park were not considered as part of any of these options. The published conclusion of those studies was that the best option was to link Parramatta and Olympic Park, with the addition of a branch line to Carlingford (*Parramatta Light Rail: how the preferred network was determined*, Elton Consulting for Transport for NSW, May 2016 p.32).

The addition of Melrose Park in the proposal appears designed only to help residential development there. Whilst I do not oppose that development, it is nowhere listed as a strategic priority. I would also note that the best option to link the new residents of Melrose Park to the heavy rail network is via West Ryde Station, which is just 3.6 kilometres away.

Similarly, the inclusion of Ermington and Rydalmere (beyond the Western Sydney University campus) takes light rail through light industrial and low density residential areas that lack strategic importance. I expect that residents along the route will not appreciate the disruption that construction will entail.

Given this, seven of the fourteen stations are not justified – three in Melrose Park, two in Ermington and two in Rydalmere.

Recommendation

The best route option would appear to be to cross the river from Camellia to Silverwater and then proceed along Holker Street, Holker Busway, and Australia Avenue. From the proposed Holker Street station passengers could proceed to either the ferry terminal via Hill Road or to Olympic Park and Carter Street via Australia Avenue and Dawn Fraser Avenue.

Under this proposal seven stations can be eliminated, reducing the cost, and travelling time. An additional station should be established in Silverwater near the prison to meet the high volume of

trips to that location. This station would also provide access to the light rail by the residents of Newington.

Warren Gardiner

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