



16 December 2022

Director Transport Assessments Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Reference: Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 Environmental Impact Statement - SSI - 10035

Dear Sir/Madam

The Sydney Olympic Park Business Association Incorporated (Business Association) is pleased to have the opportunity to provide this submission to the Department in the relation to the above referenced EIS, a project we support. There are however some omissions, errors, and concerns we would like to comment on for consideration and inclusion in the final EIS for this project.

The Business Association is an independent membership-based body representing the interests of companies, organisations and stakeholders of Sydney Olympic Park and surrounding suburbs.

Our membership consists of companies across a range of industries including venues, events, elite and community sporting organisations, government agencies, hotels and accommodation, property trusts, developers, leasing and real estate agents, corporate entities, SME's, education institutions, childcare providers, associations, not for profits and charities, allied health and fitness services, start-ups, and retailers.

Established in 2000, our mission is to maximise the potential of this iconic precinct and address issues and opportunities to ensure its growth, access, and sustainability by advocating and influencing key decision makers to meet the collective needs of our members.

The Business Association works closely with the City of Parramatta, and the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA), contributing to continuous improvements aligned with the Masterplan 2030 (Review 2018) and the Greater Cities Commission's vision for Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula (GPOP).

Sydney Olympic Park is Australia's Premier Event precinct, hosting over 5,000 events per year equating to patron visitation of over 10 million people per year. This is over and above a constant daily population of workers, residents, students, and passive recreation visitors.

CONCERNS ON THIS EIS

While events in Sydney Olympic Park are noted within the EIS, more attention and consultation is needed with the key venue stakeholders and in particular one of our members, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, and Sydney Showground (RASNSW-SS).

As the operators of the Sydney Royal Easter Show, the largest ticketed event in the Southern Hemisphere, plus the equivalent amount of people attending other large-scale concerts, exhibitions, and business events at this venue over the course of any year, there is a considerable lack of attention to the operational and economic impacts to this organisation.

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It is understood the RASNSW-SS has been collaborating closely with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) on this project over several years and yet the concerns and issues they have raised, including proposed solutions have not been acknowledged or addressed in this EIS, indicating a significant lack of understanding on the part of TfNSW and/ or the consultants involved in this EIS.

This is in contrast to the information within the EIS relating to the approach, objectives and feedback process of Community and Stakeholder Engagement as outlined in Chapter 8.

This process needs to be greatly improved to genuinely reflect and address the concerns of stakeholders, who are for the most part, very supportive of this project and willing to work collaboratively and constructively with TfNSW and across NSW Government departments and agencies to find viable, practical, and workable solutions.

CONSTRUCTION TIME FRAME

The Business Association has been a passionate supporter of this vital infrastructure project since light rail was first raised as a potential project for the Greater Parramatta region in 2014. Subsequently, in 2017, the then Minister for Transport, announced two stages to this project and proposed Stage 2 would commence construction in 2020.

It is disappointing that in Chapter 7 of the EIS, Figure 7.1, the timeline for construction to commence is now Q3, Q4 of 2025, some ten years since the initial light rail project from Parramatta to Sydney Olympic Park was first announced by former Premier Mike Baird in December 2015.

It is also unclear why the actual construction phase will take five to six years given that this will be the total length of time for PLR1 to be completed from when approval was given to when it will be completed and a construction time of less than four years.

Given the complexity of construction within the Parramatta CBD, and the experience gained by TfNSW and contractors and notwithstanding every project has its unique challenges, the five-to-six-year time frame for construction of PLR2 seems excessive.

We encourage the NSW Government to investigate all options to fast track this critical piece of infrastructure and reduce the proposed construction timeframe. We also encourage TfNSW to prioritise construction works in Sydney Olympic Park and for these to take place outside of traditional key major event schedules to minimise any economic disruption to business and any inconvenience for major event attendees.

OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Sydney Olympic Park has a reputation for sustainability and is an exemplar of environmental leadership.

The recent Vision work conducted by SOPA with significant input from the community has resulted in identifying Sydney Olympic Park as “Sydney’s Beating Green Heart”.



In keeping with this Vision, we would encourage TfNSW to investigate extending Green Tracks particularly throughout the alignment in Sydney Olympic Park, including Australia Avenue, and wherever possible along the route.

We note that the alignment along Dawn Fraser Avenue is going to be Wire Free. We would encourage this to be extended across the whole alignment in Sydney Olympic Park, particularly again, along Australia Avenue to accommodate the level of freight that use this road delivering event infrastructure to venues including the Sydney Showground sites.

The EIS lists a stop at Australia Avenue and Grand Parade under possible future stops per 6.3.1. We encourage TfNSW to include this in the initial proposed light rail stops to provide an ideal alternative egress option for patrons attending events at the three major venues in the park – Qudos Bank Arena, Accor Stadium (Stadium Australia) and the Sydney Showground (Giants Stadium) and exhibition halls. A stop here may also make it more possible for operations to continue down Dawn Fraser Avenue during major events.

Finally, we would encourage TfNSW to plan for the termination at Carter Street Lidcombe to be such that it allows for this route to extend further in due course.

SUMMARY

On behalf of our members and stakeholders, the Sydney Olympic Park Business Association reiterates its support of this important infrastructure project.

Sydney Olympic Park and the surrounding suburbs along the alignment, including Wentworth Point and Melrose Park (both set to be Australia's most high-density suburbs) and Carter Street, are superbly placed to deliver significant housing supply for Sydney in locations close to quality jobs and future transport connections such as Metro.

Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 is the critical link that will connect these communities, capitalise on the investment in Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 for the entire route to become a true network, support the investment and usage of Sydney Metro West and at the same time provide much improved Active Transport options throughout the region.

These infrastructure projects also provide an unprecedented opportunity for creative Place Making to make these high-density suburbs special places for people to call home and live quality, productive and healthy lives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you would like to discuss any of our comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allison Taylor', is written over a light blue background.

Allison Taylor, CEO

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