

Submission from the School Council for Sydney Boys High School, Moore Park, Surry Hills NSW 2010.

Subject of submission: Application No SSI 6042 MOD 1 - CSELR Modifications Assessment Report 3rd Dec 2014

i. Modification of concern to the SBHS School Council: Amended Design of the Moore Park Stop

With the change in the Moore Park (MP) LR station from double storey to single storey, there will be no direct connection with the overhead bridge crossing Anzac Pde and joining the MP LR station to Sydney Boys High School (SBHS) and the adjacent Sydney Girls High School (SGHS).

This will mean school children in the afternoon peak period at around 3.15 PM will cross Anzac Pde on the overhead bridge and will then leave the bridge to reach the MP tram stop but in doing so will need to cross by foot one set of tram tracks. At this time (and it will be repeated in the morning rush hour at around 8.45 AM), up to approximately 1,500 children from SBHS and SGHS who take the LR from the MP station to Central railway station will be crossing tracks while trams will be leaving the MP station (see 4. Under Suggested changes below). This surge of school children cannot be compared to what will happen at other LR stops as suggested in the modification justification p18 3.5.2 para 3 *“Under normal operation, the MP stop would be accessed via pedestrian crossings over the LR tracks, and access ramps similar to all other stops”*. It is inconceivable that at “all other stops” there will be at least two occasions per school day when this large number of children will need to cross tram tracks unsupervised.

As far as can be ascertained from the modifications document there will be no additional safeguards in place for school children to cross tram tracks compared to the additional safeguards to deal with crowds emerging from sporting events i.e. for these special events there will be: (1) Underground subways opened to the public to avoid the crossing of tram tracks and, (2) Additional LR staff will supervise the public’s access to the MP station.

Teachers at SBHS and SGHS presently supervise all students who are transferred by bus to Central railway station in the peak afternoon period. The staff do so on the footpath adjacent to these schools on Anzac Pde. However, the advice given to the school Council is that school staff will not be crossing over to the MP station to undertake supervision, and so the duty of care will be the sole responsibility of the LR operator. If, as is thought presently, the main / only supervision will come from the tram driver, then the school Council foresees the potential for serious accidents as school children: (1) Cross (in some cases with children this will inevitably be more a rush) tram tracks when they see their tram arriving – the tram driver in this circumstances cannot supervise as well as drive the tram, (2) Take the second of the two 33 metre long coupled LR trams - it would be difficult for the driver located in the first tram to control a large number of students from his/her position.

The justification for changing the MP LR station to single storey is to allow it to blend in with the environment, yet this comes at a cost to the safety of school children particularly at those two peak rush times when a large number will want to utilise the LR. The SBHS School Council does not accept that the proposed benefit outweighs the increased risk.

ii. Potential serious risks from MP stop modification

Injury even death are real possibilities that will result from the inability to access the MP LR station directly by the students. Two obvious scenarios are illustrated above – crossing tram tracks, and accessing LR trams particularly the second of the two carriages. If accidents were to occur, the additional safeguards taken with patrons from sporting events will contrast sharply with the lack of care / supervision provided for school children.

iii. Unknown that might exacerbate risk for school children crossing tram tracks

It is proposed in the modification document that trams will run every 4 minutes during the 7 AM to 7 PM time slot. Two 33m trams coupled together can move around 450 passengers. However, what is not known in terms of the MP stop and the transfer of school children from SBHS and SGHS is whether trams will arrive at the MP stop having already picked up passengers (particularly University of NSW where it is expected many will want to take the LR). If so, trams will arrive crowded making it more likely that school children will take shortcuts or additional risks to access the limited seats remaining rather than follow an orderly crossing from the schools to the LR station. An orderly crossing is more likely to happen if students know that they will be able to access empty trams and so be efficiently transferred to Central as happens at present with the bus arrangement.

iv. Suggested changes that would address part or all of the school Council's concern

1. Stairs should be built from the overpass to allow the students to access directly the MP LR stop rather than requiring the students to walk the length of the overpass and then walk back to the MP LR stop by crossing tram tracks.
2. Provision is made to open the subway crossings to allow students to use these at peak school times (in the AM and PM). At non-peak school times, the risk for much smaller numbers of students crossing via the tram lines will be significantly reduced although not excluded.
3. Additional LR staff are provided to supervise students in the AM and PM peak times. Many of these school children live in distant parts of Sydney so failing to connect with their trains at Central station will encourage them to take risks to catch the LR tram.
4. Clarification is needed on the logistics for student transfer e.g. whether the same effort made at sporting events to move large numbers by starting with empty trams at the MP station will be made to ensure an effective and rapid transfer of students during the morning and afternoon peak times. For the former, the additional trams will need to start from Central railway station.