



Restaurant
& Catering

SAVOUR
AUSTRALIA

Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: CBD and South East Light Rail – Environmental Impact Statement

Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the CBD and South East Light Rail Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Light Rail will significantly improve the amenity of the Sydney CBD and surrounds, providing greater access to tourism, leisure and hospitality experiences for visitors and locals. By encouraging greater passenger mobility, R&CA is confident Light Rail will deliver significant benefits to hospitality providers in metropolitan and suburban Sydney.

R&CA is the peak organisation representing the interests of 37,700 restaurants, cafés and catering businesses across Australia. The café, restaurant, and takeaway food sector generates \$34.9 billion¹ in annual receipts and employs approximately 456,000 people. In NSW alone, R&CA represents 1,400 members, 230 of which are located in close proximity to the proposed Sydney Light Rail network.

R&CA's interest in the Light Rail EIS extends from the impact of construction on hospitality and restaurant providers, in particular, businesses operating in the Surry Hills district.

Minimising the impact of construction

R&CA represents approximately 40 restaurants and cafes in the Surry Hills area, half of which will be directly impacted by construction of Light Rail. R&CA understands some disruption will occur to business trading hours during the construction of Light Rail. However, R&CA is concerned construction may have a detrimental impact on the viability of smaller operators, particularly those that rely heavily on foot traffic and pedestrian access for patronage.

R&CA understands construction of Light Rail will occur in stages, with certain sections of the route taking anywhere between 3-6 months to construct, with more technically difficult sections of the route taking 9 months or more to deliver. Extended periods of construction in the Surry Hills area has the potential to curtail patronage, negatively impacting restaurant takings during this period.

Of particular concern is construction in and around Bourke Street Bakery (cnr of Devonshire and Bourke Street, Surry Hills). This is a local hot spot for residents as well as visitors for food and coffee. R&CA is

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) 8501.0 Retail trade – Australia Table 1: Retail Turnover, By Industry Group



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concerned extended periods of construction, including limited pedestrian access to this establishment has the potential to make the business unviable.

Detailed plans as to the timing and length of construction, including the placement of hoarding, access restrictions and the operation of machinery need to be communicated to restaurant owners well in advance of construction commencement.

Delivery and pedestrian access

Maintaining delivery and pedestrian access will be critical in ensuring restaurant and café businesses remain viable in and around Devonshire and Bourke Street during construction. Experience from the construction of Light Rail in both Melbourne and the Gold Coast suggests appropriate consideration was not given to delivery access during or post construction, causing significant disruption to business logistics.

Restaurant businesses need to be able to receive supplies and produce daily in order to run their businesses effectively. Closing arterial roads and redirecting traffic during construction has the potential to cause significant disruption to restaurant procurement processes.

In addition, a large majority of cafes and restaurants rely on foot traffic and pedestrian access for patronage during the week and weekends. Protective hoarding and loss of outdoor dining areas can deter patrons and affect restaurant takings.

While R&CA understands consultations on delivery access will occur closer to construction, ensuring business deliveries can be made and the area remains inviting for visitors will be of critical importance to hospitality establishments.

Conclusion

R&CA is confident Light Rail will activate hospitality precincts, encouraging greater visitation and spend in Sydney and its surrounds. Restaurants and cafes stand to be significant benefactors of Light Rail through increased patronage delivered by the network. In order to ensure a vibrant and sustainable industry during construction, appropriate plans need to be administered for deliveries and pedestrian access to allow hospitality businesses to trade as close to normal. Communication of construction times, limitations in access and detailed delivery plans will help appease operator concerns over the potential impact of construction.

If you require any additional information on this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 9966 0055 or jhart@restaurantcater.asn.au.

Yours Sincerely,

John Hart
Chief Executive Officer

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