

Submission to the Light Rail EIS

16th December 2013

(Name and address supplied – local resident)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Light Rail EIS.

My position is this: that **the Light Rail plan should be dropped altogether, as the benefits are shown to be absolutely minimal in the EIS.**

Further to this, the EIS shows that in addition to the benefits being minimal, the following massive losses will be incurred, which in my opinion are *absolutely unacceptable*:

- Massive expenditure of money which could and *should* be spent on a much better plan of *underground extension of Heavy Rail* (see my plan on the next page);
- The disruption to traffic for *5 years (!) during construction*;
- The loss 700 mature and significant trees – this is *totally unacceptable*;
- The loss of green space – *this is totally unacceptable*;
- The loss most of High Cross Park – this is *totally unacceptable*.
- The threat to businesses going bankrupt due to loss of parking, or not being near a planned station;
- The loss of amenity - including the following -
- The loss of car parking the full length of Anzac Parade and elsewhere;
- which in turn means that pedestrians are exposed to traffic without a car parking buffer;
- the loss of right turns along Anzac Parade, and elsewhere, which will -
- Turn Anzac Parade into a road very like Parramatta Rd – this is *totally unacceptable*;
- The majority of people commuting on the Light Rail will have to stand – the reverse of what currently occurs on buses, where the majority get a seat;
- Less stops, so that people will have to walk/cycle/drive to a stop; this is asking for traffic chaos especially when there is absolutely no provision for parking at any of the proposed stations on the light rail route.
- A compulsory change of mode of transport, and having to pay twice instead of once, as it is now;
- It duplicates the route of heavy rail in the city;
- The proposed station on Anzac Parade at Moore Park/EQ/SCG is nowhere near the venues – why?
- Creation of many new jobs in the construction phase but *only 200 ongoing jobs in the operational phase*;
- Loss of many bus driving jobs, as one light rail vehicle can replace 5 buses;
- Construction noise, dust, pollution from heavy machinery *for 24/7 over the 5 years of construction*;

All of the above for a “predicted 4% improvement in general travel speeds in afternoon peak, and a minor reduction in travel speeds in morning peak”; this is the most astonishing finding, and the Light Rail Plan should be dropped for this reason alone!! (Pdf page 55 of the EIS, Part 1A)

The only other substantial advantage listed is that George Street will be malled, which is nice, *but really this is just shifting the congestion problem elsewhere.*

I must ask this: if this is the predicted outcome, then what will happen in another 10 years' time when the predicted population growth happens, and the Light Rail is at or over capacity? The answer will have to be underground Heavy Rail, so why not construct Heavy Rail now, instead of Light Rail which is going to solve almost no problems whatsoever?

I have a much better and more logical alternative proposal - **Complete an underground Heavy Rail loop by extending the existing infrastructure – see my map below.**

Also, if you want to get buses out of the CBD, make changes to the existing bus routes, so that buses drop passengers at heavy rail stations outside of the CBD, so people can transfer to EXISTING heavy rail and travel around the CBD by EXISTING underground Heavy Rail trains. The bus routes DO NOT NEED to terminate at rail stations, they can just drop people there and terminate elsewhere.

With the above in mind, *the Light Rail proposal is not needed at all*, see my map below:



The **advantages** of my underground Heavy Rail extension plan over the Light Rail plan are numerous and logical:

- Heavy rail has *4 times the people moving capacity of light rail, 20 times the capacity of a bus*, so it will take many more buses off the roads than the Light Rail.

- The **4 essential destinations/stations of the Light Rail** are included in the Heavy Rail plan –
 1. Moore park/EQ/SCG etc
 2. Racecourse/TAFE/Centennial Park;
 3. UNSW & NIDA;
 4. POW hospital/UNSW
- Other stations can be added, or planned for, to be added at a later date, eg **Taylor Square/St Vincent's Hospital/Surry Hills station**; maybe **The Spot**; maybe **Charing Cross/War Memorial Hospital**, maybe **Clovelly Rd**. **None of these places has a station at the moment either on Light Rail or Heavy Rail. The route could be varied, as it will be *underground*, and will not have to compete with other road traffic.**
- The loop would take advantage of the fact that the two connecting stations *already exist* – **Central and Bondi Junction**.
- This route as sketched is approximately 11 km, which is *shorter* than that proposed by the Light Rail route.
- Engineers will have to design and build only one line, not two. Any train on the route will call at ***all the stations***, so there will be no need to wait for a specific train as in the Light Rail plan.
- Existing rolling stock can be used. Light rail requires new rolling stock; ie, a great financial advantage.
- Existing train drivers can be used. Light rail requires new drivers to be trained; ie, a great financial advantage.
- This plan will *not duplicate existing transport* in the city as the Light Rail plan does; ie, a great financial advantage.
- This plan will allow buses to connect to stations in *many* places, not just 2, as does the Light Rail Plan, where 2 interchanges are necessary at Kingsford and Randwick. Buses can just drop passengers at the stations and leave – no need for expensive interchange terminals with bus lay-up areas; ie, a great financial advantage.
- This plan will capture a lot more passengers who will be within a short walk of a station than are captured by running a Light Rail line along Anzac Parade with very few stations along some sections.
- This plan places the station at Moore Park in the centre of the complex rather than on Anzac Parade – much more convenient for the traveller, who after all, does not want to alight on Anzac Parade, but wants to alight at the venue. No-one would have planned the Train Station at Olympic Park to be several hundred metres from the venues, so why do it here?
- **All the mature and heritage trees can stay – dropping the Light Rail plan and formulating an underground Heavy Rail plan instead is worth considering *for this reason alone*.**
- **All the parks and open space can stay – dropping the Light Rail plan and formulating an underground Heavy Rail plan instead is worth considering *for this reason alone*.**
- All the businesses along Anzac Parade will continue and not be driven to bankruptcy by the disruption of 5 years of construction and the permanent loss of parking and access problems.
- Anzac Parade will not become like the ugly, dirty and derelict Parramatta Rd, and all the right turns will be kept in both directions - **dropping the Light Rail plan and formulating an underground Heavy Rail plan instead is worth considering *for this reason alone*.**
- There may be opportunities for developers to construct multi-level car parks at nodes/nr stations – underground, or perhaps above ground in some places.

- Allows for future expansion of population/dwellings around stations along the route (Light Rail will be at capacity straight away).
- Takes many buses off the roads, especially in the CBD, as the bus routes will be reorganised into purely feeder services, with passengers changing only once – which is virtually the same as in the Light Rail, *but with all the other advantages too*.
- George St can still be malled, as most of the buses will have been converted to feeder routes to service Heavy Rail stations. And there won't be a Light Rail running down the middle of the George St Mall!!
- Many passengers will have no need to change *modes of transport* at all.
- Many passengers will have no need to change *trains*, as timetables can be drawn up so that trains from several lines can go around the loop.
- Has potential to be further expanded to the southern areas of the Eastern Suburbs, with another loop or a spur line. This is the same as the Light Rail plan, but without the numerous disadvantages.
- Will be a more comfortable journey as the majority of people will be able to *sit rather than stand*, which is the current situation for bus commuters; in the Light Rail scheme, *most people will have to stand* (220 standing, 80 sitting).
- Underground rail can be placed virtually anywhere – Sydney sandstone is easy to tunnel - there are plenty of long underground road tunnels in Sydney now, more are planned – no one seems to think they are prohibitively expensive to construct. And they have the substantial problem of exhausting the fumes, whereas trains do not cause emissions in situ, or only very few.
- Should be able to be constructed in less than 5 years, as there will be no difficult and elaborate arrangements to be made with existing traffic, moving utilities, moving pavements, moving stormwater drains, etc.
- Virtually no disruptions to traffic above ground, except for a few depots/access points at proposed stations, unlike Light Rail, which disrupts everything for everyone for 5 long years.
- ***Underground Heavy Rail will massively improve travel times to the CBD, whereas the light rail will only give a 4% increase!*** My alternative plan of underground heavy rail is worth considering for this alone.

I have thought of some disadvantages which should be considered, but these are far fewer than the disadvantages listed in the Light Rail EIS.

- Coal fired electricity – greenhouse gases. Calculations should be done on the amount of emissions caused by the cars and buses compared to the emissions from coal for powering trains, on a per capita passenger basis. The emissions during construction of Heavy Rail tunnels may be or may not be more than those for Light Rail. The emissions during operation of Heavy Rail may be or may not be more than those for Light Rail.
- Heavy Rail is an expensive project, of course, but so is the Light Rail. However, government should borrow the money to do this, as governments can borrow more cheaply than the private sector, and have a guaranteed income stream from taxes, which can be increased. Contracts would be let to the private sector who have the existing tunnelling and rail construction expertise. Or it could be funded by lottery, as the Opera House was, and as many similar projects are funded around the world. In Sydney, Heavy Rail projects in the last decade or so are numerous: the spur line to Olympic Park (constructed at great expense but very seldom used to capacity); the heavy rail line to the Airport, constructed at great expense also, but many people refuse to use it because of the exorbitant “station usage fees”; the long overdue line to Macquarie

Uni, and the long overdue North West Rail link. If these heavy rail lines can be constructed, then why not the one in my proposal?

- May take longer to complete than light but I have been told that tunnelling in Sydney Sandstone is quick and easy, and we have a wealth of experience in underground construction – mining sector, road tunnelling sector, etc.
- A lot less stops than available on current bus routes to the city, but that is a very similar disadvantage of the Light Rail plan. I contend that it is not as great a disadvantage as the Light Rail plan because the route will be circular, not a shuttle route, and will attract passengers from a wider catchment area, especially those who choose to walk to stations; and if bus routes were re-organised to be Heavy Rail station feeder routes, this would be much better than the Light Rail Plan's 2 interchanges.

Conclusion:

Light Rail as planned should be dropped altogether as it has very little advantage over the current bus transport arrangements, and has a whole host of *totally unacceptable disadvantages*. Many current bus congestion problems in the city could be solved by getting buses to drop passengers at existing heavy rail stations outside of the CBD, from where the buses should continue on to some other destination or lay-up spot. This is what the Light Rail proposes to do anyway – have bus passengers transfer to trains; but the 2 interchanges planned have not been well thought out, and the one at High Cross Park is **TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!** How could any planner even think of taking scarce green space, with historical significance, heritage and significant trees, and a war memorial and turn it into a bus interchange?

George Street could be malled now for pedestrian use if buses were reorganised in the manner outlined above, and there are sufficient existing forms of transport for people to travel around the city – existing heavy rail stations are numerous; taxis, free shuttle buses. Even so, over 90% of people choose to walk around the city, rather than pay to get on a bus, train or get a taxi, as noted in the EIS. The Light Rail is simply **NOT NEEDED** in the city, it will **ADD** to congestion on the roads, not only *not* solving the congestion problem, but making it worse!

All logic points to the crying need for an extension of the underground Heavy Rail to be built instead. From all possible angles, this is the right answer to the burgeoning congestion and population growth problems both in the Sydney CBD and the Eastern Suburbs, now and for the future.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely

(Resident of Maroubra - name and address supplied)