

CSELR EIS Submission

My focus is the Surry Hills section of the proposed light rail network.

As a third generation resident of Surry Hills, I object to the manner in which the plan was forced upon the community and the lack of consultation or negotiation. The government has not been transparent. I believe the arguments for selecting Devonshire Street are weak and narrow.

I object to the unnecessary destruction of a heritage suburb, precious parkland and peoples' homes when alternatives are viable - Oxford Street was designed as a tram route, the Foveaux Street concept merits further consideration.

I object to the EIS Devonshire route being the only one seriously considered/evaluated publically. Surry Hills is a unique area. The impact of the proposed route must be lessened at all possible opportunities.

My concerns with the EIS impacts during and after construction for the proposed Devonshire route are:

1. Traffic and Parking

There is potential for peak hour gridlock with congestion at intersections with Crown, Bourke and South Dowling Streets. South Dowling Street will have traffic lights every few blocks from Cleveland St to Foveaux St. How will these be coordinated? Will there be warning lights for pedestrians of oncoming trains?

Stop-start traffic creates increased pollution levels, a community health issue/risk.

The loss of over 128 parking spaces will result in a greater load on surrounding streets, which are already at capacity most of the time. Langton Clinic will be seriously impacted with loss of parking and constant rail movements. This is a health and safety and access issue.

Access for emergency and residents between Elizabeth and Crown Streets appears very restricted. Potential hazards.

90 m trains on sporting/event days, running every few minutes could bring traffic on South Dowling and Crown Street to a halt or have trains backed up causing delay. It would be better to have shorter trains (30m) moving at a steady pace to allow traffic flow and safe people movement.

Suggestion - Reduce the rail speed limit to 20km along Devonshire Street to ensure safety around special interest sites (schools, churches) and safeguard the pedestrian quality of the area. 30 m trains only.

Suggestion – Increase residents only parking zones (side streets) and supply passes to residents for visitors.

Suggestion – Make some parking available in Olivia Gardens vacant area along with replaced park.

2. Trees and Moore Park.

The removal of around 140 trees is environmental vandalism.

The possible removal of Moreton Bay Figs in Moore Park is heritage destruction.

Using Moore Park as a parking lot /dumping ground will further degrade the park and cost vast amounts to restore.

The tunnel entrance to Moore Park is substantial and impact harshly on the western landscape.

Suggestion – No overhead wires/lines in Devonshire Street so that trees may be preserved. Use the latest technology.

Suggestion - It will be necessary to dig a tunnel under Anzac Parade. Begin this tunnelling in Moore park east to avoid destruction of heritage trees.

Suggestion – Parking at Randwick Racecourse only.

Suggestion – Ensure that the tunnel entrance/exit has maximum cover to align closely to the original surface.

3. Olivia Gardens and local business

Residents deserve appropriate compensation for losing their homes.

Local business in the whole surrounding area will suffer during construction, which also warrants compensation.

EIS suggested 14 months to demolish Olivia Gardens. This seems an extremely long time. Is this indicative of the pace of work?

There is an arrogant, disinterested attitude to the hardship the construction will inflict.

Solution – Compensate business with rental subsidies. Pay market price for acquisition of property.

4. Size, Noise, Speed, Frequency.

Suggestions:

LRVs max.29m through residential areas at surface level

Speed limit 20 km from South Dowling Street to Elizabeth Street.

Reduce noise and vibration levels to within EPA guidelines by using state of the art continuous rail along Devonshire Street to eliminate sound of wheels on expansion joints. Use high resilience track forms to reduce noise. INNORAIL system is effective (www.trb.org)

Significant screening in residential areas must take place.

Double glazing for homes and business directly affected is essential, especially Langton Clinic, childcare centres, churches etc.

Operational times between 5.30 am and 11.30pm through Surry Hills

Frequency of LRV's to be limited to a minimum 5 minutes gap in both directions to allow for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to cross safely. No PA system at Ward Park stop, this only increases intrusive noise for residents and is unnecessary. Must have concession fares for Northcott residents.

5. Social, visual and environmental impact

I disagree with the assumption that changes to the local character will be moderately positive. Large trams travelling in both directions at high frequency will alter the environment irrevocably and effectively severe Surry Hills in two. It can be 'landscaped', but it will be forever scarred and divided.

The EIS claims people will 'get used to' the visual pollution of overhead wires and poles, along with tree destruction. The report (and government) demonstrates the lack of respect for the public. The community wants the best option and least impact.

Gardens and fences must be constructed to protect Northcott residents.

Pedestrian walkways must be ample.

As suggested in the EIS 13.9.3 all criteria during the construction phase has negative impact. There should be some mechanism for complaint or compensation during this phase.

I recognise the importance of effective public transport and the appropriate use of light rail. My preference is for an alternative route through Surry Hills with state of the art technology. Given the present government position this seems impossible. I am deeply saddened and disappointed that a highly valued heritage area will be tragically transformed, that many lives will be negatively impacted upon, that Moore Park will be sacrificed once again when the objective of moving people to and from other locations can be achieved without such major impact.

I request that the Oxford Street route and the Fouveaux Street option be reconsidered. I fear that the proposed route will be another example of poor public planning at outrageous costs like the Cross City tunnel and the Monorail, that does little to improve Sydney transport. I implore greater vision and less of a quick fix or the cheapest solution.

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