

Department of Planning and Infrastructure
Re: CSELR – response to Environmental Impact Statement

I oppose the proposed design of the CBD and South East Light Rail project (CSELR) as described in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) dated November 2013.

My objections, in particular with the Surry Hills to Moore Park West route, are listed below:

- Lack of business case for overall project and cost benefit of possible routes through Surry Hills
- Devonshire street is not capable of being the spine of the SE Network / not sustainable
- Vastly superior alternative routes has been identified – Foveaux and Devonshire sub-surface
- No genuine community consultation has been engaged in.
- Unacceptable noise levels, and times through a densely populated suburb
- Size, speed and frequency of the light rail vehicles (LRV's)
- Construction impact on small businesses and residents
- Road closures during and post construction
- Acquisition of 69 homes
- Dislocation of Surry Hills
- Loss of Amenity
- Traffic congestion
- Loss of large historic trees
- Impact on parklands
- Access to properties along the route - businesses, residents, elderly and disabled
- Significant devalue on properties along the route with no compensation from the Government
- Loss of car parking

BUSINESS CASE - LACK OF FACTS AND INFORMATION

The Government has failed to provide a business case for the project. Freedom of Information requests for the business case including a cost benefit analysis of light rail (vs. other forms of transport) and for the various potential Surry Hills routes has been ignored. The CSELR EIS is based on Devonshire Street only. As a taxpayer and community member of Surry Hills I want to understand why Devonshire Street is the Government's preferred route for the spine of the South East network, when various other options, that are existing traffic corridors, appear to be superior (Foveaux St sub-surface).

Request:

- Business case study for transport solutions for the South East Sydney, to be made public
- Cost benefit of all possible routes through Surry Hills (surface, sub-surface and tunnels), to be made public
- Genuine modern technical consideration to the Foveaux and Devonshire sub-surface routes; including cost benefit based on 2026
- The subsurface routes (Foveaux or Devonshire) should be the default option for light rail transit through Surry Hills

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Lack of community consultation by all levels of Government.

Request:

- Genuine community consultation with the local community – residents and business owners about the route through Surry Hills, design and assimilation.

DEVONSHIRE STREET SURFACE ROUTE

Light Rail Vehicles (LRV's) size, noise impacts

The proposed LRVs are 45 m. long, which is more than 50% longer than the LRVs on the existing Inner West route (those vehicles are 29 m. long). The acceptable noise levels have also been changed by the State Government to match those of heavy rail.

Request:

- The LRV's are no longer than 29m long if traveling through residential areas at the surface level. If the LRV's are longer than 29m, then they are only to travel along specifically tailored routes (such as a sub-surface or tunnel) and or dedicated rights of way (not on residential streets).
- Speed to be reduced to 20km from South Dowling Street to Elizabeth Street.
- Operational times through Surry Hills must limited to 05:30 to 23:30.
- No light rail movement between 23.30 and 5.30.
- Frequency limited to a minimum of 5 minutes gap of both LRV's.

- Noise and vibration levels delivered well within the EPA guidelines.
- Continuous rail to reduce noise at expansion joints to be used between South Dowling Street to Elizabeth Streets.
- Maximum noise reducing beds to be installed below the tracks.
- Base to be constructed in a way that limits vibration.
- Significant screening in residential areas must take place.

VISUAL IMPACT AND LOSS OF TREES AND PARKS

I am concerned with the large volume of large and historic trees that will be removed along the route and in the parklands. There will also be a loss of parklands both during and following construction.

It is suggested that a large number of overhead cables would be introduced as part of the light rail through Surry Hills. It is also suggested that substation/s in Surry Hills will be above ground.

Request:

- All parklands should be replaced 1:1 with improvements on facilities.
- The Government has suggested they will replace trees 1:7 – this should be enforced with a at least 1:1 in the Surry Hills area.
- Light rail and electrical cables to be placed underground to reduce the visual clutter and enable trees to be planted to replace those being cut down.
- All substations must be below ground.
- The route of the light rail through Wimbo Park / Olivia Gardens is along the Central route.

SAFETY

Devonshire Street is a highly built up and congested street, used by pedestrians and motor vehicles.

Request:

- Safety to be reviewed by independent consultants and the full reports made available.
- A Maximum of 20kmph through this section for light rail vehicles.
- Frequency limited to a minimum of 5 minutes gap between both vehicles.

PARKING

Surry Hills already has serious parking issues.

Request:

- Resident/Commercial Only spaces in selected areas and temporary parking permits for the occasional visitors of residents and also for tradespeople. This allows those that have a genuine need to park in the area - residents and businesses - greater access to dedicated parking.

TRAFFIC

TfNSW has offered no resolution to the traffic problems that will be caused by the light rail.

Request:

- The frequency of trains should be limited to a minimum of 5 minutes to ensure a suitable gap to allow pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to cross in safety.
- Serious consideration given to sub surface rail so that intersections are not impeded causing further congestion

In summary, if the CSELR project is to proceed, I request that all possible Surry Hills routes be technically reviewed and supported with a cost benefit report (to be made public) demonstrating the preferred route and how it is suitable for the spine of the South East light rail network, enabling future expansion, and ensuring sustainability.

And I request genuine community consultation, which will help a better outcome for all in the short and long term, and ensure a more positive process for all stakeholders.

I am one of the thousands of people who have signed the PUSH Petition calling for an alternative Surry Hills route, and believe a sub-surface route (Foveaux or Devonshire) should be the default option.

Yours sincerely
Ben Mason