

SYDNEY CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL SUBMISSION

VICTOR P TAFFA

30 NOVEMBER 2013

Memberships:

- Sydney Cricket Ground
- Souths Juniors
- Australian Railways Historical Society, NSW Division
- Sydney Tramways Museum

Special Interest Reasons:

- Previously worked with Sydney City Council via Drake International.
- Previously worked as a Taxi Driver from Oct 2002-May 2007.
- www.isput.com.au that supports Light and Heavy Rail in Sydney.
- My Mother grew up at 88 Alison Road Randwick and 42 Middle Street Kingsford.
- Since 1975 I have had a keen interest in both Heavy Rail Trains and Trams.

Stabling Locations:

The proposed Stabling Locations are as follows:

- Central Station (Eddy Avenue)
- Circular Quay
- Kingsford
- Randwick Racecourse (Old Tram Siding)

It would seem that there are too many Stabling Locations planned for this system. Many Tram routes in Melbourne do not have the same number of stabling locations. Route 109 to Box Hill simply has a set of scissors cross over tracks and straight track to terminate at. Trams terminate, traverse and continue on the opposite track back to Port Melbourne. Route 109 is one of the longest and heavily patronised routes. Route 96 from East Brunswick to St Kilda Beach is also a long route and heavily patronised. The St Kilda terminus has straight track and a set of scissors cross over for trams to return to the opposite track.

This is not a bus network that is being planned. Stabling Locations for Trams requires room that costs money. Bus Stabling does not need the same amount of room nor cost as much to implement.

Passengers will expect that when Trams arrive at the various termini that Trams depart within a short time. Trams in Melbourne operate in this fashion and excessive numbers of stabling locations will only slow down the system. At the Elizabeth Street Tram Terminus in Melbourne there is no waiting time between the Tram arriving and a Tram that departs.

Page 1 of 5

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Light Rail Stops:

Melbourne has introduced island stops particularly in Flinders Street. One of the busiest Tram Stops is the Elizabeth Street Terminus which is an island ground level terminus serviced by Route 19 from North Coburg, Route 57 from West Maribyrnong and Route 59 from Airport West. Trams arrive and depart via a set of scissors cross over tracks and terminate in a straight line.

The planned track at the Circular Quay Terminus should be a simple straight track with a scissors cross over for trams to continue onto the opposite track.

All Light Rail Stops should be island platforms with protective canopies. Access to an island platform is made by pedestrian crossings that forces traffic to give pedestrians the right of way. Platform canopies do not have to run the length of the platform. The supporting back of the canopy in the middle can be broken so as to allow people to move through. This situation occurs on the island platform in Flinders Street Melbourne.

George Street Sydney:

As a Taxi Driver from October 2002 until May 2007 I can speak from experience. The plan to stop Taxi-Cabs from dropping off or picking up passengers in George Street does not stack up. When dropping off passengers people who are paying you the fare and demand without reservation to be dropped off at a point of their choosing become aggressive and abusive to the driver if they do not get their way. On many occasions I was forced into negotiation with the passenger about the drop-off point. Fare paying passengers have every right to get out where they ask to be let out. It is illegal to detain a passenger beyond that point.

Since 1788 George Street Sydney has been a thoroughfare of commerce. The plan to stop Taxi-Cabs from using George Street is ridiculous.

George Street Buses:

The argument that George Street is clogged with buses simply shows how people do not know the history of Transport in Sydney. People used to complain when Trams lined up as far as the eye could see up and down George Street. People thought that Buses would be better and would not clog up George Street.

The plan to terminate Buses at selective locations and then expect people to transfer to Light Rail will not be an improvement from past experiences with Trams or what is currently the case. New Light Rail Vehicles will simply line George Street in either direction if not at first but within a short space of time.

Page 2 of 5

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Overhead Wiring:

Trams as with Heavy Rail Trains requires a Pantograph connected to overhead wiring to effectively power the train or tram. Without a Pantograph the train or tram goes nowhere. Some people think that the overhead wiring is ugly. The only reason that some people want to expect a Tram Car to go without a pantograph connected to an overhead wire is for aesthetics. As with the Metro Rail System I do not support this George Street Light Rail System without a Tram Car being powered by a pantograph from overhead wires. I was told that in the event of a power failure the George Street Light Rail vehicles will be pushed by the Tram from behind. This quant idea seems like something from Alice In Wonderland. George Street Overhead wiring should be a span wire system with minimal poles installed. Overhead wires can be connected to Street Light Poles.

George Street Sydney first had Tram Street poles for electric Trams from 1898.

Moore Park Tunnel:

Tram Cars using Devonshire Street is quite satisfactory. The problem is between Bourke Street and Moore Park. The EIS has a number of options. Buying up apartment blocks is expensive and unnecessary. I support none of the options in the EIS. The route that I support is via Devonshire Street, turn left at Bourke Street, turn right at Nobbs Street and then the Tunnel option.

Kingsford Terminus:

The planned Kingsford terminus track layout is too long and takes up too much room. A simple straight track terminus at one end and a scissors cross over at the other end will be very effective for Light Rail operations. The current options on the EIS take away too many car parking spaces unnecessarily.

Buses should not be using the Light Rail Terminus. Bus passengers can access the Light Rail Terminus by a pedestrian crossing. This will ensure passengers have the right of way when crossing Anzac Parade. The Kingsford Terminus should also be an island platform.

Buses do not use Tram Terminus in Melbourne.

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Light Rail Stabling Facility:

Maintenance and stabling should occur at Lilyfield or the old Tram Depot in King Street Randwick. The old Tram Depot at Randwick also had workshops attached to it that are now Randwick TAFE. Randwick Racecourse Tram siding is best suited as a stopping point for passengers and not as a stabling point. This was previously what resembled a 6 Platform Railway Station complete with a Footbridge. The footbridge foundations are still visible. If there are any old tram cars still in the King Street Facility then they can be transferred to the Sydney Tramway Museum.

Royal Randwick Light Rail Stop:

The Royal Randwick Light Rail Stop should be an island platform twice as long as any other. Two sets of Tram Cars need to be able to set down or pick up passengers at the same time. Reason being is that on race days especially on Melbourne Cup Day people will come from the Sydney CBD or Randwick at the same time. People have a habit of arriving in large numbers at the same time. The same applies when a race meeting is over. From experience as a Taxi Driver on Melbourne Cup Day it was chaotic on Alison Road for vehicles and Taxi movements. This included when taxis used the old Tram Siding. Light Rail services on Race Days should be increased so as not to need sidings or additional tracks on Alison Road.

Alison Road Gradient:

I asked as to why the route to Randwick did not take in the Belmore Road Retail area. The reason that I was given is that the grade on Alison Road is too steep. When you consider the grade that Trams used to have to traverse Darling Street Balmain to the Wharf via a counter weight dummy system makes this argument laughable. The Light Rail route should have operated via Belmore Road.

The University Of New South Wales:

Most people who want to access the University Of New South Wales will do so from Anzac Parade. This Light Rail Stop should be an island platform and also capable of holding two sets of Tram Cars at the same time. Currently large numbers of buses arrive and depart at the same time as such a longer platform than normal is required.

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Sydney Cricket Ground:

The Tram Road is to serve the Sydney Cricket Ground and not Driver Avenue. This stop on the Tram Road should also be capable of holding two sets of Tram Cars in either direction at the same time. When it is raining the distance between the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Tram Road is significant.

Conclusion:

This Light Rail plan is basically a good idea however as with any plan the detail of the plan must stack up. Sydney should never have abandoned Trams. Similarly the Heavy Rail network to Newcastle must remain in place.

This Light Rail plan requires some improvements to be made and I have outlined what should be done. It would appear that people who have written the EIS have never been to Melbourne to observe the functioning of their Tram Network.

In 2009 I began www.isput.com.au with a view of a Sydney wide and a New South Wales wide answer to traffic congestion and transport improvements. This is in addition to the 3 Public Elections that I have contested so far that supports Heavy Railway Expansion. Knowing the history of Tramway abandonment and the time that it took to construct the Eastern Suburbs Railway it will be sensible to build on and expand our Heavy Rail Network.

Sydney has one of the best Heavy Rail Networks in the world for size and effectiveness and we should recognize that and not lose it like we did with the Tram Network.

Both the Sydney Cricket Ground and Randwick Racecourse can be served by Heavy Rail and Light Rail.

This submission has been written by Victor P Taffa on behalf of Victor P Taffa.