

The Director,
Infrastructure Projects
Major Projects Assessment
Department Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39 SYDNEY, NSW 2001

Frank Cremona
1 Foord Avenue,
Hurlstone Park,
NSW, 2193

Personal submission to the Sydenham to Bankstown Submissions and Preferred Infrastructure Report (Application No SSI 17_8256)

July 2018

In addition to a form submission, I have included my specific concerns so this should be treated as a unique submission.

I am opposed to the conversion of the Sydenham-Bankstown heavy rail line to metro.

I am pleased that the preferred project, as described so far, has addressed the widespread concerns about congestion and construction impacts, the planned destruction of railway heritage items and removal of vegetation. Unfortunately the response to submissions, and preferred project, falls short of community expectations. My submission follows:

The main concerns I have about the metro, the report on submissions and the preferred project are:

- a. The proposed metro upgrade removes access to some key inner city and city stations.
- b. The cost of upgrading this line is excessive and the upgrade to stations to increase accessibility, amenities, and timetable improvements could be more cost effective. Allowing money to be spent connecting areas without train access to the rail network and improving public transport in general.
- c. Concerns about unsustainable overdevelopment along the rail corridor and links to the Metro strategy.
- d. There has been much speculation and discussion about the closure of Hurlstone Park station. Will assurances be given that Hurlstone Park station will remain open and active?
- e. No heritage assessments were conducted for the exhibited project plans and there has not been any discussion of heritage assessment.
- f. The station upgrades will have moderate impacts that should be for accessibility upgrades rather than branding opportunities for the metro.
- g. While all stations will keep their current heritage listings Hurlstone Park station was recommended for State heritage listing in 2016. There is concern that this will not be carried out.

h. The project ignores the effect on surrounding heritage areas.

In addition, I endorse the following list of objections and concerns that has been developed by my local community group, the Hurlstone Park Association:

1. The justifications for the project remain unconvincing and have been contradicted by independent rail experts. Alternatives must be addressed such as tunnelling options. A metro for the long distances is not supported.
2. The response to submissions fails to acknowledge that benefits have been over-stated and are over-shadowed by the negative consequences. The trains will have less seating, and commuters will lose many direct connections - those beyond Bankstown will be particularly disadvantaged.
3. Construction and temporary transport issues have not been adequately detailed. The gas leak in the city on 7th July 2018 due to metro construction work with rock breakers is a concern; issues with cost blow-outs and legal proceedings for the light rail project do not instill public confidence.
4. The response has ignored community concerns that project will promote growth in a climate of lack of community trust in the planning process and poor quality development without benefits such as affordability, green space and amenity.
5. The franchising to a private operator is not supported. This has not been for the public benefit in Melbourne or Newcastle, and we doubt that privatization in Sydney will pass the public interest test. In particular, the Hong-Kong model of development, utilised by MTR Corporation, is totally inappropriate for many of the heritage -rich and garden suburbs in this corridor
6. The loss of the active green strip takes away one of the few benefits of the project. Further the removal of mature trees and replacing them with small flora is an extremely poor climate change mitigation measure.
7. The response to concerns about community consultation is inadequate and inappropriate. Justifying the many techniques used does not address the lack of engagement with, and failure to prioritise the input of, the communities along the line and beyond Bankstown, who are opposed to the project. In addition, the continued use of biased glossy brochures, which have replaced transparency and meaning, reveals little hope for meaningful consultation in the future.

This project should not be approved because it lacks bipartisan and community support, and is the product of process that has lacked democracy and good governance.

The preferred project, to best benefit communities, and Sydney, should be:

-retaining the heavy rail, without a private operator

-investing now in time-tables and signaling, and connections for commuters beyond Bankstown

- upgrading all stations for accessibility, safety, landscaping and active transport connections
- retaining and restoring railway heritage to enable railway-related use including rest-rooms and toilets
- prioritising investment in new rail and rapid bus systems across Sydney instead of converting existing lines/ building more toll-ways

NB. 1. I do not have reportable donations to disclose.

2. I do not consent to my name or personal details being published.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Cremona