

18 July, 2018

Major Projects Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY, NSW 2001

Attention: Director, Transport Assessments

Objection: SSI 17_8256: Sydenham to Bankstown Metro - Preferred Infrastructure Report (PIR)

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

1. Introduction (Please redact this section)

I was the former Convenor for Better Planning Network and remain a passionate advocate for better planning for Sydney. This follows a career in the industry and financial sector.

After the initial news about the Metro and proposed land use plans, I was asked to assist a number of local communities. Consequently Hurlstone Park and Canterbury were included on a bus tour with the Department Secretary and executive in July 2016, where we discussed concerns about over-development and plans for the area.

I continue to assist a number of local communities where I can, and note there is growing concern about the proposal – particularly after a number of infrastructure projects have seen poor planning outcomes and substantial budget overruns. Members of my family have also lived in the area for a number of years. Consequently, I know the area and proposal well.

2. Objection

In response to the PIR, my key concerns follow:

- a) **The Benefits are overstated:** The benefits of the conversion are overstated, and in part misleading, e.g. the signal upgrades are not unique to the Metro; capacity and frequency can be increased through alternative means that are more inexpensive. Accessibility upgrades such as station lifts are not unique to the Metro. These are long overdue and can be delivered separately to the Metro. Likewise the benefit in time is largely derived by faster trains and removing regular stops, e.g. Redfern and other inner west suburbs. However, it will also see

increased transport times for many commuters and students travelling to Redfern and other stations.

- b) **Construction Works and Transport Impact:** The disruption and impact on local communities is underestimated. In short the area is far less ready for the changes; e.g. the Epping to Chatswood conversion is simpler. Yet that conversion will take 7 months while 3 to 6 months (in addition to the staged works) is indicated for Sydenham to Bankstown Line. Notwithstanding Westconnex, much of the commuter traffic will continue to use Canterbury Road as the major access route. This will see traffic chaos and cripple local businesses and community facilities, with implications for the wider network. Further, if the plans were to go ahead, a helipad should be introduced at Canterbury Hospital for the purpose of medical emergencies;
- c) **Implications for Local Communities:** The upgrade of the line has long been associated with land use changes for suburbs along the line. While the Metro project has been 'redefined', it is likely the strategic plans to rezone adjacent areas will follow. Consequently the 'redefined' plans fail to consider the associated or cumulative impact that is likely to follow from higher densification and its impact on housing affordability. As demonstrated in other jurisdictions, high density and urbanisation has seen the loss of more affordable family homes and walk up flats. Given the Canterbury-Bankstown area is more affordable than most council areas across Greater Sydney; the loss of more affordable family homes close to the city is a major concern. In addition, the impact on long established multicultural communities with good support services, with low rise shopping centres work well, e.g. Belmore, Lakemba and Marrickville. Likewise the introduction of high-rise town centres is likely to follow, with a flow-on impact in terms of the impact on low-rise heritage areas around Hurlstone Park, Dulwich Hill and Belmore.
- d) **Quality of Service:** The service will be less comfortable, with the majority of patrons in peak hours forced to stand in packed trains;
- e) **Transport Flow-on Impact:** The upgrade to Metro SW has implications for the T1 and T4 lines, with additional patronage pressure. While not the subject of this proposal given the implications it is difficult to understand how the proposal for Chatswood to Sydenham section does not include a stop from Waterloo to Sydenham, which will house over 80,000 residents and also provide a high concentration of jobs;
- f) **Due Process:** There is significant confusion around the proposal in part as a result of project communications and the lobbying efforts of a number of self-interest groups/individuals who have land banked a number of sites and more recently campaigned to support the line. Given the revelations at ICAC Inquiry (Dasher), any assessment should be postponed until after the Inquiry delivers its findings. Likewise given a Parliamentary Inquiry is underway in response to Sydney's Light Rail project, the assessment should follow the Committee's recommendations.

Likewise, the Parliamentary Inquiry into infrastructure projects. Further, the information provided in the Report Overview is in many cases is not correct. In addition, access to the files online has been difficult as a consequence of the size of the files, hindering public input. Further, when searching online under major projects on exhibition (e.g. on the 17 and 18 July) the project is not shown; rather can only be accessed via another link.

- g) **Metro Legislation and Conflict of Interest:** There is also substantive concern about the Sydney Metro legislation and a perceived conflict of interest between the Department of Transport and MTR.

In conclusion, the project in its current form is not in the public interest. Please keep me informed about the project and any further consultation.

I note the instructions below.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JB' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Jeanette Brokman

Notations

1. My personal details are confidential
2. Please redact Section 1, and my signature and name
3. I have NOT made a reportable political donation