

Submission regarding:

North West Rail Link E.I.S.

Submission by

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“The Customer is at the Centre of Everything we do in Transport” Section 6.4

The report loudly proclaims the above goal. However the North West Rail Link (NWRL) is ***not*** going to satisfy this goal primarily because of the decision to change the rolling stock used on the NWRL from double decker trains to metro trains. This decision which is also part of the plan to convert part of the Cityrail network to metro operation will deliver a vastly poorer customer experience than if the original plan to use double deckers had been pursued.

This is because:

1. Lack of comfort. Travelling on a metro compared to travelling on a Waratah train is like travelling on cattle trucks due to lack of seating with journeys that are often quite lengthy.
2. Many journeys (eg Pennant Hills to North Sydney) will now involve 3 trains instead of one and most likely standing instead of sitting for most of the journey
3. For many years until the second harbour crossing is built passengers will have to change at Chatswood onto already crowded trains putting considerable stress on the existing system. Any slight speed advantage claimed for the metros would be lost in the transfer.
4. Designing the second harbour crossing to only cater for metros is an act of sabotage on the future rail system because it locks in a bad decision.
5. Designing the second harbour crossing to only cater for metros will prevent the use of this crossing for future high speed trains for the final few kilometres into Sydney.
6. Apparently no research into passenger preference for metros v Waratah trains has been undertaken. No one I know wants metros.
7. Converting a large part of the existing rail network to metro operation (to Cabramatta via Bankstown and to Hurstville) has many serious problems (see below)
8. The decision to use metros appears to be more to do with the desire to operate the line privately rather than delivering a good customer experience. (If the government wishes to have part of the network privately operated as a benchmark on the rest of the system it could use the largely separate Illawarra line rather than cripple the rest of the system)
9. Metro trains are normally only used on short distance journeys on other systems around the world. For example only the inner city lines in Paris are metros while the rest of the suburban network (more like Sydney) are operated by double deckers running to 90 second headway (much closer than in Sydney due to better signalling).

Problems with use of metro trains to Hurstville

Whilst this is not part of the NWRL it is relevant because a key decision on the NWRL is to implement a metro network in parallel with the existing Cityrail network.

On the Illawarra line it appears that the local line will be used for metro trains but double deckers will service the longer journeys to the South Coast, Waterfall and Cronulla on the other (main) line. Three practical problems present themselves.

1. Anyone wanting to travel from the city to stations like Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville will find it difficult and confusing because they won't know which platforms to catch the next train from
2. Metro trains will not mix well with coal trains that use the local Illawarra line. (And attempting to cross coal trains to the main line will cause chaos)
3. Has the need to build extra platforms at Wolli Creek been costed and factored into the overhead caused by the decision to use metro trains?
4. Passengers on metro trains wanting to travel beyond Hurstville will have to change trains.

Problems with use of metro trains to Cabramatta via Bankstown and to Lidcombe

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1. Passengers who can now travel through from say a major centre like Bankstown to a major centre like Liverpool will have to change trains when they don't now.
2. Journeys to Liverpool via Regents Park from the inner west line will now have 2 changes of trains instead of none as at present.
3. Unless extra platforms are constructed at Lidcombe (very expensive), complex operations will be required to manage the significant additional train movements caused by terminating metro trains.

Order of Construction Wrong

The second harbour crossing should be the number one rail construction project in Sydney. There is a need right now to increase capacity because Cityrail is having to employ extra train marshals at city stations due to overcrowding. A second harbour crossing should be built BEFORE the NWRL.

An extensive and detailed report a few years ago by a team headed by former roads and rail boss Ron Christie found that the Cityrail system would face paralysis within 10 years unless a **second harbour crossing** for rail were built.

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/second-harbour-crossing--or-chaos-20100530-wnik.html>

I agree with this conclusion and believe that the number 1 priority for rail planning for Sydney (and all transport in Sydney) is to complete a second harbour rail crossing. This project would benefit the entire rail network (and hence all rail users) and would also benefit road users. It would also enable some of the buses that clog the city streets to be diverted to interchanges at North Sydney, St Leonards and Chatswood. Unfortunately the government's election promise of building the North West Rail link is likely to suck up all available funds for years to come and simply feed more passengers into an already overcrowded network. I suggest that the Federal

Government be asked to support the second harbour rail crossing by diverting the funding promised for the Parramatta-Epping rail link. They are much more likely to do this than support the North West Rail Link because of the clear benefits which are harder to demonstrate for the NWRL.

The need for a second harbour rail crossing is now. A second harbour crossing catering for double deckers and integrated into the existing Cityrail system will provide **immediate** benefits and it is **guaranteed to work**. The building of the North West Rail link should follow a second rail harbour crossing.