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A submission in response to

**EIS-Application Number: SSI 15\_7400**

**Sydney Metro & Southwest – Chatswood to Sydenham**

Prepared by EcoTransit Sydney

24 June 2016

Authorised by the Executive Committee of EcoTransit Sydney

The submission consists of 7 pages.

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### **Disclosure reportable political donations**

EcoTransit Sydney has **not** made a reportable political donation.

We have read the Department's Privacy Statement and agree to the Department using our submission in the ways it describes. We understand this includes full publication on the Department's website of my submission, any attachments, and any of the personal information in those documents, and possible supply to third parties such as state agencies, local government and the proponent.

John Bignucolo

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bignucolo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Secretary  
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## **Sydney Metro City & Southwest-Chatswood to Sydenham**

### **A Submission on EIS-Application Number: SSI 15\_7400**

EcoTransit Sydney objects to the building of the City & Southwest metro on the following grounds:

- It is clear from reading the EIS for the City and Southwest Metro that the line is not primarily being built to increase the capacity and coverage of Sydney's rail network.
- It will serve no new suburbs with the exception of Crows Nest and Waterloo and these two suburbs are within walking distance of major stations.

The question then has to be asked: "What is the real reason to build a metro line along the chosen route?" The answer is that the New South Wales Government is building the metro to justify the redevelopment of large tracts of the CBD and the suburbs.

If the Sydney Metro is completed as proposed, the only new suburbs to receive a rail service will those from the terminus at Cudgegong Road to Cherrybrook. This is an extremely poor return on the expenditure of billions of dollars of public funds.

### **Destruction of Communities**

The decision to build a station at Waterloo, instead of at Sydney University, for the purpose of facilitating the redevelopment of public housing into expensive private apartments will destroy the local community.

The station at Waterloo can only be justified if the population density is dramatically increased by redevelopment (progressing rapidly to overdevelopment) of the Waterloo area. Sydney University is one of the largest "trip generators" in Sydney and was a more logical choice for the location of a station.

The Government maintains that current residents of Waterloo will be offered new accommodation in the area after redevelopment. This will not restore the existing community and will require tenants to move to areas well away from their friends and services that they rely on. Many of these residents are vulnerable and it is difficult to envisage that after suffering one major upheaval in their lives, that they will want to undergo another one after three years and move back to Waterloo.

EcoTransit Sydney is concerned that the overdevelopment of Waterloo with high-rise apartment blocks is only a foretaste of what can be expected if the Bankstown Line is converted for the Metro.

## **An Alternate Heavy Rail Metro Route**

When major public transport projects are being planned in countries that use a rational planning process the intended outcome is to supplement and improve existing transport infrastructure. Unlike the Sydney Metro they do not seek to replace it with a lesser service nor unnecessarily duplicate it.

In the case of the Sydney Metro, and contrary to sound planning practice, this is what is being proposed. The expensive outcome will be the cannibalisation of existing rail services and the misplaced duplication of others.

The only section of the route that is completely new is the section from Cudgong Road to Epping. EcoTransit Sydney has already been critical of the decision to build a station at Waterloo instead of the Sydney University, however, the entire proposed route from Epping to Bankstown via the CBD does nothing to provide rail services to suburbs that currently don't have one.

EcoTransit Sydney has identified an alternate route, which would not only provide a rail service to suburbs that don't currently have adequate public transport, but would also have interchanges with all of the radial heavy rail lines that extend from the CBD. This route would be a valuable addition to Sydney's rail network and provide a "cross city line," enabling commuters to cross Sydney, by-passing the CBD.

The route identified by EcoTransit Sydney diverts the Metro south from Epping, through Ryde, Gladesville, Abbotsford, Ashfield, Campsie, Kingsgrove, Hurstville and terminating at Blakehurst. The full list of proposed stations is:

Epping\*  
Balaclava Road  
Eastwood Light Rail (interchange with another EcoTransit proposal)  
Denistone East  
Top Ryde  
Victoria Road  
Gladesville  
Gladesville Hospital  
Abbotsford Bay  
Five Dock  
Ashfield\*  
Ashbury  
Campsie\*  
Clemton Park  
Kingsgrove\*  
Bexley  
Hurstville\*  
Blakehurst

\* Indicates interchange with existing heavy rail lines.

Please see the attached map for the route in relation to the suburbs through which it passes.

There is the possibility of further extension of the line to Miranda, where there would an interchange with the Cronulla Line. Stations would be located at Sylvania, Port Hacking Road and Miranda.

The tunnels for this route are not significantly longer than the proposed route, via the CBD to Bankstown, but it does avoid a deep harbour tunnel to access the CBD. The diameter of the tunnels south of Epping should be constructed to 6.5 metre diameter, to allow for future upgrading to double deck trains when demand warrants it.

To make the trains more comfortable for the travelling public, the single deck trains on order for the Metro could be fitted or retro-fitted with transverse seating, increasing the seating capacity by at least fifty per cent.

## **Increasing Capacity Across the Network**

The following quote is taken from Sydney Metro's "Have Your Say" brochure:

"Sydney Metro, together with signalling and infrastructure upgrades across the existing Sydney rail network Metro, will increase the capacity of train services entering the CBD- from about 120 an hour to 200 services beyond 2024. That's an increase of up to 60 per cent capacity across the network to meet demand."

This wording seems to be deliberately written to mask the actual impact of the proposed metro on the networks capacity. It does not detail what projected capacity increase can be attributed to the Metro and what increase can be attributed to the upgrades of the existing network.

In questioning Michael Lloyd, a representative of Sydney Metro, he informed us that the maximum number of trains per hour would be 30 or one train every two minutes, in the peak period. The same frequencies can be achieved with double deck trains, offering a higher standard of comfort and carrying more passengers.

Double deck trains have more than twice the seating capacity of metro trains and will run with 70% of passengers seated when fully loaded, where as the metro will run with 70% of the passengers standing, when fully loaded.

At 30 trains per hour (one every two minutes), the metro can carry 36,000 passengers per hour. If the line were to be built and operated with double deck trains, the capacity would be 45,000 passengers per hour, with the same frequency. The frequency of one train every two minutes is possible with double deck trains and as is being done in Paris, on the RER network.

Building a second harbour crossing, fully integrated with the existing network, combined with the planned upgrades, would increase the capacity across the network by more than 60 per cent.

## **A Cheaper Alternative**

The projected cost of the “City & Southwest” metro of almost \$13 billion is a high price to pay for a sub-standard rail line. The Government has not yet explained how the project will be funded, saying only that \$7 billion will be allocated from the sale of the “poles and wires” i.e. the electricity grid. The remaining \$6 billion can only come from massive high-rise apartment development around the stations at Crows Nest, Victoria Cross, Martin Place, Waterloo and from Sydenham to Bankstown.

Instead of investing this large sum of money into a project that won’t achieve the capacity increase that its proponents claim, the money would be better spent on expanding the “heavy rail” network and upgrading the signalling.

There does need to be a second rail crossing of Sydney Harbour to increase capacity across the network but this can best be achieved by building two more tracks from Chatswood to Sydenham and Stanmore, via Central, utilising the Harbour Bridge. The Bridge was designed to take four tracks and taking back the Cahill Expressway lanes for rail and utilising other infrastructure that is currently unused, the “heavy rail” alternative could be built for less than \$4 billion. This would be less than one third of the cost of the proposed City & Southwest metro.

This combined with upgrade to the signalling on the Bankstown Line, frequencies of one train every two minutes would be possible, with double deck trains. The capacity of this alternative line would 25% higher than that of the metro.

A video<sup>1</sup>, “Two more tracks: How to boost Sydney's commuter rail capacity,” provides an overview of this alternate proposal.

## **Emergency evacuation**

There are severe safety concerns in the tunnels from Chatswood to Crows Nest, Victoria Cross to Barangaroo and Waterloo to Sydenham. The proposed evacuation procedure, through the end doors to track level does not cater for people in wheel chairs or those with mobility problems. In addition, evacuation via this method will be very slow and with no on-board staff, it could lead to serious stress to passengers and to loss of life in extreme events.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MU6JuXYPVXY>

## Conclusion

The City & Southwest metro is an inferior and sub-standard rail line when compared to the current Sydney Rail Network and the modern double deck carriages that are used to provide the service.

It is not only inferior, it is also much more expensive than the alternate outlined above. The cost differential is on the order of \$8.5 billion, money that could be far better utilised in expanding and improving the existing network and also rapidly expanding the budding light rail network.

Safety is also a concern, as the small tunnel size does not permit vestibule height walkways throughout the length of the tunnels. This could lead to injury and even loss of life in an extreme event such as an on board fire. This combined with no on board staff to provide direction and assistance in the event of an emergency could be catastrophic.

Based on the information that has been presented to the public, one can reasonably conclude that the Sydney Metro, including the City & Southwest section, is not really about providing improved public transport. It is about providing development opportunities to developers, including MTR Corporation, and turning large tracts of Sydney into MTR's version of Hong Kong.

EcoTransit Sydney opposes the construction of the City & Southwest metro and urges the Government to build rail transport infrastructure that:

- Is compatible with, and configured for the existing Sydney rail network;
- Uses the existing comfortable and reliable double deck carriages that are currently used by Sydney's rail commuters
- Passes through suburbs that currently do not have a service, instead of cannibalising two existing rail lines for the sake of providing windfall profits for developers.

