

**SUBMISSION TO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT
SYDNEY METRO-CHATSWOOD TO SYDNEHAM - REF: SSI 7400**

A Plan for a Spur Line to Northern Beaches

***How to Connect the Major Dee Why /Brookvale Industrial Area To
Sydney's Global Economic Corridor & Ease Traffic Congestion on
Military Road***

By

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The Plan

This submission advocates an integrated public transport plan that strikes a virtuous balance between the economic, social and environmental perspectives. There are two core components to it:

- A rapid spur line to the Sydney Metro that would connect the major Northern Beaches industrial centre of Brookvale/Dee Why to the Global Economic Corridor at the new Victoria Cross station North Sydney, with additional metro stations at Dee Why, Brookvale and Spit Junction; and
- Complementary light rail lines connecting the proposed new metro stations at Crows Nest and a possible one at Brookvale to the tourism, recreation and residential centres of Balmoral Beach and Manly respectively.

The new spur line and the proposed Sydney metro would meet at proposed Victoria Cross Station, North Sydney that would become a metro hub.

The plan will boost economic growth because it would provide efficient and effective public transport alternatives to the Military Road traffic bottleneck that is currently a nightmare.

As metro and light rail can be powered from renewable sources, the proposed plan will greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air particle pollution. And because the plan will slash road traffic congestion and pollution, it will make our city a much more liveable and socially amenable place.

Motivation for Writing this Submission

I am motivated to write this submission because I am very concerned about the enormous WestConnex project. Since the project was announced it has become a huge 'black hole' both from a planning and a financial point of view. The experts say the project will provide no long-term answer to why it was set up; to ease road traffic congestion. Meanwhile community opposition to WestConnex has risen exponentially and it has become a major vote changer in the marginal seat of Grayndler in the 2016 Federal Election.

Of particular concern is that the budget for WestConnex has continued to blow out until today some commentators are saying it could cost \$30 billion or more of taxpayers' money. That is a lot of money to waste on a project that will not work!

Along with tens of thousands of others, I am calling for WestConnex to be scrapped and the money spent on public transport projects that do work. In particular I am advocating that the money that would otherwise be wasted on WestConnex should be used to fund the integrated public transport project

outlined in this paper. Indeed I believe that there would be plenty of change left over to go towards worthy public transport projects besides this one.

Rationale for Extending the Sydney Metro to Dee Why

The Sydney Metro EIS persuasively argues the economic case for improving transport connections in Sydney's Global Economic Corridor. The new metro will link the North West and South West growth centres of Sydney with a state of -the -art- high- capacity- turn- up -and- go- service, drastically reduce travel times and drive the knowledge economy.

But unlike Westconnex that will ultimately worsen road traffic congestion, the Sydney Metro and a possible Northern Beaches metro will cause a shift away from private car travel to public transport. In support of this conclusion, I cite page 37 the Sydney Metro EIS that says:

By increasing the reach of the rail network, frequency of services, interchange with other modes and connections to key destinations Sydney Metro City and Southwest is expected to increase accessibility trip diversity and utilisation of the network during both peak and non-peak periods. This would facilitate a shift to rail from car....

Private cars that heavily congest Military Road, create a major obstacle to efficient transport connections from the Northern Beaches to the City. Military Road is the only major direct route to the city from the Northern Beaches. The road acts as a bottleneck for vehicle traffic that seriously detracts from the resilience of the transport network because the people of the Northern Beaches lack alternative modes of transport to the City other than buses or private cars that are funnelled together into a slow moving traffic jam as they negotiate the problematic harbour crossing. Military Road is a vital artery that is congested not only during the morning peak but at most other times of the day. The road to the Northern Beaches is the cause of major delays and frustration that has a detrimental effect on economic productivity. Without doubt, the vehicle carrying capacity of Military Road and the approaches to the harbour crossing has reached its limit and an effective solution must be pursued as a matter of priority.

But expanding road capacity with poorly thought out projects like WestConnex is not the answer. Studies have shown that building motorways just induces more demand and road traffic congestion worsens within a very short time. This in turn prompts calls for more motorways and we end up in a city liveability nightmare that has been expressed in horror films like Peter Weir's *The Cars that Ate Paris*.

As the Sydney Metro EIS shows, the right answer is to improve public transport in such a way that most people will see that travelling by public transport is the cheapest, fastest and most amenable way to get from A to B. They will then leave their car at home and take public transport, causing a major shift away from private car travel that is the cause of the smog-inducing-greenhouse -gas- emitting- road -traffic- congestion that blights our city.

Victoria Cross as the Metro Exchange Station

Proposed Victoria Cross Station (outlined in the Sydney Metro EIS) stands out as the logical choice for a metro exchange to connect the Northern Beaches spur line to the Sydney Metro.

Making Victoria Cross the metro hub will:

- Provide the strongest connection to the Global Economic Corridor(GEC) short of the prohibitively expensive option of a second metro tunnel across Sydney Harbour.
- Create the most efficient passenger transfer point between the two metro lines because Victoria Cross is strategically situated as the closest station to the Sydney CBD before crossing the Harbour;
- Enable the most efficient transfer of passengers between heavy rail and metro because at Victoria Cross these two mass transit modes come very close together at this strategically important Harbour crossing point

North Sydney is a key destination city in the GEC and it is only one metro stop from the Sydney CBD at Barrangaroo that will become a major new employment land when completed. As regards the second point above, the faster dwell times of metro compared to heavy rail mean that peak hour passengers can be quickly exchanged at Victoria Cross station. Moreover even more efficient passenger transfer may be achieved if spur line trains are staggered to arrive at slightly different times from the main Sydney Metro trains. Fourthly the proximity of the metro to heavy rail at Victoria Cross means that the two rail modes may be efficiently connected with an underground pedestrian tunnel. Fifthly this proximity of rail modes at North Sydney creates resilience at this critical harbour crossing point. If breakdowns or delays occur on either rail mode, passengers will find it relatively easy to change to the alternative mode.

Why a Metro to the Northern Beaches?

There are three main reasons why a metro to the Brookvale/Dee Why area is the best solution to the traffic bottleneck that is Military Road.

1. The Brookvale/Dee Why area is a major employment land that unlike similar areas in Sydney lacks a rapid mass transit connection
2. The topography and urban morphology of the lower Northern Beaches area militates for a 'best fit' rail tunnel that would link Victoria Cross at North Sydney, to Brookvale and Dee Why with a stop mid-way at Spit Junction;and

3. An underground metro from Victoria Cross to Brookvale and Dee Why would permit a traffic –slowed- local-light -rail connection from Crows Nest to Balmoral Beach and from Brookvale to Manly Beach that will amenably connect and complement the rapid mass transit route.

Brookvale is the site of Waringah Mall while Dee Why is a major light industrial area. Without mass transit, the limitations of the relatively low capacity traffic- congesting buses currently serving the Brookvale/Dee Why area will tend to hinder jobs growth. And there is sufficient depth of economic saturation to warrant at least two Metro stations; one at or near Brookvale and one at Dee Why. The latter would also be the logical site for a bus interchange to serve the Upper Northern Beaches region.

The Northern Beaches area currently depends on the steep and winding Spit Road that becomes Military Road at Mosman where it picks up more traffic. The topography and urban morphology of this area means that light rail or extra buses alone can't or won't solve the traffic congestion problem. What is required is a rail tunnel that will expand passenger- carrying capacity without generating additional surface road congestion.

The advent of the Sydney Metro proposal serendipitously suggests that the rail tunnel should be a metro tunnel. The straightest direct (and therefore cheapest) line for a metro tunnel is from Brookvale/DeeWhy to the proposed new metro station at Victoria Cross, North Sydney, with a station mid- way at Spit Junction. Moreover the Sydney Metro EIS indicates that constructability is cheaper and easier for a metro than for a heavy rail tunnel with modern tunnelling machines.

The unfavourable topography and urban morphology of the lower Northern Beaches area is a major obstacle in the way of making Manly Beach the end destination for the proposed Northern Beaches metro spur. The fact that Manly Beach is already served by a good high capacity commuter ferry service to the City is another good reason not to put a metro station at Manly Beach. Instead it would be better to connect the ferry at Many Beach to a metro station at Brookvale with a light rail line that would run along Pittwater Road. This road is wide enough to carry light rail with trams running in both directions. Manly residents would then have a good public transport connection to Waringah Mall. Northern Beaches commuters generally would be able to choose either metro or ferry for travel to the Global Economic Corridor. The alternative routes would improve the resilience of this connection and assist economic productivity while taking private cars off Military Road.

Last but not least the famous description of Manly 'as seven miles from Sydney but a thousand miles from care' warrants a scenic route to Manly that is best served by ferry on the seaward side and by light rail on the landward side. The first vistas of Manly that tourists see should not be a rapid dark Metro tunnel but the scenic and sense of place opportunities afforded by light rail and ferry.

Light Rail from Crows Nest to Balmoral Beach

The Sydney Metro EIS found that there was overwhelming community support for a separate Metro station at Crows Nest to serve both the employment lands of St Leonards and the restaurant precinct in the Willoughby Road Crows Nest vicinity. Why not take this opportunity to further develop vibrant mixed use land uses along Falcon Street & Military Road by connecting the proposed Crows Nest metro Station to a possible metro spur line station at Spit Junction?

By creating this rapid transit metro connection that will take the bulk of private cars off the Military Road bottleneck, it becomes possible to make the road a 'boulevard of dreams' with a magnificent sense of place. Imagine a thriving traffic-slowed 'Champs Elysee' served by the sustainable transport options of light rail, cycling and pedestrian friendly streets. Cyclists, pedestrians and light rail passengers will love the flat terrain and traffic slowed streetscape. They will be tempted to linger at local shops, cafes and restaurants, creating a vibrant social atmosphere and profitable passing trade. At the same time they will enjoy rapid transit options connected by light rail at Crows Nest, Spit Junction and North Sydney.

Light rail will replace most of the buses that normally ply between Crows Nest, North Sydney and Spit Junction. At Crows Nest Metro Station there will be an pedestrian underpass that will efficiently connect metro passengers to a light rail interchange at Falcon Street connecting to Military Road and that route will be wide enough to take trams in both directions. There will be a single track light rail loop connecting Victoria Cross Station to the Crows Nest TAFE/ High School precinct in Miller Street.

At Spit Junction light rail passengers will change to a single track light rail loop that will take them to Balmoral Beach, passing through Mosman shopping centre before proceeding down Raglan Street to the beach where the buses currently go. A shuttle bus will link Clifton Gardens and Taronga Park Zoo to the Balmoral Beach light rail line near Raglan Street.

The single loop tram line will replace the buses that currently go through Mosman and shift passengers away from the private cars that almost always clog the shopping centre. At the Spit Road side of Spit Junction buses to Manly will begin. While the red Metro buses from the Spit to Sydenham would be phased out as a combination of light rail and metro take their former passenger load.

In this way, the North Sydney and Mosman communities that were once cruelly divided by the monstrous chasm of the Warringah expressway will be reunited with the wonderful connection created by the light rail connection. And at the same noxious motor vehicle traffic will be minimised, as people switch to metro in order to meet their rapid transport needs. Private car travel will be the slowest, dearest and most stressful way to travel and people turn away from it in droves, thus realizing good public policy. Our city then becomes a less polluted, more sustainable and more liveable place.