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Dear James

**RE: Notice of Exhibition – Sydney Metro City and Southwest (Chatswood to Sydenham) Modification 3 – Martin Place (SSI 7400 MOD 3)**

I refer to your letter dated 27 June 2017 which invites the City of Sydney (“the City”) to comment on the request for modification of the Sydney Metro City and Southwest (Chatswood to Sydenham) project approval.

The City notes that this modification relates to a current SSD application currently being considered by the Department of Planning for an unsolicited proposal by Macquarie Bank. The City has objected to the proposal on grounds of poor urban design outcomes and conflict with the City’s built form controls.

**Key modifications from the Environmental Impact Statement Works (EIS) works**

One of the main difference between the approved Metro works for Martin Place Station and the modification that is of particular interest to the City is the proposed unpaid concourse.

Given that the connection to the MLC Centre currently exists, it is possible for this connection to be provided by the project in an alternate location under Castlereagh Street, regardless of this modification.

It is also noted that the plans for the proposed station entries are inconsistent with the cross-sections provided and are misleading. The plans show that the whole site area will be occupied by a pedestrian plaza/station lobby, with some service and operational area. This is not the case because, as shown by the cross-sections, it is clearly intended that some of this space will be occupied by Over Station Development (OSD) entries and retail, particularly in the northern station.

Due to the inaccuracy of the plans, it is not possible to determine if the station area is larger than the approved works, but it appears that it is not.

*city of villages*

## **Response to Proposed Design**

If the proposed modification is to be approved, the following amendments should be made to the design of the stations, to ameliorate the poorer outcomes associated with the modification.

### ***Station Design – North***

- The frontages to Castlereagh and Elizabeth Streets should be sleeved with retail to activate the street, services should be located behind.
- The curved openings between 52 Martin Place and the Station entry are not supported. These should be square to the street in the mid-block area to maintain definition of the street edge and continuation of the urban character.
- The pedestrian access to the station platforms is less direct than the reference design in the EIS. The journey from the street is longer as a result of the escalator arrangement. This is clearly beneficial to the retail tenancies flanking the escalators, but extends the journey for transport customers. This is a poorer outcome than the EIS design. A modification that extends travel time to the platforms should not be approved.
- The sloping frontage to Hunter Street must not be resolved with an awkward and/or unusable stair/seating structure. A range of carefully considered options for the resolution of this critical frontage must be presented to the Metro Design Review Panel.

### ***Station Design – South***

- The entry arrangement has been modified. The modification will encourage pedestrians to cross Castlereagh Street outside the signalised box.
- Entries should be located at the corners closest to signalised crossings. This will provide the most direct access from the signalised intersection into the station. It will also prevent the need to extend the signalised crossing along Castlereagh and Elizabeth Streets.
- There should be active frontages to Martin Place. Preferably the commercial lobby entry would be located on Martin Place, and the level change managed internally.
- It is noted that the direct lift access has disappeared from the sections for the southern entry. This must be provided in both station entries to facilitate equal access requirements.
- A ground level setback to Martin Place is not supported. A colonnade to Martin Place is not supported. The station must contribute to definition of the street wall along Martin Place.

### ***Martin Place – Public Domain Works***

- The City reiterates its previous submission to the Metro EIS in regards to Martin Place.
- It is expected that the Metro project will implement the adopted Masterplan for Martin Place as described in the City North Public Domain Plan (December 2015). This includes delivery of new trees, terraces and seating in the Metro Block.
- Trees are to be accommodated in set downs to the ground slab, ie not in raised planters. Appropriate depth must be accommodated in the concourse space beneath Martin Place to ensure this.
- Skylights in the public domain are not supported.

### ***Proposed New Unpaid Concourse***

- Represents a privatisation of public infrastructure.
- Details of the width and design of the unpaid concourse are not provided in the modification.

- To achieve maximum public benefit in the proposed unpaid concourse, the following should be provided:
  - Access to public toilets;
  - Public access for the full period of Metro operation times;
  - A space free from advertising to ensure effective wayfinding for transport customers;
  - Stratum ownership for Transport for NSW to ensure efficient operation of the underground interchange environment for customers;
  - Ownership and management by Transport for NSW to avoid real and perceived privatisation of the station entry, exit and interchange of public infrastructure.

### ***Pedestrian Level of Service***

- It is noted that the EIS included some very poor Pedestrian Levels of Service outcomes during construction, and some poor outcomes during operation. This has not been addressed by the modification. It is essential that this information is updated and provided for the full impact of the modification to be considered. Martin Place is a very high pedestrian environment and safety of pedestrians must be the primary consideration.

### **Heritage Issues**

#### ***North***

The principle of integrating the design of the station with the tower above is not opposed in principle but any such proposal must optimise external and internal public spaces. It must deliver a clear public benefit and public spaces and amenity clearly delineated from private amenity. It is very important to bear in mind that the metro station is infrastructure with a 100+ design life whereas any commercial building above it would (looking at the history similar premium sites elsewhere in the city) be replaced up to three times during the next hundred years. The amenity of the station must therefore be independent of the building above it.

The proposal in its current form does not deliver this and has an unacceptable impact on its context and, in particular, on the heritage listed 48-50 Martin Place.

The proposed tower to the north is too close to 48-50 Martin Place and is a poor contextual fit due to its bulk and lack of set-backs to north, east and west. This results in a poor relationship with the surrounding street wall heights and the heritage buildings at 48-50 Martin Place and in the vicinity of Chifley Square including the former Qantas building, Wentworth (Sofitel) Hotel and the City Mutual Building. The Datum set up around Chifley Square by the last two decades of development is weakened by a lack of street wall or set back to the north.

The key problem with the tower is the increase in its external bulk caused by the proposed internal atrium. Due to its height this atrium is unlikely to admit substantial quantities of daylight or sunlight to the public areas of the metro station. It is essentially creating internal amenity for the tower occupants at the expense of the appearance and amenity of its context.

The key way to improve the relationship of any tower in this location is to delete any internal atrium, move the resulting smaller tower footprint to the north, and introduce an atrium in the resulting podium between the new tower and 48-50 Martin Place. This would reduce heritage impacts and deliver much better daylight down in to the public areas of the Metro station as a clear and dedicated public benefit. The resulting slimmer tower could then deliver complying Development Control Plan (DCP) setbacks to north,

east and west. Such a tower could be replaced or remodelled in the future while preserving the public spaces and amenity of the metro station.

### **South**

The full 25m setback to above the Martin Place street wall is essential to maintain the distinctive street proportions, daylighting and amenity of Martin Place. This setback has been retained in developments over the past twenty years including the GPO (No1 Martin Place) development and 120 Pitt Street.

The proposed envelope does not set back the east and west sides of the tower as required by the DCP and this is not adequately justified. The proposal will therefore have an impact on views, sun and daylighting from north and south.

### **Noise and Vibration**

The City notes that the relevant criteria for airborne and ground borne noise associated with the modification appears to be correctly set as per the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) policy and the general approval.

The relevant vibration criteria for heritage items seems to reference a criteria of 7.5mm/s which the City recalls being consistent with the approval however, the EIS has also referenced the DIN 4150 as relevant for intrinsically vibration sensitive structures. The modification does not give regard to this.

#### ***Intensity of noise and vibration impact***

##### **a. Intensity of airborne noise impact**

This is likely to significantly increase with the modification given the expanded footprint of the station works. Some criterion exceedances over 20 dB will occur, but the acoustic assessment provides no further guidance on how far these exceedances will go. In our experience demolition noise impact can be quite significant, as associated with the activities proposed. Noting that the proposed modification includes demolition of a new building (9-19 Elizabeth St), which is immediately adjacent to 50 Martin Place and opposite the Channel 7 studios, this modification has the potential to cause significant noise impact. Levels 20 dB in excess of this will be in this instance over 81dB. This is liable to cause significant duress, and may not be mitigated without substitution of activities like impact hammering to demolish the building or strict and meaningful respite.

##### **b. Intensity of ground-borne noise impact**

Works are proposed in the ground space under and around 50 Martin Place which according to the assessment will have significant effect on the mentioned building and the adjacent structures, in the order of 25 dB or more of exceedance. This will be up to 75dB of ground borne noise which will be of considerably significant impact. We would suggest out of hours works are appropriate as these impacts effect commercial receivers while the residential impacts (as these are further away) will likely be less, and more easily managed with mitigation options.

There is also liable to be a structure borne noise impact associated with the demolition of the building at 9-19 Elizabeth Street which the City was not able to ascertain whether it had been assessed and provided for in the Modification. This needs careful consideration and evaluation as there is minimal separation between the building proposed to be demolished and the building at 50 Martin Place.

**c. Vibration Impact**

The assessment of vibration is limited to ground borne vibration from the proposed tunnel works. This assessment is less objective in its description than the assessment for noise and simply provides that levels over the criteria (7.5mm/s) will be incidental on the building at 50 Martin Place. We consider this building likely to be the most vibration affected receiver associated with the expanded footprint. The report provides that the building may be steel framed and capable of withstanding around 25mm/s of vibration.

The report appears to assess only ground borne vibration which will be caused by the tunnelling and excavation works, and gives no guidance over vibration impact which will be caused by the demolition of the adjacent Elizabeth Street demolition.

We note the City's comments about the 7.5mm/s criteria being potentially inappropriate for some structures. This was acknowledged in the original Metro EIS review which gave recognition to the DIN 4150 as the basis for controlling vibration impact onto vibration sensitive structures. Buildings which contain original period glazing and ornate plaster could stand to be adversely affected from a cosmetic damage standpoint at levels of around 7.5mms per second, and blocks of render and plaster can become dislodged, falling off and affecting occupants. These levels are also likely to cause severe annoyance.

The City notes that a detailed assessment is indicated as necessary, and urge that this assessment considers the finer grain detail of the affected building and any inherent vibration sensitivity it may have. This should focus on vetting any potential injury to occupants from cosmetic damage to the building and preventing annoyance. We caution against an approach which permits a degree of damage to any heritage structures to occur with a focus to "making them good after" in that it is not always possible to repair the damage and what is of heritage value is then permanently lost.

In addition, whilst noting that an acoustic consultant will be employed to monitor the work, and that the work will be subject to the conditions in the overall approval and the processes inherent to the approval such as the Construction Noise & Vibration Management Plan, the degree of noise permitted at times is subject only to time based controls, and limits do not necessarily apply outside of respite periods. Thus where the levels of noise exceed criteria, the impact is expected to be meaningful.

On this basis the City suggests that relevant mitigation strategies be brought forward and planned to be implemented from the commencement of works where there is certainty of noise impact, as opposed to waiting for complaints to inevitably eventuate.

Should you wish to speak with a Council officer about the above, please contact Michael Soo, Area Planning Manager, on 9265 9574 or at [msoo@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:msoo@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,



**Graham Jahn AM**  
**Director**  
 City Planning | Development | Transport