## To Greater Sydney Regional Plan

The attached submission is also made in response to the Future Transport draft. It is largely concerned with transport, and in particular rail.

There should be an independent public inquiry into Sydney transport to inform decision makers and the public. At present decision makers appear underinformed, and the totality of transport material provided to the public in Future Transport and Greater Sydney Regional Plan drafts is probably misleading. Reasons include: the drafts omit the most relevant rail facts; they are ambiguous, inconsistent, contain mistakes; the process of which they form a part is flawed.

Perhaps most importantly for the Commission, the Future Transport draft contradicts the 'vision' of the draft Greater Sydney Regional Plan. This vividly demonstrates failure of this level of planning - of matching transport and living patterns. A report in yesterday’s Sydney Morning Herald, if correct, removes any remaining doubt about this failure; it had the Government allowing new housing on lands 'earmarked' for a rail corridor; in this case perhaps the most important future rail corridor in Sydney.

The transport aspects of the draft plans favour affluent inner metropolitan dwellers and businesses at enormous financial cost and also at the expense of the rest of the metropolis. This can be seen in a number of respects: the profile of ‘investments’ (which remain unassessed); transport aspects that aim to reduce services in Western Sydney (below). The greater detail depicted for eastern Sydney compared with other areas is perhaps telling too.

The Commission's draft Regional Plan posits 'three cities' associated with a '30-minute city'. While catchy, the concepts need an understanding substantially more sophisticated than demonstrated in the draft. The draft therefore creates an extraordinarily high probability of misinterpretation of relevant concepts, already evident in the transport elements of the draft and much public commentary. The effect of such misinterpretation may cause great damage to Sydney and its future citizens.

The draft virtually concedes a 30-minute Sydney is impractical; indeed it concedes three 30-minute areas in Sydney are impractical. Ergo the fudging into 'no one needs to live more than....' and 'centres' rather than cities; its own concept has changed into a much larger number of centres than three cities.

The fudging reflects the fact, perhaps unhappily for town planners, that many, even most, residents of Sydney always have, currently do and forever will commute for substantially more than 30 minutes. The commuting travel time equilibrium in Sydney probably exceeds the average previously observed by Marchetti elsewhere. Among the reasons are characteristics of Australian labour markets; the best educational and employment opportunities will only ever be available in a few places. Attempts by Government to reduce travel time, except through road pricing, lead to dispersal of settlement in either nodular form (rail) or in strips (roads). Put simply, neither the Commission, nor anybody else, nor any 'plan', will stop commuting in Sydney.

This commuting will be done in cars unless suitable public transport is available. The most important facet of public transport in this respect, the matter that largely determines public transport use for rides of 30-minutes or more, is seating. Extraordinarily, this is not discussed in either draft, nor is the other major determinant of public transport use – travel time.

In fact, both drafts propose rail forms that reduce seating - in some cases from what is currently available on rail lines e.g. Bankstown. There is some probability the proposals will also increase public transport commuting times for some rides currently at 30 minutes or more. The effect will be an increase in car use, road congestion, and irresistible political pressure to provide more motorways and subside road use (at present, highlighted by the Government's registration charge 'initiative'). This will cause more health problems in western Sydney due to both commuting stresses and airshed quality issues; again policies to benefit the affluent creating further disadvantage for the more needy.

Hence, I have commented in John Menadue's Pearls and Irritations: It is one thing to provide opportunities close to home (this is how the three cities 30-minute city is portrayed to the public).

It is another to reduce access to opportunities elsewhere (which may well be an effect of the Future Transport and Regional Plan rail 'visions').

It is yet another to do so without clearly informing the public.

There is a high risk of enormous negative consequences if decisions are based on transport related material in the Future Transport and Greater Sydney Regional Plan drafts.

With this background, talk of three cities appears to be more glib and offensive than enlightening. It risks further dividing Sydney into haves and have-nots. While there will be sincere protestations this is not intended, some maps in the drafts indicate otherwise.

The three cities and 30-minute city proposals need a serious discussion rather than monologues, false analogies to Mr Bradfield, or slick public relations material. Such serious discussion needs to take a long, long, time - much longer than this consultation period. Apart from addressing the above most substantial concerns, demonstration of how such ideas have worked in other similar cities would be welcome.

While some might raise questions about whether a Royal Commission would benefit western Sydney planning, in my view an open public inquiry into Sydney transport is the best current option to redress the present gap in information and analysis. It would help the Government do its job.

Turning to more positive matters, the attached submission makes suggestions in relation to: train types (eg. Metro v. other) using the Bankstown line as an example; rail lessons to be applied in development of Badgerys Creek 'Aerotropolis'; how to develop a customer-centred transport plan using South-West Sydney, Liverpool, Macarthur and Badgerys Creek, as an example.

The last of these yield indicative rail projects for South-West Sydney, the highest priorities being:

• simultaneous construction of airport and commuter rail lines/stations (Sydney trains compatible) at Badgerys Creek;

• a commuter line (Sydney trains compatible) segment Leppington-Badgerys Creek as part of a north-south route through the airport and adjacent areas and towards a 'loop' including the Aerotropolis, Liverpool, Parramatta and St Marys;

• a new junction at Glenfield to allow some South line commuter trains (Liverpool etc) to be routed along the East Hills line, dramatically cutting commuting times (by more than achievable by Sydney Metro).

Mass transit - in particular Sydney Metro - should not be installed in or extended to any part of South-West Sydney. The Commission’s ‘vision’ for rail must be dismissed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. I apologise for this necessary length and would be happy to be corrected on any point.

I look forward to providing further comments on later, emended, drafts.

Regards