# **Sydenham-Bankstown Metro 2nd hearings etc comments updated in February 2020**

1.5 One update must be noted. In early February 2020, Transport for NSW was reported as issuing options for continuation of Sydney Trains services on the lines extending west of Bankstown. The supports the intentions conveyed by the Chief Executive of Sydney Trains.

## 12. West of Bankstown

### 12.1 Transcript

12.1.1 Witnesses said the idea is to continue Sydney Trains services to stations west of Bankstown:

*Mr LAMONTE: … we are planning for customers beyond Bankstown so they [may] still have access to train services to the city. More detail on that will be to follow in the coming months…..*

*Mr COLLINS: We are not going to leave people behind and marooned on those stations that are west of Bankstown. For some people, though, who are near Bankstown, the best option will be a very attractive option of maybe one or two stops on our network and then getting on to the metro.*

12.1.2 Connection of those stations with the Sydney Trains network was seen as important:

*Mr COLLINS….a heavy rail connection for the rest of the network is important to maintain.*

12.1.3 The transcript has the witnesses saying there are options for the connection (12.1.2 above). The intention is to consult on options in the future. This was represented as a normal approach to planning for the rest of the network:

*The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It strikes me that it is odd that you do not have a plan already….*

*Mr COLLINS: Superficially, it might seem like that…..we do have to have a flexible plan. I think it would have been wrong of us, when announcing Bankstown was going to be converted, to have said, "Right, this is the service we are putting on for the rest of the network." … We want to make sure that that service provision fits in with our network.*

### 12.2 Comments

12.2.1 While witnesses said the idea is to continue Sydney Trains services to stations west of Bankstown, the Government’s official documents - which do not show a train line and caused this to be an issue - had not been amended at the time of the hearings. Hence their testimony was in conflict with then current Government documents, however seemingly odd or contradictory those documents might be.[[1]](#endnote-1)

12.2.2 The argument in the response also was illogical. Connection of the more heavily used east-of-Bankstown stations with the Sydney Trains network i.e. non-conversion to Sydney Metro, would be equally – in fact more – important than connection of those stations west of Bankstown.

12.2.3 The reasons given for not having a plan for services to stations west of Bankstown were not credible. The potential service patterns are limited and straightforward. None appear to involve significant changes to Sydney Trains operations. The need for a plan must have been identified as an issue in 2012 – if it was intended for services to continue.

12.2.4 The claim that changing demand patterns justifies not coming to a decision is nonsensical. It is equally a reason not to decide anything, including conversion of the Sydenham-Bankstown segment.

12.2.5 Further, if it is believed – as claimed – Transport for NSW has the timetabling and planning function, none of the witness statements about the timetable west of Bankstown can carry much weight in the present Inquiry. Later, in early February 2020, Transport for NSW was reported as putting to public consultations three options for continuation of rail services.[[2]](#endnote-2)

## 12a Supplementary answers 6 December 2019 - stations west of Bankstown

### 12a.1. Answers

12a.1.1 Supplementary answers from Transport for NSW include eight relating to continued provision / termination of Sydney Trains services at stations west of Bankstown. The answers are to the effect there is no ‘plan’ to discontinue services. They point to *Future Transport 2056* which was said to supersede (at least) aspects of previous statements:[[3]](#endnote-3)

*‘The Future Transport 2056 strategy is the NSW Government’s strategic vision for integrated land use and transport over the next 40 years to meet demands of predicted population growth. A copy of the Strategy is publicly available on the Transport for NSW website. Future Transport 2056 does not include plans to remove Carramar, Villawood, Leightonfield, Chester Hill, Sefton, Birrong, Yagoona from the rail network.’*

12a.1.2 In response to a question about the apparent omission – non-identification - of the relevant stations and line in *Future Transport 2056* (plan) diagrams the answers had:

*‘The plans contain conceptual-level maps which illustrate the future city-shaping and city-serving networks in 2036 and 2056. These future e network visions will develop over time with a range of initiatives identified for future investigation.’*

12a.1.The explanation of the previous transcript qualifier to the continuation of services – in the ‘short-term’- was:

*‘The ‘short term’ refers to services being introduced after Sydney Metro City & Southwest opens. Further rail plans may be investigated and developed as part of the Future Transport 2056 strategy.’*

### 12a.2 Comments

12a.2.1 By going beyond simple accurate statements, the answers introduced doubt, ambiguity and uncertainty as to intentions. For example, it is hard to believe a ‘*conceptual level map*’ would exclude Bondi Junction but include Appin on the rail network. Similarly, that ‘*short term’* is limited to services to be introduced does not address services currently in place.

12a.2.2 Further, the claim a document *‘does not include plans’* to cease services is not the same as saying there are no such plans. In the present case it could equally be – more relevantly - said the document does not include plans to continue services. It is also possible that further rail plans may cancel services.

12a.2.3 The intention, as expressed by Sydney Trains’ Chief Executive, may well be to continue services. It can be readily believed this is the wish of his organisation and himself. However, if his organisation does not have the timetabling and planning function, that remains just a wish. It is up to the organisation with that function – which was said to be Transport for NSW - to clarify the matter. As indicated in section 12.2.5 above, post the hearings, in February 2020, Transport for NSW initiated action to clarify its intention to continue services.

12a.2.3 The easiest and best approach would have been for Transport for NSW to alter the problematic diagrams in its own publication, or at least say this will be done. This is important since it was claimed that publication ‘supersedes’ - in at least some respects - previous statements. That this has not been done after such a suggestion suggests arrogance or the existence of intentions to cease relevant services at some time. Later action to consult on options for continuation of relevant rail services, while not changing that conclusion, is a start to resolving the rail service issue.[[4]](#endnote-4)

## 12b Post hearings consultation on intention to continue rail services to west of Bankstown

### 12b.1 Transport for NSW consultation

12b.1.1 Post the hearings, in February 2020, Transport for NSW initiated action to clarify its intention to continue Sydney Trains rail services to stations west of Bankstown.[[5]](#endnote-5)

12b.1.2 Three options were reported, relating to train routes. Reports did not deal with the issue of train frequency. Reports did not specify whether existing or different train configurations or fleets - for example 4 car sets or single deck trains - would be deployed.

### 12b.2 Comment

12b.2.2 The reports about proposed consultation address the issue of inability of witnesses to speak about the intentions of the NSW Government on the issue of continuation of rail services.

12b.2.3 Despite the doubts raised by other actions of the Government, it can be presumed from the most recent Transport for NSW document there is now an intention to continue rail services.

12b.2.4 That document states 2018-19 was an early planning stage. That is a disturbing suggestion. It means this stage – which is now revealed to be quite conceptually simple - appears to have been divorced from the planning of *Future Transport 2056* and other central policy statements and not communicated adequately to witnesses or this Inquiry.

12b.2.5 Meaningful public consultation on services must consider the issue of timetables: service frequency in peak and off peak; hours of operation; stopping patterns especially on segments beyond the Bankstown line; planned closures. This is not prominent in press reports. The most recent Transport for NSW document indicates this will not be available until after 2021 – with that year being the start of timetable development.

1. <https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2018/Future_Transport_2056_Strategy.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/the-express/sydney-metro-southwest-state-government-releases-route-options/news-story/c86eb29f052437e2bab8968bf35f7692> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/12924/Transport%20for%20NSW%20-%20answer%20to%20QONS%20-%20received%206%20December%202019.pdf>

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/12923/Transport%20for%20NSW%20-%20answer%20to%20supplementary%20questions%20-%20received%206%20December%202019.PDF> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. *‘Supersedes’* appears in the response to question on notice no. 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://yoursay.transport.nsw.gov.au/52978/documents/128585> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)