**Review of submission on the Sydenham-Bankstown Line?[[1]](#endnote-1)**

The NSW Government provided a written submission to the current Parliamentary Committee inquiry into the proposed Metro conversion of the Sydenham-Bankstown rail.[[2]](#endnote-2)

This note reviews the author’s submission to that inquiry in the light of the Government’s document. It concludes the document does not justify reconsideration of the author’s submission.

The note suggests one more recommendation – for the Government to substantiate its claims by providing the public with relevant facts.

**v. This inquiry require the NSW Government publish all material relevant to every claim made in its submission.**

This note should be read in conjunction with the author’s September submission. It:

Summarises and comments on the NSW Government submission.

Reviews responses to terms of reference in light of the NSW submission.

Adds a conclusion and recommendations.

As ever, comments and corrections would be most welcome.

J Austen

3 November 2019

Contents

[**Review of submission on the Sydenham-Bankstown Line?** 1](#_Toc23678306)

[**1.** **NSW Government submission** 3](#_Toc23678307)

[**1.1** **Establishing Metro trajectory** 3](#_Toc23678308)

[**1.2** **City and Bankstown extension** 3](#_Toc23678309)

[**1.3** **Omissions** 5](#_Toc23678310)

[**1.4** **Comments** 6](#_Toc23678311)

[**1.5** **Conclusion** 11](#_Toc23678312)

[**2.** **Review of response to terms of reference** 13](#_Toc23678313)

[***2(a) the adequacy of the business case and viability of Metro*** 13](#_Toc23678314)

[***2(b) the consideration of alternatives for improving capacity and reducing congestion*** 13](#_Toc23678315)

[***2(c) the factors taken into account when comparing the alternatives and the robustness of the evidence used in decision-making*** 13](#_Toc23678316)

[***2(d) whether metro is a suitable means of transport over long distances*** 13](#_Toc23678317)

[***2(e) the consultation process undertaken with, and the adequacy of information given to, community, experts and other stakeholders*** 14](#_Toc23678318)

[***2(f) the impact on the environment and heritage conservation*** 14](#_Toc23678319)

[***2(g) any lobbying, political donations or other influence of the public or private sector in relation to making that decision*** 14](#_Toc23678320)

[***2(h) the tender process for appointing private operators*** 14](#_Toc23678321)

[***2(i) the contractual arrangements entered into in respect of the project*** 14](#_Toc23678322)

[***2(j) the adequacy of temporary transport arrangements during the conversion process, including for people with a disability*** 14](#_Toc23678323)

[***2(k) the impact on the stations west of Bankstown*** 15](#_Toc23678324)

[***2(l) any related matter*** 15](#_Toc23678325)

[**3.** **Conclusions and recommendations** 16](#_Toc23678326)

[**3.1** **Conclusions** 16](#_Toc23678327)

[**3.2** **Recommendations** 16](#_Toc23678328)

## **1. NSW Government submission**

### **1.1 Establishing Metro trajectory**

1.1.1 The NSW Government submission refers to *Future Transport 2056* and the *Greater Sydney Plan* as the overarching strategy within which Sydney Metro is framed.

1.1.2 It says the trajectory for Sydney Metro was established in 2012 via *Sydney’s Rail Future* which preferred:

‘*a Metro network integrated with the existing (rail) network’,*

over three other options one of which was an:

*‘independent metro network’*.

1.1.3 The submission claims the reason for the trajectory was the existing rail network could not cope with estimated demand. A first step was a conclusion that network needed support by a:

*‘separate, independent “differentiated” system*’.

1.1.4 The submission says the next step was assessment of various:

‘*differentiated service opportunities’*,

the best option for which was one:

*‘integrated with the existing network’*.

1.1.5 Rapid transit / metro railways operate in other cities. The submission presents a sample comparison of metros: Seoul, London, Shanghai, Singapore, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Paris and Amsterdam. The sample only compares claimed line length. There is no explanation of how the sample was derived or the relevance of line length.

### **1.2 City and Bankstown extension**

1.2.1 The submission says the City and Bankstown extension of the North West Metro was justified by a business case conforming with NSW and Commonwealth guidelines. The business case document has not been published, but a summary has.

1.2.2 The submission says a number of bodies reviewed and approved the business case. It was:

*‘overseen by a crossagency committee including representatives of NSW Treasury, Infrastructure NSW and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment’.*

The review and approval have not been published.

1.2.3 The submission says:

*‘Analysis of the project’s benefits was undertaken by specialist expert advisers’.*

The advisers remain unidentified. Their analysis has not been published.

1.2.4 It further says:

*‘the business case was independently reviewed under the NSW Government’s Infrastructure Investment Assurance Framework and the panel considered that it “provides a compelling and comprehensive justification for the project”.’*

This review has not been published. The submission does not identify its authors.

1.2.5 The business case was reviewed by Infrastructure Australia which recommended the City etc. Metro as a high priority project.

1.2.6 Infrastructure Australia is quoted, by the submission, saying the business case:

*‘presented a comprehensive assessment that details the rationale for the final project route and station locations.*’

1.2.7 The submission notes Infrastructure Australia was:

*‘confident that the benefits of the project will exceed its estimated costs’.*

1.2.8 It quotes Infrastructure Australia’s then Chief Executive, Mr Davies:

*‘The positive assessment of the Sydney Metro City & Southwest business case reflects that this is a sound investment for Sydney—an investment that will enhance the productivity and connectivity of a city …’.*

1.2.9 The submission notes the base case for Metro included extension along the Bankstown line:

*‘Base Case – Sydney Metro on the T3 Bankstown Line to Cabramatta and Lidcombe, and the T4 Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra Line to Hurstville.’*

1.2.10 It claims there was exploration of options of extending Metro to Sydney Airport, including by conversion of the existing Airport line. These options were rejected as having:

*‘Some disadvantages, as well as constructability issues. Variations were explored in subsequent analysis to attempt to overcome disadvantages…..’*

and they would:

*‘Provide excessive capacity for T8 Airport Line patronage, while inadequately addressing network demand and relieving broader network capacity constraints*.’

1.2.11 The submission claims unless Metro is extended to Bankstown the Government would:

*‘not be able to look to provide……..*

*Dulwich Hill ….will not have lifts…..*

*Stations such as Belmore will continue to have 4 trains per hour, instead of the 15 per hour…..*

*2 additional services per hour from Revesby, providing additional capacity for 2,400 more people in the peaks……*

*Unable to increase the frequency of services in the future to 24 trains per hour, providing additional capacity for 7,400 more people in the peaks…..*

*(re Illawarra) additional suburban trains per hour, providing an additional 2,400 seats per hour….’* etc*.*

1.2.12 The submission states reasons for deciding on the Bankstown conversion being to:

*‘improve rail network reliability by reducing the number of rail lines sharing the same existing tracks and will facilitate much needed capacity increases from the west and south west…..*

*unlock capacity at Central Station platforms and enable the relocation of train paths on the City Circle…..*

*significantly reduce platform and train crowding…..*

*(as it) does not share operations with other lines or rail freight. It would therefore be less complex to convert and segregate from the existing rail network when compared with other lines……*

*less infrastructure work…..*

*Reduced rail network complexity …. unlocking the capacity constraint presented by the existing network configuration at Sydenham and into the City Circle.’*

1.2.14 The submission offers support for the reasons in 1.2.13 (above) by many mentions of capacity. Some of these refer to infrastructure and some refer to trains.

1.2.15 The submission mentions ‘line’/ ‘lines’ many times. These comments variously refer to the different concepts of infrastructure e.g. ‘*up to 15 branch lines into this limited CBD capacity*’ and of train operations e.g. ‘*three lines that share the City Circle loop*.’

1.2.16 It claims the Sydney *‘suburban*’ rail network is complex with:

‘*only two lines through the city’*.

1.2.17 It draws a conclusion about the Bankstown Line from its mentions of capacity and lines:

*‘The T3 Bankstown Line creates a significant bottleneck for the existing rail network.’* It claims extension of Metro to Bankstown will add to ‘*unlock*’ capacity in the CBD, on top of the addition of new Metro capacity in the CBD.

1.2.18 The submission states Metro will have:

*‘the capacity to run a metro train every two minutes each way through the centre of Sydney – a level of service never before seen in Sydney.’*

1.2.19 It also states:

*‘Stations west of Bankstown will continue to be serviced by Sydney Trains…. on the redesigned T3 Bankstown Line.’*

### **1.3 Omissions**

1.3.1 Several matters are not addressed by the submission. The more notable include:

1. Metro’s two determining characteristics of tunnel diameter and CBD route;
2. Estimates of Metro carrying capacity – it only refers to train numbers;
3. Comparison of Metro and Sydney Trains seating and carrying capacity;
4. The net impact of (any) Metro project on rail capacity.
	* 1. Any claim as to the confidentiality of the ‘business case’ – as distinct from its summary – would have lapsed at this stage of the project. Another omission is
5. Non-publication of the business case.

* + 1. Also omitted are:
1. assessments that led to the initial Metro decisions (1.1.2 - 1.1.4 above);
2. an explanation of the international comparison (1.1.5);
3. the cross-agency review (1.2.2);
4. the identity of advisers (1.2.3);
5. analyses and reports by advisers and others (1.2.3);
6. the review of/under the assurance framework, and its authors’ identities (1.2.4);
7. Infrastructure Australia’s (full) assessment (1.2.5);
8. the source of operational and policy claims (1.2.9-1.2.13);
9. advice on operational and policy claims (1.2.9-1.2.13).

### **1.4 Comments**

1.4.1 Apart from stating that trains will continue to operate to stations west of Bankstown (1.2.19 above) – which conflicts with the relevant diagrams in *Future Transport 2056* and *the Greater Sydney Plan -* the submission adds little factual content or basis to what the NSW Government has previously presented the public.

1.4.2 However, the submission’s unsupported propositions and errors indicate haste in its development and chaos in policy making.

1.4.3 The submission’s claim about the primary decision, to introduce its Metro (1.1.2-1.1.4 above) is oxymoronic: an integrated, independent, separate network / system? It is clearly confused.

1.4.4 The submission provides no reason for eschewing the obvious option of augmenting the existing rail network or by supplementing that network with interoperable infrastructure.

1.4.5 Its comparison of the length of a few metro lines in other cities (1.1.5 above) is misleading. It is as pointless as observing, for example, the main south line is 600km long.

1.4.6 Any reasonable technical comparison of rapid transit/metro would depict essential characteristics e.g. distance between stations; train frequencies; line layout and intersections; type of service. These would cover the entire system rather than a single line. The submission fails to do this.

1.4.7 More relevant than a technical comparison (of 1.1.5 and 1.4.6 above) would be a contextual comparison of systems’ functionality, for example: population / density; whether the system has transit or commuter functions. Possible contextual measures would indicate: displacement of other specified ‘modes’ notably walking and car use; passenger on-board time; passenger standing time; design and actual train loads as % of seating; directions of passenger travel. The submission fails to do this.

1.4.8 Such a functional analysis / comparison would indicate Sydney Metro serves a commuter function – that it is a misapplication of technology.

1.4.9 A most basic error of the submission and previous official documents arises from the failure to identify the implications of Metro tunnel dimensions and CBD route. This failure means opportunity costs were ignored. It invalidates all assessments of the project.

1.4.10 The failure to deal with opportunity costs represents either extraordinary ineptitude in assessments – of not identifying costs - or the proponent not advising assessors of the facts and implications – opportunity costs - of tunnel dimension and CBD route.

1.4.11 The submission’s use of quotes from Infrastructure Australia are out of context.

1.4.12 Infrastructure Australia’s claim of a ‘*comprehensive assessment of final project route’* (1.2.6 above) not only lacks any evidence – but the evidence that is available suggests there was no relevant consideration of the most vital part of the route – through the CBD.

1.4.13 That Infrastructure Australia was ‘*confident*’ benefits would exceed costs (1.2.7 above) was only because final financial cost estimates were not known – a situation unique among Infrastructure Australia’s endorsements to at least that time.

1.4.14 Such ‘confidence’ – i.e. absence of fact - underlines that Infrastructure Australia did not relevantly apply the essential concept of any assessment - opportunity cost.

1.4.15 The submission omits the following from Infrastructure Australia’s summary assessment:

*‘Infrastructure Australia would have expected a more quantitative comparison of the plausible alternatives given the scale of the project.’*

This means plausible alternatives were not examined. It is further confirmation of failure to appreciate opportunity costs and of the apparent uniqueness of the positive recommendation by Infrastructure Australia.

1.4.16 The above points - 1.4.11-1.4.15 (above) - do not support the comments attributed to Infrastructure Australia’s Chief Executive.

1.4.17 The use of a base case in which Metro extension is assumed (1.2.9 above) is, to my knowledge, contrary to accepted practice. Rather, the accepted practice would be to assume no extension.

1.4.18 The inclusion of extension of Metro along the Illawarra line to Hurstville in the base case (1.2.9 above) was ludicrous. That base case could not be acceptable to decision makers - for reasons outlined in the author’s submission – and therefore was inappropriate.

1.4.19 The submission does not indicate exploration of the Metro extension suggested by Infrastructure NSW and several international experts – to Strathfield instead of Bankstown. Nor does it provide any reason for not exploring that option.

1.4.20 The submission’s reasons for rejecting an extension via Sydney Airport (1.2.10 above) include nonsense and conflicts with facts. Part of the reason given for rejecting an extension via Sydney Airport – that such extension would provide excessive capacity – is at odds with NSW Government announcements of providing Metro style services to Western Sydney Airport.

1.4.21 To explain 1.4.20 (above), conversion of the CBD-Sydney Airport line segment to Metro would involve around 10km of pre-existing infrastructure. The Airport is around 10-15 minutes of the CBD by rail. It handles around 45 million airline passengers annually. Rail demand on the segment is supplemented by increasingly large populations at Mascot and Green Square etc. This might be compared with the Government’s plan to install around 20km of new Metro infrastructure, starting around 50km from the CBD, progressing further outwards along a route with very low population to an airport that is yet to open.[[3]](#endnote-3)

1.4.22 Airport rail services should be by single-deck trains. Such trains and systems have lower capacity than double-deck trains that currently serve Sydney. NSW policy for rail to Sydney Airport - to continue with inappropriate trains - demonstrates another conflict between NSW policy and the submission’s reason for not extending Metro to the Airport.

1.4.23 Further (to 1.4.22 above), there is now the possibility of running single-deck trains on the Airport line without conversion to Metro or associated costs. However, the submission fails to acknowledge this.

1.4.24 In conjunction with 1.4.17 - 1.4.22 (above), this failure to acknowledge the possibility of running single deck trains on the current Airport line is further evidence for the view that the NSW Government is concerned with identifying places for its particular Metro rather than having appropriate transport systems for Sydney. It is evidence decision making is not about double-deck v. single-deck trains etc., but rather it is about Metro. The failure would be more egregious were the old claims outlined at 1.4.43 (below) correct.

1.4.25 The submission’s claims of Government inabilities in the absence of Metro extension (1.2.11 above) intermingles single and double negatives so badly as to be unintelligible – even if they were true.

1.4.26 Some claims of Government inabilities (1.2.11) are likely untrue. An example is the supposed necessity of Metro technology for the installation of station lifts. Other examples include seating numbers, which on some suburban trains are implied to amount to 1,200 - a number the submission otherwise (wrongly) implies to be the seating and standing capacity of a suburban train.

1.4.27 The submission’s comments on lines and capacity (1.2.12 – 1.2.17 above) include substantial errors, are confused and apparently are based on a false premise.

1.4.28 An example of a substantial error is a given reason for rejecting alternatives to Bankstown – that the line does not share operations with freight (1.2.12 above). This ‘reason’ is wrong in two respects. First, the Bankstown corridor and alignment are shared with freight trains. Second, most potential alternatives to Bankstown - Airport segment, East Hills segment, CBD-Strathfield - do not have freight trains operating in their corridors.

1.4.29 Confusion (referred to in 1.4.27 above) is illustrated by:

*‘There are only two lines through the city (the T1 North Shore Line, the T1 Western Line and the T9 Northern Line, and the T4 Eastern Suburbs & Illawarra Line)….’*

To identify two lines, the submission cites four. It also omits the City Circle which – properly considered – is another ‘line’ (or perhaps three ‘lines’) through the city.

1.4.30 Confusion is further seen in the oxymoronic claim (referred to in 1.4.3 above) which is presented as the foundation of the introduction of Metro.

1.4.31 More confusion arises from the submission’s failure to differentiate capacity from capacity utilisation (e.g. in 1.2.12 above).

1.4.32 The false premise (referred to in 1.4.27 above) arises from a failure to adequately differentiate infrastructure from services – ‘track’ from ‘trains’. This failure is evident in the quote in 1.4.29 (above). That quote presumably intended to say there are two network lines – track pairs - passing through the city, and/or there are four service lines – basic origin/destinations – for trains passing through the city. (Of course, for reasons explained in 1.4.29 above, both such statements would be factually incorrect).

1.4.33 The confusion and false premise underpin a fundamental misconception: the existing rail network’s fact of junctions creates a capacity constraint (1.2.12 above). That misconception leads to major analytic errors such as: a supposition that isolation of infrastructure lines is a precondition for ‘turn-up and go’ services; that ‘turn-up and go’ services are desirable to maximise infrastructure capacity.

1.4.34 A track with a junction cannot have less capacity than a similar track without a junction. This is most simply demonstrated by trains not using the junction. It is not necessary to remove the junction for the track to be operated as if there was no junction. The junction allows trains to merge, disperse, pass or overtake, and therefore increases the train carrying capacity of the infrastructure.

1.4.35 A most important corollary is: infrastructure interoperability, a junction being an example, increases network capacity. An interoperable network has more capacity than the equivalent (distance etc. of) independent, separated, differentiated etc. tracks. This was the key land transport reason for Australia becoming a federation.

1.4.36 The misconception (of 1.4.33 above) embodies a false comparison – of one track (with a junction) against two tracks – by observing that one track (with a junction) is unable to carry as many trains as two tracks. It wrongly ascribes any ‘blockage’ to a junction, rather than to the lack of a second track or to the train operating pattern. This error that can be seen in the Government’s submission e.g. 1.2.16 and 1.4.29 (above).

1.4.37 Any real analysis would dismiss an a-priori proposition that the fact of junctions creates network capacity constraints. It would make clear that train operations do not change track capacity but affect capacity utilisation and the amount of available capacity for other purposes. Hence, it would focus on whether the train operating plans – service patterns - used on the network unduly utilise track capacity. It would conclude the only way to ‘unlock’ the capacity of a central segment is to decrease its capacity utilisation, and the best way of so doing while enhancing service levels is to ensure any new infrastructure is interoperable and facilitates some bypass of existing traffic. This is done in all other modes and public infrastructure.

1.4.38 Analysis should then seek to understand the network wide implications of ways to decrease capacity utilisation on one of its central segments. In the case of Sydney rail, the cause of reduced capacity utilisation of the Sydney Trains network in the CBD is removal of Bankstown trains. In turn, this is caused by degrading the capacity of that network via conversion of the Bankstown segment to Metro.

1.4.39 The net effect on Sydney rail capacity – of Sydney Trains and Metro combined – of the Bankstown line conversion is, therefore, not as presented by the submission. The conversion does not increase Sydney Trains network capacity in the CBD, but rather changes and reduces infrastructure capacity utilisation. Any assessment of the net effect on Sydney rail network capacity would need to offset the reduction in capacity of Sydney Trains on the Bankstown segment and the tracks etc. that connect with it against the more modern Metro infrastructure on the segment.

1.4.40 An adequate analysis, of the type warranted for decisions the magnitude of Metro, would consider the net effect on future Sydney rail capacity by specifically focussing on quantification of future opportunities jeopardised or lost for either Metro or Sydney Trains – and both combined - as a result of particular projects. For Sydney, this would include quantification of transport opportunities foregone as a result of Metro non-interoperability e.g. small tunnels and as a result of Metro city and CBD route. Issues such as conversion of Bankstown would be assessed as a resultant of this.

1.4.41 An important implication of an adequate analysis is that for the foreseeable future – for very many years - a Sydney harbour crossing will not be optimally used unless several service lines feed into it. This is as much the case for Metro as for Sydney Trains.

1.4.42 Demand on the Bankstown line is low relative to other lines. In conjunction with sections 1.4.30 – 1.4.31 (above), this means a new asset (Metro CBD and harbour crossing) with an extraordinary high opportunity cost – possibly orders of magnitude greater than its financial cost - is being misallocated. Proper use of this asset – at near 30 trains per hour in each direction sustained over peaks - will require abandonment of the ‘turn-up and go’ claims made in the submission. Among other things, this underlines the irrelevance of presented analyses, assessments and evaluations of Metro proposals such as noted in 1.4.8 - 1.4.18 (above).

1.4.43 The submission provides no evidence of an analysis adequate to the issues at hand. Indeed, the failure of it and previous Government statements and assessments to mention the relevant issues suggests there has been no such analysis.

1.4.44 It is pertinent to note the submission’s claim of Metro providing a level of track capacity – a train every two minutes – hitherto unseen in central Sydney (1.2.17 above) has long been contradicted. In the early 1960s there were claims of trains every two minutes on the City Circle. Those claims imply the capacity of the City Circle track then exceeded what is now claimed for Sydney Metro. They underscore the apparent failure to consider single deck operations for Sydney Airport (1.4.24 above). They may also imply conversion to Metro reduces the train carrying capacity of the Bankstown tracks.[[4]](#endnote-4)

1.4.45 Given 1.4.31 – 1.4.44 (above), the submission is deficient in not providing any information to substantiate its claims as to capacity. Nor does it do more than offer assertions as reasons for conversion of the Bankstown segment (1.2.12 – 1.2.17 above).

1.4.46 In these circumstances, it should be presumed each of the submission’s aims re conversion of Bankstown could be better achieved by alternative Metro routes and/ or, more significantly, by infrastructure design to standards interoperable with the existing network.

### **1.5 Conclusion**

1.5.1 It is likely the submission was conceived with some intention of countering the by-now well-known critical questioning of Metro. However, it does not attempt to address:

* The two determining characteristics of tunnel diameter and CBD route;
* Estimates of Metro carrying capacity – the submission only refers to train numbers;
* Comparison of Metro and Sydney Trains seating and carrying capacity;
* Questions and concerns about Metro including those raised by its own experts;
* The idea of extension to Strathfield made by Infrastructure NSW and some experts;
* Errors and ambiguities in cited documents e.g. *Sydney’s Rail Future, Future Transport 2056*).

1.5.2 The submission includes significant errors and exhibits confusion. Its central assertions appear to be based on false premises. It does not provide – produce - evidence from which its contentious claims could be checked.

1.5.3 Much information in the submission is unreliable. Its arguments should not be accepted without further substantiation. Its explanation for extension of Metro to Bankstown should be rejected until reliable evidence is produced.

1.5.4 In the absence of further information, it could be inferred the NSW Government - via its submission - effectively concedes:

1. Metro does not have the capacity previously claimed;
2. Metro compares unfavourably with Sydney Trains;
3. Its decisions on Metro extension, CBD route, and to Bankstown were made without regard to adequate analysis;
4. Its decisions were concerned with installing its Metro somewhere in Sydney rather than with meeting Sydney’s transport or development requirements.

1.5.5 The submission provides further evidence of the validity of the principal concerns of this author: Government indifference to the welfare and prospects of the people of Western Sydney; lack of care by the Government for what it tells the community.

## **2. Review of response to terms of reference**

### ***2(a) the adequacy of the business case and viability of Metro***

2.a.1 The essential element of any proper business case for Metro is examination of the necessity - and opportunity costs - of its core aspects of tunnel diameter and central city route.  The NSW Government’s submission does not refer to any of these matters.

2.a.2 The NSW Government’s submission does not provide any evidence of the existence of a business case for Metro. Nor does it provide any evidence on the viability of Metro.

### ***2(b) the consideration of alternatives for improving capacity and reducing congestion***

2.b.1 The NSW Government’s submission provides an oxymoronic explanation of preferring Metro. It does not refer to the core aspects of Metro.

2.b.2 The submission does not address the conflicting views put in previous Government documents. Indeed, it purports to rely on those documents.

2.b.3 It offers specious and contradictory explanations for rejecting several alternatives to the extension of Metro to Bankstown.

2.b.4 It does not raise the two most obvious Metro extension options: no extension; extension to Strathfield.

2.b.5 It does not provide any evidence of consideration of real alternatives to Metro, its core aspects, routes, or conversion of the Sydenham-Bankstown segment.

### ***2(c) the factors taken into account when comparing the alternatives and the robustness of the evidence used in decision-making***

2.c.1 The NSW Government submission does not provide any public evidence of factors on which a competent transport or planning decision maker could rely to make the Metro decisions made by the NSW Government.

2.c.2 The submission does not provide any evidence that significant, credible advice regarding key Metro issues was considered by the Government or some of its predecessors.

### ***2(d) whether metro is a suitable means of transport over long distances***

2.d.1 The NSW Government submission claims to address this issue but in fact does not.

2.d.2 The only possibly relevant information in the submission - tangential to this issue – is the claimed length of metro lines. In relation to 2(d), it is misleading.

2.d.3 In conjunction with 2.d.2 (above), the failure to provide readily available information on the characteristics of metro systems relevant to this issue may imply knowledge of the common view that such systems are not suitable means of transport over long distances.

2.d.4 Sydney Metro seeks the functions of a commuter railway yet is unsuitable for commuting and less than optimal for rapid transit.

2.d.5 The design of Metro jeopardises and may preclude optimal rapid transit and further commuter rail in much of the metropolitan area. It works against rail travel between Sydney and elsewhere. It copies the worst infrastructure characteristics of Paris Metro decisions of the late 1800s which France has been trying to mitigate for the past 60 years.

2.d.6 Matters 2.d.3 – 2.d.5 (above) implies there is a policy of using transport to make commuting across Sydney more difficult.

2.d.7 Matters 2.d.3 - 2.d.6 (above) go beyond, even contradict, announced policies such as the ‘three cities’ by working to effectively restrict access of most Sydney residents, especially those in its growth areas, to the best opportunities in the metropolis.

### ***2(e) the consultation process undertaken with, and the adequacy of information given to, community, experts and other stakeholders***

#### 2.e.1 The NSW Government submission does not address the false and confused information previously presented to the public. Indeed, it cites offending documents as authority for some propositions.

#### 2.e.2 It does not refer to previous claims about train and service carrying capacity supposedly (at that time) the key reason for Metro decisions.

#### 2.e.3 It introduces new contradictions.

#### 2.e.4 In this, the submission is consistent with a pattern observed in the author’s submission to this inquiry: an increasing disregard about the information provided to the community.

### **2(f) the impact on the environment and heritage conservation**

No comment.

### ***2(g) any lobbying, political donations or other influence of the public or private sector in relation to making that decision***

2.g.1 The NSW Government submission does not provide any information on this issue.

2.g.2 It ignores peculiar aspects of Metro decisions including: disregard of published expert advice; implausible explanations; indications a consultant reviewed expert work and was acting on behalf of Transport for NSW in advising Infrastructure NSW.

### ***2(h) the tender process for appointing private operators***

### ***2(i) the contractual arrangements entered into in respect of the project***

### ***2(j) the adequacy of temporary transport arrangements during the conversion process, including for people with a disability***

No comment.

### ***2(k) the impact on the stations west of Bankstown***

2.k.1 The introduction to the NSW Government submission cites *Future Transport 2056* and the *Greater Sydney Plan* as authoritative sources of information. Both these documents do not depict any rail line to the relevant stations west of Bankstown. They effectively show there will be no train services to those stations.

2.k.2 Despite 2.k.1, the submission states the relevant on the Bankstown line will be served by Sydney Trains.

2.k.3 It does not acknowledge the conflict in this position.

2.k.4 The matter is unclear. Unless *Future Transport 2056* and the *Greater Sydney Plan* are revised it should be presumed the relevant line will be closed.

2.k.5 The NSW Government submission does not provide any information on the effect of conversion of the Bankstown line on the capacity of the network used by Sydney Trains. It should be presumed the impact will be disproportionately adverse.

### ***2(l) any related matter***

2.l.1 The NSW Government submission inadvertently confirms the gravity of the situation Sydney and NSW face.

2.l.2 The Metro decisions permanently divide and reinforce geographic inequities in Sydney. They will reduce access of people in the metropolitan area and beyond to central Sydney much as the similar Paris Metro decisions did from the late 19th century in that city.

2.l.3 The NSW Government submission does not rebut the presumption of an absence of transport and land use reasons for a rapid transit system in Sydney.

2.l.4 It does not provide any plausible explanation for the core Metro aspects - small tunnel diameters, city route – and commencement with North West rail.

2.l.5 In not naming experts etc. or publishing supporting material, the submission is likely to reinforce pre-existing suspicions about Metro and cause more ill-informed speculation.

2.l.6 The above confirms by far the best option – for operational and public policy reasons - is to terminate Metro near the CBD.

## **3. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **3.1 Conclusions**

3.1.1 Information in the NSW Government submission is inadequate and unreliable.

3.1.2 Its lack of supporting information and non-disclosure of claimed sources is a concern.

3.1.3 To meet its terms of reference, the inquiry needs to further pursue information about reasons for and consequences of Government Metro decisions.

3.1.4 To mitigate very substantial risks, there is a need for:

a. current Metro plans and projects to be held in abeyance; until

b. properly independent experts publicly advise on the situation facing NSW and options open to Parliament.

3.1.5 If risks are to be ignored, and it is (wrongly) assumed current Metro projects must continue, conversion of the Bankstown line is the worst of all publicly known options.

### **Recommendations**

**i. This present inquiry determines, on balance of probabilities, the underlying reasons for NSW decisions on Sydney Metro and especially its core characteristics of small diameter tunnels and central Sydney route.**

1. **An expert public inquiry, independent of the NSW Government, be established to report to Parliament on:**

**a. implications of Sydney Metro and related NSW policies and proposals, including for Western Sydney rail; and**

**b. options for public transport policies and projects affecting Sydney.**

1. **There be no Government consideration of, or action on, any Sydney passenger rail project including extension of Sydney Metro, prior to Parliament deliberating the report of the expert public inquiry (arising from recommendation ii).**
2. **If, notwithstanding the above, work on Metro is to continue, this inquiry should find that conversion of the Bankstown line to Metro is the worst possible option.**

**v. This inquiry require the NSW Government publish all material relevant to every claim made in its submission.**

1. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/submissions/65643/0030%20Mr%20John%20Austen.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/submissions/66187/0071%20NSW%20Government.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.sydneymetro.info/greaterwest> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, *All manner of trains,* at <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/all-manner-trains>. See e.g. video at minute 29 and beyond [↑](#endnote-ref-4)