

17 December 2014

The Hon. Pru Goward, MP
Minister for Planning
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Minister

Modification to CBD and South East Light Rail Project

I support light rail as a public transport solution, and support the new CBD and South East Light Rail Project to provide links between Circular Quay and Central Station, and Central Station and the Centennial Parklands, the sporting stadia, the University of NSW and Randwick Hospital. The project is necessary to help reduce inner city and event related traffic congestion.

However the proposed modifications to the approved project include changes that will permanently damage and further alienate the Centennial Parklands without justification. I do not support these modifications and will argue that the department should reject these proposals in order to protect public green open space.

My submission will also address concerns about impacts from proposals to lengthen light rail vehicles.

Alison Road Realignment

The Centennial Parklands are part of Governor Macquarie's 1811 Sydney Common bequest which dedicated 405 hectares of land for the outdoor recreational needs of present and future Sydney generations.

The parklands face increasing pressures from residential growth in surrounding suburbs including Green Square while older adjacent suburbs have low ratios of open space. There are limited and diminishing opportunities to provide new space for passive recreation in the inner city and it is essential that what is left is preserved.

The parklands have been subject to successive encroachments including from the Eastern Distributor, the SupaCenta, event car parking and the bus-way. This year the Albert (Tibby) Cotter Walkway was approved and construction has begun on an imposing structure that will alienate massive parts of public green open space and block heritage vistas between Moore Park east and west. Less than a third of Governor Macquarie's bequest now remains open public land.

The approved light rail project will already result in massive losses of green open space including at the entry portal in Moore Park west; substation/compound in Moore Park west south of the entry portal; entry portal in Moore Park east; overhead bridge at Sydney Boys and Sydney Girls high schools and light rail track along Moore Park east, with 77 trees permanently lost. There has been strong community concern at these significant intrusions.

It is vital that no further loss of the Centennial Parklands is permitted.



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The modified project proposes to relocate the light rail track and racecourse stop on Alison Road from along the northern edge of the Royal Randwick Racecourse to the other side of the road within Centennial Park. The proposal includes an extended fence adjacent to the track to prevent flooding.

The proposal will result in significant and permanent loss of vital public green open space, the loss of fifty established trees and create a massive barrier to the parklands. Pedestrian and cyclist access will be blocked, and the large number of anticipated light rail passengers for the racecourse will be forced to cross a major regional road where this is not necessary.

This outrageous and unjustified proposal must be refused outright.

The EIS claims that the modified proposal is designed to address issues at the Alison Road bus interchange and access to the racecourse, TAFE and Centennial Park events; however it is unacceptable and these issues can be managed and mitigated through other measures. The proponent has failed to demonstrate consideration of other proposals.

The parklands provide a vital service to current and future Sydney residents and should not be further diminished when there are reasonable alternatives that will allow light rail operations.

I strongly oppose relocation of the light rail track and Royal Randwick Racecourse stop into Centennial Park.

Moore Park Stop

While proposed changes to the Moore Park stop would reduce the platform height from two storeys to one, making it visually less intrusive, the additional ramps and stairs required and subway entrance structures would result in significant and unacceptable additional encroachment on public green open space in Moore Park.

Massive amounts of Moore Park land are already being alienated by the Tibby Cotter Walkway and the proponent should be required to minimise further damage.

Redesign of the stop involves subway access for pedestrians during major events. Subway access should be extended under Anzac Parade in order to remove the need for the overhead bridge associated with the stop connecting east and west. Removal of the overpass would help compensate for the loss of Moore Park land as a result from the approved project and proposed modifications. Subway access could be provided at all times or secure access could be provided to the schools through key or security code.

Further damage from proposed pedestrian access below Anzac Parade via a subway should be compensated through full subway access below Anzac Parade and removal of the overpass at the Moore Park stop.

Increased Light Rail Vehicle and Lengths

Proposed modifications to the project would increase the length of light rail vehicles from 45 metres to 67 metres to allow for the movement of more patrons per vehicle.

I do not support this proposal because it will reduce street access particularly in the city and Surry Hills and intensify amenity impacts.

Larger vehicles will block intersections forcing pedestrians who need to cross to wait longer, increasing frustration in the city. In Surry Hills, the amenity impacts from longer vehicles risk damaging the heritage and village character of Devonshire Street. Reduced access to Little Riley Street and delays getting in and out of the area by bicycle or motor vehicle will impact significantly on residents and businesses. The need to lengthen platforms would make them significantly more visually imposing.

Light rail vehicles and stops will create a barrier between the north and south of Devonshire Street. The EIS shows that there will be increased noise impacts on residents' homes adjacent to Devonshire Street, largely social housing properties where large numbers of people with limited mobility spend large amounts of time at home. Residents believe that this barrier will divide the Surry Hills community visually and because it will be difficult to cross from one side to the other. I share their concern that longer vehicles will increase these impacts.

It is unclear whether longer vehicles would result in better outcomes for public transport patrons given patrons will have to wait longer for services.

If longer vehicles are approved, conditions must be imposed on the proponent to ensure that during off-peak periods, fewer carriages are used so that impacts can be minimised. Acoustic protection must be provided for affected homes.

Loss of Trees

A number of proposed modifications result in further loss of trees.

There is a great deal of concern in the community about the loss of heritage trees and overall tree canopy, especially at Moore Park. The project is already set to remove approximately 760 trees and further proposed losses would have a significant impact on amenity, habitat and microclimate. Replacing mature trees in established green areas with new trees will not maintain existing environments, and will take many years to re-establish current conditions.

Trees provide shade, encourage bird life, filter pollution and are visually attractive. Trees will be replaced at a ratio of 2:1 and 8:1 in consultation with the relevant council. Where mature trees are removed, particularly in Moore Park and Centennial Park, a condition of consent must require that replacement trees are also mature.

All replacement trees must be advanced and planted as early as possible to re-establish green tree cover and habitat corridors.

New public transport options are essential for Sydney's sustainability; however green public open space is equally vital. The CBD and South East Light Rail Project should not be permitted to further damage and alienate the parklands beyond existing approval.

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney