



Infrastructure NSW
PO Box R220
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The State Infrastructure Strategy Report “ First Things First ”

We refer to this Report which was released on 3 October. The Glebe Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Report. These comments were prepared by its Transport and Traffic Subcommittee transport@glebesociety.org.au. Please include it on your circulation list.

We note the earlier release by Transport for NSW of the Draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (the Master Plan) with its emphasis on improving the public transport network in NSW. While we appreciate that Infrastructure NSW has broader objectives than Transport for NSW, we are concerned that certain recommendations in the Infrastructure NSW Report will undermine the development of a high class public transport system in Sydney as proposed by the Master Plan.

In particular, we are concerned about the priority given in the Infrastructure NSW Report to new road projects in Sydney. We believe new road projects will jeopardise much needed investment in public transport and will undermine the future development of the public transport system.

The Glebe Society has a strategy for improving transport for people living in Glebe that largely focuses on improving public transport in and around Glebe and to destinations taken by Glebe residents. **We believe that an efficient and attractive public transport system is vital for our densely populated inner suburb as are steps to make cycling and walking safe and attractive options.**

In our view, the use of private motor vehicles in Sydney, with the costly investment required in roads and associated infrastructure and the problem of traffic congestion, should not be promoted and encouraged at the expense of public transport. Rather, public transport, walking and cycling need to be made an attractive option for commuters. This is best done through the development of an integrated and viable public transport system and by providing facilities for safe cycling and walking.

Public Transport Initiatives

For these reasons we support the initiatives set out in the Master Plan **to improve and integrate the public transport system in Sydney and to make cycling and walking safe and attractive options.** The initiatives in the Master Plan relating to Public Transport, Rail,

Light Rail, Bus, Ferries, Cycling and Walking will, we believe, go towards developing a high class transport system for Sydney. We support the initiatives to bring about integration of the network, such as the Opal system, accurate and modern real-time and way-finding information and the alignment of public transport timetables. We also believe that investment in a modern transport fleet and investment in interchanges as outlined in the Master Plan are critical.

Passenger Trains

Accordingly, we support Infrastructure NSW's endorsement of the three tier rail strategy for rail infrastructure investment that was adopted in the Master Plan, these initiatives being designed to modernise the Sydney rail network and increase its capacity. We generally support the suggestions made by Infrastructure NSW to improve that strategy, including implementing a differential between peak and off-peak fares to the CBD following the introduction of the Opal system and improving off-peak rail services to reduce peak hour demand. We also support the recommendation by Infrastructure NSW to extend the ESR to Randwick and Maroubra.

Second Harbour Rail Crossing

We are however concerned at the rejection by Infrastructure NSW of a second harbour crossing for rail in the foreseeable future, as envisaged in the Master Plan. We believe that failure to build a second harbour rail crossing within the next twenty years will weaken the role of rail as a viable commuter option and will be detrimental to Sydney's public transport system as a whole.

Light Rail

We support the development of a comprehensive light rail system in Sydney. In our view the development of a comprehensive light rail system should be a key component of the public transport system of a modern city like Sydney, particularly in and around localities that experience high volumes of commuter traffic.

The Master Plan refers to three inner Sydney corridors where light rail could be built: the Sydney CBD, to the University of Sydney and to University of NSW with a link to Randwick. The Master Plan refers to these projects as requiring further consideration. We believe there needs to be a firm commitment to these projects.

We therefore support the recommendation by Infrastructure NSW to construct light rail from Central Station to Moore Park and the University of NSW.

Bus Tunnels in the CBD

We were however disappointed that Infrastructure NSW has rejected the light rail option in George Street in favour of CBD RBT bus tunnels. We believe that abandoning the light rail option in the CBD is a retrogressive step.

The benefits of light rail are well set out on pages 154 and 155 of the Master Plan and we note reference in the Master Plan to a new light rail line in the CBD having the capacity to carry

up to 12,500 passengers in the morning peak hour with significant reduction in traffic resulting. We consider that the light rail line proposal for George Street would have very significant benefits for the CBD, for commuters, tourists, retailers and other businesses alike and will confirm Sydney in the ranks of attractive, modern and progressive international cities. It will also make light rail a meaningful option for Glebe residents and for those living in the other inner west suburbs served by the existing light rail line and the extension to Dulwich Hill. Light rail down George Street to Circular Quay will give commuters direct access to their place of work in the CBD which the present light rail service does not achieve because it terminates at Central Station.

We are also concerned that the construction of the CBD RBT bus tunnels is likely to impinge on heavy rail corridors in the area and so will jeopardise the potential for developing further rail infrastructure in the CBD which we consider must be retained as an option.

WestConnex

As mentioned, we are concerned about the priority given by Infrastructure NSW to more road projects for Sydney. In particular we refer to the WestConnex Project. We appreciate that the Report does not identify the exact route of the “inner west” section of the WestConnex Project or the exact routes of the associated road connections in the inner west. We note however that the Report refers to a connection with the City West Link and this connection, depending on the route chosen, could impinge on Glebe. We would be concerned if the WestConnex Project were to result in increased traffic flows in and around Glebe.

We recognise the need for some new roads for Sydney, particularly in the outer suburbs and to key localities such as the airport, but we believe Glebe and greater Sydney would be best served by the development of a high class public transport system as a priority. Ultimately more roads lead to more traffic congestion and in the short to medium term undermine investment in public transport. The experience of many other cities in the world, including Los Angeles and Auckland , attests to this.

Yours truly

John Gray

President
November 4, 2012