

Higher Standards - Better Services - Balanced Budgets



Fixing Public Transport:

Expanding

Light Rail

in

Sydney and NSW



THE NATIONALS

EXPANDING LIGHT RAIL IN SYDNEY AND NSW

A NSW Liberal/Nationals Government will provide another public transport option for the inner city and CBD by extending the existing light rail system to link Circular Quay with Central/Lilyfield.

This will reduce the number of buses entering the city and take pressure off the heavy rail stations in the CBD.

Within twelve months of coming to office we will also fully and openly assess the potential expansion of light rail from Central to other key suburbs in inner suburban and metropolitan Sydney as well as in regional cities in NSW.

What New South Wales Deserves

By any standard Sydney is a global city. Hundreds of thousands of workers commute to and through the CBD each day.

At most times of the day, the city's roads are gridlocked, making travel through the city a slow and stressful ordeal. Labor's response is to force more and more buses onto an already overcrowded city road system and to funnel city roads associated with the Cross City Tunnel project. The Government has lacked the determination to make decisions and fix the problem - and Labor's options are further limited because their allies in the bus union hierarchy are opposed to light rail.

Sydney needs a clean, safe and reliable form of public transport that will meet the demands of a growing city and attract people back to public transport. We need a system of transport that attracts more travellers onto public transport, not a bandaid bus solution that only adds to the existing problems. Light rail is the answer.

Worldwide, there are over 400 light rail systems currently in operation. Over 100 cities have built new rail systems or expanded existing networks in the last decade¹. London, Paris, Los Angeles, Singapore, Moscow and Berlin are just some of the international cities using light rail systems to alleviate traffic congestion and support heavy rail systems in the movement of vast numbers of passengers.

Light rail currently operates in Sydney between Central Station and the Inner West suburb of Lilyfield. The route is 7.5km in length and operates 7 trams 365 days a year². 3.5 million people use the service each year³.

If extended through the city to link Central with Circular Quay the light rail network would offer travellers a real alternative to slow, overcrowded buses or their own cars. Commuters deserve an integrated, multi modal transport network that incorporates light rail as a real alternative.

¹ Glazebrook Associates, 'Report to the City of Sydney *Integrated Transport Strategy – Mass Transit for CBD and Inner Sydney*', February 2005, p. 13.

² Metro Transport website, <http://www.metrolightrail.com.au/aboutus.asp>, retrieved 21 July 2006.

³ Ibid.

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition's Plan for an expanded light rail network:

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition will expand light rail in NSW. We will:

- Establish a City loop route through the CBD from Central to Circular Quay, removing buses from the streets where the light rail operates.
- Assess the potential expansion of light rail from Central to other suburbs in Sydney including Burwood via Parramatta Road, Bondi, Maroubra via Anzac Parade and Mascot.
- Assess the potential to expand light rail in other areas of Sydney and greater NSW including Parramatta, Strathfield, northwest Sydney, the northern beaches, Newcastle, and an appropriate mass transit option for Wollongong.

As part of our comprehensive assessment of light rail for New South Wales we will urgently update the 1997 MacDonald Report 'Light Rail Strategic Plan for New South Wales'⁴. This Report examined more than fifteen light rail options based on 1991 census data. We will update the Report based on more recent census results. The updated report will be completed within twelve months of coming to office.

The Route for Sydney CBD

The NSW Liberal/Nationals Coalition will pursue one of two potential routes for the light rail loop through the Sydney CBD – either a Central to Circular Quay route via George Street or via Castlereagh Street.

Within 90 days of taking office and in close co-operation with Sydney City Council we will make a decision on one of the two options

Construction of the new light rail city loop will take into account the capacity to further extend the light rail network to other areas of Sydney including the inner west, inner south and eastern suburbs.

Indicative maps of the two route options are at [Appendix A](#).

Installing a new Sydney CBD light rail loop will:

- Enable the movement of 37,400 passengers through the Sydney CBD each weekday⁵.
- Slash journey times from Circular Quay to the CBD by up to 20mins compared with buses.
- Reduce the number of buses entering the CBD and take pressure of the CBD heavy rail stations.



Artist's impression of light rail in Castlereagh St
(SMH 9 Jan 2006)

⁴ MacDonald, L. (Chair), 'Report to Transport Minister, Brian Langton - Light Rail Strategic Plan for NSW', *Public Transport Advisory Council*, 27 November 1997.

⁵ Glazebrook Associates, 'Review of Patronage and revenue for the Castlereagh Street Light Rail Route', May 2006, p. v.

- Cater for the expansion of employment, population, and movement through the Sydney CBD for the future
- Move more than 200 people per vehicle compared to approximately 65 per bus⁶.

Labor's Failure

Public transport has been on a steady decline over the last twelve twelve years due to mismanagement, lack of investment and a refusal to face up to problems.

Because of Labor's neglect many commuters have been forced back on to roads. Both Sydney Buses and CityRail patronage figures tell a clear story with decreases in patronage of 4.55% and 10.67% respectively from five years ago⁷.

To date the Labor Government has not made a commitment to light rail through the CBD. In fact they have opposed the extension of the light rail through the Sydney CBD and rejected proposals to extend the light rail system elsewhere.

Approximately 7,400 buses travel through the city every weekday, effectively gridlocking city roads, despite bus lanes. Without a public transport alternative It is estimated that almost 9,400 buses will be travelling to the city every day by 2021⁸.

Buses are significant contributors to the problem of city air and noise pollution. According to the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, motor vehicles are responsible for 70% of emissions of oxides of nitrogen, 52% of volatile organic compounds, and 24% of particle pollution in Sydney⁹. Powered by electricity, light rail operating in the city can be considered environmentally friendly in comparison.

Labor has contributed to congestion on city roads by persisting with buses as the major intra-city transport mode. According to a February 2005 Consultants Report,

"notwithstanding the introduction of bus lanes, bus speeds are below 10 kph between Central and Circular Quay in peak periods, tying up hundreds of buses and drivers every morning and evening¹⁰".

⁶ Metro Light Rail, 'The Resurgence of Sydney's Trams'. Retrieved 31 July 2006, p. 1 from <http://www.metrolightrail.com.au/Technical/LightRailTechSheet.pdf> & State Transit Authority of New South Wales Website, 'About our Buses'. Retrieved 31 July 2006 from <http://www.sta.nsw.gov.au/busfleet/>.

⁷ Wilson, R. (A/Chief Executive) & Unsworth, B. (Chairman), 'Annual Report 2004/05', *State Transit Authority of NSW*, p. 93 & Herlihy, D. (Chairman) & Stott PSM, J. (Chief Executive), 'Annual Report 2000/01', *State Transit Authority of NSW*, p. 132 & Graham, V. (A/Chief Executive), 'Annual Report 2004/05', *NSW State Rail Authority*, p. 27 & NSW State Rail, 'Annual Report 2000/01', p. 13.

⁸ Glazebrook Associates, 'Report to the City of Sydney *Integrated Transport Strategy – Mass Transit for CBD and Inner Sydney*', February 2005, p. 9.

⁹ Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), 'Motor Vehicle contribution to air pollution'. Retrieved 21 July 2006 from <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/esdsmoky/motorair.asp>.

¹⁰ Glazebrook Associates, 'Report to the City of Sydney *Integrated Transport Strategy – Mass Transit for CBD and Inner Sydney*', February 2005, p. 6 & 7.

The Report found that bus travel times from Circular Quay from Central were up to 35 mins¹².

In contrast, it is projected that light rail will be able to travel from Central to Circular Quay and back again in 33 mins¹³.

Labor's stubborn adherence to buses is driven by links to the hierarchy of the bus driver's union.

Despite almost 50 reports over the past decade into the feasibility of light rail in Sydney, Labor has refused to consider this efficient and internationally proven form of public transport.



Buses nose to tail in George Street in the morning peak. 25 buses are visible within a few blocks¹¹.

Costing and Funding

According to a report by Engineering Consultants GHD in 2004, the total cost of the project was \$176 million for the George Street route and \$156 million for the Castlereagh Street route¹⁴.

An updated report completed by Hyder Consulting in May 2006 found the cost of the Castlereagh Street route to be approximately \$230million excluding GST and street improvements but including rolling stock¹⁵.

In government we will negotiate with Metro Transport on a range of options regarding the ratio of public/private capital and ongoing investment. The exact form and extent of taxpayer contribution will be determined after negotiation.

It is also anticipated that greater development and use of light rail as a public transport option will generate savings from other transport networks.

¹¹ Glazebrook Associates, 'Report to the City of Sydney *Integrated Transport Strategy – Mass Transit for CBD and Inner Sydney*', February 2005, p. 6.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Glazebrook Associates, 'Review of Patronage and revenue for the Castlereagh Street Light Rail Route', May 2006, p. 11.

¹⁴ As reported in - Nixon, S., 'Dithering state told tram plan will work', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 2006, p. 3.

¹⁵ Hyder Consulting, 'Review of Sydney Light Rail Castlereagh Street Option Final Report', 31 May 2006, p. 40.

APPENDIX A: Possible CBD routes



George Street Route



Castlereagh Street Route

Source: Glazebrook Associates, 'Report to the City of Sydney *Integrated Transport Strategy – Mass Transit for CBD and Inner Sydney*', February 2005, p. 20