



GEOFF LEE MP
MEMBER FOR PARRAMATTA
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MEDIA RELEASE

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GRAVEYARD SHIFT IN LIGHT RAIL DESIGN

Underground exploration has enabled a major transport infrastructure project to sidestep unmarked graves beyond the historic St Patrick's Cemetery in Parramatta.

Dr Geoff Lee, Member for Parramatta said that archaeological testing outside the cemetery's modern-day bounds, prior to construction of the Parramatta Light Rail, had resulted in a redesign to ensure that construction activities did not disturb five suspected burial sites.

"This beautiful old graveyard has a rich and complicated history, including borders that have moved over the centuries," said Dr Lee.

"Our light rail team came up with solutions including design and construction methods that minimise ground excavation and a custom-made pavement as shallow as 100 millimetres, so as not to disturb what might lie beneath."

The cemetery is the final resting place of many Catholic convicts and exiled Irish rebels, as well as early Irish priests of Parramatta, numerous inmates of early institutions including the Female Factory, the Military Barracks, the Benevolent Asylum, the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Orphan Schools, the Lunatic Asylum, Invalid Asylum, Sydney and Parramatta Hospitals and the Poor House.

Light rail works are moving north across the street from the 19th-century cemetery at the junction of Pennant Hills Road and Church Street, North Parramatta.

Dr Lee said construction of the Parramatta Light Rail has been designed to reduce any impact to suspected burial sites from earlier phases of the cemetery.

"Although this particular portion of land has not been part of the cemetery since the 1930s, it is important that our work treads lightly and nowhere is this more important than this peaceful and historic site," said Dr Lee.

"There is always potential for light rail work to encounter human remains, and this is why we have protocols in place to manage any discovery and ensure the sensitive handling and appropriate recording of what is found."

The Parramatta Light Rail will connect Westmead to Carlingford via the Parramatta CBD and is expected to open in 2023.

To find out more, visit www.parramattalightrail.nsw.gov.au

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