



# Action for Public Transport (N.S.W.) Inc.

P O Box K606  
Haymarket NSW 1240  
15 November 2016

Secretary  
NSW Planning & Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Secretary,

## 7871 - Sydney Olympic Park

### Master Plan 2030 (2016 review)

#### Submission in response

Action for Public Transport (NSW) is a transport advocacy group, which has been active in Sydney since 1974. We promote the interests of beneficiaries of public transport; both passengers, and the wider community. We make the following submission on the Plan.

#### 1 Introduction

Being located close to the demographic centre of Sydney and close to many transportation links, the ongoing development of Sydney Olympic Park (SOP) precinct has the potential to be the template for future land use planning promoting sustainable transport options and less reliance on the private car, which is often inefficient and causes congestion. The reference to transit-oriented development in the Masterplan is welcome. We hope it's not merely tokenistic.

The development of Sydney Olympic Park must be looked at within the context of urban developments in adjoining areas such as Rhodes, Meadowbank, Wentworth Point and suburbs along the T1 Western railway line.

The amount of development planned will overwhelm the capacity of the existing road and rail networks without considerable investment and a change in approach from the state government. The proposed improvements flagged in the Masterplan will not suffice if the government really wants 40% of all journeys to the precinct to be non-car journeys.

Despite the spin from its proponents, WestConnex will not improve traffic flow into the area. There is a wealth of research debunking the myth that motorways provide real and ongoing improvements to congestion and journey times. Moreover, the cost of this folly means less money available for public transport projects that provide tangible improvements for the general public. There is a great disparity between government rhetoric in the Masterplan review about reducing car dependency and government action in building WestConnex.

#### 2 Public Transport Improvements

##### 2.1 Heavy Rail

###### The T1 Western line

The T1 Western line is already running at capacity during the morning peak hour with few extra train paths available. The Masterplan places a lot of reliance on people interchanging from this line to the T7 Olympic Park line, which seems implausible without a plan to deal with the capacity constraints on the T1 Western line.

Consideration should be given to a T1 Western line relief line under the city and two extra tracks between Homebush and Granville to cope with additional east-west traffic. This proposal has wider benefits for the city given the lopsidedness between residential development in western Sydney and employment development in the eastern half of the metropolitan area. It could be built at the same time as the metro harbour crossing

###### The T1 Northern line

Congestion on the heavy rail network between Strathfield and Olympic Park means that regular and frequent services between the two stations are not viable on the current infrastructure or without inconvenient changes to the timetable on other lines. This makes journeys from the northern line to Olympic Park very difficult. Passengers face a long walk through Bicentennial Park from Concord West station. After dark, this becomes an unpleasant and potentially unsafe journey. Alternatively, passengers must change trains at Strathfield and again at Lidcombe. This is a very convoluted path for what is – as the crow flies – a relatively short journey.

Consideration should be given to linking the T7 Olympic Park line with the T1 Northern line at Strathfield or elsewhere further north. In the interim, a frequent bus service catering to both SOP and Concord West or North Strathfield railway stations should be introduced. This would complement the expanded 526 service since the introduction of the Bennelong Bridge and provide a more direct link to the

T1 northern line.

### Lidcombe Railway Station

Lidcombe railway station is the main gateway between SOP and the rest of the heavy rail network. The station requires major improvements to live up to its importance. In terms of frequency of service on the T7 Olympic Park line, improvements are required outside the peak and on weekends, which are presently inadequate. There is significant research showing that people will move away from cars and towards public transport if services are provided on a more frequent "turn up and go" basis.

Consideration should be given to an 8 train per hour service on the T7 Olympic Park line by using a relay driver at Lidcombe railway station.

Disabled access is confined to the western end of Lidcombe station, a great distance away from the sprint platform at the eastern end of the station. This adds a lot of time for passengers when changing trains.

Consideration should be given to providing lifts to service the existing pedestrian bridge at the eastern end of Lidcombe railway station, nearest the sprint platform.

There is also potential for increased bus services to and from Lidcombe railway station for people ultimately travelling to SOP.

Consideration should be given to entrances and exits at this end to facilitate bus interchange services closer to the sprint platform.

### 2.2 Metro

The reference in the Masterplan is significant. This appears to be one of the first government documents to reveal that this metro line is even under consideration. We recognise there was an outline of a plan announced on 14 November 2016 by the Government connecting the CBD, Bays Precinct and Parramatta but the lack of other detail – such as where this metro will go – means that it is difficult to provide further comment.

The Masterplan review mentions that a "rapid transit line" is currently under investigation and the need to "maintain potential" for a Metro station at SOP. This is guarded language. Any metro line passing through SOP or linking the CBD with Parramatta must service the precinct. This will ensure that SOP lives up to its potential as a model for transit oriented development, not to mention its role as a major residential, employment and leisure hub for Sydney.

The long timeframe announced by the Government is no surprise. When Government commits to a poor piece of transport policy like WestConnex, it is inevitable that there is less money available for building more viable transport alternatives such as a Metro. Any proposed metro service passing through SOP should integrate with the heavy rail network and other transport infrastructure to facilitate journeys across all corners of the metropolitan area.

If a metro was not to proceed, we would encourage planners to examine the option of a T1 Western relief line as mentioned above. Any expansion should be considered alongside the second harbour crossing for the Sydney metro for reasons of expediency and to save costs.

### 2.3 Light Rail

The Strathfield to Parramatta light rail will help in transporting people to and from Sydney Olympic Park, but if it is lower than the heavy rail services that cater to the same areas, it may not be a viable option for people visiting the precinct from those centres.

We acknowledge the light rail service will provide its greatest utility in areas presently under-served by public transport, such as Silverwater and the T6 Carlingford line.

At the same time, there is no planned connection to Granville railway station. Granville has a potential role in connecting Olympic Park redevelopment to the T2 Southern Line.

Consideration should be given to linking the light rail service with Granville to integrate it with T2 Southern line services. Alternatively, Government should consider improving T2 Southern line services from Lidcombe Railway station (where SOP is accessed via heavy rail) and T5 Cumberland line services (where SOP would be accessed from Parramatta via light rail).

### 2.4 Bus

The Masterplan presents a series of public transport options that service visitors coming from the east and the west. There is a lack of expanded services for visitors coming from north of the Parramatta River or south of the Parramatta Road corridor. An expanded bus service provides the most immediate method of overcoming this imbalance.

Table 3.3 in Appendix B of the Masterplan review reveals an increasing proportion of visitors to SOP coming from the north. At the same time, increased development along the Bankstown railway line when the metro is built means it is inevitable more travellers will come from south of the Parramatta Road corridor.

However, the Masterplan contains very little in the way of public transport service improvements for passengers coming from the north and south. This means an increased reliance on the car for travellers from the north and south. It is little wonder NRMA identifies the A3 corridor as one of Sydney's worst for congestion. The 533 bus service from Chatswood and 450 from Hurstville suffer from being low frequency services with poor connections.

A visitor from Hurstville or Ryde would have very limited public transport options, most of which involve using existing infrastructure and several mode and/or line changes. Figure 3.1 and 3.2 in Appendix B confirms that travellers to and from SOP generally have to make more connections than other users of public transport. This is unusual and unacceptable for SOP, which holds itself out to be a major employment and residential hub. A public transport system with infrequent services that requires several mode changes is incompatible with the notion of transit-oriented development. It will also do little to help make 40% of all journeys to and from SOP non-

car journeys.

There is one area where buses to SOP are a success story. The special event bus network which services SOP during special occasions such as NRL Grand Finals and the Royal Easter Show deliver thousands of people to SOP from all corners of Sydney. These services complement the rail network by catering to areas near and far from SOP with poor public transport connections. They mainly service areas without a rail connection and most services run to the north and south – areas identified above as lacking decent public transport connections to SOP.

**Consideration should be given to making the SOP special event bus services permanent metrobus-style routes to run at 15 minute intervals, for 15 hours per day, 7 days a week, with increased services during special events.**

Not only will introducing permanent metrobus services modelled on the special event network help deliver visitors to the precinct, but it will provide wider benefits to people making other journeys across Sydney.

Returning to the examples above, SOP special event bus route 7 as well as route 2 go some way to addressing the issues raised about travellers coming to and from Hurstville and Ryde respectively. Further afield, a permanent metrobus style SOP special event bus route 1A and 1B to upper north shore and northern beaches would integrate well with the Sydney Metro and B-line northern beaches busway.

### **3 Car Use and Parking**

As mentioned above, there is a great disparity between government rhetoric in the Masterplan review about reducing car dependency and government action in building WestConnex, which is designed to increase car dependency. Government lacks the courage to stand up to vested interests to divert funds away from motorways and towards more efficient public transport infrastructure.

One example of the folly in WestConnex as it relates to SOP is the Hill Road ramp. This will do little to improve efficiency on the M4 due to induced demand and the potential for more crashes when changing lanes to enter and exit the tollway. Literature shows more motor vehicle accidents occur near ramps.

The Masterplan foresees an increased demand in parking spaces as SOP development progresses. However, very little is mentioned of SOP's ability to manage this demand. There is significant research supporting the idea that limiting parking spaces reduces the mode share of car journeys and draws people to public transport. We welcome talk of reducing parking spaces in line with demand in the Masterplan but the SOP authority can take a leadership role by limiting parking and regulating the number of spaces in Masterplan buildings immediately, rather than in the future when people will already be conditioned to driving.

**Consideration should be given to building more apartments without parking spaces. Visitor parking spaces should also be limited. Further, consideration should be given to closing one of the current single storey car parks and repurposing the land (see below).**

### **4 Community Facilities**

The SOP precinct has sufficient scale to provide a range of educational, health and other community services without the need for residents to travel outside the precinct. Congestion will be reduced if many essential services are provided within the precinct. These local facilities would obviate the pressure for car journeys outside the SOP precinct.

Planners should not be so naïve as to underestimate the demand for community facilities in areas of medium and high density living. SOP authorities can learn from the Wentworth Point experience where a lack of school and community facilities creates significant congestion as residents move in and out of the suburb each day, especially during the morning peak. Further afield, significant unmet demand for public schools in inner Sydney at present is a direct result of planners incorrectly assuming families would eschew apartment living. These mistakes should not be repeated within the SOP precinct.

The Masterplan is light on details regarding planned schools, health care facilities and community spaces. **Consideration should be given replacing one of the SOP car parks such as P4 with school and/or other community facilities.** This would help lower the share of car journeys from outside the precinct and assist SOP's stated goal of transit-oriented development.

### **5 Value Capture Finance**

Value capture has proven to be a success story overseas in providing finance for transit-oriented development. This is covered in our submission to recent Federal Parliamentary Committee inquiry <http://aptnsw.org.au/documents/connectivity.html>.

**Consideration should be given to a levy for every \$1000 increase in land value which should be redirected to spending on public transport improvements.**