



EcoTransit Sydney inc.

Dear Sir,

EcoTransit Sydney would like to thank Leichhardt Council for considering the views of the public and interested groups on this issue.

If there are any concerns, or any further information you require regarding our position on this subject, please contact EcoTransit Sydney on the numbers below.

You may also contact us on 0438253022.

Yours sincerely,

Leah Mason
Co-convenor
EcoTransit Sydney Inc.

SUBMISSION FOR PARRAMATTA ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**EcoTransit Sydney Inc.*****(a) Introduction***

EcoTransit Sydney supports, in principle, any improvements to Parramatta Road that encourage increased public transport along this important corridor. However, we cannot support any proposal that calls for a potential trade-off in favor increased road capacity elsewhere.

While we find many of the proposals included in the submission quite positive, we are concerned that there is no commitment to funding any part of this work. We feel that it is important to ensure that there are commitments from government, as this will encourage the community to continue engaging with the project. If no commitment is forthcoming this plan will be seen as a distraction from equally pressing issues.

Parramatta Road has a major bias towards car use over public transport, as evidenced by the high traffic volumes during weekday peak periods, and also certain 'choke' points on weekends. EcoTransit Sydney notes that the proposed improvements to Parramatta Road, as part of the urban villages concept, attempts to address this imbalance, with two lanes devoted to public transport (i.e. buses and light rail) as part of the overall proposal.

(b) Inner-Western Light Rail:

EcoTransit Sydney strongly supports the expansion of the light-rail network, especially in the context of the Parramatta Road proposals. Light Rail has many advantages over State Transit & private buses, especially with regard to capacity, operational noise, and local air pollution.

However, we are concerned at the lack of any firm proposals for light rail along Parramatta Road itself. EcoTransit Sydney believes that frequent, high-capacity, light rail services in dedicated lanes on Parramatta Road will do much more to encourage commuters out of their cars, reducing traffic and significantly improving amenity in the Parramatta Road corridor.

For example, one light-rail vehicle can take as many as 75 cars off the road. With a 10-minute light-rail frequency during both peak periods, this will translate into the removal of 450 private cars per hour in each direction, or 1,800 private cars in each direction during each four-hour peak period. Combined with existing State Transit bus routes, a reduction of as many as 2,500 private car movements in each direction during each peak period is entirely feasible.

(3) Motorway v/s Public Transport Trade-off

EcoTransit Sydney notes that public transport, and especially light rail expansion, has been used to “sell” the expansion of motorway construction to the general public in those areas affected by motorway construction. There are two recent examples, where the motorways have been constructed, and are now in operation, but improvements to public transport are nowhere in sight.

The extensions to the M5 East, especially under the inner-eastern suburbs, were to lead to an introduction of light rail to the eastern suburbs, on the basis of reduced traffic along the roads surrounding the M5 corridor. With induced traffic growth generated by the new motorway, light rail has failed to even reach the “drawing board” stage, despite positive results from a study into its viability in this area.

The opening of the Cross City Tunnel, has also been promoted as the best way for any proposals for a CBD light rail City Loop to proceed. Despite draft proposals from Metro Light Rail, City of Sydney Council and local community groups, including EcoTransit Sydney, there has been no commitment from the State Government to expanding the existing light rail network.

(d) Summary & Recommendations:

EcoTransit urges Council not to support the Taskforce proposals for Parramatta Road without demanding further guarantees of an integrated transport strategy for the inner-western suburbs. A fully integrated policy, that also embraces the movement of small to large haul freight from road to rail, is essential crucial to the success of any improvements to Parramatta Road.

While we support the idea of an inner-west light rail network, we believe that a light rail service along Parramatta Road itself, will bring more immediate relief in terms of increased amenity. Furthermore, we urge Leichhardt Council to reject any proposals for any increase in private dwellings along Parramatta Road without a commitment to improved and increased public transport. Increased private car use will exceed the capacity of Parramatta Road, which is already experiencing gridlock during each weekday peak period.

It is important that Council is not placed in any position of having to approve motorway expansions, such as the M4 East or the Marrickville Tunnel, to facilitate improvements to any part of Parramatta Road. EcoTransit Sydney strongly believes that the Taskforce proposals for the beautification of Parramatta Road can be implemented without the need for motorway construction elsewhere in the inner-west.

EcoTranist Sydney would also advise that the Council should insist upon the NSW government making a commitment of appropriate funding. These proposals have little meaning without this kind of commitment.

Leah Mason
Co-convenor
EcoTransit Sydney Inc.

Matthew Doherty
Secretary