

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
**PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS**

**(WSPTU)**

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## **SUBMISSION TO THE TRANSPORT PUBLIC INQUIRY**

Western Sydney Public Transport Users (WSPTU) is a coalition of local groups and people who are public transport users and local advocates for better public transport in Western Sydney. WSPTU began with a major transport symposium held in Granville on June 20, 2009, where it was decided that local groups would form the WSPTU as an umbrella of the various groups working on issues in their local areas. WSPTU is currently working with local people interested in issues in Campbelltown, Liverpool, Bankstown, Fairfield, Auburn, Parramatta, Holroyd, Penrith, Blacktown and the Hills.

### **Inquiry Terms of reference**

1. The Independent Public Inquiry will create a Long Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney after receiving public submissions. The plan is designed to assist both the public and future governments to make informed decisions about priorities for transport investment. The plan will cover the following topics:
2. The optimisation and integration of existing public transport operations (including ferry, bus, light rail and heavy rail).
3. The expansion of public transport services and infrastructure, as well as cycle commuting infrastructure, over a 30-year planning horizon, taking into account existing transport accessibility problems and integration with future land use changes.
4. The most appropriate governance arrangements to guarantee the plan's longevity to remove the negative impact of single-term party politics and to optimise investments.
5. Key environmental sustainability issues.
6. Key social and economic issues.
7. Proposals for short term and long term funding.
8. The cost-effectiveness of solutions, taking into account short term financial costs and benefits, and longer term environmental, congestion and other external costs and land use and accessibility benefits.

### **What we Like**

WSPTU supports most of what is presented in the Glazebrook Plan which is used as a reference for

the inquiry.

- The calls for a more open and transparent development of planning for public transport.
- The call for an integrated system is well overdue.
- The development of an extended bicycle network with showers to bring us up to world standard for bicycle usages is warranted.
- The two main rail expansions for the short term being Liverpool to Camden (NSW Metropolitan strategy has Glenfield to Leppington) and Epping to Rouse Hill (NSW Metropolitan strategy has Epping to Vineyard).
- A more comfortable public transport experience, with the state moving away from high capacity standing room only buses to more comfortable seating.
- The development of a metro (single deck) system to allow for a fast onload and offload of passengers.

### **What we did not like**

- An increase in fares of 20% over 4 years to pay for rail expansions
- The Plan is very peak-time-centric (an expansion of 20 more railway stations in the CBD reflects this). The assumption is morning travel.
- Little mention of personal public transport initiatives other than Bicycles. No real solution for access to our transport system by older people (senior citizens).
- No mention of the disparity of service levels between the STA and privately provided bus systems, particularly in the West.
- The optimisation and integration of existing public transport operations (including ferry, bus, light rail and heavy rail).

## **The Terms of Reference addressed.**

1. The Independent Public Inquiry will create a Long Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney after receiving public submissions. The plan is designed to assist both the public and future governments to make informed decisions about priorities for transport investment

WSPTU supports this goal.

2. The optimisation and integration of existing public transport operations (including ferry, bus, light rail and heavy rail).

### **Increase the Capacity of the Trunk Routes - the heavy use systems.**

Clearly it is not sensible to work to increase the uptake of public transport if the capacity of the system cannot cope with the increase. Clearly this relates to parts of the train system but it is also true for parts of the bus system (e.g. Victoria rd and the Hills).

### **Integrated Ticketing.**

WSPTU advocates that it will be a much superior system if the ticket fare structures are 'normalised'

and simplified so that they all match across modes and an integrated ticketing system is introduced. Overseas experience tends to suggest that there is a surge in usage when this is done. However we acknowledge that even with a less-than-ideal fare structure an integrated ticketing system will improve the system significantly. We need integrated ticketing as a priority.

We also believe that flexible fare options, available across all modes and for all people, are really important to be able to match the travel needs of people with the optimal fares for those people: e.g. day tickets and other time-based tickets such as weeklies and multi-trip tickets with discounts for bulk-purchase.

We think a general discussion with the community about the fares would be advantageous so that people understand the fares and that there is widespread acceptance and awareness.

Fares need to be attractive to bring people to public transport. We recommend that an investigation is done, and publicised about the merits or disadvantages of time/zone based ticketing.

Currently the distance based tickets are inconsistent in their value and usefulness. For instance, a 1 - 3 zone ticket for \$1.90 on the bus is very affordable but a longer trip for over \$5 makes a regular return trip prohibitive, especially if it involves a change of mode and the requirement to buy another ticket. It will currently cost around \$20 to go return from St Clair to Castle Hill, or, St Marys to parts of Liverpool (using the T-way). This is clearly not viable for a person commuting to work, especially for a lower paid job. A "day tripper" ticket, which gets you on all Cityrail, STA buses and Sydney Ferries all day, is good value at only \$17 compared to the trips mentioned above.

### **Recommendations:**

- To optimise our transport system we must look firstly to boosting its patronage when it is used least (i.e.: off peak times).
- Everyone wants optimisation and integration of our transport options, but few seem willing to institute the changes to make this happen.
- Ticketing integration will be most effective once all parts of our transport system agree to have the same fare structure (i.e. same peak fare times, same ticket zoning rules, etc). An integrated ticket should be implemented that will work on train, light rail, bus, and ferry. It is desirable that an integrated ticket could also be used in taxis.
- Ticketing integration needs to extend across the Private and Public bus services. Private operators will have to accept integrated tickets under the same rules as the rest of the system.
- An integrated ticket should emulate successful ticketing structures in other states of Australia and overseas; for example, Melbourne. We need a daily ticket that is multi use to replace return tickets. We need a zoned system rather than a distance-based system. This should be a simplified system with a minimum number of zones across Sydney, preferably only 3.

## **Off-Peak Services**

### **Recommendations**

- During off-peak times our transit system is near empty and under utilised. Since we have already financed the infrastructure capacity to handle peak transit, off-peak transit should be encouraged.
- Investigate tax concessions for businesses operating outside peak times or that encourage more off-peak transport.

3. The expansion of public transport services and infrastructure, as well as cycle commuting infrastructure, over a 30-year planning horizon, taking into account existing transport accessibility problems and integration with future land use changes.

### **Planning Issues - Anticipate the Populations The North West and South West Rail Links Must Be Built**

The State, through its land use planning powers its planning department, can predict and influence the way in which land use happens and where people go to live. For example we believe that the North West Rail Link is critical to sustainable development patterns in the North West and to alleviate the congestion problems going into the Sydney cbd, the Macquarie Park area and the North Shore. In the South West Edmonson Park and the rest of the growth centre is predicted to house many hundreds of thousands of people. To provide transport for those families and encourage the development of industry in that area a train link must be built. These projects should be prioritised above the CBD metro.

### **Recommendations**

- Expanding the rail network out to the North West (Rouse hill/Norwest) and south west (Leppington and/or Camden) must be encouraged. It is a massive loss that these plans for expansion (which are similar to those recommended by the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney) are shelved.
- All reports are very Sydney CBD focused with a side note for Parramatta. Sydney is made up of many small city centres (i.e. Campbelltown, Liverpool, Hurstville, Blacktown, etc) and public transport needs to look at how these centres interrelate.

WSPTU supports the Glazebrook plan on infrastructure development with these following amendments.

### **Recommendations**

1. Stage 1 of the North West Rail must go at least to Norwest but preferably to Rouse Hill because there is no capacity for people to join the system at Castle Hill because of the congestion. There needs to be adequate car parking to allow people to link into the bus transitway and train systems.
2. The Parramatta to Chatswood link needs to be made.

### **Feeder Services and Local Transport Options**

Everyone should enjoy the basic right to freedom of movement, and should be provided with the means to do so. People need to be able to get around their local area and to the main trunk routes. This needs to be included in any planning. Personal Public Transport was not discussed by the Inquiry materials.

A system may involve personal public transport and combinations of modes to service the sector such as taxis, particularly multi-hire maxi-taxis, buses like shopper-hoppers, hire cars and bicycles. It is very important to ensure equity of access for people on all incomes and with mobility restrictions. We need a public transport system that will provide a link between our doors to the system for those that need it.

## **Recommendations**

- It is preferable for people to be able to directly access a route bus system but for the situation where that is not possible we need the state government to assign funding and resources to enable forms of Personal Public Transport to flourish.
- While this system needs to be developed at a local level, the state government needs to provide resources, infrastructure, legislation and government backing to make this system run.
- There are several suggestions on how to provide this system, these could vary from locality to locality:
  - Allowing a community bus/van service to be established within the local area. These vans would be able to drive down the local streets that are not covered by the current bus network.
  - Using Maxi Taxi's to Multi hire for short local trips at a fixed rate of fair (say \$6) with the aim of getting 6-8 people per trip.
  - Having a subsidised registration and running costs of local members of the community if they were willing to act as a transport service for people on their own street that did not have access to a public transport service.
- All these options would act under a local transport coordinator. That said coordinator would be able to receive booking for public transport services via phone line, email, SMS, prearranged schedule (with local medical practitioners, shopping centres, Centrelink and other government services, etc). They could then schedule a service so that it picks up the maximum amount of passengers with the minimum amount of waiting time for commuters.
- These options would be employment and resource generating. These services could be staffed by long-term unemployed, thereby sending commonwealth funding to employment opportunities as opposed to unemployment allowances.
- Services like this are already being run by the RSL's/ Clubs and pubs of Australia for their members. This sadly has linked their service coverage to gambling revenue.

4. The most appropriate governance arrangements to guarantee the plan's longevity to remove the negative impact of single-term party politics and to optimise investments.

WSPTU supports the open transport planning strategies described in the Glazebrook plan.

## **Recommendations**

- We strongly support a bi-partisan approach to transport planning with government, opposition and cross-bench members being involved.
- Government public transport planning needs to extend beyond the 4 year election cycle.

Transport planning for local needs, however, should also be localised and accountable. We have

seen private companies run their own local consultations and these have been less than consultatory. Local people have been able to voice their frustration, but this can be ignored and not noted within the report. Often the private operators can pick and choose on what comments they act upon.

### **Recommendations**

- Hence we would like more involvement and responsibility for the planning of local transport resting with local councils.
- After a consultation process, feedback should be freely available to all concerned.
- If an individual has made a submission, that submission should receive a response.
- The responsibility of providing the link with people contributing to planning issues needs to rest with the government not private operators.

Urban planning throughout Sydney needs to have public transport needs evaluated first. New developments are being planned and built without any thought to public transport.

### **Recommendations**

- That a public transport needs analysis be done on new developments to work out the public transport infrastructure needs for that development.
- That infrastructure should go in first before the development is built.
- Planning legislation must be changed so that new developments have rail and bus corridors set aside before development. Public transport needs should be integrated with the development process.

## **5. Key environmental sustainability issues.**

Public Transport has a far smaller environmental footprint than private transport so every effort must be made to encourage public transport usage. In Sydney's West a car culture has been cultivated within our society. If we are to encourage public transport then we need real car alternatives in the West of Sydney.

Where possible, freight should travel via rail link rather than road. Roads are a cheaper option, but not an environmentally friendly option for main freight corridors.

## **6. Key social and economic issues.**

### **Social Inclusion Has A Positive Economic Consequence**

Access to public transport should be seen as a right, not a burden or an optional service available to some. Social isolation is a growing concern for Sydney residents. We have seen increasing levels of depression among people who are socially isolated, as well as associated medical problems. Transport is the lifeblood of our society. Without access to transport then a person cannot participate within our society. That lack of participation has a social and economic cost for our society, (i.e. if a Grandmother cannot visit her grandchildren then their mother has less resources to support those children. Hence their development is hindered. Likewise if an unemployed person cannot reach transport, then they will have less employment opportunities).

This cost is real, while it is impossible to quantify we cannot neglect the benefits of social communication. When we socially interact there is an economic impact. That impact might be in the form of a coffee shop getting more business, local retailers having more patronage or even just more trade in general. This impact means a better utilisation of monetary resources (a larger choice is available to the consumer and hence better purchasing is utilised).

That impact is vital for trade within our state. Hence a good public transport system is vital for a good trading system within NSW. The perception of Public transport funding needs to change, with its investment being seen as a direct investment in growth (more like building the marketplace for people to shop than just the streets that the people use).

## 7. Proposals for short term and long term funding.

### **Recommendations**

- WSPTU does not support a 20% ticket rise for off peak consumers (Glazebrook highlights a blanket 20% ticket rise). We need to encourage more off peak consumers by lowering ticket costs during the off peak.
- There were no solutions proposed in the materials provided by the Inquiry to the problems of the disparity between service levels provided by private and STA operations. One idea is to have the private operators lease the bus route from the government, with the government specifying the level of service and the private operators being contracted to provide that service. If no operator applies for the contract (or the applicants are substandard) then the government will provide the service.
- Extending the government subsidy of public buses across Sydney (be it a subsidy of the private operators to provide the same service as the public bus network OR extending the public bus network across all of Sydney).
- Federal government should give funding to community developed transport initiatives that employ long term unemployed people as this will reduce the unemployment allowance burden. Local contractors work for Australia Post delivering mail and parcels. There is no reason this type of idea can not be applied to local transport needs.

## 8. The cost-effectiveness of solutions, taking into account short term financial costs and benefits, and longer term environmental, congestion and other external costs and land use and accessibility benefits.

The benefits of public transport need to be measured by the cost to society if the transport link is not provided.

### **Recommendations**

- WSPTU would like the Independent Inquiry to make some suggestions about taxes which encourage public transport use rather than car use.

