

Friday 8 May 2015

## **CONSTRUCTION OF CRITICAL MISSING LINK IN LIGHT RAIL NETWORK IS A 'NO BRAINER'**

Construction of the 'missing link' in the Western Sydney Light Rail Network between the Macquarie Park and Parramatta CBDs was described as a 'no brainer' by delegates representing three tiers of government, at a Light Rail Symposium hosted by City of Ryde Council and Macquarie University today.

In a rare show of consensus, delegates that included two State cabinet ministers, a Federal minister and two mayors, were unanimous in their agreement that a light rail connection between Parramatta and Macquarie Park (via Carlingford and Epping) was the preferred route for Stage 1 of the Western Sydney light Rail Network.

City of Ryde Mayor, Bill Pickering, said the Macquarie Park/Parramatta route was the critical missing link in the metropolitan transport strategy: "Macquarie Park to Parramatta is the only section in the Global Economic Corridor that does not have a current or planned mass-transit service.

"Today, we demonstrated how servicing this Global Economic Corridor with adequate and connected transport infrastructure will ensure its continued significant contribution to the State's economy and reputation as an international city and benefit the wider Sydney region."

Linking the two thriving CBDs with light rail infrastructure that can move up to 10,000 passengers per hour was described as a 'no brainer' by key note speaker, Dr Michelle Zeibots of the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures.

When businesses were asked to identify the key transport issues affecting Macquarie Park, 95% of the respondents indicated that traffic congestion affects their business directly.

Vaughan Paul, Vice President of Human Resources of Optus, whose head office campus is located in Macquarie Park, said: "The current transport options are reaching a critical point. If we don't resolve this soon, companies like Optus will not be able to attract highly skilled workers to the area any more."

The Mayors of Ryde and Parramatta will take their proposal for a Parramatta to Macquarie Park (via Carlingford and Epping) Stage 1 link to the NSW Government within the next week.

**See: "Connecting the Future Parramatta to Macquarie Park Light Rail" video and brochure at [www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/lightrail](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/lightrail) containing presentations and key benefits.**

Delegates: Dr Michelle Zeibots (UTS) Institute for Sustainable Futures; Vaughan Paul, Vice President Human Resources, Optus; The Hon John Alexander MP, Member for Bennelong; Scott Lloyd – Lord Mayor Parramatta; Jeff Lee MP – Member for Parramatta; Damien Tudehope MP – Member for Epping; members of the Macquarie Park Business Community. Hosts City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Bill Pickering; Prof Richie Howith, Macquarie University, Professor of Human Geography and Director Macquarie-Ryde Futures Partnership.

Addendum: Light Rail Key Benefits/2

## **SUMMARY KEY BENEFITS**

Key benefits of the preferred Light Rail Link will:

- Drastically reduce reliance on single-driver car trips
- Connect workers along the corridor with access to a potential 80,000 knowledge-based jobs in the Macquarie Park Specialised Precinct and Parramatta business hub
- Connect students with world-class educational opportunities at Macquarie University, the Rydalmere Educational Precinct and the University of Western Sydney's new Parramatta City campus
- Serve fast-growing population centres such as Greater Parramatta, the new Urban Activation Precincts in Epping and Macquarie Park, and other large housing developments occurring at Carlingford
- Connect residents with a range of recreational and shopping opportunities such as Rosehill Racecourse, Macquarie Shopping Centre, Parramatta Westfield and Parramatta shopping precincts.
- Increased capacity with space for up to 300 commuters on each light rail service – equivalent to five standard length buses – reducing crowding and congestion
- Faster, simpler, more reliable services that are easy to navigate
- Improved amenity with smooth, comfortable and quiet services that reduce the stress of commuting
- Urban renewal opportunities through creation of more pedestrian friendly streets, open spaces and revitalised public areas.

From a transport perspective, Light Rail will:

- Provide a key missing transport link for the Global Economic Corridor by connecting the CBDs of Parramatta and Macquarie Park and into the existing northern transport link to Sydney CBD
- Reduce congestion and remove the reliance upon cars for commuters by providing fast, effective and affordable travel options
- Reduce the demand by employers for parking on site for staff, enhancing their ability to attract and retain staff.

From an infrastructure investment perspective, Light Rail will:

- Align with the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney commitment to prioritising infrastructure investment to Growth Centres and Priority Growth Areas
- Align with the NSW Government priorities such as the Macquarie Park Specialised Precinct, the Herring Road and North Ryde Station Urban Activation Precincts
- Provide necessary infrastructure to a key centre of the Global Economic Corridor, which generated over \$9.1 billion in economic output in 2012/13, is currently NSW's second biggest CBD and is projected to become the fourth largest CBD in Australia.