



Barangaroo Submissions  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

20 June 2011

## **Submission to the Barangaroo Review by EcoTransit Sydney**

EcoTransit Sydney is a community-based public transport advocacy group. In the recent past we have been very active in proposing public transport solutions, especially rail<sup>1</sup>, light rail<sup>2</sup> and cycling<sup>3</sup> solutions throughout Sydney.

Our submission addresses Points 2 and 4 of the Review's terms of reference. We would be pleased to meet with the review panel to discuss our concerns and elaborate on the solution we propose.

### **1. Adequacy of planned transport arrangements to meet the demand generated by the site at full development (ToR 2.)**

In its present form the Barangaroo scheme would be an isolated enclave insufficiently supported by public transport capacity. In fact it would place unsustainable pressure on existing public transport.

This is largely an outcome of recent planning misdirection and leadership instability within the former state government. It is apparent that the Barangaroo developers always favoured a light rail route serving the site. Regrettably, until late in the premiership of Kristina Keneally, roads and bus public transport were the focus of Sydney's planning. Light rail solutions were actively opposed by NSW Transport and Treasury and responsible plans for the expansion of heavy rail capacity had languished for some years. Under the Iemma and Rees premierships, matters were further confused by a brief infatuation with large-scale metro schemes<sup>4</sup>. In short, the period of instability during which the Barangaroo scheme took shape was not conducive to sound and innovative planning in relation to the site's future.

It is plainly the case that current public transport arrangements would not meet the needs of the additional 23,000 workers and residents expected to occupy the Barangaroo site under the most recent version of the redevelopment scheme. This represents an increase in CBD jobs (and therefore commuters) of around 9 per cent.

Access relies too heavily on Wynyard station from which the site can be reached only by a long walk. Wynyard Station is already at or near capacity and, with the present unexpectedly rapid increase in rail commuting, it will also, in the future, need to cater for much additional commuter access to other parts of the northern CBD as well as Barangaroo.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ecotransit.org.au/ets/NWRL>

<sup>2</sup> [http://ecotransit.org.au/ets/dulwich\\_hill\\_light\\_rail\\_greenway](http://ecotransit.org.au/ets/dulwich_hill_light_rail_greenway)

<sup>3</sup> <http://ecotransit.org.au/ets/citywest-cyclelink>

<sup>4</sup> [http://ecotransit.org.au/ets/files/ETN\\_0909\\_CBDMetro.pdf](http://ecotransit.org.au/ets/files/ETN_0909_CBDMetro.pdf)

The CBD is already congested with buses, especially in peak periods and it would be folly to rely on this mode for public transport to the site. Indeed the priority (as recognised by City of Sydney and the State Government in the current light rail planning process) is to rapidly wind back the number of buses entering the CBD.

We are also concerned that the planned pedestrian tunnel from Wynyard to Barangaroo would have to accommodate at least 10,000 pedestrians an hour during peak periods if Wynyard was the sole rail transport access.

Development of the Barangaroo precinct on the lines of the current scheme will also place an unsustainable amount of additional car traffic on overcrowded CBD streets – an unacceptable and counterproductive outcome.

What is needed is a new high-capacity and more direct public transport access point located in the centre of the Barangaroo precinct. **We submit that the White Bay Green Link scheme (WBGL) outlined in the attached briefing paper (*White Bay Green Link – An overview*) represents a robust solution to this need.**

At present, public transport from the inner west to the central and northern CBD relies almost completely on buses entering the CBD on an indirect route via the Anzac Bridge or Parramatta Road, Broadway and George Street. The WBGL would resolve this situation (which is bound to be worsened by the planned concentration of workers and residents in Barangaroo) by making Barangaroo the main access point for commuters from the inner west and, via future light rail extensions along Victoria Road, the inner north-west. With the WBGL solution in place, commuters from these regions of Sydney would save as much as 30 minutes on current peak period journey times.

We also contend that the expected development of a light rail loop within the CBD (a scheme we completely support) would not in its present form adequately answer the need for public transport access to Barangaroo because it is anchored on Central Station in the extreme south of the CBD, making it an inefficient compromise for commuters from the inner west and inner north-west.

Based on a cost comparison with the larger Sydney Harbour Tunnel Project, it is likely that the WBGL would cost between \$350m and \$450m, or between 5% and 7.5% of the stated \$6 billion cost of the Barangaroo project. The fact that the WBGL would significantly enhance the commercial and retail value of the project suggests that a significant proportion of the cost should be borne by Barangaroo's developers.

## **2. Relocation of the cruise terminal to White Bay (ToR 4.)**

The nature of the redevelopment of the unused cargo wharves at White Bay is uncertain. Part of the site is currently earmarked for a cruise passenger terminal (CPT). Other parts of the site will certainly be redeveloped in the near future for residential, industrial or educational purposes.

**In the absence of a direct public and active transport link such as the WBGL, all these potential uses will generate additional road traffic that will further congest already overcrowded local roads and particularly the route to the CBD via the Anzac Bridge.**

EcoTransit Sydney has serious reservations about the proposed relocation of CPT facilities at Barangaroo to White Bay. It would appear to be only a short-term solution because the

evolution of passenger ship design is making the future of any terminal site west of the Harbour Bridge uncertain.

It is the case that the new generation of ocean liners now under construction will be too tall to pass under the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Unless the Australian Government is willing to prevail on the cruise ship builders to build, and operators to use, lower ships – an extremely unlikely eventuality – the State Government will actually need to invest in terminal facilities east of the Harbour Bridge or at Botany Bay.

To date, in response to this problem, cruise operators have asserted that the new generation of taller vessels are not yet destined for the Australian cruise market, that lower ships which can fit under the Harbour Bridge will continue to operate here, and that White Bay therefore remains a viable option. This would appear to be a short-sighted attitude. **At the very least, the Barangaroo Review should seek independent advice on this issue.**

A resolution is also increasingly urgent because of the peaking of world oil supplies and the inevitable effect of this on civil aviation. It is entirely possible that in the next decade the rising expense of air travel will cause a shift back to ocean travel for reasons other than recreational cruising.

In these circumstances, it may be prudent to retain some CPT capacity at Barangaroo and for the NSW government to seek a robust solution (such as buying back the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf) that takes into account the reality of the new ocean liner designs.

Whatever the future of the now-unused White Bay area, the creation of a new and direct public transport link to the CBD will be necessary if counterproductive road congestion is to be avoided.

**ATTACHMENT: *White Bay Green Link – An overview***

Yours sincerely



John Bignucolo  
Secretary  
EcoTransit Sydney

**Contacts**

E: [contact@ecotransit.org.au](mailto:contact@ecotransit.org.au)

T: 02 9567 8502

M: 0417 674 080

(Mr Gavin Gatenby, Convener, EcoTransit Sydney)