



EcoTransit Sydney

Submission for **Greater Parramatta future underground infrastructure corridor**

10 January 2025

Who we are

EcoTransit is transport that supports a sustainable economy and environment. The less resources used by the transport sector, the more efficient our economy is, and the less damage is done to the environment.

Public transport, walking and cycling fit these criteria. Urban freeway development that entrenches prolific car use does not support **EcoTransit** based economies and cities.

EcoTransit is a public transport advocacy group operating out of Sydney, but with a focus on all regional and rural parts of NSW that need better public transport. **EcoTransit** is a not-for-profit organisation made up of volunteers dedicated to the promotion of **EcoTransit** development.

EcoTransit advocates improving the local environment of towns, suburbs, and cities in NSW, by shifting transport from invasive modes like the private motor car that produce high levels of air, noise, and water pollution to the less polluting public transport modes. **EcoTransit** is dedicated to the preservation of NSW's natural environment and heritage areas.

EcoTransit members are transport planning consultants, academics, trainspotters, bus drivers, commuters, cyclists, engineers, pedestrians, and combinations of all the above. **EcoTransit** has given evidence at various NSW Parliament Inquiries including: [Current and future public transport needs in Western Sydney](#), [Critical Transport Infrastructure Supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis](#), and [Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis developments](#).

Discussion

EcoTransit supports transport-oriented development that is planned in conjunction with the local community and for areas with high frequency multi-modal transport options with supporting adequate infrastructure such as health, education, and open spaces.

We are concerned with the current transport and planning approach of converting existing rail lines into a Metro as the default solution to improving services and providing opportunities for housing growth. Converting existing rail lines into Metro is an expensive and questionable option to reducing car dependency in Western Sydney.

EcoTransit cannot support the conversion of the existing Sydney Trains Network especially between Merrylands and Leppington into any form of Metro. As outlined at previous NSW Parliamentary Inquiries, the roll-out of new digital signalling upgrades (such as European Train Control System – ETCS Level 2) would deliver the same frequency of double-deck heavy rail services as a Metro conversion.

Signalling upgrades would be at a significantly less cost to the taxpayer (e.g. \$800 million for a train every 2 minutes as announced for the T4 Illawarra Line and T8 Airport Line), hence enabling investment in other new local multi-modal transport and infrastructure needs along the corridor.

EcoTransit supports direct rail access to Western Sydney International Airport Terminal Station from Leppington as an extension of the existing Sydney Trains Network. The extension of the South West Rail Link from Leppington to not just Bradfield (Aerotropolis, which is a station short of the actual Western Sydney Airport) but to the Airport Terminal itself is a critical part of reducing car dependency in Western Sydney.

We are concerned that the proposed New Cumberland Line as part of the Greater Parramatta future underground infrastructure corridor falls short of Western Sydney Airport Terminal Station. Additionally, the abandonment of the Y-Link between Merrylands and Harris Park/Granville is a significant reduction in both Sydney Trains and freight network operating capabilities.

EcoTransit also supports the introduction of tram-trains especially in Western Sydney as the new single-deck fleet for services between Western Sydney Airport, Liverpool, Fairfield, and Parramatta. Tram-trains would be compatible with the existing Sydney Trains Network (which would also safeguard the important T3 Inner West Line from Liverpool – Cabramatta – Sefton – Regents Park – Lidcombe – Strathfield – City Circle).

We are concerned about the lack of forward planning with the New Cumberland Line to be the primarily a conversion of the existing line between Leppington and Merrylands into a Metro. There is much opportunity to boost multi-modal public transport in Western Sydney instead with the operation of tram-trains (replacing buses) on the Liverpool to Parramatta T-Way. The New Cumberland Line should be an uplift of the Liverpool to Parramatta T-Way to replace motor vehicles with higher capacity/frequency rail services (such as tram-trains).

Please refer to EcoTransit’s supplementary submission for the Inquiry into [Critical Transport Infrastructure Supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis](#) for further discussion about tram-trains in Western Sydney.

EcoTransit is in favour of improved rail access between Parramatta and Epping but expresses concern about the lack of forward planning in the Greater Parramatta future underground infrastructure corridor to accommodate future high-speed rail through the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula. Additionally, the alignment of the future Norwest to Miranda/Parramatta to Kogarah via Bankstown line (“RiverRail”) should be concurrently determined in this project as this line intersects with the New Cumberland Line in Parramatta CBD.

Parramatta will also be the location of a major interchange (location earmarked as Smith Street in a Ministerial Briefing to Transport Minister Jo Haylen in September 2023) between Sydney Metro West, the New Cumberland Line, and the Norwest to Miranda line. The Parramatta interchange between these rail lines and the existing T1 Western Sydney, light rail, and high-speed rail should be included in this public exhibition.

We believe that surface level options as means of cost-effectiveness and reducing construction impacts should be considered between Parramatta and Epping. The New Cumberland Line especially as a Metro with its very low number of stops in the corridor will not be as effective as tram-trains with more stops which would serve a larger catchment area.

Conclusion

EcoTransit recommends the New Cumberland Line corridor be the conversion of the Liverpool to Parramatta T-Way from buses into new tram-trains system (instead of converting Leppington to Merrylands into a Metro) with subsequent extension from Parramatta to Epping (that also maintains the Sydney Trains Network on the Y-Link between Merrylands and Harris Park/Granville).

EcoTransit recommends the Parramatta CBD rail interchange and corridor for future transport infrastructure be publicly exhibited in full (beyond the New Cumberland Line; but for all other rail lines listed in the NSW Future Transport Strategy).

EcoTransit recommends the publication of indicative housing targets for all suburbs along the New Cumberland Line corridor between Western Sydney International Airport Station – Bradfield (Aerotropolis) – Leppington – Glenfield – Liverpool – Cabramatta – Fairfield – Merrylands – Parramatta – Epping.

EcoTransit recommends the prioritisation of Western Sydney rail lines on the Sydney Trains Network to receive signalling upgrades as part of the Digital Systems Program (DSP) especially the T2 Leppington and Inner West Line, and T5 Cumberland Line.