

Fixing the Network



Better Transport for Sydney Discussion Paper

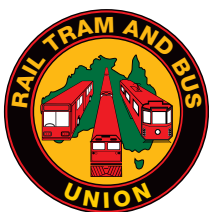
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LET'S FIX IT

Better transport for NSW



June 2009



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What is this about?

The Rail Tram and Bus Union and our members care about the future of public transport in Sydney. Over recent years we have seen many plans unveiled then shelved, while demands on the network increase. Our members are at the frontline every day delivering services for commuters, battling to make a stressed public transport system work. Now, more than ever, Sydney is crying out for an integrated public transport system that works better – and has the capacity to efficiently service the growing city.



The central question facing Sydney is with so many worthwhile proposed projects on the backlist, which should be priority projects that meet the most urgent community needs.

As part of our **Let's Fix It** campaign for better transport in NSW, the RTBU commissioned this study into needed rail infrastructure. The Union has produced a series of recommendations based on:

- the recent history of public transport project announcements, the “broken promises”,
- an update of criteria for assessing projects especially in the “shovel ready” context,
- the identification of two or three priority projects that warrant support, and
- the need to change community and political perceptions about the importance of moving from “talking about” to “doing” projects.

This discussion paper builds on earlier reports **Back on Track** followed by **Moving On** in 2006. These reports set out the RTBU's fundamental principles and directions for sound public transport planning and performance.

Our members want to build ties with the community, with policy makers and with government to see well-intentioned plans actually come to fruition. We intend to continue to engage in all major transport policy debates, but more importantly to build community support for projects to drive the political will to deliver on these vital projects.

Our preliminary calculations in this discussion paper indicate that investment in the three shovel-ready projects would produce about 11,000 construction jobs, 14,000 permanent jobs and \$2.2 billion in annual economic efficiency gains. The capital cost would be under \$6 billion. The benefits in reduced public and private travel costs, energy and pollution reductions, and greater accessibility in an ageing but spreading population, would be massive.

At a time when governments are spending funds to keep the economy strong while building national infrastructure, we have the golden opportunity to demand the action Sydney deserves to be a workable city. Let's not waste it. Let's reverse the culture of broken promises and make Sydney a city of excellence in public transport.

Nick Lewocki
NSW Branch Secretary

Strategic Context

In 2000-01, as the Sydney rail system was rapidly approaching gridlock, Director General of Rail (and Olympics Transport) Ron Christie prepared a long-term rail plan at the request of Premier Carr. His plan was strategic – long term and staged. Improvements were designed to strengthen and repair a somewhat neglected system that was carrying heavier loads than it was designed for, with the proposed projects prioritised so as to gain maximum benefit from the metropolitan passenger and freight rail systems. The reforms would meet demands over the next decade, with metros to come later to meet gaps in service coverage.

In June 2005 Premier Carr's Cabinet approved funding for the key first-stage projects. This was an historic decision, involving extensions of rail services into suburban growth areas as well as system strengthening (central rail capacity, clearways, untangling rail corridors, and rail carriage and signalling reforms).

That decision was reversed in 2008 as Premiers lemma and then Rees introduced new priorities. The 2005 context must not be forgotten.

In the context of the lemma and Rees changes, an important aspect that is not often recognised is that most overseas capital cities envy our Bradfield-era rail system that carries long and medium distance passengers into and through the CBD seamlessly. In London and Paris, as examples, the commuter rail systems ended in scattered terminuses and the metros had to come later to fill the gaps, with inner-city transfers being a disadvantage.

Rail networks that have central routes have extended their rail systems where they can instead of building duplicated systems. Carefully considered, Metros may also have their place, where there is no existing inner rail system. In Sydney like Zurich and Berlin, we already have a central underground rail system which is linked with the radiating lines.

Building a duplicated CBD Metro at a massive cost with its estimated 15 per cent utilisation in the early years; without easy passenger interchanges at Central, Town Hall and Wynyard Stations and with expensive multiple submarine sections will force future governments to divert funding from the existing rail network to extensions of the metros in an effort to make the metro initiative look more effective. The duplicated system is not likely to be economically or financially viable in a city which has a sad history of failed rail and road PPP (Public Private Partnership) projects.

Sydney continues to grow, it is an international city. There is a recognised need to make it affordable, healthy and efficient and that means that new schemes have to be developed against "fit for purpose" public transport options.

The lack of political will to commit to a long-term plan for public transport that is attractive to the community and investors, is a critical failing that threatens the State's future. Sydney does not want its efficiency dragged down by a public transport network that remains geared to the last century. We have not looked far enough ahead in our transport planning. There is a better way, an integrated planning and implementation process.

A short history of Rail, Bus and Tram announcements

The history of post-1945 public transport planning is characterised by grand ideas and no money. The magnificent network planned in the 1910s and 1920s has had just two short extensions and a few missing links fixed, as population grew by about 220 per cent.

The Christie Report (2000-2001) documented the challenge facing Sydney now – an extra 445,000 new dwellings (about 1 million people) within the built-up area and 300,000 people in the North West by 2031 – with the need to increase rail patronage by 50 per cent.

This discussion paper focuses on rail but proposes better integration across all modes.

In 1998 then Minister for Transport Carl Scully sponsored Action for Transport 2010 which included:

- construction of Parramatta to Chatswood rail by 2006 (first promised in 1994/5),
- Hurstville to Strathfield by 2014,
- Epping to Castle Hill by 2010 (then \$350 million),
- new Northern Beaches and Maroubra lines, and
- seven Bus Transitways.

A rail extension to Bondi Beach was already being pursued by a private consortium. Minister Scully invited other ideas including the possibility of a Fast Rail from Wynyard to Parramatta. The failure since then to commit to completing such projects has left the Sydney system under severe stress, as the timeline contained in the Appendix indicates.

The global financial crisis impacted heavily from late 2008 and caused a great focus by the Federal Rudd Government on the funding of “shovel ready” projects in infrastructure, starting with schools but moving to rail, road and port projects among others. This provides an opportunity for the NSW Government to work in partnership with the Federal Government to secure funding for delivery of some these projects.

What to build – Our criteria

What is clear from past transport planning is the absence of a coherent strategy in planning for the city's transport needs. At the very least all transport projects should be assessed against a set of clear criteria. We say, they should create and support jobs, be 'shovel-ready', meet sound planning benchmarks, and comply with the ten principles and sustainability criteria laid out in our Moving On report:

10 Principles:

1. a long-term legislated plan for a world-class public transport
2. continuous, annual and substantial State and Commonwealth funding
3. an independent NSW Transport Coordination Authority
4. Principles of Sustainable Transport - see list to right
5. improve transport equity in Sydney
6. citizen-driven transport planning processes
7. 'fit for purpose' public transport infrastructure with a heavy rail base at the metropolitan level, buses and light rail operating on a regional scale and more active use of Government provided transport assets at the local level
8. specific high-priority initiatives in the short-term while observing the long-term plan
9. planning and accountability measures to support the development and integration of transport infrastructure
10. move from 'car preference travelling' to supporting a 'public transport culture'



Sustainable Transport criteria:

1. access to people, places, goods, services and opportunities
2. reliability and quality
3. sex, spatial, age, income, health and all other equity factors in the distribution of resources
4. health and quality of life
5. environmental quality
6. integration of planning, delivery and use of public transport
7. public participation
8. reduction of land impacts and emissions
9. asset and funds utilisation, accountability and long-term sustainability
10. cost effectiveness based on accountability in reporting and equitable sharing of costs.

Added to these principles is the imperative to act quickly. After all the delays the need for job creation meshes the imperative need for investment in the rail system.



The simple criteria for "shovel-ready" project selection can be summarised as:

1. projects are assessed to be justified in terms of long-term regional and system needs and have planning and related approvals in place
2. projects are relatively labour intensive
3. transparency and accountability to ensure avoidance of political distortions
4. projects lead to skills development and program/project integration improvements.

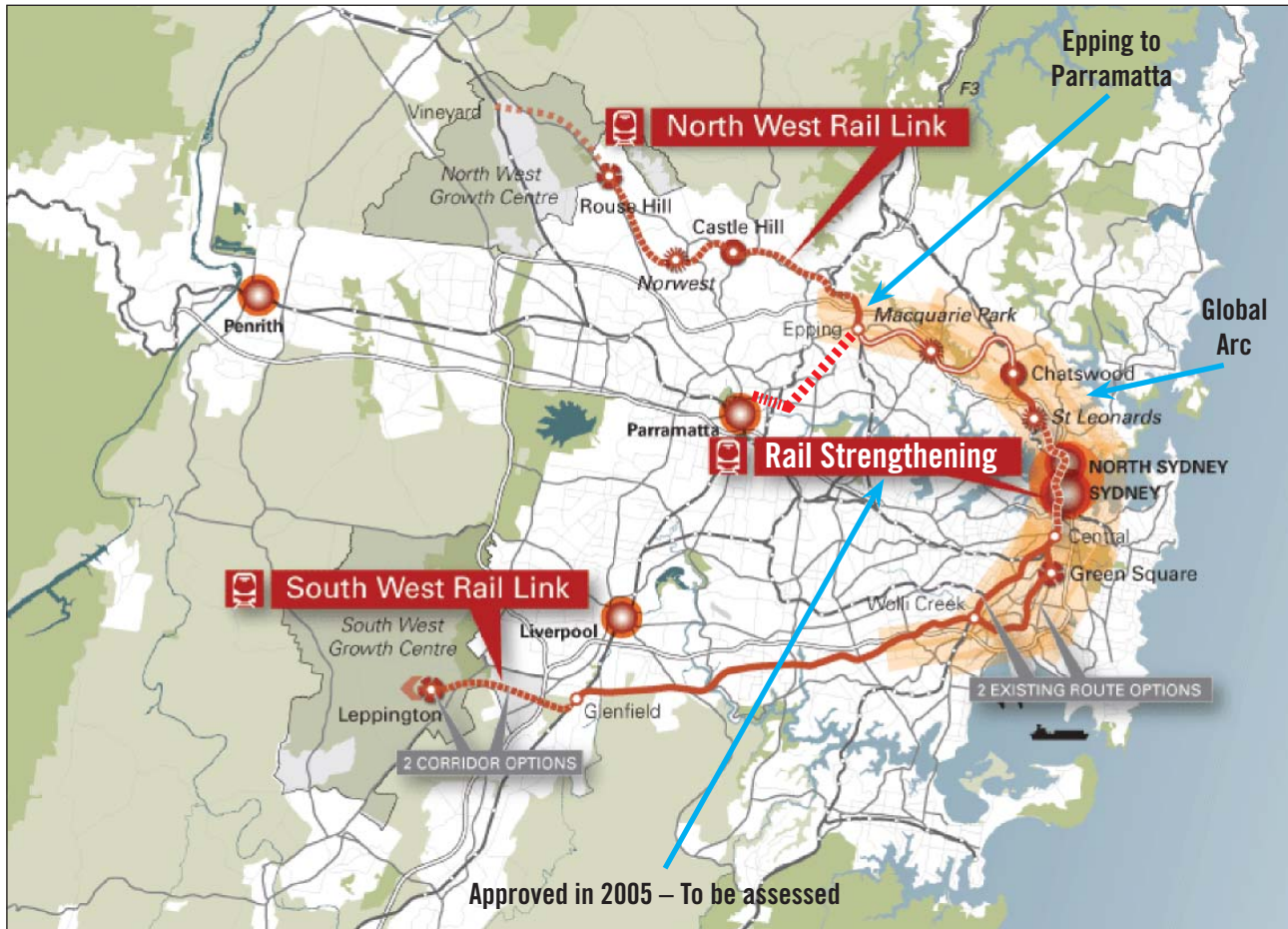
Major infrastructure projects are a golden opportunity to develop new skill sets. The investment of billions of dollars in physical and digital infrastructure will fail to deliver the desired or planned outcomes unless a conscious, integrated and significant investment is also made in workforce planning and skills.

We need a targeted and specific education and training response driven by industry needs and focused on the future. Such models are being developed overseas e.g. Logistics College North West in the UK – a consortium of six colleges and the Transport and General Workers Unions.

Our three priority projects

Three projects have been given planning permission under part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. They went through the studies required to convince the NSW Government that they were worthy of approval at all levels. A wide range of community and environmental, commercial and other groups have been demanding their implementation.

The following reference map is from the Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation's Project Application for the North West Rail Link (April 2006), with notations:



The main components of the map (from the top) are:

- **North West Rail Link from Epping to Rouse Hill** (separate from announced Vineyard extension): new stations at Franklin Road, Castle Hill and Hills Centre in the first stage and three more at Norwest, Burns Road and Rouse Hill, with six to eight peak hour trains an hour
- **Epping to Parramatta Rail Link:** extension from Epping down the Carlingford line then into Parramatta by tunnel. Part of the Chatswood to Parramatta line, truncated at Epping in 2001
- **Rail strengthening** – see June 2005 Cabinet decision described later and in the Appendix, with current train control and re-signalling projects to be reviewed in this context

- **South West Rail Link from Glenfield to Leppington** and onto Bringelly possibly: 13 km of surface track with stations at Leppington and Edmondson Park in cuttings. This would provide 8 trains services from Leppington to the City during the morning peak. The project would increase total morning peak rail services to the city from Glenfield by 2 trains per hour and to Blacktown by 2 trains per haour.

The Global Arc is shaded yellow. This is profound in employment terms, for example the proportion of travellers from the south-west (on the Bankstown and East Hills Lines) going to say Epping and nearby jobs is expected to rise very quickly, and the suburban rail system (and the proposed Metro system) will not be able to serve this adequately.

These are the "shovel ready" projects – described on pages 7, 8 and 9 – which we propose should receive urgent government attention.

Project One – North West Rail Link – Epping to Rouse Hill

Based on NSW Government planning predictions, by 2031 **The North West Growth Centre** is expected to have 140,000 new homes with approximately 300,000 residents and 130,000 new jobs. It has two associated bus transitways and major road upgradings. Current population of the North West sub-region is approximately 1 million, with the lowest percentage of public transport trips in the Metro area – Road speeds are declining

rapidly – M2 corridor fell from average 36 km/h in 2004 to 31 in 2008. Pollution recirculates within Sydney air basin.

The features are:

- The funding package announced in June 2005 (after speculation from 1998 and earlier) allocated \$3 billion for the NW rail link. Brought forward by 2 years in 2006. Planning approvals in place.
- Rail will be the skeleton for commuting, changes such as scooters replacing cars, more bicycling and walking, and access to night time and recreational trips not now available. Holistic feeder systems to be developed including tram and bus when justified.
- Car congestion will be significantly reduced with the uptake of travel alternatives.

RESULTS

In most cases the Government's planning and budgetary documents contain no or only out-dated cost numbers for projects, and a lack of outcome indicators including economic and financial ratios. A number of stated assumptions were made in our preliminary scoping of this and the other projects. These include:

Estimated Cost

- \$3.4 billion (updated from 2005 using ABS General Construction Index NSW, indicating an increase of about 10%)

Jobs Created

- **6,400 construction phase** over 2-3 years
- **8,200 permanent jobs** spread through all occupations across the State.

Economic stimulus

- ongoing benefits in the order of **\$1.3 billion per annum** in economic activity

Sources: Property Council's Building Wealth Through Infrastructure (Centre for International Economics 2006) for permanent jobs and economic stimulus. For construction phase: the HIA/ABS current estimate is 1.87 jobs per \$1 m (advice from Housing Industry Association).



Project Two: Epping to Parramatta

The second priority is the balance of the Chatswood to Parramatta railway, namely the section from Epping to Parramatta, which would complete the link between the northern and western lines. The first section from Chatswood was controversial as the cost doubled as the length halved, largely related to the decision to tunnel under the Lane Cove River. This final section from Epping to Parramatta will be even more important when the West Metro proceeds.

The features are:

- Heavy rail link will increase east-west capacity in the rail system overall and ease pressure on the main western tracks
- Connects West Metro (Central to Penrith, should it be built) with northern destinations from Rouse Hill to Chatswood. This would require a review of the NW Metro
- Links with contracted government bus routes into the Manly-Warringah Peninsula
- Provide improved interchange possibilities across several major regions
- Supports massive CBD redevelopment in Parramatta providing linkages into the business district and other precincts
- Good example of using railways to "develop" rather than to support known patronage
- Facilitate positive land use and other changes, which will encourage other travel patterns and patronage.

RESULTS

Estimated Cost

- \$1.4 billion (updated from 2003 using ABS General Construction Index NSW indicating an increase of about 35%)

Jobs Created

- **2,700 construction phase** over 2-3 years
- **3,400 permanent jobs** spread through all occupations across the State.

Economic stimulus

- ongoing benefits in the order of **\$54 million per annum** in economic activity.

Sources: as with Project 1



Project Three: Glenfield to Leppington/ Bringelly

The Government's South West Sub-Region Strategy set out the case for investment in public transport: the growth pattern was stated to be 155,000 new dwellings (about 300,000 people), 100,000 of those dwellings in the SW Growth Centre, by 2031.



RESULTS

Estimated Cost

- \$900 million (updated from 2004 using ABS General Construction Index NSW indicating an increase of about 25%)

The features are:

- The 2009 Mini Budget contained deferral of the staging of the South West Rail Link to Leppington saving \$462 million over the four years to 2010-12 – leading to the assumption of a project cost of \$500 million as against \$688 m in 2004 – no explanation given. The government alternative was construction of a major carparking facility at Glenfield
- While this is a smaller project, the project may stimulate additional residential growth in the sector
- Completion would allow consideration of light rail and bus networks to supplement the heavy rail extension, allowing the growth centre to be an environmentally and accessibility successful urban community
- Facilitate positive land use and other changes, which will encourage other travel patterns and patronage.

Jobs Created

- **1,700 construction phase** over 2-3 years
- **2,100 permanent** spread through all occupations across the State.

Economic stimulus

- ongoing benefits in the order of **\$34 million per annum** in economic activity.

Sources: as with Project 1



On the basis of projections from research finding, investment in the three shovel-ready projects would produce about 11,000 construction jobs, 14,000 permanent jobs and \$2.2 billion in economic efficiency gains each year. The cost would be under \$6 billion.



There has been one major recent effort to calculate the environmental benefits of rail and similar projects. The *Sydney Morning Herald* commissioned the Centre for International Economics (CIE) to prepare **Sydney's Transport Infrastructure – the Real Economics** (2005). CIE assumed a 20 per cent increase in transport system capacity. The study predicted that while population would increase by 15%, social costs would increase disproportionately:

- travel increase of almost 30 per cent, from 42 billion vehicle-kilometres travelled to 55 billion
- congestion cost increase of almost 40 per cent, from \$12 billion to \$17 billion a year
- accident costs, road subsidy costs and greenhouse gas emissions up by about 30 per cent – valued at \$4.75 billion growing to \$6.1 billion per annum
- reduced economic efficiency and employment in Sydney and NSW, with jobs diverting to Melbourne and Brisbane.

CIE concluded that \$11 billion investments in public transport would be required to contain this social costs at the 2005 levels.

There are also affordability studies which indicate that improved public transport systems will assist citizens to live more safely, comfortably and cheaply.

Our outcomes

This discussion paper has focussed on three projects that should be progressed by Governments in order to achieve urban reform, employment growth and improved and sustainable public transport system to meet future needs.

The RTBU **Let's Fix It** campaign will extend up to the 2011 State election and beyond – with the intention of raising community and political awareness of the economic, social, employment, skill development, safety, congestion, health and other benefits to be gained from using Federal and State money to build these projects. Sydney is a great city and its citizens deserve to be treated better than the poor planning history in public transport.

The Union's members have many ideas as to how to achieve a better system and their proposals will be included in the program. In resource-limited environments, Governments should also be sensible in developing plans that include system integration and "fit for purpose" modes for the task and then funding the package progressively and consistently over the long term.

The growth of Sydney is inevitable and Governments must work together and with genuine stakeholders such as the RTBU and others to achieve a sustainable transport culture.

APPENDIX

Chronology

The main provisions of Action for Transport 2010 (1998) have been summarised already. Subsequent events were:

1998

- Metropolitan Light Rail to Lilyfield approved with a subsidy of \$16 million

1999

- Lord Mayor Sartor released City on the Move incl inner and outer city tram loops and to Bondi and to UNSW. Government dropped UNSW link on the basis of cost. Lend Lease/City of Sydney proposed new City Circle station near State Library (not accepted)
- Consultant investigation of extension of trams from Lilyfield to either Leichhardt or Summer Hill (not revealed for almost 10 years)

2000

- Govt changed Parramatta end of the Chatswood line to reduce impact on nearby golf course and park, increasing costs
- UNSW says it is discussing a possible metro with DOT
- Premier Carr opened Metro Light Rail and predicted extensions as "the green alternative". EcoTransit promoted two tram routes in the South East.

2001

- Budget Committee of Cabinet limited Chatswood to Parramatta line to \$1.4 b while estimates were already \$2 b – construction was then truncated at Epping. Carr decided to tunnel under Lane Cove River
- Govt rejected Bondi Beach line (after Federal funding had been offered)
- Four extra cross-regional busways announced with other enhancements

2002

- Scully raised a PPP possibility for NW/Castle Hill
- Christie Reports on Metropolitan Rail Development planning leaked to press including L/T role for metros; Scully emphasised priority of Parramatta/Chatswood, Hurstville/Strathfield and Epping/Castle Hill heavy rail. Lindfield station deleted due to costs related to the depth of the station
- Signalling technology to raise capacity by 50% being investigated
- Scully funded tram expansion feasibility studies; and revived F6 corridor as public transport opportunity
- Compensation of \$4 m to Bondi consortium

2003

- Minister Costa said Epping/Parramatta costed at \$1.05 b; and released Godfrey report on system defects and needs
- State Rail suggested \$6 b new line from Campbelltown to Hornsby to Prof Parry's Inquiry into Public Transport Futures
- Parramatta to Liverpool Transitway opened, not yet completed

2004

- Planning Minister Knowles said NW won't be built until population warrants it. Announced acquisition of Glenfield to Leppington corridor; then that that \$688 m line will open in 2016
- Knowles also announced Parramatta Road tram with Innerwest Mayors agitating; LM Clover Moore refused to contribute
- Mini-Budget allocated \$2.5 b to fix up trains including \$1 b to Clearways; then Costa reduced train numbers by 10% in addition to the 10% during previous driver shortages (and delayed timetable reform)

2005

- Easson/Leighton Western Fast Train proposal announced
- M4 East road shelved with talk about metro option
- MetroWest route (within CBD) no longer favoured, now MetroPitt; various Christie-based metro routes discussed in media

- Carr announced \$8 b for rail system development – to Rouse Hill and later Vineyard, new underground CBD rail (Christie – Redfern to St Leonards) and extra track St Leonards to Chatswood. RIC released Connell Wagner options for new Harbour capacity: Carr talked it up in media. Carr confirmed rail to Leppington and later Bringelly
- Metro Strategy released with major role for Parramatta, Global Arc and NW and SW fringe development centres

2006

- Budget provided for SW rail by 2012 and NW by 2019. Net debt to double. NW Rail brought forward by 2 years – Hills Centre by 2015 and Rouse Hill by 2017 plus \$316 m for related clearways/capacity projects. 2 CBD underground corridors reserved. \$25 m on six new cross regional bus routes plus \$450 million over 7 years on 1,000 buses
- Revealed that DOT failed to conduct the Central Coast Fast Rail study promised 2 years previously

2007

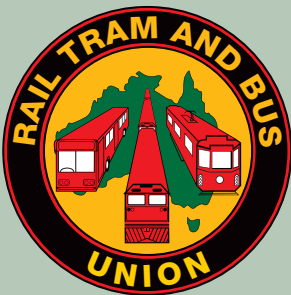
- Treasurer Costa pushed to drop NW rail, opposed by Transport Minister Watkins
- Emergence of Anzac metro – 19 stations over 19 kms West Ryde to Malabar. Prof Richmond proposed an independent and separate metro system, Scully agreed as unions very difficult to deal with. At year-end Premier lemma said Metros will be detailed soon with electricity reforms to also pay for 5 metros
- Blowout in Clearways erupted, gone from \$1 b to \$4.6 b
- Chatswood to Epping tunnel over cost, poorly laid and too noisy
- Bus priority 2 years late; revealed that Watkins' promise of extra buses had not been delivered
- Michael Easson and Metro Transport reported to have proposed tram extension from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill
- Fed Labor committed to \$2 b freight enhancement to Newcastle
- \$10 m consultant review of RailCorp operational interfaces was contentious
- F3 to M2 link discussed to be fast train instead of road

2008

- NW Rail deferred
- Costa released Infrastructure Strategy to 2018 with 600,000 extra people in Sydney. Planning Institute attacked Strategy if NW Rail to be dropped
- NW Metro announced amid controversy, 38 Kms and \$8+ b; then became \$12 b. West Metro to Nth Shore via CBD and Sth East announced as possibles. Controversy. Two alignments for inner West Metro revealed, Fed and NSW Govts contribute \$20 m and \$10 m respectively to investigate them
- Premier lemma pushed fast train to Newcastle as part of Airport planning
- Carr called for bus-only freeways; but critics replied he had built 3 out of 6 busways promised in 1998
- F6 Bus Rapid Transit report by MOT revealed – \$1.9 b, 10 km tunnel from KSA to CBD, 80,000 passengers per day, to be funded from electricity privatisation
- World Youth Mass at Barangaroo scared Govt re capacity of existing City Circle lines and stations (employment level of 58,000 mooted by Planning Minister)
- Rees cancelled NW Metro/rail then Vineyards extension (instead 100 buses), sought Federal funding for CBD/Rozelle Metro which he had announced on 25 Oct (with a double cavern station at Barangaroo)

2009

- Barangaroo employment capacity downgraded from earlier 35,000 and higher, to 20,000 and lower, and also deferred. Barangaroo Delivery agency and Metro agency set up to pursue early commencements
- The first Building the Nation funding cycle allocated \$92 m to research and to commence land acquisition for West Metro but no funding for Nth Strathfield to Hornsby freight rail, the CBD Metro or inner freeway extensions. NW and SW rail extensions not considered. No Sydney projects to have substantial commencement within 2 years



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For a full report containing details of cost estimates used and other background information supporting this document see the RTB website www.rtbu-nsw.asn.au