



Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: LIGHT RAIL TO REDUCE CONGESTION AND REVITALISE SYDNEY

Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian today announced light rail would be built through the Sydney CBD to Randwick and Kingsford to reduce congestion and revitalise the city.

The estimated \$1.6 billion 12 kilometre light rail project will link Circular Quay and Central via George Street, the Moore Park sporting and entertainment precinct including the Sydney Cricket Ground and Allianz Stadium, Randwick Racecourse, the University of NSW and Prince of Wales Hospital at Randwick.

Light rail will be built in parallel with the implementation of a redesigned bus network to significantly reduce the number of buses clogging the CBD during the peak.

Around 40 per cent of George Street will be pedestrianised, between Bathurst Street and Hunter Street, for light rail – meaning 60 per cent of George Street will still be accessible to private vehicles.

"This is a once-in-a-generation project to revitalise the centre of Sydney by reducing congestion and offering a fast, attractive public transport option to key locations," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The NSW Government is getting on with the job of building for the future."

Ms Berejiklian said light rail forms part of an integrated transport solution to fix congestion in the CBD which includes a redesigned bus network and train improvements outlined in *Sydney's Rail Future*.

"Congestion on roads in the Sydney CBD and surrounding areas will only get worse as the number of jobs in the city grows and the population increases – we have to act and in a significant way," Ms Berejiklian said.

"With the introduction of light rail and the redesigned bus network announced today, we will be able to significantly reduce the number of buses clogging the city's streets and provide fast and reliable links for people to key destinations like the Prince of Wales Hospital, University of NSW, SCG, Allianz Stadium, Moore Park, Central and Circular Quay."

Bus improvements to be rolled out include improved bus interchanges in the city, more cross-city Metro style routes, reconfigured bus stops and higher priority for buses to move people through the city faster.

Key benefits of light rail and the redesigned bus network include:

- A 97 per cent reliability rate for light rail, compared with buses in the CBD which currently only arrive within two minutes of the timetable 19 to 34 per cent of the time;
- Journey times of 24 minutes to travel from Kingsford or Randwick to Central and 15 minutes from Central to Circular Quay. It can take buses more than 30 minutes to travel from Central to Circular Quay in the peak today;
- A reduction per hour of more than 220 buses entering the CBD in the morning peak, benefiting customers who travel from the North, North-West and West on buses and are currently delayed due to congestion;
- The introduction of brand new light rail vehicles that can carry up to 300 people each, compared with 60 people on a standard bus;
- Light rail can carry 9,000 people per hour in each direction;
- The potential to join two light rail vehicles for special events at Moore Park to move up to 18,000 people per hour in each direction.

Customers will be able to use their Opal card on light rail, meaning a seamless transfer from other modes.

The NSW Government will construct light rail down George Street and to the south east as a single project to speed up delivery of this crucial infrastructure and save significant costs.

Detailed work will now be undertaken to determine the final timetable for construction, which early analysis suggests will take five or six years. Work is expected to begin in 2014. It will be funded from the transport budget, third party contributions and a PPP arrangement, subject to testing the business case.

All east-west roads in the city will remain open and small delivery trucks and property owners will retain access to the pedestrianised zone on George Street at all times. The Government will examine how to best provide access for taxis and hire cars at night to support the night time economy.

“Building the spine of a new network through a major city like Sydney will obviously cause significant disruption, but through the planning process we’ll be working closely with retailers, businesses, councils and customers to manage these impacts,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“The NSW Government is committed to investing in quality infrastructure and taking action that will give the people of Sydney the world class, reliable public transport system they deserve.”

Work continues on the 5.6 kilometre Inner West Light Rail Extension from Lilyfield to Dulwich Hill, with construction on track to be completed in 2014. The current light rail line is about 7km.

The full *NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* and *Sydney’s Light Rail Future* is available at www.transportmasterplan.nsw.gov.au

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