

Submission from Sydney Boy's High School Council in response to the 2013 Environment Impact Statement on the CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR) Proposal by the NSW Government

Sydney Boys High School is a selective high school within the NSW Department of Education and Communities. The school was founded on 1 October 1883 and moved to its current site at Moore Park in 1928. The school is bounded by Moore Park, Anzac Parade, Sydney Girls High School (SGHS) and Cleveland Street.



The SBHS Council applauds the NSW Government for this initiative which will bring a significant development in terms of a 21st century model for public transport to NSW residents in Sydney. Of particular relevance are the many thousands of secondary and tertiary students in a number of educational facilities along the proposed route that will benefit.

After considerable discussion the School and its Council have identified four key issues that must be addressed to ensure that the proposal can provide the community with an efficient, effective but safe light rail public transport system.

Issue 1: Safety for school children crossing Anzac Parade to reach the Moore Park Stop located opposite SBHS.

Present arrangement:

1,200 students are enrolled at SBHS (and 930 students at the adjacent SGHS). The great majority of these these students travel to and from school on public transport. Each school day between 8.00 – 9.00 AM and 3.00 – 3.20 PM students are rapidly transported by buses from 2 bus stops located on the footpath adjacent to SBHS and SGHS on Anzac Pde. Using this designated school bus service it takes ~15 minutes to travel between Central Railway station or Town Hall and the school. From Central or Town Hall stations the students connect to various trains or buses or even the ferry to travel to a wide range of Sydney suburbs some located at considerable distance.

Although crowded at times, the current bus option provides an efficient and safe mode of transfer since it does not require the crossing of Anzac Pde in the afternoon peak rush (when up to 2,000 students from the two schools might be crossing Anzac Pde within a 30 minute time period). Although two peak times have been described, there are many other occasions including weekends that students travel to and from school for various activities.

One set of traffic lights located between the two schools allows a small proportion of students to cross Anzac Pde to catch buses running south along Anzac Pde. Another small proportion of students cross Cleveland St at traffic lights which are also monitored by speed cameras.

The current arrangement has proven to be satisfactory over many years. Nevertheless, safety in terms of crossing the busy Anzac Pde has always remained a concern although is manageable at present.

Impact of the CSELR:

The Light Rail station will be located on the eastern side of Anzac Pde opposite SBHS. All students whether they travel east along Anzac Pde or in the opposite direction to go to Central will have to cross the very busy Anzac Pde and the Bus Only Roadway before reaching the Moore Park Stop. This will be a particularly acute problem in the afternoon peak crossing time when in effect 2,000 students will need to cross in a short time period of 30 minutes.

We have not gone into the traffic flow problems that will be created with the large number of students crossing Anzac Pde. However, it is evident that the already congested Anzac Pde will become a greater bottleneck for traffic flow. We suggest that emergency vehicles will be in an even more difficult and at times dangerous situation as they attempt the transfer of emergency cases to the Prince of Wales Hospital complex.

Recommendation(s) to address concerns of the proposed CSELR:

1. Construction of an overhead pedestrian footbridge adjacent to SBHS or SGHS is essential for the crossing of Anzac Pde. The traffic implications and risk for accidents will be significantly increased with the CSELR. Multiple factors will contribute to this risk: (1) Very busy traffic flow north and south along Anzac Pde particularly at the peak times for its crossing by students. (2) Cars turning into Anzac Pde from both Cleveland St and Lang Rd. (3) The visible Moore Park Station with the inevitable consequence that some students will run across the road to catch the tram when they can see it coming. Although students are strongly warned about the risks of this behaviour it is expected that some will disregard this particularly those who have long distances to travel and do not want to miss their train connection. ***Two examples of the safety measures implemented for the crossing of busy roads by school children are provided in the Appendix.***

Cost implications: Costs for the pedestrian footbridge will be considerable and should be met as part of the CSELR as safety issues identified have emerged directly as a result of this project. Thus, it is difficult to understand why the EIS states in Ch 5B at page 5-38 that "The design of the Moore Park Stop and associated pedestrian pathways would not preclude the future development of a potential pedestrian bridge over Anzac Parade (which is outside the scope of this EIS)."

2. The present set of lights and pedestrian crossing located midway between the two schools along Anzac Pde are permanently closed. Fencing is placed on both sides of Anzac Pde for the length of the two schools to ensure that students cannot cross this busy 6 lane highway.

Cost implications: see 1. above.

3. The pedestrian crossing presently located alongside speed cameras in Cleveland St (opposite SBHS) is upgraded so students cannot run across the road to catch a coming bus. This will involve fencing on both sides of the footpath. This has been highlighted as an additional safety risk emerging from the CSELR as it will be expected that traffic congestion around Cleveland St will significantly increase due to construction related interruptions to traffic flow along a road that is already overly congested particularly at the times that students need to cross to reach the bus stop opposite SBHS.

Cost implications: see 1 above.

4. If safety issues related to the crossing of Anzac Pde and Cleveland St cannot be addressed, the School Council would expect the present bus transfer arrangement to be continued.

Issue 2: There is a service provision in the CSELR contract to ensure that the transfer of students between Central station and SBHS is equal to or better than the current bus transfers in respect of timeliness, cost and reliability,

Present arrangement:

Students attending SBHS do so from many distant locations within Sydney. Thus, the school provides an opportunity for many in the distant western, northern and southern suburbs of Sydney to attend a public high school of their choice. Free bus and train passes are available to students,

Impact of the CSELR:

If well planned and delivered as promise, the CSELR will provide students with rapid and frequent transfer from Central Railway station to the school precinct. However, there are concerns that: (1) Insufficient planning will be undertaken to allow efficient transfers of large numbers of students at the two peak hours. Related to this is the location of the proposed Light Rail Station which will mean that trams might be getting to SBHS after they have left a large site like the University of NSW and so will be full. (2) Although we note that the proposed Light Rail will be serviced by the "Oyster pass" ticketing system it is not clear if the current free bus and train passes provided to students will be covered by the "oyster pass".

Recommendation(s) to address the concerns of the proposed CSELR:

1. Key performance indicators are developed to ensure that students are able to transfer between Central station and SBHS with times that are comparable or better to what is now possible. As part of this it might be necessary to set aside SBHS (and SGHS) specific light rail pickups and drop offs. We do not anticipate this will be an issue as trams will be terminating and starting from the station when major sporting events are in place.
2. Reassurance is needed that the free bus / train pass arrangement is not changed.

Cost implications: Minimal.

Issue 3: There is adequate provision during the construction of the CSELR across Moore Park West (estimated to take 6 years) to ensure noise, dust and other forms of industrial pollution will not impact on the teaching activities or the health of students or staff located a short distance away at SBHS.

Present arrangement:

Moore Park West provides SBHS (and SGHS) with essential recreation and playing areas that are used all days of the school year.

Impact of the CSELR:

From what is drawn on the EIS, it is anticipated that at least 50% of Moore Park West will be required for the proposed construction site. The MPW fields comprise important infrastructure for students at SBHS (and SGHS) both during recreation breaks as well as before and after school sporting training. It is expected based on the EIS that this disruption in access to MPW will be at least 6 years in duration.

Recommendation(s) to address the concerns of the CSELR:

1. An external WH&S assessment is conducted to report on the likely impact of noise, dust, vibration, cigarette smoke from workers, traffic and other forms of pollution resulting from construction of the cut and fill tunnel and the work sites located not far from SBHS. Action will need to follow depending on the finding of this assessment. Regular audits are conducted during the construction phase to ensure WH&S safeguards are met.
2. A work schedule is developed to ensure there is some consideration of school activities when trucks and other heavy items of equipment move in and out of the construction sites.

Cost implications: WH&S considerations should be covered as part of the CSELR proposal.

Issue 4: SBHS has access to alternative playing and recreation fields as a result of loss of a significant portion of Moore Park West needed for a CSELR construction site.

Present arrangement:

Moore Park West (MPW) is essential to ongoing school activities at SBHS (and SGHS). This land is presently used for two purposes: (1) Day to day recreational activities such as recess, sports training, and (2) Regular interschool sporting events / carnivals. SBHS occupies a unique position within the NSW Department of Education and Communities and our public education system in that it is a member of the GPS sporting program. For this, students and staff members travel to many destinations to compete in sport. In exchange SBHS must provide access to sporting venues which allow team sports such as rugby, soccer, cricket and others to be played. For access to sporting

venues SBHS has to negotiate access to these playing fields with the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust (CMPT) which is already under considerable pressure for access to playing fields from various professional sporting bodies such as the Sydney Swans.

Impact of the CSELR:

The EIS shows that at least 50% of MPW will be taken up by the construction site. This will need to be replaced to allow the school to continue its day to day activities.

Recommendation(s) to address the concerns of the proposed CSELR:

1. Alternative parklands and playing fields will need to be identified that could be used to replace existing MPW land and any other fields lost as a result of the CSELR. These might include playing fields located opposite the school (between South Dowling St and Cleveland St); ES Marks Field, Kippax Lakes Fields. SBHS would expect financial compensation as part of the CSELR to allow the school to access alternative locations.
2. There is agreement that the MPW playing fields are returned to their current state (or improved) when the construction site is removed at the end of the CSELR development.
3. Section 1.2.3 of Supporting Document June 2013 states that the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust (CMPT) is a key stakeholder and partner for the CSELR leading to MOUs being signed between Government and the CMPT to facilitate issues that will arise during approval, construction and operation phases of the CSELR. We recommend an additional MOU is signed between Government e.g. TfNSW and the CMPT to ensure fair and reasonable discussion becomes possible with the Trust and the SBHS in terms accessing alternative playing fields as the CMPT will be under considerable pressure from more high profile and well-funded sporting organisation such as the Sydney Swans for access to playing areas that might be lost during the construction phase.

Cost implications: These are difficult to estimate as they depend to a great extent on the attitude of the CMPT.

Speculation about other options for the CSELR

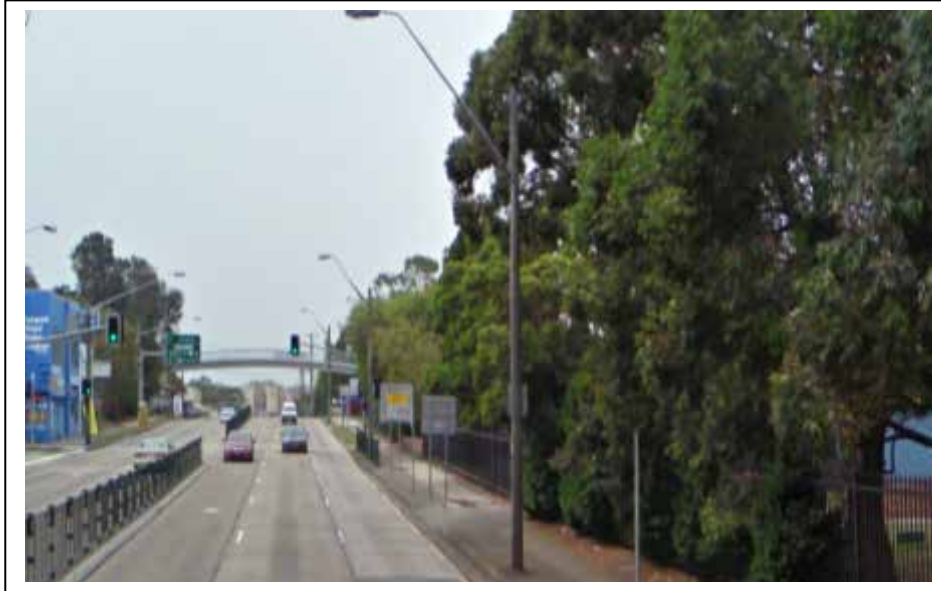
Although not part of the EIS, we understand that there are ongoing discussions about a number of issues in relation to the CSELR. There include:

1. **Re-positioning of the Moore Park Station opposite SGHS.** We would be in favour of this as it will ensure that there is both a safe and efficient crossing of Anzac Pde by all students at SBHS and SGHS. It would also be strategically placed to optimise access for a large number of patrons going to SCG, SFS, Fox studio complex and Centennial Park.

2. **The northern part of MPW is used by students from SBHS.** This is incorrect, SBHS and SGHS students access MPW directly through the school fence that borders SBHS and MPW and so the southern part of MPW is a heavily utilised thoroughfare for the students.
3. **A viaduct rather than a tunnel would be preferred across MPW.** Apart from its aesthetic appearance we would not be in favour of this option because it would mean permanent loss of playfields in MPW, and already these are at a premium.

APPENDIX

Example #1: Pacific Highway Kogarah - This represents the “gold standard” for pedestrian safety for school children crossing a busy 6 lane busy road that runs along two adjacent high schools – a comparable situation to SBHS and SGHS and Anzac Pde although in terms of student numbers SBHS and SGHS are bigger schools (see numbers below)



The Google map provided shows what is in place along the Pacific Highway at Kogarah between the St George Private Hospital and two adjacent high schools (Moorefield Girls HS and James Cook Boys Technology HS). The two High Schools are located on the right of this picture. Crossing this very busy road safely involves:

- (1) Overhead pedestrian footbridge located at the James Cook HS (seen in background)
- (2) Traffic lights midday between schools including a pedestrian crossing – needed for vehicular access to St George Private hospital (on the left of the picture)
- (3) Fencing along the length of the Princess Highway on the median strip to separate cars as well as prevent crossing of the Princess Highway by foot
- (4) Where appropriate fencing on the footpaths to prevent crossing of the Princess Highway by foot
- (4) Speed cameras on both sides of the Princess Highway.

Note that Moorefield HS has ~440 students and James Cook Boys ~600 compared to 1,200 students at SBHS and ~930 students at SGHS. Although St George Private hospital is located across the road from these schools pedestrian traffic from patients is minimal and there is a large car park in this hospital allowing visitors to go there by car rather than crossing the busy Pacific Highway by foot. The public hospital entrance is located elsewhere.

Example #2: Fort St Public School, Petersham – Illustrating how school students are prevented from crossing a very busy roadway.

This school has ~900 students (slightly less than SGHS and considerably less than SBHS). It is located along Parramatta Rd although its main entrance opens into Palace St which comes off Parramatta Rd. Nevertheless, there is an overhead pedestrian footbridge across the very busy Parramatta Rd to ensure students can cross this road safely. Crossing Parramatta Rd apart from the footbridge is not permitted i.e. there is a fence on the footpath on the school side of Parramatta Rd and there are no lights or pedestrian crossing.