



# Tania Mihailuk MP

*Member for Bankstown*

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17 August 2017

The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP  
Minister for Planning  
GPO BOX 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

7 SEP 2017

Dear Minister,

**RE: SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN URBAN RENEWAL CORRIDOR – REVISED  
DRAFT STRATEGY**

I write in my capacity as the State Member for Bankstown, former Mayor of Bankstown City Council, and as a lifelong resident of the Bankstown community, to make the following comment regarding the NSW Government's *Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Revised Draft Strategy*.

At its essence, this strategy is proposing to make sweeping amendments to planning and land use instruments in the rail corridor between Sydenham and Bankstown to enable the construction of an additional 35,000 high density residential households.

It is my understanding that the NSW Government has devised this strategy to justify the intended conversion of the existing T3 Bankstown rail line from heavy rail to a metro between Sydenham Station and Bankstown Station. The exact costing of this conversion has not been accurately budgeted nor announced, but it is anticipated that the conversion of the Bankstown line will cost in the vicinity of \$6.2 billion dollars.<sup>1</sup>

The *Revised Strategy* has estimated that an additional 100,000 residents would be expected to occupy the new households constructed within the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor. This is a drastic population increase that is grossly disproportionate when compared to similar targets by the NSW Government for other regions within metropolitan Sydney.

For instance, the *Greater Sydney Commission's Draft North District Plan* has proposed a 5 year target for Mosman Council of 300 additional households, with Hunters Hill Council set a target of just 150 additional households.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/the-premier/media-releases-from-the-premier/12-billion-in-budget-for-metro-rail-revolution/>



On the other hand, the *Greater Sydney Commission's Draft South District Plan* has set Canterbury-Bankstown Council a target of 13,250 additional households within the next 5 years. It is not clear whether this target is in addition to, or encompasses, the target of 35,000 additional homes set within the *Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Revised Draft Strategy*. These are obscene increases that will have a devastating impact on our existing, distinct communities across the corridor.

While the Strategy has foreshadowed significant uplifts in zoning throughout the corridor to meet the intended target of 35,000 additional households, to date, the NSW Government has refused to allocate the funding required to upgrade social infrastructure prior to the construction of these additional households and the associated conversion of the rail line to a Metro.

Given the immense scale of the projected population increase within the Corridor's footprint, there will be a great burden placed upon existing services and infrastructure within the Bankstown region. It is critical that funding be provided to upgrade local schools, congested roads, sport and recreation facilities, and our local hospital, prior to this so called 'urban renewal'.

The *Revised Strategy* has proposed that an additional 6,000 households to be constructed within 800 metres of the Bankstown Metro Station. To meet this target, the strategy has proposed to increase the existing 53 metre height limit within the perimeter of Bankstown Station, despite this restriction being in place due to the proximity of the Bankstown Airport.

Many of Bankstown's suburban residential streets are comprised of single-storey homes constructed in the post-War era, or low-rise housing, with more recent developments complying with the Bankstown Airport height restrictions. This has ensured that Bankstown has been able to both accommodate a reasonable increase in population, whilst also maintaining the general character and amenity of the community.

These proposed rezoning's would create a great disparity between properties within the 800 metre radius, and those in the surrounding suburbs of Bankstown, rampantly increasing the population with no proportionate increase in social infrastructure to service new and existing residents.

The streets within Bankstown that have been earmarked for high-density residential housing of up to 25 storeys simply do not have the capacity to service high-density residential housing, including: Greenwood Avenue, Winspear Avenue, Egan Street, Oxford Avenue, Northam Avenue, Brandon Avenue, Cambridge Avenue, Chelmsford Avenue, Macauley Avenue, Restwell Street, Leonard Street, Percy Street and Vimy Street.

There is genuine concern that the existing road and public infrastructure within Bankstown are not capable of servicing the proposed population increase. During

peak periods, roads within close proximity to Bankstown station experience significant congestion due to existing capacity constraints.

Up to 9040 vehicles utilise Stacey Street between Fairford Road and the Hume Highway in both directions during morning and afternoon peaks.<sup>2</sup> According to Austroad's *Congestion and Reliability Review*, analysis of Google Maps data over a two month period has revealed that Stacey Street in Bankstown is the 7th slowest road in all of Australia and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup>

The '*Funding Local Roads*' report that was recently issued by the NRMA identified that Bankstown has an existing local road infrastructure backlog of \$42 million dollars, the second highest backlog in NSW.<sup>4</sup> The ability to widen Council roads within Bankstown is not only limited by the constraints of the built environment, but also by the lack of funding directed by the NSW Government to clear the existing infrastructure backlog.

Given that the Revised Strategy has foreshadowed an additional 6,000 households to be constructed within 800 metres of the Bankstown Metro Station, this level of overdevelopment has the potential to completely overload local roads within Bankstown, and significantly increasing traffic congestion on surrounding arterial roads such as the Hume Highway, Canterbury Road, and Henry Lawson Drive.

Furthermore, the Revised Strategy fails to outline how the NSW Government intends to increase carpark capacity within Bankstown. Public parking lots within Bankstown are at their full capacity, particularly at the West Terrace, Brandan Avenue and Meredith Street carparks. This is of significant concern, particularly given the increased likelihood of commuters from suburbs within close proximity to Bankstown, such as Yagoona, Georges Hall, Bass Hill, Punchbowl, Greenacre, Condell Park, Chullora, Mount Lewis, Birrong, Sefton, Chester Hill, Potts Hill, Villawood, Milperra, of driving in to the CBD to utilise the Bankstown Metro Station.

Since the NSW Government removed the Liverpool via Regents Park (Inner West) train line from the timetable and express services from Yagoona Station in October 2013, patronage has increased at Bankstown Station with more commuters avoiding Villawood, Chester Hill, Sefton, Birrong, Regents Park and Yagoona Stations in favour of Bankstown.

Thousands of commuters from these stations have been deprived of direct access to the City via the Inner West and have been forced to change trains on up to three occasions for what was previously a direct journey to the City. With the conversion of the T3 Bankstown rail line to a metro between Bankstown and Sydenham, there will

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/south-west/fair-go-for-the-west-coalition-claims-bankstowns-worst-road-is-set-for-improvements-if-elected/news-story/140492d5f5a23084812fe9d305d7c77d>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/the-express/roads-and-maritime-services-probe-congestion-problem-on-notorious-bankstown-bottleneck-stacey-st/news-story/9aec90c804bdca1192a2ff41e2a95b33>

<sup>4</sup> Funding Local Roads, NRMA (August 2017), pg 18.

be a need for commuters west of Bankstown to change from the Sydney Trains system to the Metro system at Bankstown Station.

Given the ramifications as a result of the removal of the Liverpool via Regents Park line being removed, it is likely that an even greater number of commuters would drive into Bankstown and then continue their journey on the Metro to the City, adding further pressure to Bankstown limited parking capacity and further increasing traffic congestion.

To combat this anticipated issue, it is imperative that the NSW Government reinstate the Liverpool via Regents Park train line, to ensure that commuters who utilise existing railway stations west of Bankstown continue to have direct access to the Sydney CBD on the Sydney Trains network once the line is converted to a Metro.

The Department of Planning has estimated that the number of persons aged more than 75 years old in the Canterbury-Bankstown local government area will almost double in the next 20 years. Chester Hill, Yagoona and Birrong have a high percentage of elderly residents who simply cannot utilise the Sydney Trains network because of the lack of an Easy Access Lift. Since being elected in 2011, the NSW Government has repeatedly ignored the need to upgrade Yagoona, Chester Hill, Birrong and Villawood stations with an Easy Access Lift.

Accessibility upgrades at these stations is not about the bells and whistles, but should be a bare minimum necessity to ensure that all members of our community, including the elderly, disabled, and parents with prams, are able to utilise our public transport network.

With the impending closure of the Bankstown line in an eastward direction over the course of the next five years as part of its conversion to a Metro, the NSW Government should be prioritising the upgrade of existing railway stations and reinstating the Liverpool via Regents Park line immediately, as these measures would ensure disruption to Bankstown residents is kept to a minimum.

The *Revised Strategy* is also glaringly silent in revealing how the NSW Government intends to upgrade other critical social infrastructure with the identified corridor between Bankstown and Sydenham, in particular health, education and sport and recreation facilities.

The *Sydenham to Bankstown Social Infrastructure Study* has anticipated that the population of Bankstown would increase by 13,950 residents by the year 2036, with an additional 100,000 residents living in the wider corridor.<sup>5</sup> Despite the NSW Government being aware of this significant increase in population, the 2017/18 NSW Budget did not allocate any capital works funding to upgrade Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital to address emergency room waiting times or the long elective surgery waiting list.

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<sup>5</sup> Sydenham to Bankstown Social Infrastructure Study, pg 73.

Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital requires a significant upgrade and additional funding to be able to adequately service the needs to over 250,000 residents by 2036. Bed occupancy rates at the hospital regularly exceed the benchmark set by NSW Health.

The current car parking capacity is also grossly insufficient to service patients, staff and visitors at the Hospital. I have made repeated requests to both the current and former Ministers for Health to upgrade the carpark at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital, but all of my requests to date have been ignored.

The NSW Government should immediately acknowledge and prioritise the upgrade of Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital and the carpark, which should occur prior to the mass rezoning of our community as part of the Metro conversion.

The *Sydenham to Bankstown Social Infrastructure Study* further noted the lack of community facilities in Bankstown. The study suggested that an additional 5.3 community centres would be needed to cater for the projected population growth. This is a significant shortfall, particularly considering the lack of functional open space and green space within the identified 800 metre radius of the Bankstown Metro Station for existing and new residents to undertake sporting and leisure activities. The scale of high density rezoning that this Government is proposing would require a significant increase in green space. Given the constraints of the built environment in Bankstown, the only solution to this would be for the Government to acquire private land to be converted to green space and for community use. To my understanding, the Revised Strategy offers no such solution.

The NSW Government has also failed to outline any framework to upgrade existing schools in Bankstown, or to identify locations for new schools to be built to support the 100,000 additional residents expected to reside within the corridor. Many of Bankstown's local schools are already over their recommended and functional capacity. This was noted *Sydenham to Bankstown Social Infrastructure Study*<sup>6</sup>. It is my understanding 10 schools in the Bankstown Electorate are either at, or over, their classroom utilisation capacity, including: Bankstown North Public, Bankstown Public, Bankstown South Infants, Bankstown West Public, Chester Hill High, Chester Hill North Public, Sefton Infants, Wattawa Heights Public and Yagoona Public School.

Bankstown residents need an immediate assurance from the NSW Government that it will provide the necessary capital works funding up front to upgrade existing schools, and build new schools, to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to educate children within Departmental standards.

It is clear that on a number of different fronts that the *Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Revised Draft Strategy* would place an unfair burden on Bankstown to shoulder a grossly disproportionate level of population growth, with no

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<sup>6</sup> Sydenham to Bankstown Social Infrastructure Study, pg 74.

commitment to upgrade the social infrastructure required to service the influx of 100,000 additional residents along the corridor.

As such, the NSW Government should not be proceeding with the planning and land use amendments proposed within the *Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Revised Draft Strategy*.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tania Mihailuk', written in a cursive style.

Tania Mihailuk MP

**MEMBER FOR BANKSTOWN**