PIA POSITION STATEMENT ON SYDNEYLINK PROPOSAL
APRIL 2008

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is the peak body representing professions involved in planning Australian cities, towns and regions. PIA NSW plays key roles in promoting and supporting the planning profession within NSW and advocating on key planning and public policy issues.

The Institute provides the following comments on the SydneyLink proposal.

KEY POINTS

• PIA supports the introduction of metro rail technology in Sydney for densely built up areas within a 25 kilometre radius from Sydney CBD, or linking the CBD with regional centres such as Parramatta. International best practice experience of transport and land use planning for metros indicate that they work most effectively in densely developed areas near a central business district that can support a high frequency of service and minimise the time that passengers will need to stand in the vehicle.

• PIA provides the following position on the North West Metro proposal:
  o The alignment and metro rail technology on the higher density leg between the Sydney CBD and Epping or West Ryde via Victoria Road is supported. This segment of the alignment as a bus replacement railway will be a strong mass transit link to the CBD.
  o However, the Epping to Rouse Hill leg should be retained as a heavy rail corridor that is part of the CityRail network connecting to the soon to the opened Epping Chatswood Rail Link. This will provide a strong direct rail link between the North Western parts of Sydney and major employment locations on the northern side of Sydney Harbour, such as Macquarie Park Corridor, Chatswood, St Leonards and North Sydney.
Both components should be built within the next 10 years to support population growth, changes in land use activity and provide a viable rail based transport alternative.

- PIA believes that a heavy rail North West Rail Link should be supported by the South West Rail Link and a CBD through line identified in the Infrastructure SEPP and part of the previous Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program (MREP). The MREP rail proposals strongly support the Metropolitan Strategy of the Department of Planning where a large strategic integration program was established between landuse and transport planning, with a focus on future development of public transport to support urban density development in major centres.

- PIA notes that the announcement of the North West Metro and its connectivity with Victoria Road overturns years of careful planning by the State Government to integrate landuse and transport planning for Sydney’s global city corridor from Epping to the Airport via Chatswood, North Sydney, the Sydney CBD and the growing areas served by the Airport Line.

- PIA encourages the NSW Government to provide a comprehensive plan to industry and the community of the long-term aspirations of a metro network for Sydney and its integration with other transport modes. Potential catchments include the Parramatta Road corridor, Victoria Road corridor, Military Road corridor, Anzac Parade corridor and potentially a Northern Beaches between Chatswood and Dee Why.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Metro Technology**

- Metro technology is a transport mode with potential to support land use activity in the Sydney metropolitan area within a 25km distance from the Sydney CBD. Similar schemes are in place in many global cities, such as Singapore and Hong Kong.

- Metro technology is most appropriate in inner city areas, generally no further than a 25 kilometre radius from Sydney CBD, or linking the CBD with regional centres such as Parramatta. International experience of transport and land use planning for
metros indicate that they work most effectively in densely developed areas near a central business district that can support a high frequency of service and minimise the time that passengers will need to stand in the vehicle.

- The NSW Government strategy should identify the entire potential network of metros for Sydney and its integration with other transport modes in Sydney, rather than focusing on limited corridors. This will provide a comprehensive plan to industry and the community of the long-term aspirations of this network.

- A number of potential catchments could be well serviced by metro technology in Sydney. These include the Parramatta Road corridor, Victoria Road corridor, Military Road corridor, Anzac Parade corridor and Northern Beaches between Chatswood and Dee Why.

**North West Metro**

- The NSW Government announcement in March 2008 for the North West Metro indicated that metro technology would be used for the same alignment and station locations identified in the previous heavy rail proposal for a heavy rail link between Epping and Rouse Hill, known as the North West Rail Link.

- Further information is sought on a number of aspects of the North West Metro proposal in supporting integrated transport and land use for Sydney:
  
  - The capacity of Epping Station to support forced interchange of passengers for the Epping to Chatswood Rail Line. The North West Rail Link Overview Report (2002) indicates that 38% of passengers from North West Sydney would use stations in the Macquarie Park Corridor, Chatswood, St Leonards and North Sydney.

  - The capacity of Wynyard Station to support forced interchange of passengers onto the CityRail network. This station is currently under pressure with large numbers of people during peak periods and this is forecast to increase further in the future. This will have flow on effects for train dwell times, and the loading and unloading of passengers.
The North West Sector link between Rouse Hill and Epping serves an entirely different market to that which may evolve between Epping and the CBD via Victoria Road. Demand is strong to the northern side of the Harbour at Macquarie Park, Chatswood, St Leonards and North Sydney. However, there is little evidence of strong demand between the North West Sector and the Victoria Road leg of the North West Metro. This leg was not identified as such in the Urban Transport Strategy of Government.

One of the strengths of the previous MREP proposal was to remove some operating and passenger pressure on the existing north-south CBD railway across the vulnerable Sydney Harbour Bridge, with associated benefits for CBD rail stations at Town Hall and Wynyard. The North West Metro does not relieve this pressure on the existing railway and it is very uncertain if the NSW Government has any cohesive plans to relieve pressure on the existing CityRail system whilst attempting to establish metros as an alternative in some parts of Metropolitan Sydney.