Media coverage – PIA NSW Submission on Metro Link.

There was strong coverage of PIA NSW submission to the Metro link. In addition to the items below, which appeared on page 1 and an Editorial in the SMH, there was also coverage on radio 2GB, 2SM and on ABC television and radio.

**Metro throws Sydney's big plan on its head** Linton Besser Transport Reporter
SMH May 7, 2008

YEARS of careful planning to link Sydney’s housing, transport and employment hubs has been jettisoned by the decision to abandon a heavy rail line to Rouse Hill and replace it with an independent metro line, Australia's top planning body has warned.

The announcement of the new $12 billion North West Metro has scuttled the integrated transport and housing policies that underpinned the State Government's all-encompassing Metropolitan Strategy, says the Planning Institute of Australia.

Thousands of future north-west residents were expected to travel by rail from their new homes to jobs specifically created in the "global arc" between Macquarie Park and North Sydney. But the metro will force these commuters to interchange at Epping to a line that now will not have room for them. More than 10,000 people an hour could be stuck at Epping during the morning peak, competing for just 4000 spaces on the Epping to Chatswood CityRail line.

The sudden shift of priorities - from an $8 billion CityRail expansion plan to a single underground all-stops metro - has thrown into doubt the very principles by which hundreds of planning decisions have been made. For instance, no provision has been made for high-density development at key stops on the metro at Rozelle, Drummoyne and Gladesville.

In a new policy paper, the institute says it supports the North-West Metro line as far west as Epping, but that extending a subway to Rouse Hill contravenes the world's best transport and land use principles. The metro and "its connectivity with Victoria Road overturns years of careful planning by the State Government to integrate land use and transport planning for Sydney's global city corridor from Epping to the airport", it says.

The metro was announced in March as a replacement for the $8 billion Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program, which would have included the North-West Rail Link and a new rail line through the CBD as part of the CityRail network. The line to Rouse Hill was always premised on the link between housing designated for the north-west and the concentration of jobs in areas between Macquarie Park and Chatswood, St Leonards and North Sydney.

The new line will still service the north-west but will force commuters to change at Epping or Wynyard to reach those employment hubs via CityRail lines.

"The Epping to Rouse Hill leg should be retained as a heavy rail corridor that is part of the CityRail network," the institute says. "This [would] provide a strong direct rail link between the north-western parts of Sydney and major employment locations on the northern side of Sydney Harbour."

The metro will carry up to 30,000 passengers an hour to Epping, where many will be forced to change to the CityRail network to travel to this employment arc. The Government has calculated that 38 per cent of north-west passengers want to access the Macquarie Park corridor, as well as Chatswood to North Sydney. That means 11,400 people an hour in the peak will be trying to change on to a rail line
that is now configured for a maximum of 4000 an hour between Epping and Chatswood. Under the former rail plan, the capacity of the Epping to Chatswood line would have been substantially enhanced. The importance of a direct connection was recognised by the Government in its 2002 overview report on the North-West Rail Link. "The North-West Rail Link's primary aim is to allow people from Sydney’s north-west direct access to employment, shopping and community facilities in the broad area between Epping, Chatswood, North Sydney, [and] Sydney CBD," it said.

The institute is concerned that strategic planning for Sydney was largely underpinned on a rail plan that has now been shelved. It included a new CBD rail line that would ease congestion at stations such as Wynyard. The institute asks about the capacity of the already pressured Wynyard "to support forced interchange of passengers onto the CityRail network".

The Minister for Transport, John Watkins said: "I welcome the Planning Institute of Australia's praise … they have joined the chorus of support for this vital project.

"Passengers travelling to the business centres at Macquarie Park, Chatswood and North Sydney can interchange with the existing CityRail network at Epping, Wynyard, Martin Place and St James stations."

*This story was found at: [http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/05/06/1209839649452.html](http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/05/06/1209839649452.html)*

**Mind the gap in Metro plan** SMH Editorial 8 May 2008

IT'S ONE thing to be decisive. It's another to be making the right decision when you do it. The Planning Institute of Australia's warning about the proposed North West Metro should have everyone in the State Government pulling up for a quick rethink. After all, the $12 billion Metro plan announced in March by the Premier, Morris Iemma, is a linchpin of the strategy to sort out the city's looming transport gridlock, and the need for this investment lies behind the bruising fight over electricity privatisation.

With all this strife involved, we'd want to feel sure it's contributing to the best outcome.

The Planning Institute, a respected professional association in urban planning, makes the valid point that the Metro line, as currently envisaged, would work against years of planning and investment in trying to ensure that residential growth areas in the north-west have adequate public transport capacity to bring residents to and from expanding centres of employment north of the harbour.

These growing suburbs out to Rouse Hill epitomise the city's "aspirational" classes who would be working in high-tech and creative enterprises in centres like Macquarie Fields, Chatswood and St Leonards-North Sydney. If Sydney is to continue as Australia's biggest and most exciting city - not be gradually eclipsed by Melbourne and Brisbane - it has to be made a liveable, workable place for people like them especially.

No one is faulting Mr Iemma for seeing that Sydney needs big thinking like the Metro scheme. The planners like it, too. But they only like it for about half its radial route out from the city centre, as far as Epping.

From Epping, they think the heavy-rail link originally planned, from Epping to Rouse Hill, should be retained and capacity raised sharply on its already constructed extension to Chatswood. Failing that, thousands of commuters will be banked up at Epping changing between Metro and CityRail, while others will travel many unnecessary kilometres into the city and back up the North Shore line.
The planners point out that the Metro along the Victoria Road axis will create pressure for high-density housing in places like Rozelle, Drummoyne and Gladesville, for which little or no provision seems to have been made. The case for a more holistic approach to city planning could not be better illustrated.

This story was found at: http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/05/07/1210131059523.html

**Metro link may 'jeopardise planning'**  ABC News Wed May 7, 2008  There is concern the New South Wales Government's proposed North-West metro link between Epping and Rouse Hill will inconvenience future commuters and jeopardise years of careful planning. (Quotes PIA)