

## TRANSPORT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION BROUGHT FORWARD

Thursday 11 March, 2010

This week, the State Government issued critical infrastructure declarations to start implementation of some of the projects in the \$50.2 billion **Metropolitan Transport Plan**.

This includes the eight new train platforms for the Western Express and almost 10 kilometres of light rail extensions.

In addition, the State Government is proposing to amend the Infrastructure State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) to streamline the delivery of commuter car parks and bus depots for the 1,000 new buses.

The proposed amendments will allow preliminary work to assist the delivery of the light rail line – such as testing, surveying and other investigation work – to be carried out without the need for a development application.

This will ensure they are subject to a streamlined, efficient and legally certain planning assessment while at the same time guaranteeing public input.

Planning Minister, Mr Tony Kelly decided the major elements of the Metropolitan Transport Plan would be assessed as major projects by the Department of Planning. He declared them “critical infrastructure”.

Under the **critical infrastructure** declaration:

- Projects will still be subject to the same rigorous, open and transparent assessment;
- Public submissions will still be received and considered;
- Costly and prolonged legal challenges will be avoided;
- Projects will be assessed and determined by the Minister for Planning under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 – the cornerstone of Australia’s best planning system; and

In addition, smaller projects including bus depots and commuter car parks would be expedited under the Infrastructure SEPP.

On February 21, the Premier, Kristina Keneally announced the Metropolitan Transport Plan: Connecting the City of Cities. This included:

- \$4.53 billion Western Express CityRail Service – a dedicated rail track to slash travelling times from Sydney’s west and Blue Mountains to the CBD;
- \$500 million expansion of light rail in Sydney with up to 20 new stations and almost 10 kilometres of new track;
- 1,000 new buses; and
- \$400 million for commuter car parks.

“This means work for the platforms for the Western Express and the light rail extensions will start as quickly as possible,” Ms Keneally said.

“The Western Express will mean more trains, more seats and air conditioned carriages.

“The most important thing we can do for the families and businesses of NSW is to build the transport network quickly and efficiently,” Ms Keneally said.

Mr Tony Kelly said the rigorous environmental impact assessments would remain in place.

“All projects will still be subject to the same rigorous, open and transparent assessments, while providing certainty that these projects, critical to the city’s transport system, will not be delayed,” Mr Kelly said.