**Number 2/August 2018**

[CBD and South East Light Rail: key sources](CBD%20and%20South%20East%20Light%20Rail.pdf)

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# INTRODUCTION

In the lead up to the March 2011 NSW election, the Coalition [**announced**](http://www.urbanaffairs.com.au/downloads/2011-2-24-10.pdf) that it would build light rail in the Sydney central business district (CBD) and conduct feasibility studies into extending the light rail network from Central Station to the University of NSW and University of Sydney.

In October 2012, Infrastructure NSW delivered its first 20-year **State Infrastructure** [**Strategy**](http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/1127/sis_report_complete_interactive.pdf) to the Premier. It recommended scoping a light rail project from Central Station to the University of NSW but “given the critical economic importance of maintaining a functional CBD” suggested that other solutions to bus congestion and capacity be implemented before committing to light rail in the CBD.

In December 2012, the NSW Government released a [**Long Term Transport Master**](https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/nsw-transport-masterplan-final.pdf)[**Plan**](https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/nsw-transport-masterplan-final.pdf) and a [**Sydney’s Light Rail Future**](http://mysydneycbd.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/user-files/uploads/light-rail-future-web.pdf) strategy. These plans proposed construction of a light rail line from Circular Quay through George Street to Central Station and to the University of NSW via Anzac Parade and Alison Road. The estimated cost of this project was $1.6 billion.

The November 2013 [**business case summary**](http://data.sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au/s3fs-public/CBD%20AND%20SOUTH%20EAST%20LIGHT%20RAIL%20%E2%80%93%20BUSINESS%20CASE%20SUMMARY.pdf) stated:

…the state can expect to more than double its investment of approximately $1.6 billion, with a return of over $4 billion in total economic benefits. This equates to a benefit-cost ratio (BCR) of 2.5 or, to put more simply, $2.50 worth of benefits for each dollar invested.

[Planning approval](http://www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6042) for the project was given on 4 June 2014.The [contract](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/la/papers/DBAssets/tabledpaper/webAttachments/4854/Sydney%20Light%20Rail%20PPP.pdf) to design, construct, operate and maintain the line was signed in December 2014 with the ALTRAC Light Rail consortium. The Minister for Transport issued a [media release](http://librarystaff.parliament.nsw.gov.au/jspui/bitstream/1/972954/1/interpublish40467.pdf) about the contract, which announced that the project cost was $2.1 billion and that the increased cost was “due to customer improvements to the original scope”. The media release also stated that light rail services were expected to commence in early 2019.

A 2016 NSW Auditor-General’s [report](https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/publications/latest-reports/cbd-and-south-east-light-rail-project) commented on the cost increase and a reduction in the benefit-to-cost ratio:

While part of [the cost] increase was due to scope changes and planning modifications,

$517 of the $549 million increase was caused by mispricing and omissions in the business case.

At the same time, the project benefits had decreased from the 2013 business case estimate of $4.0 billion to an estimated $3.0 billion in December 2014. This was mainly due to increases in travel time assumptions.

These changes reduced the project’s benefit-to-cost ratio from 2.4 to 1.4, excluding wider economic benefits. The project still went ahead because the ratio remained positive.

The Minister for Planning [approved](http://www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6042) several modifications to the project in February 2015. These included increasing the length of light rail vehicles and stop platforms.

Construction of the light rail line began in [October 2015](https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases/final-countdown-to-construction-sydney-light-rail-major-works-start).

There have been construction delays, in particular along George Street, and the [scheduled](https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases/final-countdown-to-construction-sydney-light-rail-major-works-start) April 2018 date for completing major civil works was not met.

In April 2018, the [media](http://librarystaff.parliament.nsw.gov.au/jspui/bitstream/1/1184991/1/00939994080.pdf) reported that the main contractor, Acciona, was suing the NSW Government for $1.1 billion for misleading and deceptive conduct in providing information about how to handle Ausgrid’s electricity cables along George Street. Transport for NSW has [denied](https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/spanish-company-accused-of-using-light-rail-lawsuit-to-duck-damages-bill-20180730-p4zugx.html) these allegations.

In May 2018, the Legislative Council’s Public Accountability Committee commenced an [inquiry](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2492&tab-termsofreference) into the impact of the project on residents and businesses in the vicinity of the light rail route. The Committee is due to report by 1 December 2018.

On 2 July 2018, ALTRAC [stated](http://sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au/news/light-rail-construction-moving) that “we will have civil construction substantially completed by the end of 2018”; and “the systems, signalling, cabling and stop fit out, will start in each zone as the substantial civil construction work is completed”.

The following pages provide a collection of key sources on the project, including government publications, parliamentary material, and media articles. Links are provided to the full text of sources. For copyright reasons, some linked items are only available to Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff.

### Figure 1 Route Map



**Source:** Sydney Light Rail, Light Rail Benefits, Fact Sheet, January 2018

# GOVERNMENT

## Transport strategies

[Future Transport Strategy 2056](https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/), March 2018

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[Sydney’s Light Rail Future: Expanding public transport, revitalising our city](http://mysydneycbd.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/user-files/uploads/light-rail-future-web.pdf), December 2012

[NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan](https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/nsw-transport-masterplan-final.pdf), December 2012

**Project website** [Sydney Light Rail](http://sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au/) **Business case**

Transport for NSW, [CBD and South East Light Rail: Business Case Summary](http://data.sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au/s3fs-public/CBD%20AND%20SOUTH%20EAST%20LIGHT%20RAIL%20%E2%80%93%20BUSINESS%20CASE%20SUMMARY.pdf),

November 2013

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Constance A, [Sydney light rail tram hits the track for testing](https://www.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/news/sydney-light-rail-tram-hits-the-track-for-testing/), 27 February 2018

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Infrastructure NSW, [The State Infrastructure Strategy 2012 – 2032](http://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/media/1127/sis_report_complete_interactive.pdf), October 2012

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## Questions and debates

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **House** | **Subject** |
| [19 June 2018](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-102605) | LA | Project cost |
| [23 May 2018](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-102175) | LA | Project cost and completion date |
| [12 April 2018](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1820781676-75930) | LC | Compensation for businesses |
| [19 October 2017](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1820781676-74757) | LC | Article in *The Australian* |
| [6 July 2017](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lc/papers/Pages/qaprofiles/cbd-and-south-east-light-rail_236121.aspx) | LC | Project costs and financial consequences |
| [23 February 2017](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardFull.aspx%23/DateDisplay/HANSARD-1820781676-72574/HANSARD-1820781676-72579) | LC | Take note debate on Auditor-General’s report |
| [15 February 2017](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-96225/HANSARD-1323879322-96229) | LA | Project cost |
| [9 August 2016](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-91437) | LA | Progress on light rail projects |
| [2 June 2015](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-59673/HANSARD-1323879322-59701) | LA | The decision to have 67 metre long trams |
| [28 May 2015](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1820781676-56845) | LC | Changes to the administration of Sydney CBD |
| [28 May 2015](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-59657) | LA | How light rail will transform Sydney |
| [26 May 2015](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx%23/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-59547) | LA | Compensation for businesses |

## Committee inquiries

Legislative Council Public Accountability Committee*,* [Impact of the CBD and South](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2492&tab-termsofreference) [East Light Rail Project](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2492&tab-termsofreference), [Inquiry - commenced 22 May 2018]

Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No.5, [NSW Budget Estimates 2017-18:](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/DBAssets/InquiryEventTranscript/Transcript/10054/Transcript%20-%201%20September%202017%20-%20CORRECTED%20-%20PC%205%20-%20Transport%20and%20Infrastructure%20-%20Constance.pdf) [Hearings](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/DBAssets/InquiryEventTranscript/Transcript/10054/Transcript%20-%201%20September%202017%20-%20CORRECTED%20-%20PC%205%20-%20Transport%20and%20Infrastructure%20-%20Constance.pdf), 1 September 2017

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Legislative Council General Purpose Standing [Estimates 2016-17: Hearings](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/DBAssets/InquiryEventTranscript/Transcript/9858/Transcript%20-%2030%20August%202016%20-%20CORRECTED%20-%20Transport%20and%20Infrastructure.pdf), 30 August 2016 | Committee | No.2, | [NSW Budget](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/DBAssets/InquiryEventTranscript/Transcript/9858/Transcript%20-%2030%20August%202016%20-%20CORRECTED%20-%20Transport%20and%20Infrastructure.pdf) |
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[$2b light rail already at ‘crush capacity’](http://librarystaff.parliament.nsw.gov.au/jspui/bitstream/1/1118253/1/00731259662.pdf), *SMH*, 21 February 2017 More media articles can be found [here.](https://library.parliament.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/koha/opac-search.pl?idx=su%2Cst-date-normalized%2Cge&q=2012-06-01&op=%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20and%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20&idx=su%2Cst-date-normalized%2Cle&q=2018-06-18&op=%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20and%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20&idx=kw&q=%22light%20rail%22&limit=branch%3ACLIPPING&limit=mc-ccode%3A%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27Metro%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27%27&offset=630&sort_by=acqdate_dsc)

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**Last updated:** 1 August 2018

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