

Sydney CBD and South East light rail crowding rates exceed bus and train 'crush capacity'

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The new light rail will
be crammed with 25% more
people per square metre
than peak hour buses...
So if you could all shed
some weight...



Illustration: Cathy Wilcox

Reported in the Sydney Morning Herald: Passenger crowding on the \$2.1 billion Sydney inner-city light rail is forecast to easily exceed "crush capacity" rates for buses and heavy rail, raising questions about patronage on key sections of the line.

The analysis is contained in a capacity report for the Sydney CBD and South East light rail, due to open in 2019, commissioned by Randwick City Council.

Anzac Parade trees to fall despite protests

The planned felling of 40 trees on Anzac Parade to make way for Sydney's \$2.1 billion light rail is intended to go ahead despite impassioned protests by activists on Tuesday.

Discussing the Anzac Parade corridor, the report by EMM Consultants says passenger capacity is historically 2.5 people per square metre for Sydney trains and 2.8 people per square metre for buses.

But there is a maximum capacity of 466 people for each tram on the light rail, which the report says equates to 3.3 people per square metre.

This rate is "about 25 per cent higher than the average of the previously identified maximum crowding levels (which were defined as crush capacity) for either Sydney trains or buses," the EMM report says.

However, it argues that the "maximum practical crowding level" is about 80 per cent of the stated capacity, or about 380 people per tram.

"Once an operating tram gets above this level of crowding (which is 2.65 persons per square metre), there is going to be a tendency for passengers to wait on the platform and hope the next tram is less crowded rather than try and force their way on," it predicts.

The report was commissioned by the council as part of its residential growth strategy.

It finds that when the light rail opens in 2019 the Randwick section will be at full capacity, meaning one-third of express bus services will need to be retained to meet commuter demand in its first year of operation.

By 2031, almost half the current 80 morning express services will need to be kept, the report says.

Tony Bowen, a Labor member of Randwick City Council who is opposed to the light rail, said the report "is another concerning feature of the entire proposal that calls into question whether the necessary studies were done at the planning phase".

Opposition planning and infrastructure spokesman Michael Daley said the project was "destroying capacity on Anzac Parade and will carry no more people than the buses currently do. That \$2 billion could have been much better spent in other places in Sydney."

But CBD Coordinator General Marg Prendergast said the government has always said light rail "is part of an integrated transport solution to cater for growth and changing demand and will complement express, local and cross-regional bus services".

The project "will deliver significant increases to public transport capacity throughout the day, in conjunction with a redesigned bus network that will continue to provide direct services between the South East and CBD, including existing peak period express services and some all-stops and cross regional routes".

Read the original story in the [Sydney Morning Herald](#).