



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

Western Sydney: Public Transport

SPEECH

Thursday, 15 October 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Husic, Ed, MP

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Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (11:34): I extend my thanks to the prominent residents of eastern Sydney who take a lot of time to think about what Western Sydney needs and advocate for it, and have a willing ear in both the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* in telling us exactly what Western Sydney needs for its public transport. I have seen this over the last few weeks with the debate about the proposal to commit billions of dollars, either from the federal government or the New South Wales state government, to commit to the establishment of a rail line between the Western Sydney line connecting up St Marys to the proposed second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek.

Eastern Sydney has voices, like Lucy Turnbull's, through the Committee of Sydney. She is a person I have a lot of respect for. But the Committee of Sydney really represents the eastern part of Sydney—one half of the city—and does not reflect the needs of Western Sydney. It reflects only the needs of the inner city. On 9 October, in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Lucy Turnbull proposed that this rail line be done, that billions be committed to improve public transport in Western Sydney. This is nothing short of a joke.

The creation, the establishment, the dedication of millions and nearly billions of dollars for creating that link in Western Sydney flies in the face of the genuine needs of people I represent, in this place. When I stand at railway stations, catching up with constituents, they do not tell me they need another line to an airport—that will become a white elephant because Qantas and Virgin will not fly there—they tell me they want to see simple things done. For example, they have been asking, for ages, for a lift to be built at their local railway station. We cannot even get that simple infrastructure put in place. Eastern Sydney tells us we need to have a railway line to connect to a white elephant of an infrastructure project at Badgerys Creek, but they will not spend the money on what is needed for Western Sydney residents.

Doonside, for example, has been crying out for improved rail facilities and commuter car parking to ensure more people use public transport instead of relying upon vehicles to get into the city. They have been fighting for this for ages and cannot get anywhere. The *Blacktown Advocate* pointed out, recently, that for Edgecliff, near Bondi, the federal member and now Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull will get a lift at their local railway station. Edgecliff services 92 disabled people, according to the *Blacktown Advocate*, and 591 elderly people. Doonside station has nearly 900 residents with some form of impairment that impacts on their ability to access the station and nearly 2,000 elderly residents who cannot get the simple dedication of money to build a lift there.

That is the case in Western Sydney. Where the Baird government sees electoral advantage it dedicates the money. It does not do it on the basis of need; it does it on the basis of politics. The whole clamour for the building of this rail line to Badgerys Creek is about politics from the inner-city perspective. It is not about reflecting Western Sydney's needs. For example, if federal and state governments were of a mind to invest in transport—realising that we need to get more people on public transport—they would make public transport more accessible. Improve the stations. Build the commuter car parks. Dedicate other road projects, like the M9, which needs to be built and will open up, potentially, employment lands between the M7 and M9 and transform Western Sydney. Creating more employment prospects in our region will ensure that we do not need to have people travelling from west to east.

Bear this in mind too. When that rail line is built it will be heavily subsidised, but any new road has a tollway put on it. I represent residents who pay—something that most residents in other parts of the country will not pay—massive tolls. Residents in my part of the world will pay \$35 a day to get access to the city, because of tolls. Not many other cities have to pay that. I bet any money we will have the major newspapers and voices in the city say that we need to subsidise that public transport link to Badgerys Creek and, if we do build a toll road, Western Sydney residents will have to pay for it.

There is an uneven and unfair approach to the dedication of resources when it affects Western Sydney. It is always inner-city voices telling Western Sydney what is good for them, and that is not good enough for the people I represent in this place.