

Impacts of new government infrastructure on small business

Review report

February 2019



Customer
Service
Commissioner



Contents

Commissioner’s foreword	4
Executive summary	5
Review context	5
Review approach	5
Key findings and recommendations	5
Roadmap of next steps	7
Section 1: Review context	8
Background	8
Review objectives	8
Guiding Principles	8
Section 2: Review methodology	9
Background	9
Small business types	10
Section 3: The Customer imperative	11
Background	11
Small business – scale and impact	12
Section 4: Key findings	13
Background	13
Short term pain for long-term gain	13
Small businesses could be considered earlier in the planning process	14
Communicate early and regularly	15
Information and services provided in a way that is easy to access	15
Managing positive landlord-tenant relationships	16
Leveraging good practice	16
Impacts on small business subcontractors	17
Case Studies	18
Key findings summary	27
Section 5: Recommendations	28
Background	28
Easy access	30
Early planning	32
Appropriate Support	36

Improvements at pace	38
Roadmap of next steps	41
Parliamentary Committee report on Sydney Light Rail	42
Section 6: Conclusion	43
Review conclusion	43
What success looks like	43
Section 7: Appendices	44
Appendix A: Media release	
Appendix B: Stakeholders and references	
Appendix C: Key government infrastructure projects	
Appendix D: Customer Service Commissioner research on engaging businesses	
Appendix E: Parramatta Light Rail qualitative feedback	
Appendix F: Sydney Light Rail engagement activities	
Appendix G: Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey	
Appendix H: Sydney Light Rail project small business support	

List of Figures

Figure 1: Review process steps

Figure 2: Infrastructure funding breakdown summary

Figure 3: Outcomes by stakeholder group

List of Tables

Table 1: Small business definitions

Table 2: Infrastructure funding by cluster

Table 3: Key findings

Table 4: Recommendations summary

Table 5: Roadmap of next steps

Table 6: Public Accountability Committee recommendations and Review response

Commissioner's foreword

The NSW Government's capital works program underpins economic performance and job creation, and ensures the people of NSW have access to world-class services. The delivery of key infrastructure and improving customer satisfaction with government services are complementary Premiers' Priorities, allowing everyone who lives and works in NSW to share in the State's prosperity. When infrastructure projects are in the construction phase, disruption to residents and businesses can occur.

I was requested by the NSW Premier and NSW Treasurer in late 2018 to undertake a review into the impacts of new government infrastructure on small businesses to identify opportunities to improve their customer experience.

As Customer Service Commissioner, my overarching responsibility is to advise the government on how to deliver better customer service experiences, including for the small business community.

It is evident a great deal of effort and investment goes into supporting small businesses affected by the delivery of new infrastructure projects. However, this Review has identified steps to improve the way government and small businesses can work together and see through the temporary disruption.

The recommendations of this Review will help deliver an enhanced customer experience throughout the delivery of significant government infrastructure projects. Where there is anticipated disruption – which in most cases is temporary – these recommendations will help both government and small businesses plan even more effectively for the changes ahead.

I look forward to working with the NSW Government to improve the customer experience of the small business community.

Glenn King

NSW Customer Service Commissioner

Executive summary

Review context

In October 2018, the NSW Treasurer asked the NSW Customer Service Commissioner to examine how small businesses may be more effectively supported throughout the lifecycle of new government infrastructure projects.

The Customer Service Commissioner was asked to recommend steps to make small business' access to information and services easier, and to consider other opportunities to mitigate the impacts of construction on small businesses.

Interviews were conducted with small business operators in Parramatta, industry representatives and key government stakeholders. Research was undertaken across a range of published reports and reviews on transport, health and justice projects spanning NSW, Victoria and Queensland to provide regional and interstate perspectives. The findings of the NSW Parliament Standing Committee on Public Accountability on the Sydney Light Rail project were also examined and the Parliamentary Committee's recommendations assessed in light of this Review.

Review approach

A set of guiding principles were created to focus the Review.

- **Easy access:** Small businesses will know what to expect through the construction process, and have easy and seamless access to information, support, and feedback channels.
- **Early planning:** The right support will be provided at the right time in the project lifecycle.
- **Appropriate support:** The NSW Government will take reasonable steps to support small businesses maintain operational and financial stability during infrastructure construction.
- **Improvements at pace:** The NSW Government will deliver quickly to improve the customer experience for small businesses.

Key findings and recommendations

The Review revealed significant effort went into engaging and supporting small businesses throughout the lifecycle of infrastructure projects. Nevertheless, it found instances where the small business journey could be improved by early and upfront information, better use of data and communications, and clarity and consistency in how and when financial support is provided.

The Review concluded the implementation of the proposed recommendations will provide:

- Direct benefits for small businesses by supporting them to trade through disruption.
- Support and certainty for infrastructure delivery agencies by building on lessons learned and the good practices being used across various delivery agencies.
- Benefit for the wider community who rely on a healthy small business sector and receive services through the public transport, roads, schools and hospitals that the government builds.

Guiding principle Recommendations

Addressing the key findings

Easy Access

Recommendation 1: Streamline access to information and services

Recommendation 2: Strengthen engagement backed by customer and behavioural insights

- Consistent, timely and easily understandable information is critical in helping small businesses plan and make decisions.
- Small businesses want help to understand and visualise potential disruptions and end outcomes.
- Small businesses value access to a consistent information, preferably face-to-face backed by easy to access digital channels.

Early planning

Recommendation 3: Consider the impact of disruption and mitigation strategies early in the planning cycle

Recommendation 4: Undertake small business support analysis upfront

Recommendation 5: Landlord-tenant loyalty initiative

- Planning for if, when and what support should be provided early in the project lifecycle allows support to be administered rapidly if the need arises.
- Early analysis of individual businesses provides a baseline to plan for potential impacts before they are realised.
- Small businesses want the option to be engaged early in the project planning stage.
- There are opportunities to ensure subcontractors are made more aware of their rights when subcontracting on government projects.
- Landlord support is important in helping small business tenants through the construction period.

Appropriate support

Recommendation 6: Establish a Small Business Infrastructure Fund

Recommendation 7: Centralise governance of financial assistance

- Tolerating prolonged periods of disruptive construction is challenging, with some small businesses having to close before they see the long-term benefits the infrastructure is expected to bring.
- Targeted financial support could be warranted to help small business sustain operations when disruption exceeds planned or expected levels.
- Grants for marketing can complement project-wide activation initiatives.
- Effective support is being delivered across different projects, and there is an opportunity to build on this to provide an improved and consistent customer experience.

Improvements at pace

Recommendation 8: Periodic surveys to improve support

Recommendation 9: Enhance the use of data for small business needs

Recommendation 10: Deliver benefits to small businesses quickly

- Regular pulse-checks can help government respond to emerging issues.
- Proactive sharing of project data, customer insights and lessons learned – including case studies – helps government improve the customer experience with each new project.

Roadmap of next steps

Should the government accept these recommendations, a high-level roadmap has been developed to guide and fast-track program delivery to ensure outcomes are realised for small businesses.

Three months

- Establish a one stop shop through Service NSW for businesses seeking information about government infrastructure and support services, including case studies.
- Host a landlord-tenant loyalty program roundtable.
- Offer support analysis to small businesses likely to be impacted by government infrastructure in the future.
- Conduct customer satisfaction pulse-check surveys across live projects.
- Support current engagement efforts with customer and behavioural insights

Six months

- Develop clear and consistent criteria for providing financial assistance.
- Establish the Small Business Infrastructure Fund.
- Establish a central governance group to make decisions on financial support, and delegate authority to make ex gratia payments to the chair of the governance group.
- Streamline pathways between support services.
- Finalise methodology and guidance to quantify small business impacts and mitigation strategies in business cases.
- Establish small business insights database, and make data and insights public.

Section 1: Review context

Background

The NSW Government has committed \$87.2 billion over the next four years in infrastructure including upgraded or new roads, public transport, hospitals, schools and police stations. Over the past decade, we have seen immediate impacts of job creation and economic stimulus as a result of transformative infrastructure projects and flow-on civil development.

Yet when these projects are deep in delivery phase, unavoidable but significant disruption to residents and small businesses may occur. On 30 October 2018 the NSW Premier and NSW Treasurer requested the Customer Service Commissioner undertake a review of the customer experience of small businesses impacted by government infrastructure construction. The media release of the Review announcement is at Appendix A.

The Review focused on the small business' customer experience throughout the lifecycle of significant government infrastructure projects and assessed whether there was room to improve, expand and simplify current practice and processes.

The Review adopted the customer centric approach of the 2016 Housing Acquisition Review by the former Customer Service Commissioner and now NSW Treasury Secretary, Michael Pratt AM. The Pratt Review developed guiding principles and a methodology reflecting the Customer Service Commissioner's remit to ensure customer perspectives were at the heart of policy and service design, funding, delivery and measurement across the public sector.

Review objectives

- **Provide advice** to the NSW Government on the customer experience of small businesses impacted by significant government infrastructure.
- **Analyse the protocols** and consistency of hand-offs, channels and feedback loops for small businesses engaged or assisted as part of the rollout of major infrastructure projects.
- **Assess the way** small businesses are engaged throughout the infrastructure lifecycle including assessing impacts at the business case stage.
- **Consider** other mechanisms for small business support.
- **Provide** recommendations for consideration in response to the customer experience with the guiding principle of making it simple and efficient.

Guiding Principles

These principles articulate the aspirations for a better customer experience for small business.

- **Easy access:** Small businesses will know what to expect through the construction process, and have easy and seamless access to information, support, and feedback channels.
- **Early planning:** The right support will be provided at the right time in the project lifecycle.
- **Appropriate support:** The NSW Government will take reasonable steps to support small businesses maintain operational and financial stability during infrastructure construction.
- **Improvements at pace:** The NSW Government will deliver quickly to improve the customer experience for small businesses.

Section 2: Review methodology

Background

Key findings and recommendations were developed through consultation with key government stakeholders; a desktop review of relevant reports and research including previous customer research; and interviews with impacted businesses and business representative groups.

The Review considered previous and current infrastructure projects including, but not limited to, Sydney Light Rail, Parramatta Light Rail and the Grafton prison project.

It also reviewed the NSW Parliament Standing Committee on Public Accountability Inquiry report into the Impact of the CBD and South East Light Rail Project (referred in this report as the Parliamentary Committee) which was released on 25 January 2019.

Interviews:

- Discussions with small business directly impacted by infrastructure.
- Discussions with business representative groups.
- Discussions with senior NSW Government officials.

References:

Insights were drawn from the customer satisfaction research of the Customer Service Commissioner, including the 2018 Customer Satisfaction Measurement Survey and Quarterly Pulse Checks as well as a range of reports as part of the case study review.

The full list of stakeholders and references is at Appendix B.

Figure 1: Review process steps



Small business types

For the purpose of understanding the small business customer journey for this Review, the Customer Service Commissioner utilised the definition of small business as contained in the Small Business Commissioner's Business in NSW: Our Story, report.

Table 1: Small business definitions

Definitions	
Small business	An actively trading unincorporated or incorporated business employing less than 20 people.
Small business operator	Owner manager of an actively trading unincorporated or incorporated business employing less than 20 people.
Actively trading business	Businesses that have an Australian Business Number (ABN) and are actively remitting in respect to a GST role (or are businesses that are monitored directly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and are determined to be 'active').
Number of employees	Based on 'headcount' rather than a measure of 'full-time equivalent' employees.
Employing business	Businesses with an active Income Tax Withholding (ITW) role.

Source: Small Business in NSW: Our Story, 2014.

Section 3: The Customer imperative

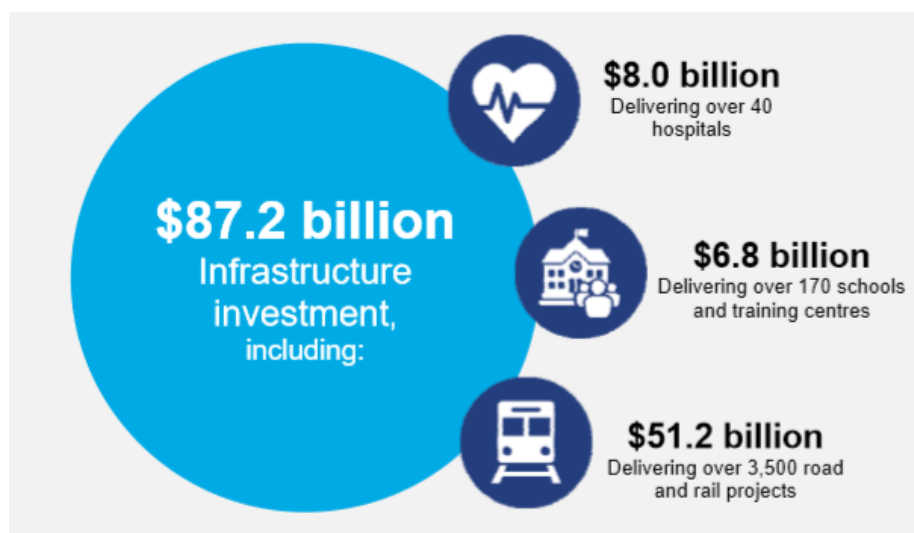
Background

In 2012, the first State Infrastructure Strategy and Long-Term Transport Master Plan laid the foundations for major projects being delivered today across transport, roads, health, education, housing, community, and justice infrastructure. The Premier's Priority on delivering metropolitan, regional and local infrastructure projects on time and on budget is accelerating the delivery of both major projects and smaller local projects across NSW. A list of the key projects can be found at Appendix C.

Infrastructure scale and type

The delivery of projects will continue with the NSW Government committing \$87.2 billion over four years to infrastructure investment. Infrastructure Partnerships Australia's 'Australian Infrastructure Budget Monitor 2018-19' examines the infrastructure spend across jurisdictions in Australia. It found NSW is by far the largest investor in infrastructure over the next four years, accounting for 42.9 per cent of state infrastructure investment across Australia - almost double the next closest state, Victoria, at 22 per cent.

Figure 2: Infrastructure funding breakdown summary



Source: NSW Budget 2018-19 Budget Paper No,B2: Investment Program

The 2018-19 Budget outlines the extent of infrastructure delivery in NSW across sectors of government services – showing transport projects account for a significant majority of infrastructure spending.

Table 2: Infrastructure funding by cluster

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Four year total	
	Budget	Forward Estimates			\$m	%
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	%
Transport	14,724	13,441	11,371	11,696	51,231	58.7
Health	2,163	2,169	1,646	1,456	7,435	8.5
Education and Skills	1,793	2,092	1,868	1,071	6,824	7.8
Justice	1,381	834	1,203	298	3,717	4.3
Housing	598	592	617	493	2,300	2.6
Electricity	521	554	476	482	2,034	2.3
Water	1,352	1,160	1,391	1,685	5,588	6.4
Venues, Arts and Culture	568	710	1,112	439	2,830	3.2
Other	1,370	994	1,358	1,528	5,250	6.0
Total	24,471	22,547	21,042	19,147	87,208	100

Source: NSW Budget 2018-19 Budget Paper No.B2: Investment Program

Small business – scale and impact

Small businesses rely on a positive and sustained economic climate. Therefore, infrastructure that unlocks economic opportunity and employment is beneficial.

The Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities noted that investment in infrastructure had the capacity to stimulate and enhance economic productivity in both the short and long-term. The Department found infrastructure had a multiplier effect throughout the economy, generating lasting economic, social and environment benefits.

However, given the scale of infrastructure development, it is likely small businesses may be impacted during the construction phase and some might not be able to reap the benefits.

In relation to the number of businesses impacted by infrastructure, there is an estimated total of 1,300 small businesses on the alignments on the Sydney Light Rail, Parramatta Light Rail and the Newcastle Light Rail projects alone. These are predominantly retail lease tenants such as restaurants, cafes, accommodation and services. In addition, there are 123,000 subcontractors in NSW, a portion of whom will have some interaction with delivering government infrastructure.

The health of the small business sector is important. According to the Small Business Commissioner, there are approximately 736,000 NSW small businesses – which represent 98 per cent of all businesses in NSW. Small businesses in NSW employ close to 1.6 million people, which accounts for 44 per cent of the State’s private sector workforce, paying more than \$51.42 billion in annual wages and salaries to employees every year. Small businesses in NSW contribute more than \$339.73 billion to annual sales and service income.

Section 4: Key findings

Background

To truly gauge the specific issues that relate to the small business segment, this Review sought to understand the typical small business customer journey through the planning and delivery of significant government infrastructure. The Review considered:

- What small businesses were telling government (through the Parliamentary Committee; the Customer Service Commissioner's customer research reports; interviews with small businesses likely to be impacted by the Parramatta Light Rail project; and interviews with industry representatives and government agencies).
- Learnings from the delivery of significant infrastructure both in NSW, interstate and across sectors.

This research resulted in key findings representing the challenges small businesses could face when impacted by infrastructure, and highlighted the opportunities for good practice to be leveraged across all government infrastructure projects for the benefit of small businesses, government and the wider community.

Short term pain for long-term gain

In the NSW Customer Service Commissioner's 2018 Q4 Quarterly Pulse Check Survey, small businesses ranked planning/infrastructure and transport changes/disruption as the two most important topics for the NSW Government to communicate to business.

As one business owner noted in that survey, "Infrastructure and building for the future will help place Sydney as a global city able to compete with the large Asian business hubs". Another small business owner noted, a "significant number of road and rail construction work going on ... should help to ease the congestion on the cities' roads".

However, this Review found prolonged periods of disruptive construction was challenging for small businesses. The Small Business Commissioner told the Review small businesses operating in and around the construction of a major project may not survive before the project benefits were realised. The president of the Kingsford Chamber of Commerce, Peter Schick, noted approximately half a dozen small businesses in the Kingsford area closed down citing Sydney Light Rail project construction as the reason.

The Parliamentary Committee acknowledged the work of Transport for NSW, the Small Business Commissioner and relevant local councils in implementing various business support initiatives to minimise the impacts of the Sydney Light Rail project. "We believe that these initiatives have provided some assistance, although not to the extent of alleviating the financial pressures business owners have felt," the Parliamentary Committee found.

Without a direct analysis of small businesses in relation to general trading conditions before construction starts, it is difficult to determine the immediate factors that cause a business to close and, in turn, inform any contingent financial relief program that may be considered at the planning stage of future projects. Consistency using best practice small business engagement and support approaches from the outset will enhance the customer experience of small businesses and help alleviate the temporary disruptive impacts of construction for the greater economic uplift to come.

Small businesses could be considered earlier in the planning process

The Review heard there was merit in enhancing the planning process by assessing the potential impact of an infrastructure project on small businesses at the business case stage – well before the project hits the ground.

Infrastructure proposals typically go through a concept phase where key stakeholders, such as government agencies and industry representatives, may be consulted on the feasibility of a project. Small businesses would rarely be encouraged to participate at this stage. Rather their interests may be advocated through the industry groups involved.

Generally, at the feasibility or initial concept phase, a funding business case would be prepared for Cabinet consideration based on the concept proposal, and move through various funding gates before detailed plans go through the statutory planning process. The Review notes that Transport for NSW is working with Infrastructure NSW on practitioner guidance on disruption management, but there are no specific methodologies to quantify small business impacts.

The individual small business journey would most likely start after at the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) stage. The EIS consultation is usually conducted in three key phases – Pre-EIS consultation (for example, providing likely impacted stakeholders with high-level project plans); the formal exhibition period which is a minimum of 30 days under the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)*; and a post EIS Submissions Report which encapsulates the stakeholder feedback. This feedback is then fed into the consent approval for the project.

The Review notes the NSW Government's recent reforms to the EP&A Act, which came into effect on 1 March 2018, includes prescribed mandatory community participation requirements. Under the changes, councils and other planning authorities must prepare and implement community participation plans, detailing engagement with their community before an application for planning approval is made. When decisions are made on approving projects, the consent authority has to notify the public as to how community views were taken into account in making the decision.

The Parliamentary Committee made observations that small business impacts could be considered earlier in the planning process, to ensure that appropriate support could be offered from the beginning of the project.

A key opportunity is to gauge the impact on small businesses at the business case stage. This will assist the government in planning mitigations to minimise risks to small businesses.

At a Parliamentary Committee hearing, City of Sydney General Manager, Monica Barone, noted the challenge was in helping people survive the disruption “knowing that they are going to benefit from a good project”. However, she noted larger businesses had the capacity to be flexible and adapt to disruption, suggesting “smaller businesses do not have that and perhaps in future thinking about the impact on smaller businesses up-front may be something to be considered”.

Communicate early and regularly

The Review heard that with clear and accurate information, small businesses were better equipped to make vital decisions to minimise the disruption on their business, such as lease negotiations and accessing support services. They want the basic facts, jargon-free with anticipated project delivery milestones.

Simon Chan, president of the Haymarket Business Chamber, told the Review that small businesses wanted to know when the Sydney Light Rail would be complete. “Everyone is focused on the end – it will be good for the city so it is short term pain for long-term pain. But not everyone is happy. They want certain information around completion dates”.

One small business operator in Parramatta said he needed time to plan staff rosters (which are prepared a month in advance due to extended trading hours) and delivery of supplies (at least 10 suppliers at any given time). “You can’t do these things at the last minute. We need time to prepare. I’m even thinking of renting extra space now for storage in case I need it.”

The Review found small businesses also value a clearer picture of what construction and the final project would mean to them. The Sydney Light Rail project used virtual goggles in public consultations to provide a 3D experience of what an operational light rail would look like. Similar techniques could be used to give small businesses a sense of what construction would mean. For example, the likely height of any barricades, construction noise levels in comparison to other general noises, and typical excavation equipment.

Information and services provided in a way that is easy to access

Small businesses value having straightforward access to information and services at their fingertips, without needing to go through time-consuming search or application processes. The Review found that an important need of small businesses was ease of access to effective communication and information, at a time and in a way that meets individual small business needs.

One small business reported to the Customer Service Commissioner’s Q4 Quarterly Pulse Check Survey 2018 that “Governments on the whole are complex, and knowing what services or assistance might be available ... is always a learning curve.” Another reported that “I would suggest that the government immediately look to further enhance its online presence and its Service NSW app and make sure both platforms provide the unfettered access to info that customers expect and that searching for such information is easy and intuitive”.

The Review noted easy access requires an omni-channel approach to contacting government and receiving information. According to the NSW Customer Service Commissioner’s Q4 Quarterly Pulse Check Survey 2018, business satisfaction with government services was highest among those who interact online. However, the survey found businesses had some concern about the level of accountability with online services, specifically how to get in touch with someone when they needed more help. One operator noted, “face-to-face is only really critical when I need to work through a more complex issue and want to sit with someone and go through it, to better understand or get a better outcome (usually both). My preference is to use online as it is more time saving for me.”

Further analysis of small business sentiment on communications and channel preference can be found at Appendix D, and a summary of the Parramatta small business survey findings, including channel preference, can be found at Appendix E.

Managing positive landlord-tenant relationships

The Review heard retailers relied upon location sight lines and unrestricted pedestrian access. This is different to destination businesses such as medical specialists, offices, factories and warehouses which customers seek out.

Therefore, retailers often feel the impact of disruption the hardest. The landlord-tenant relationship is critical for retailers, and is essentially why there is a Retail Leases Act – legislation that is not repeated for offices or factories.

Landlords of retail tenants can be affected negatively by disruption in the short-term, and may have difficulty reaping the medium to long-term benefits. Smaller landlords carrying mortgages with tenants unable to meet agreed rent, or who are unable to find a tenant at all, may have no choice but to sell their property.

The Parliamentary Committee heard tenant experiences with landlords were mixed – some had assisted their tenants stay the course, for example, through rent reductions; whilst others were not as forthcoming.

The Small Business Commissioner (as the Registrar of Retail Tenancy Disputes) has for many years dealt with landlords and tenants who are affected by disruptions often beyond their control. However, the Review heard there may be merit in seeking out new ways of building positive relationships between landlords and small business tenants before disputes arose.

Transport for NSW noted infrastructure such as light rail was often a catalyst for urban renewal. Experience cited in the Sydney Light Rail EIS economic assessment found uplifts where light rail was constructed were experienced in the Gold Coast, Calgary in Canada and Portland in the United States. Positive gains included increased property values, increased pedestrianisation (and patronage) and less congestion.

Given these expected uplifts, it is important landlords and businesses plan for this future. In some cases that might be capitalising on the uplift, while in other cases it might be making a decision to change the business or exit the area, if for example, the newly constructed area is no longer fit for purpose for a particular business.

Leveraging good practice

The Review heard NSW Government agencies were generally working well to incorporate learnings from previous projects into the delivery of new infrastructure. Transport for NSW told the Review it worked closely with Infrastructure NSW to apply learnings from previous NSW Government projects. For example, in planning the Parramatta Light Rail project, changes were incorporated directly into contractual obligations and processes were enhanced as a result of the learnings from the Sydney Light Rail project.

Health Infrastructure and Schools Infrastructure noted they took lessons from some Transport for NSW projects. Schools Infrastructure itself was modelled on Health Infrastructure as an effective organisational structure to plan and deliver a record capital works program. Schools Infrastructure plans to encourage parent-run small businesses to bid and work on school projects as a means to keep the investment local and to strengthen the ties of parents to the school community. Such arrangements would follow normal government procurement guidelines and could be an approach leveraged in other future infrastructure projects.

The NSW Auditor-General's Report on the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program, December 2018, said, "major infrastructure construction will inevitably have an impact on local businesses. Research from other jurisdictions suggests business mitigation strategies and proactive engagement are most effective when implemented early in the planning stages".

In summary, consistently using best practice small business engagement and support approaches, complemented by engagement in earlier planning and upfront communications from the outset, reduces risk and enhances the customer experience of small businesses when impacted by new government infrastructure.

Impacts on small business subcontractors

Whilst the Review did not originally set out to consider the potential impacts of government infrastructure projects on subcontractors, the experience of some subcontractors was raised by the Small Business Commissioner.

The Small Business Commissioner said subcontractors on the other side of the 'construction barricade' were, in the main, small businesses themselves. The Commissioner noted that when things went wrong on a particular infrastructure project – such as project delays, cost blowouts or the insolvency of head or lead contractors – the impact was felt keenly by small business subcontractors.

For example, on the Tyndale to Glenugie section of the NSW Government's Pacific Highway Upgrade, the insolvency of the grader firm, Ostwald Bros, saw a number of subcontractors owed monies for work already delivered. One subcontractor told the Small Business Commissioner, "my house paid for that road – people are going to drive on that and it's me who paid for it!" Another said, "good luck building the next one...they'll have to get subbies from Queensland because there will be none of us left".

The Small Business Commissioner outlined a likely scenario. A small business – husband and wife – jointly own a 'grader'. He runs the operations, she takes care of the finances. They attend an information session about a new Government project in their area, and are told to make themselves available for a lot of work. They finance another machine and find someone else locally who can be available to operate.

They successfully obtain a "wet hire agreement" contract through a subsidiary of the head contractor on the project. Over six months they start to suffer a pattern of late or no payments. This starts to impact on their personal finances and inability to pay staff. The Small Business Commissioner plays an intervening role in these types of scenarios.

The Review heard that small business subcontractors' needs could also be addressed earlier in the project lifecycle, ensuring they understood their rights under recent reforms to the *Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 1999*. These reforms aim to strengthen protections for subcontractors. Making effective communication available, including case studies, would assist.

Case Studies

This Review examined a number of case studies in NSW, Queensland and Victoria across the rail, health and justice sectors to investigate current practice, analyse trends and provide observations as to how the customer experience for small businesses can be improved in future projects.

Case Study: CBD and South East Light Rail



Background

The CBD and South East Light Rail (Sydney Light Rail project) is a new 12km light rail network broken into 31 construction zones and when complete, will feature 19 stops extending from Circular Quay to Randwick and Kingsford. The Sydney Light Rail project was classified as critical State Significant Infrastructure and approved by the NSW Minister for Planning on 4 June 2014 with six modifications approved between 2015 and 2017. It is expected to be complete in 2020. Vehicle testing along the Randwick section of the network is already underway.

The project will provide turn-up-and-go services every four minutes with capacity to transport 13,500 passenger an hour in the peak period (7am to 7pm). It is expected to generate \$3 billion in economic benefit for NSW.

A number of themes have emerged with the Sydney Light Rail project that have informed this Review's key findings and recommendations. This included opportunities to leverage best practice on a wider scale such as elements of the Business Assistance Program, the Business Activation Program and the forward planning on engagement.

Engagement

The Review found the engagement effort on the Sydney Light Rail project was comprehensive and began well in advance of construction. A detailed summary of the engagement work can be found at Appendix F.

The NSW Government had already recognised the cumulative impacts of the Sydney Light Rail project, Sydney Metro and the WestConnex motorway would have on the city. As result, it established the Sydney Coordination Office in 2015 (formerly the CBD Coordination Office) to manage the disruption. The impacts were exacerbated further by other civil developments such as Wynyard Walk, the Barangaroo revitalisation and commercial property developments.

Transport for NSW Engagement Managers built strong relationships with small businesses, complemented by efforts from the Small Business Commissioner, business advisors through the Department of Industry's Business Connect program, and the community engagement team employed by the building contractor. Kingsford Chamber of Commerce's Peter Schick said he had a good relationship with the Engagement Managers, describing them as proactive and helpful.

However, the Review heard more efficient sharing of information could have improved consistency. For example, when the Business Assistance Program was first established in 2017, other agencies were not as familiar with the details and therefore could not provide real time information to small businesses. It should be noted Transport for NSW did undertake two rounds of door to door engagement with businesses along the alignment.

The Sydney City Council and the Sydney Business Chamber of Commerce told the Parliamentary Committee of their concerns regarding the ease of finding information about assistance, given the number of different websites and telephone numbers on the project. A customer journey map of the digital and phone experience was prepared for this Review with findings at Appendix G.

Peter Schick told the Review approximately 75 per cent of small businesses in the Kingsford area was operated by cultural groups less willing to engage with government. Understanding such behavioural characteristics could assist in delivering more targeted communications.

Transport for NSW established business support programs for the Sydney Light Rail project including the Business Activation Program in 2015 and the Business Assistance Program in 2017 (more on the Sydney Light Rail project small business support can be found at Appendix H).

Business Activation

The Business Activation Program was a first of its kind for a transport agency globally and recognised as international best practice by leading place-making experts at New York's Projects for Public Spaces. Haymarket Chamber of Commerce's Simon Chan said he was happy with initiatives such as direct support for the popular Lunar Festival held annually in February. Transport for NSW surveyed Christmas shoppers on George Street, between King and Market streets, where Christmas activation was occurring in 2017 and found 90 per cent of those surveyed found it had improved their experience. The Parliamentary Committee recommended an expansion of the program and encouraged Transport for NSW and the Small Business Commissioner to "work with affected businesses directly on marketing, communication and other initiatives to attract visitors to the affected areas".

Financial support

As a result of overstays in some of the zones, Transport for NSW established the Business Assistance Program and began accepting applications for direct financial assistance in August 2017 by way of ex gratia, or act of grace, payments. The payments were not designed to compensate businesses, but to provide targeted assistance for short term adverse impacts. This assistance is formally approved under a set of established criteria.

In May 2018 the program was expanded to increase the threshold of those businesses able to apply from 20 to 50 FTE, and to reimburse reasonable accountant costs incurred in connection with an application. As at 22 January 2019, 158 businesses had officially applied and provided all necessary information for assessment with 122 businesses offered assistance. More than \$20.3 million in ex gratia payments to businesses had been approved by the Minister.

The Australian Hotels Association told the Parliamentary Committee that “in reality, losses were sustained ... from the commencement of the construction, and that should be factored in to any relief or assistance package”. The Small Business Chamber recommended a disruption mitigation plan for all future major projects, saying it should set out all initiatives and support services, such as advice on alternate business growth strategies and business sustainability measures.

The Parliamentary Committee concluded the NSW Government’s assistance was “unprecedented” and that many business owners found the assistance useful. However, it noted that “with the benefit of hindsight, the introduction of the Small Business Assistance Program was too late and too restrictive in its scope. The likely financial impact on businesses was clearly foreseeable given the experience of similar projects both interstate and overseas”.

Mental Health

The Parliamentary Committee found the wellbeing of some small business operators, and their families, was impacted by the Sydney Light Rail project. For example, one business operator reported feeling “stress and anxiety with regards to loss of trade and unknown ongoing nature of disruption”. The Review found it is important to clearly communicate to each business the process for accessing support, and to make sure that this information is easy and simple to find for businesses when they need it. The Parliamentary Committee also found that mental health should be considered in the project planning phase to ensure services are provided early, especially to any small businesses that may be significantly impacted.

The Review found that project staff were trained on mental health, including understanding and supporting people who are suffering health issues and making appropriate referrals to available services. Project staff were able to make customers aware that under Medicare, a GP can refer patients for 10 free consultations as part of a mental health plan. Additionally, Transport for NSW provided free access to mental health professionals through the Department’s employee assistance program. The Review noted that the Secretary of Transport had written to the Secretary of Health to examine what further support could be provided.

Observations

This case study illustrates the criticality of early engagement with small businesses during a sustained period of disruption. The Review found there had been significant focus, resourcing and investment in engaging stakeholders well before the project had begun. This included the small business support programs. However, the Review found there were deep concerns regarding access to support services, the timeliness of the introduction of direct financial assistance, the nature of the assistance and the general impacts on small business owners including on their mental well-being.

Case Study: Gold Coast Rapid Transit



Background

The 13km Gold Coast Rapid Transit (GCRT) light rail corridor connecting Southport, Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach began operations in 2014 after at least 17 years in long-term planning.

Engagement

Under the Stage 1 GCRT planning phase (2006 – 2009), a two-tier engagement plan was designed which involved city-wide information through newsletters, a website, fact sheets and media campaigns. The engagement plan also focused efforts on communicating directly with key impacted residents and small businesses focusing on the wider benefits.

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit Authority in its 'Lessons Learned from Planning to Procurement' analysis, found it was important to present the business and community benefits of a project. The Authority undertook a Corridor Study, published in the planning phase, which addressed the 'whole-of-journey experience' and was a useful tool for small businesses. It provided a vision for the pedestrian environment through to the detailed street and footpath design guidelines for key connecting streets.

Observations

This case study illustrates that while there were some criticisms regarding the apparent lack of support for small business during construction (a point noted by Transport for NSW in the development of its Business Activation Program for Sydney Light Rail), the visioning of benefits and use of visualisation techniques was a worthwhile learning for infrastructure projects.

Case Study: Newcastle Light Rail



Background

The Newcastle Light Rail is 2.7km in length, running from Newcastle Interchange at Wickham to Newcastle Beach in the east. It is due to commence operations in early 2019.

Engagement

Between June 2014 and May 2016, Transport for NSW undertook the 'Design and Revitalise Newcastle Community Engagement' feedback phase, with 65 local businesses providing submissions. During the EIS' Review of Environmental Factors phase of the project, 300 local small businesses were identified as being directly impacted.

The NSW Auditor-General's Report on the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport Program, December 2018 noted that, despite all efforts on engagement, "many local businesses have reported that they have not been supported adequately during the construction period" and that several businesses had closed or relocated during the construction period.

One of the recommendations of the Auditor-General's report is "establishing whole-of-government coordination for the assessment and mitigation of the impact of major construction projects on businesses and the community".

Observations

This case study illustrates that the effectiveness of the communications on the ground did not line up with expectations from the infrastructure delivery agencies. This a good case study to ensure any delivery of strategic communications and engagement delivered by third parties is aligned with the government's commitment to stakeholders including small businesses. It also reaffirms the need for a more coordinated approach to engaging with stakeholders from the various infrastructure agencies and other related industry and small business advocacy bodies.

Case Study: Parramatta Light Rail



Background

The Parramatta Light Rail is a 12km line connecting Parramatta's CBD to the Westmead Precinct, the Parramatta North Growth Centre, the Camellia Town Centre, the Telopea Precinct, and Western Sydney University campuses at Westmead and Rydalmere. Major civil construction is due to start in 2019.

Engagement

The Sydney Coordination Office and the Small Business Commissioner have been working with the Parramatta Light Rail project team to ensure learnings from the Sydney Light Rail project were applied when engaging small businesses along the route. An Activation Strategy has been implemented and mitigation measures incorporated into the contract requirements.

More than 330 businesses (approximately 85% of businesses at street level) along the Parramatta Light Rail alignment were surveyed to gain an understanding of how they operate. Place Managers were appointed to liaise regularly with business owners. Realise Business was appointed by Transport for NSW to deliver free business support services to maximise their potential through brand awareness and online initiatives.

As a learning from the WestConnex project and mandated through the Pratt Review reforms, property owners and tenants who are subject to acquisition of property have also been assigned a Manager Acquisitions to work directly with them.

Observations

This case study illustrates that attention on and engagement with small businesses prior to construction was essential and was generally well received. The Review undertook qualitative research through interviews with 10 small businesses. In the main, the operators surveyed were confident the project would be a positive for their business and the wider region. However, there was concern expressed by the lack of detail on key project timelines and a desire to have as much upfront information as possible to give them time to rearrange their business operations to accommodate or mitigate disruption. The survey findings are found at Appendix E.

Case Study: Level Crossing Removal Project



Background

One of the largest infrastructure projects in Victoria's history is the Level Crossing Removal Project – an eight-year program of works to remove 50 of Victoria's most dangerous and congested level crossings. The multiple design stages, construction sites, road closures and temporary changes to rail services mean this large project in theory has had the opportunity to continually learn from each contracted package of works to develop strategies for minimising impacts on the level crossing communities. The Level Crossing Removal Authority, in conjunction with its construction partners and the Small Business Mentoring Service, established a business support program to assist impacted small businesses deal with immediate issues through private mentoring sessions and training programs. Some traders, however, called for more direct assistance to keep their doors open. According to the Herald Sun on June 25 2016, business owners in McKinnon, Bentleigh and Ormond had lost more than \$1 million. Combined Ormond Traders Association president David Trotter told the newspaper 10 small businesses had closed their doors as a result of the project, whilst other small businesses have had to remortgage their homes to stay afloat. The newspaper noted that financial assistance for businesses impacted by infrastructure projects was not common practice for the Victorian Government.

Engagement

This Review examined the Edithvale to Bonbeach Level Crossing Project. While small business peak bodies were represented in Community and Stakeholder Reference Groups during delivery of the project, a notable small business engagement feature was a Business Impact Assessment which considered localised shopping areas in detail to identify the most at-risk traders. These small businesses were invited to partner with the contractors and sell their goods and services directly to the workers on the project and to commuters during rail shut down periods.

Observations

This case study illustrates an example of a business activation measure aimed at reducing risk and providing a revenue stream for traders during disruptive construction. The case study also demonstrates that despite efforts to support small businesses during the disruption, without the potential for direct financial support, some small businesses would not survive to benefit from anticipated uplift post-construction.

Case Study: Randwick Campus Redevelopment (Prince of Wales Hospital upgrade)



Background

The NSW Government committed more than \$14.4 billion in infrastructure spending in the health portfolio over the next four years. Around 90 projects are in the planning and delivery stage at any given time. While a hospital build does not generally have the same scale of impact on small businesses as transport projects, some localised disruption may occur.

Engagement

One of the largest health network projects is the \$720 million Randwick Campus Redevelopment for Prince of Wales Hospital Stage 1 which will deliver a new Acute Services Building.

Approximately 90 properties will be acquired for the project. The Pratt Review recommendation for Personal Manager, Acquisitions (PMAs) to be appointed has been applied to this project. At an owner and resident meeting on 18 January 2017, attended by the NSW Health Minister, the Hon Brad Hazzard MP and members of the project team, it was noted the PMAs would provide a single point of contact to help the affected owners and residents with relocation support services.

The Review heard Health Infrastructure undertook early engagement with impacted stakeholders which, it said, ensured more issues could be resolved quickly on the ground. It noted that delivering infrastructure in an operational hospital environment brought a unique set of challenges.

Observations

This case study illustrates that whilst the scale and impact of these infrastructure projects may differ, common themes and leveraging good practice from other projects, like the compulsory acquisition reforms, can ultimately benefit impacted stakeholders.

Case Study: Grafton Prison



Background

The largest prison in Australia is being built in Grafton – a state of the art 1,700-bed prison, providing rehabilitation services for inmates and regional jobs.

Due to open in 2020, the prison is expected to inject more than \$560 million into the local economy with 1,100 jobs created during construction and about 600 permanent jobs once operational. The prison site is approximately 12.5km southeast of Grafton and 3km northeast of the Clarence Valley Regional Airport. Prisons have been the lifeblood of some communities in regional NSW with new correctional facilities such as those built in Wellington in the Central West and Nowra on the South Coast providing significant economic stimulus to those towns. In the case of Grafton, there has been a prison in the region for some time. However, there are inevitably some concerns about perceptions of tourism impacts.

Engagement

Under the EIS, Corrective Services NSW noted the project aligned with the Clarence Valley Settlement Strategy 1999 which aimed to accommodate future growth for the region by providing jobs and income. The focus of the contractor awarded the project, John Holland Group, is to provide local subcontracting opportunities including targeting Aboriginal businesses as part of the NSW Government's eight per cent indigenous employment target.

Observations

This case study illustrates the opportunities government infrastructure can bring to small businesses during the construction phase. Learnings from past experiences highlight the need to ensure subcontractors benefit from their local participation in the project.

Key findings summary

The customer research and a review of case studies has revealed a series of key findings. Some of these findings are opportunities to be leveraged and others are challenges to be overcome. They are detailed below against the relevant guiding principle.

Table 3: Key findings

Guiding principles	Key Findings
Easy access: Small businesses will know what to expect through the construction process, and have easy and seamless access to information, support, and feedback channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent, timely and easily understandable information is critical in helping small businesses plan and make decisions.• Small businesses want help to understand and visualise potential disruptions and end outcomes.• Small businesses value access to a consistent information, preferably face-to-face backed by easy to access digital channels.
Early planning: The right support will be provided at the right time in the project lifecycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning for if, when and what support should be provided early in the project lifecycle allows support to be administered rapidly if the need arises.• Early analysis of individual businesses provides a baseline to plan for potential impacts before they are realised.• Small businesses want the option to be engaged early in the project planning stage.• There are opportunities to ensure subcontractors are made more aware of their rights when subcontracting on government projects.• Landlord support is important in helping small business tenants through the construction period.
Appropriate support: The NSW Government will take reasonable steps to support small businesses maintain operational and financial stability during infrastructure construction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tolerating prolonged periods of disruptive construction is challenging, with some small businesses having to close before they see the long-term benefits the infrastructure is expected to bring.• Targeted financial support could be warranted to help small business sustain operations when disruption exceeds planned or expected levels.• Grants for marketing can complement project-wide activation initiatives.• Effective support is being delivered across different projects, and there is an opportunity to build on this to provide an improved and consistent customer experience.
Improvements at pace: The NSW Government will deliver quickly to improve the customer experience for small businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular pulse-checks can help government respond to emerging issues.• Proactive sharing of project data, customer insights and lessons learned – including case studies – helps government improve the customer experience with each new project.

Section 5: Recommendations

Background

Based on the key findings presented in Section 4, the Review makes ten recommendations to improve the small business experience, and ultimately ensure better outcomes for citizens and the community. The recommendations were shaped by the guiding principles, opportunities for longer-term operational effectiveness, and the ability to deliver with pace.

Of course, disruption through the course of infrastructure delivery cannot be avoided altogether. However, these recommendations are designed to minimise adverse impacts and, where possible, enable small businesses to trade through disruption for the positive uplift expected when construction is complete.

A summary of recommendations linked to the guiding principles and addressing the key findings is at Table 4 followed by a detailed breakdown of the recommendations and the anticipated benefits to small businesses in particular.

Table 4: Recommendations summary

Guiding principle	Recommendations	Addressing the key findings
Easy Access	<p>Recommendation 1: Streamline access to information and services</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Strengthen engagement backed by customer and behavioural insights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent, timely and easily understandable information is critical in helping small businesses plan and make decisions. • Small businesses want help to understand and visualise potential disruptions and end outcomes. • Small businesses value access to a consistent information, preferably face-to-face backed by easy to access digital channels.
Early planning	<p>Recommendation 3: Consider the impact of disruption and mitigation strategies early in the planning cycle</p> <p>Recommendation 4: Undertake small business support analysis upfront</p> <p>Recommendation 5: Landlord-tenant loyalty initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for if, when and what support should be provided early in the project lifecycle allows support to be administered rapidly if the need arises. • Early analysis of individual businesses provides a baseline to plan for potential impacts before they are realised. • Small businesses want the option to be engaged early in the project planning stage. • There are opportunities to ensure subcontractors are made more aware of their rights when subcontracting on government projects. • Landlord support is important in helping small business tenants through the construction period.
Appropriate support	<p>Recommendation 6: Establish a Small Business Infrastructure Fund</p> <p>Recommendation 7: Centralise governance of financial assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerating prolonged periods of disruptive construction is challenging, with some small businesses having to close before they see the long-term benefits the infrastructure is expected to bring. • Targeted financial support could be warranted to help small business sustain operations when disruption exceeds planned or expected levels. • Grants for marketing can complement project-wide activation initiatives. • Effective support is being delivered across different projects, and there is an opportunity to build on this to provide an improved and consistent customer experience.
Improvements at pace	<p>Recommendation 8: Periodic surveys to improve support</p> <p>Recommendation 9: Enhance the use of data for small business needs</p> <p>Recommendation 10: Deliver benefits to small businesses quickly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular pulse-checks can help government respond to emerging issues. • Proactive sharing of project data, customer insights and lessons learned – including case studies – helps government improve the customer experience with each new project.

Easy access

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1 Streamline access to information and services

Recommendation 2 Strengthen engagement backed by customer and behavioral insights

Recommendation 1: Streamline access to information and services

A **key finding** from the Review is that consistent, timely and understandable information helps small businesses plan and make decisions about how to best manage disruption. Notwithstanding some examples of good practice on particular projects, making it easy for small businesses to find and access what they need could be enhanced and applied more consistently across the board.

The Review **recommends** using the NSW Government's one stop shop, Service NSW, as a navigational support for small businesses via online, phone and in-person channels. Service NSW has a high customer recognition and satisfaction in the community as the single customer portal of government services.

By visiting Service NSW, small businesses will be able to access high-level project information on any NSW Government infrastructure project. They will also be able to find information on how to access support, including mental health support, as well as case studies and reflections from small businesses who have been on similar journeys.

Providing an overarching information and referral service through Service NSW does not remove the need for project-specific resources and contact points, but will ensure small businesses can navigate between these more effectively. The **benefit** is small businesses will only have to remember one website and one phone number.

The Review also **recommends** small business insights to ensure support services available to small businesses are easy to access. This includes ensuring referral pathways are clear, addressing gaps, removing duplication, and – where possible – removing the need for small businesses to provide the same information multiple times.

The Review **recommends** Service NSW leads this work, with support from infrastructure delivery agencies, the Small Business Commissioner, the Customer Service Commissioner and with the involvement of small businesses.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen engagement backed by customer and behavioral insights

A **key finding** from the Review is that there is an opportunity to strengthen the way government engages with impacted small businesses through more user-friendly engagement and communication tools.

The Review **recommends** simplifying communications, leveraging behavioural insights and using visual tools to help infrastructure delivery agencies and their delivery partners improve the way they engage small businesses.

The **benefit** is that small businesses receive improved communication materials, information and guidance that better targets their needs and enhances their ability to 'visualise' impacts ahead of time and in circumstances when timelines are not yet available.

Of course, there is no one size fits all solution, and any engagement strategy will need to be tailored in the style that is best suited to a particular geographic footprint and characteristics of the small business sector within. For example, if there are cultural sensitivities of some small businesses engaging with government, as shown in the case of some Kingsford businesses impacted by the Sydney Light Rail project, the use of a third trusted party to engage those stakeholders may be a solution.

The Review **recommends** the Small Business Commissioner and Customer Service Commissioner lead the development of this suite of tools. Small businesses, infrastructure delivery agencies and the NSW Behavioural Insights Unit will help co-design these communications.

This co-design approach to streamlining navigation between services and developing the suite of communications tools with small business operators will ensure the final products meets small business needs. It will also **benefit** government as the tools can be adapted by agencies and their delivery contractor partners to support engagement efforts on current and future projects.

Next Steps

Next 3 months

- Develop and implement a Service NSW web landing page as a navigational support which includes project information, case studies, and access to support services, for example, mental health services.
- Commence rapid development and implementation of simplified communication tools and test with small businesses.

Next 6 months

- Roll-out enhanced suite of communications tools, and continue to refine based on small business insights.
- Enhance pathways between small business support programs, addressing gaps and overlaps to make it easier for small businesses.

Early planning

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 3 Consider the impact of disruption and mitigation strategies early in the planning cycle

Recommendation 4 Undertake small business support analysis upfront

Recommendation 5 Landlord-tenant loyalty initiative

Recommendation 3: Consider the impact of disruption and mitigation strategies early in the planning cycle

A **key finding** from the Review is financial and non-financial support provided to small businesses is, in some cases, reactive. It focuses on mitigating the issues that have emerged during the construction phase rather than managing or potentially avoiding disruptions from the outset.

Each infrastructure project varies in reach, duration, type of impacted stakeholders, trading conditions prior to construction, and the potential cumulative impacts of multiple projects in one area. Risk profiles are likely to vary between projects too. Some projects may be relatively straightforward and similar to previous projects, whilst others may be complex and unprecedented. The impact of these factors on businesses must be considered for every new infrastructure project.

The Review **recommends** strengthening the preliminary assessment of small business impacts and considering mitigants upfront by developing methodologies and guidance to be applied at the business case stage.

The Review **recommends** NSW Treasury leads the development of these methodologies and guidance materials through revisions to the Cost Benefit Analysis Guidelines and Business Case Guidelines, with support from relevant agencies. In particular, guidance on financial and non-financial support options – including, but not limited to, mental health support and ex gratia payments – will be developed to help agencies when they need to prepare a business case.

In every case, infrastructure delivery agencies will be encouraged, as many do already, to hear directly from small business about their initial perceptions and concerns to inform the appropriate envelope of small business support when preparing their business cases. The use of data, including insights from previous projects and geo-spatial information, will also be leveraged.

The Review considers current policy settings on when financial assistance may be provided to small businesses to be appropriate i.e. when disruption exceeds planned levels due to issues such as overstays or excessive noise and dust. Under these circumstances, financial assistance will be available to those businesses that can establish that they were financially viable prior to the commencement of the infrastructure works, or likely reach to financial viability if not for the disruption associated with construction (see Recommendation 4).

The Review recognises there may be circumstances outside of the government's control that amplify disruption. A typical example is concurrent private development projects in the vicinity of government infrastructure projects in response to the prospect of economic uplift when completed (as found in the Sydney Light Rail project case study). Any financial support contemplated will only be on the basis of the portion of disruption due directly to government construction.

The Review also notes, in some cases, government may need to fast-track projects to respond to an urgent community need. While in such cases the planning process may be expedited, the proposed guidelines and methodologies will provide a ready reference for the small business' potential impacts to be considered.

The **benefit** of this recommendation to small businesses is that their needs have been specifically considered earlier in the planning cycle. Better upfront and contingency planning will mean that any support is appropriately targeted and available to small businesses when they need it most. In relation to small business subcontractors, the NSW Small Business Commissioner can actively support agencies from the business case development phase to educate small businesses about their rights under the new security of payment reforms before they enter into any contracts.

The proposed approach will also **benefit** government by supporting infrastructure delivery agencies to explicitly identify potential impacts on small businesses, as well as associated mitigating steps and contingency plans, when seeking funding approval from Cabinet and its sub-committees.

Recommendation 4: Undertake small business support analysis upfront

A **key finding** from the Review is early analysis of individual businesses allows any financial assistance to be delivered quickly and transparently, should the need arise. It is important that any financial assistance be delivered with a high degree of transparency as expected by the broader community in the spending of taxpayers' dollars.

The Review **recommends** conducting small business support analysis as early as possible and certainly prior to construction. Support analysis will be a free baselining exercise that will involve small businesses providing information about their business on a voluntary basis.

The information can be fed into a wider analysis of potential impacts on the relevant small business community to help plan how to mitigate the impact of disruption. If financial support is to be made available on a specific project, noting this might be years after the planning phase, the small business support analysis will become a requirement for small businesses to be considered for financial assistance.

Small businesses will still be able to access a free support analysis at the time of requesting financial assistance if they have not provided it earlier in the project lifecycle. This is the case for small businesses accessing financial support under the Sydney Light Rail Business Assistance Program.

Undertaking support analysis prior to the start of a project will mean the small business has already provided baseline information, and the NSW Government can provide financial assistance expediently should it be needed. This approach reduces the burden on small businesses at a time when they are under most pressure – an issue highlighted by the Parliamentary Committee which found applying for the Sydney Light Rail Business Assistance Program was difficult and time-consuming for some businesses.

Early support analysis may also help identify government services available to a small business regardless of the infrastructure project, for example energy efficiency supports. Many small businesses are entitled to a range of value add services but do not have the information, time or expertise to access them. This type of one-on-one advisory service is similar to the Cost of Living advisory service for citizens, and will draw on learnings from the delivery of the Cost of Living program.

There are a range of channels that can be used to provide support analysis to small businesses. One option is to extend the NSW Government's Business Connect program. Under the program, services are delivered by contracted organisations with about 80 business advisors across NSW. Another option is through Service NSW's digital channels.

The **benefit** of offering upfront support analysis to small businesses is that the process for accessing financial assistance will be clear and transparent from the start, and small businesses will have the ability to receive rapid financial support should the need arise.

For government, the **benefit** is better planning and the ability to respond to excessive disruption quickly and efficiently so that small businesses do not suffer undue detrimental impacts. Further, the high degree of transparency of this approach benefits the community as a whole.

Recommendation 5: Landlord-tenant loyalty initiative

A **key finding** from the Review is small business tenants and landlords are both recipients of uplift the infrastructure is expected to unlock – but both face potential disruption during construction.

Insights from the Parliamentary Committee found tenants had inconsistent experiences with landlords, and that some, even small business landlords themselves, faced uncertain futures during extended disruptions with some having to close down their businesses.

The Review **recommends** the Small Business Commissioner and the Customer Service Commissioner jointly host roundtables with landlords and tenants to discuss initiatives to promote landlord-tenant loyalty throughout an extended construction period.

The roundtables will offer an opportunity to share data such as leasing trends, occupancy rates, foot-flow data and post-construction economic uplift projections to help both landlords and tenants understand how property values may be affected during and post-construction. This, in turn, may improve their decision-making about variations to lease terms and investment strategies.

Early and constructive engagement between landlords and small business tenants allows leases to be negotiated in a transparent way, with no pressure of time, no threat of lock-out and no threat of insolvency. Lessons learned to date from the Small Business Commissioner (who is also the Registrar of Retail Tenancy Disputes) can provide a starting point for the initiative. It is proposed that such roundtables continue to be held on periodic basis and complement existing project-specific business reference groups.

This will **benefit** small business tenants by encouraging landlords and tenants to find strategies to trade through rental difficulties with prospects for recovery.

Next steps

Next 3 months

- Treasury to lead a cross-government team to rapidly develop and integrate methodologies and guidance on how disruption and mitigation strategies should be considered in existing decision making and assurance processes.
- Develop and implement a standard Small Business Support Analysis process building on work already delivered through Business Connect, and considering opportunities for Service NSW digital solutions.
- Host a landlord-tenant loyalty program roundtable at an agreed project area and standardise for all projects.

Next 6 months

- Mandate changes to decision making and assurance processes in relation to consideration of impacts and mitigants as part of the business case formulation.
- Evolve the Small Business Support Analysis based on feedback and insights from stakeholders including small businesses.

Appropriate Support

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 6	Establish a Small Business Infrastructure Fund
Recommendation 7	Centralise governance of proposed financial assistance

Recommendation 6: Establish a Small Business Infrastructure Fund

A **key finding** from the Review is some small businesses struggle to tolerate the prolonged disruptions of infrastructure projects. Businesses may receive valid advice from Business Connect advisors to increase marketing efforts or carry out other business activities during periods of disruption, but do not have the cash flow under these circumstances to do so.

The Review **recommends** the NSW Government, as part of the 2019-20 Budget, create a fund of between \$5-10 million over four years to provide small grants to businesses to help them target opportunities to trade during the disruption. This is in addition to any direct financial relief, such as through ex gratia payments, that may be provided on a particular project.

This Fund will be established centrally with decisions on applications to be made by a central governance structure (more in Recommendation 7).

Grants may be provided for business operational review advisory services, signage, advertising, increased online presence as well as other promotional activities. The purpose of the Fund is not to compensate for losses. It is to support eligible businesses manage impacts of the disruption. The Fund will be particularly useful to support the delivery of local infrastructure projects.

Financial support will only apply to new projects entering the business case phase from the 2019-20 Budget and not retrospectively. Arrangements already in place on projects in the planning or construction delivery stages will continue as per normal and as set by those relevant agency governance structures. Note there may be exceptions, for example, for the significant number of local infrastructure projects currently underway for which support may not have been considered.

An important next step will be to clearly define circumstances when funding will be provided and which businesses will be eligible.

The **benefit** of the Fund for small businesses is access to support that can enhance trading during construction, and open new revenue streams above and beyond what they will gain from wider business activation programs. It will also assist the broader community, ensuring citizens have access to small business services throughout periods of construction.

Recommendation 7: Centralise governance of proposed financial assistance

A **key finding** from the Review is that a central governance body determining all financial assistance will ensure consistent and transparent criteria will be applied to all types of future government infrastructure projects.

The Review **recommends** establishing a central governance group to make decisions on the provision of financial assistance to small businesses impacted by government infrastructure projects, including ex gratia payments and grants under the Small Business Infrastructure Fund.

Financial assistance will only be available for small businesses where it could be established that they were financially viable prior to the commencement of the infrastructure works, as evidenced through the support analysis work as outlined in Recommendation 4.

The Small Business Commissioner, Customer Service Commissioner, and a representative from NSW Treasury will form the core governance group with those agencies responsible for particular infrastructure projects joining the group as the need arises.

The administration of applications will still be the responsibility of the agencies, however, the governance group will determine all applications under the agreed set of criteria.

Decisions made by the central governance group will not interfere with any project-specific governance structures to avoid unintended adverse impacts on the project. It is also intended that the governance body will make decisions expeditiously to respond quickly to the needs of small businesses.

It should be noted that currently ex gratia payments can only be approved by Ministers under the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. Legislation changes due to take effect in July 2019 will enable Ministers to delegate their powers. The Review **recommends** delegating authority to make ex gratia payments – under a clear and finite set of circumstances related to excessive disruption – to the Small Business Commissioner. Cases that fall outside identified criteria will still be escalated to the responsible Minister for determination.

The Review **recommends** the governance group also undertakes a legislative assessment to consider options such as a statutory scheme to deal with impacts of disruption in a standardised way rather than relying on ex gratia payments.

The **benefit** of this recommendation for small businesses is increased consistency, transparency and speed of financial assistance if it is needed.

Next steps

Next 3 months

- Establish the governance group and quickly define clear and repeatable criteria for providing financial support to small businesses from 2019-20, based on data and small business insights.

Next 6 months

- Establish the Small Business Infrastructure Fund, including a clear methodology for submission and assessment of applications.
- Drawing on legal expertise across government, undertake a legislative assessment to consider options such as a statutory scheme.

Improvements at pace

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 8	Periodic surveys to improve support
Recommendation 9	Enhance the use of data for small business needs
Recommendation 10	Deliver benefits to small businesses quickly

Recommendation 8: Periodic surveys to improve support

A **key finding** of the Review is that understanding customer concerns, needs, satisfaction and experience is critical in helping small business operators prepare for and manage potential disruption. It found there are also opportunities to better understand small business satisfaction levels over the course of an infrastructure project in order to further target support activities.

The Review **recommends** that project-specific satisfaction pulse-check surveys be undertaken to gauge customer sentiment; inform what information or support is needed at a point in time; manage expectations in relation to upcoming project phases; and monitor effectiveness of financial and non-financial supports.

Small businesses impacted by disruption, as well as subcontractors involved in project delivery, will be invited to participate in these surveys. The surveys will occur regularly before, during and after construction. Collecting customer feedback in this systemised way will provide more insights. Anonymised results will be captured in a central database to create a pool of resources to inform planning for future projects. Data and insights will be made public.

Further, the use of regular satisfaction pulse-checks allows a clear view of how well infrastructure projects are being delivered to meet strategic policy settings such as the Premier's Priorities and the State Infrastructure Strategy. The research will help quantify the benefits of major projects and in turn, communicate the progress to the public effectively.

The Review **recommends** the Customer Service Commissioner and the Small Business Commissioner create a template pulse-check survey in conjunction with infrastructure delivery agencies. The survey will be informed by and complement the Customer Service Commissioner's NSW Government Customer Satisfaction Measurement Survey. The surveys will be delivered by the relevant delivery agency, noting that the Small Business Commissioner has existing client databases that can be used and can promote engagement with the survey.

This recommendation **benefits** small businesses by enabling the NSW Government to provide support that makes the biggest difference to small business at the right point in time.

Recommendation 9: Enhance the use of data for small business needs

A **key finding** of the Review is that capturing and sharing project data and lessons learned helps government improve the customer experience with each new project. The review also found this information helps small business operators understand how their business will be affected through construction and upon completion of the infrastructure project.

The Review **recommends** developing a small business insights database, drawing on the expertise of the NSW Government's Data Analytics Centre, by the second half of 2019.

Information that can be captured includes customer insights generated from interactions with small businesses, survey results, operational metrics, evaluations, and lessons learned. This means that a dynamic inventory of customer-rich data and learnings will be accessible as new projects are considered, reducing the need to reinvent the wheel. Small businesses will be able to access relevant information and insights on the Service NSW infrastructure project website.

The Review **recommends** the Customer Service Commissioner and Small Business Commissioner lead this work with support from NSW Treasury and delivery agencies.

The **benefits** for both government and small businesses is a much richer picture of likely impacts and opportunities can be understood and planned for with each new project.

Recommendation 10: Deliver benefits to small businesses quickly

Should the NSW Government accept the recommendations of this Review, attention needs to turn immediately to delivering outcomes for small businesses quickly. Clear governance and accountability for delivery is critical.

The Review **recommends** establishing a Small Business Infrastructure Program Committee, co-chaired by the Small Business Commissioner and the Customer Service Commissioner to oversee implementation of the recommendations. The Review **recommends** the group report regularly to the Infrastructure Sub-Committee of Cabinet.

Ultimately, the Small Business Commissioner and the Customer Service Commissioner will be accountable for the overall implementation of the recommendations of this Review. Whilst, post-implementation governance is yet to be determined, consideration could be given to continued involvement of the Customer Service Commissioner as an escalation point when small businesses' concerns cannot be resolved through available support services.

The recommendations do not remove the accountability of project teams which are responsible for managing on-the-ground impacts and relationships with small businesses. As Transport for NSW noted by introducing consistent policy guidance on how to deal with small business matters, project teams will be held to account to implement them and, in turn, deliver an even better customer experience to small businesses.

The **benefit** of this recommendation for small businesses is a focus on delivery that puts the customer at the centre, allowing small businesses to benefit quickly.

Next steps

Next 3 months

- Rapidly develop a customer satisfaction pulse-check survey, apply to current projects, and make results available to the public as part of the Customer Service Commissioner's regular customer satisfaction reporting.
- Catalogue from three recent projects the information that will go into the insights database.
- Establish the Small Business Infrastructure Program Committee.
- Apply Behavioural Insights and the Premier's Implementation Unit's Deliverology methods to delivery.

Next 6 months

- Establish the insights database. Make full database available to relevant infrastructure delivery agencies, and appropriate insights available to the public.
- Refine any ongoing governance arrangements and review delivery of all recommendations.

Roadmap of next steps

To prioritise action and serve as a basis for implementation, the key outcomes that will deliver tangible benefits for small businesses are summarised in a three to six-month roadmap in Table 5.

Table 5: Roadmap of next steps

Three months	Six months
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a one stop shop through Service NSW for businesses seeking information about government infrastructure and support services.• Host a landlord-tenant loyalty program roundtable.• Offer support analysis to small businesses likely to be impacted by government infrastructure in the future.• Conduct customer satisfaction pulse-check surveys across live projects.• Support current engagement efforts with customer and behavioural insights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop clear and consistent criteria for providing financial assistance.• Establish the Small Business Infrastructure Fund.• Establish a central governance group to make decisions on financial support, and delegate authority to make ex gratia payments to the chair of the governance group.• Streamline pathways between support services.• Finalise methodology and guidance to quantify small business impacts and mitigation strategies in business cases.• Establish small business insights database.

Parliamentary Committee report on Sydney Light Rail

This Review examined the Legislative Council Public Accountability Committee's Inquiry into the impact of the CBD and South East Light Rail Project. The Committee's final report, tabled on 25 January 2019, made a total of 20 recommendations. Seven of these recommendations specifically related to small businesses. Table 6 outlines the Review's response to the Parliamentary Committee's recommendations.

Table 6: Public Accountability Committee recommendations and Review response

Public Accountability Committee recommendations	Customer Service Commissioner Review response
Recommendation 14: That the NSW Government revise the guidelines for the Small Business Assistance Program and implement this scheme for all other major infrastructure projects	The Customer Service Commissioner's Review recommends establishing clear governance and eligibility criteria for small business financial assistance which will be applied to future infrastructure projects (Review Recommendation 7). The Review also recommends considering the impact of small business disruption and mitigation strategies systematically early in the planning cycle (Review Recommendation 3). In combination, these recommendations will ensure clarity, consistency, and timeliness in the delivery of financial assistance to small businesses impacted by future infrastructure projects, should the need arise.
Recommendation 15: That Transport for NSW and the Small Business Commissioner encourage and support businesses to apply for financial assistance under the Small Business Assistance Program, even in circumstances where businesses may not meet eligibility criteria	This recommendation relates to the CBD and South East Light Rail project. For future projects, the Customer Service Commissioner's Review recommends offering small businesses the opportunity to undergo a support analysis before construction commences, ensuring that small businesses have early and clear guidance on what information will be required from them should they wish to apply for financial assistance in the future (Review Recommendation 4). The Review also recommends strengthening engagement with small businesses in general through the use of customer and behavioural insights (Review Recommendation 2). Together, these actions will ensure that small businesses are informed and well prepared to apply for financial support should the need arise.
Recommendation 16: That Transport for NSW continue to provide financial assistance under the Small Business Assistance Program until the CBD and South East Light Rail project is completed	The Customer Service Commissioner's Review is focused on future infrastructure projects and the Customer Service Commissioner defers to Transport for NSW on this matter.
Recommendation 17: That Transport for NSW provide ongoing mental health support to affected business owners and their families, at no cost to the recipients, and clearly communicate to each business the process for accessing this support	The Customer Service Commissioner's Review is focused on future infrastructure projects and Commissioner defers to Transport for NSW on this the matter of further mental health support for small businesses impacted by the Sydney Light Rail project. Notwithstanding, this Review recommends early consideration of how small business operators can be supported to manage potential mental health impacts (Review Recommendation 3), and easy access to mental health support Service NSW (Review Recommendation 1).
Recommendation 19: That Transport for NSW, in consultation with business owners, expand the Business Activation Program developed for the CBD and South East Light Rail project, focusing on marketing, communication and other initiatives to attract visitors	The Customer Service Commissioner's Review is focused on future infrastructure projects and the Customer Service Commissioner defers to Transport for NSW on expanding the Business Activation Program for the CBD and South East Light Rail project. The Review notes the importance of marketing and communication, and recommends establishing a Small Business Infrastructure Fund to directly support businesses mitigate the impacts of disruption through activities such as enhanced marketing (Review Recommendation 6).
Recommendation 20: That the NSW Government commission and publish the outcomes of an independent review of the effectiveness of financial and non-financial support provided to businesses during the CBD and South East Light Rail project	The Customer Service Commissioner's Review considered the effectiveness of financial and non-financial support to businesses during the CBD and South East Light Rail project to January 2019, and it is recommended that the Customer Service Commissioner's Review is published.

Section 6: Conclusion

Review conclusion

It is evident a great deal of effort and investment goes into supporting small businesses affected by the delivery of new infrastructure projects. Notwithstanding, this Review has identified opportunities to further enhance the small business customer experience throughout periods of construction.

The Review concludes that implementation of the proposed recommendations will provide:

- Direct benefits for small businesses by supporting them to trade through disruption.
- Support and certainty for government infrastructure delivery agencies by building on lessons learned and the good practices already being used.
- Benefit for the wider community who rely on a healthy small business sector and receive services through the public transport, roads, schools and hospitals that the government builds.

What success looks like

Figure 3: Outcomes by stakeholder group

	For small business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling heard and engaged appropriately.• Receiving upfront and consistent advice.• Finding information and services easy to access and understand.• Feeling satisfied with how the process is handled.• Confidence in the NSW business environment.
	For government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear and consistent methodologies, and reduced inefficiencies.• Utilisation of data to quantify benefits, make contingency plans, and inform engagement.• Evidence of a fair and transparent process implemented across all infrastructure.• A strong economy and small business sector.
	For the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to small business services during construction.• A strong and diverse small business sector.• A vibrant economy and access to modern government infrastructure.

Section 7: Appendices

Appendix A:	Media release
Appendix B:	Stakeholders and references
Appendix C:	Key government infrastructure projects
Appendix D:	Customer Service Commissioner research on engaging businesses
Appendix E:	Parramatta Light Rail qualitative feedback
Appendix F:	Sydney Light Rail engagement activities
Appendix G:	Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey
Appendix H:	Sydney Light Rail project small business support

Appendix A: Media release



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Thursday, 1 November 2018

CUSTOMER FIRST APPROACH TO HELP BUSINESSES

Premier Gladys Berejiklian today announced the NSW Government is setting up new processes and a specialist team to help resolve problems encountered by small businesses during the construction of major infrastructure projects across the State.

Under the changes, small businesses will be provided with key information and options on what help and support they can access, and where necessary specialist case officers appointed by agencies as a key point of contact.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet will take on responsibility to ensure large budget projects, with potentially significant impacts on small businesses, are identified early and businesses offered the support they need.

“This Government is building an unprecedented amount of new roads, rail, schools and hospitals across the State,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“We are transforming NSW with \$87 billion worth of projects in the pipeline over the next four years, but we recognise these cause some disruption along the way.”

“That is why the Treasurer is taking on this new role focused on ensuring small businesses impacted during the construction of these projects have access to the support they need as quickly as possible.”

Mr Perrottet said the NSW Customer Service Commissioner, Glenn King, would immediately undertake a review of existing procedures, set-up a website and hotline, and have a dedicated team who will work with individual project staff to ensure issues are resolved.

“We are adopting a customer-centric process with a face-to-face commitment to do everything we can to solve problems for small businesses,” Mr Perrottet said.

“The NSW Government will be redoubling its efforts in reaching out to small businesses to ensure their concerns are heard and we respond quickly.”

“It is vital we make the process as simple as possible, give businesses the support they need and solve their problems.”

MEDIA: Beau Mitchem | Premier | 0418 151 808
Trevor Seymour | Treasurer | 0427 253 927

Appendix B: Stakeholders and references



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Stakeholders and references

NSW Government consultation

- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Treasury
- NSW Small Business Commissioner
- Transport for NSW
- Infrastructure NSW
- Service NSW
- Department of Industry
- Health Infrastructure
- Schools Infrastructure
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Department of Finance, Services and Innovation

Market research and interviews

- Face-to-face interviews with nine small business operators in Parramatta, January 2019 and one telephone interview
- Telephone interviews with the presidents of the Haymarket Chamber of Commerce and Kingsford Chamber of Commerce, January 2019
- Review of the Customer Service Commissioner 2018 Customer Satisfaction Measurement Survey and 2018 Q4 Quarterly Pulse Check Survey
- Review of media coverage of various infrastructure projects
- Review of current government websites for the purpose of mapping the customer journey
- Review of current business case guidelines and template



Stakeholders and references

Key reference documents

- Australian Infrastructure Budget Monitor 2018-19, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, 2018
- Building Momentum State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038 February 2018, Infrastructure NSW
- CBD and South East Light Rail : Environmental Impact Statement, Submissions Report and other statutory planning documentation as part of the Infrastructure Approval under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, 6 June 2014, Department of Planning & Environment, 2014 to 2017
- Environmental Impact Statement, New Grafton Correctional Centre, Infrastructure NSW June 2017
- Environmental Effects Statement (EES) Edithvale and Bonbeach (Vol 1), Level Cross Removal Delivery Authority, March 2018
- Gold Coast Rapid Transit Lessons Learned. Making a good project a great project. Executive Summary (date uncited), Goldline
- Hunter Business Chamber Newcastle Light Rail Review of Environmental Factors (REF) Submission, 20 May 2016
- Infrastructure Statement 2018-19 NSW Budget No. 2, NSW Treasury
- NSW Auditor General's Performance Audit, The CBD and South East Light Rail Project, Audit Office of NSW, 30 November, 2016
- NSW Auditor-General's Report on the Newcastle Urban Transformation and Transport program, December 2018
- NSW Housing Acquisition Review Summary Report. Customer Service Commissioner NSW, 14 September 2016
- NSW Infrastructure Pipeline, Infrastructure NSW, December 2018
- NSW Legislative Council Public Accountability Committee's Inquiry into the impact of the CBD and South East Light Rail Project 25 January 2019 (final report and associated submissions, hearing transcripts from May – Dec 2018)
- Randwick Campus Redevelopment project information, Health Infrastructure (presentation to AN owner and resident meeting, 18 January 2018)
- Small Business in NSW: Our Story. NSW Small Business Commissioner December 2014
- State Infrastructure Strategy, Infrastructure NSW 2012
- Victoria Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee Fourth Report into Infrastructure Projects February 2018



Appendix C: Key government infrastructure projects



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Key government infrastructure projects

Under the NSW Premier's Priorities, the NSW Government has committed to deliver 10 key infrastructure projects and 80 smaller local projects on time and on budget by the end of 2024.

10 major infrastructure projects

- Westconnex
- Pacific Highway Upgrade (Woolgoolga to Ballina)
- Northconnex
- Sydney Light Rail (CBD and South East)
- Sydney Metro Northwest
- Sydney Metro City and Southwest
- Northern Beaches B-Line
- Newcastle Light Rail
- Westmead Stage 1A/1B Redevelopment
- Northern Beaches Health Service Redevelopment

List of local projects by region

Central Coast

- Regional Performing Arts Centre & Conservatorium, Gosford
- Toukley Ambulance Station
- Wyong Ambulance Station
- Terrigal Public School
- Wamberal Public School
- Gosford Health Campus Car Park
- Beach remediation
- Wyong Road intersections upgrades, Mingara Drive

Central West & Orana

- Grenfell Ambulance Station
- McKanes Bridge, Coxs River, McKanes Fall Road
- Warroo Bridge Upgrade, Lachlan River, Warroo
- Bathurst Ambulance Station
- Southern Feeder Road, Orange
- Coolah Multi-purpose Health Service
- Mitchell Highway, Guanna Hill Realignment
- Molong Ambulance Station
- Rylstone Multi-purpose Health Service
- Cargo Road upgrade, Orange
- Molong Multi-purpose Health Service
- Newell Highway realignment, Trewilga

Far West

- Cobar Multi-purpose Health Service
- Cobb Highway upgrade and sealing
- Silver City Highway upgrade and sealing, Broken Hill
- West Wyalong Heavy Vehicle Bypass Upgrade

Hunter

- Brig O'Johnston Bridge Upgrade, Williams River, Clarence Town
- Hunter Pinch Points (Highfields, Mayfield, University)
- New England Highway upgrade, Rutherford
- Becker's bridge replacement
- Belmont High School Upgrade
- Birmingham Gardens Ambulance Station
- Maitland (Rutherford) Ambulance Station
- Monkerai Bridge upgrade
- Murrurundi Multi-purpose Health Service
- Rutherford Public School
- Taree Police Station
- Bolwarra Public School upgrade
- Nulkaba Public School
- Pacific Motorway intersection upgrade, Weakleys
- Middle Falbrook Bridge upgrade, Middle Falbrook



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Key government infrastructure projects

List of local projects by region

Illawarra and South Coast

- New Bay and Basin Police Station
- Princes Highway & Albatross Road link, via Flinders Road, Nowra
- Bay and Basin Area Ambulance Station, Shoalhaven
- Berry Ambulance Station
- Kiama Ambulance Station
- Gunnedah Police Station refurbishment
- New England Highway, pavement rehabilitation
- New Tabulam Bridge, Clarence River, Bruxner
- Northern Inland Centre of Excellence, Tamworth
- Oxley Highway safety improvement works

New England & North West

- Armidale Secondary School consolidation
- Oxley Highway safety and realignment works
- Oxley Highway, second road bridge over railway line, Gunnedah
- Inverell Hospital redevelopment

North Coast

- Banora Point, Tweed River and Kingscliff Secondary Schools
- Coffs Harbour Ambulance Station
- Lennox Head Public School upgrade
- Murwillumbah Secondary School consolidation
- Pottsville Ambulance Station
- Wauchope Ambulance Station
- Wauchope Public School
- Byron Bay Public School upgrade
- Bonalbo Multi-purpose Health Service
- Pottsville Beach Public School upgrade
- Sportsman's Creek Bridge replacement, Lawrence

Riverina Murray

- Gee Gee Bridge replacement, Swan Hill
- Tooleybuc Bridge Replacement, Murray River, Tooleybuc
- Griffith Secondary School consolidation
- Harden Multi-purpose Health Service
- Barham Multi-purpose Health Service
- Culcairn Multi-purpose Health Service

- Griffith Ambulance Station
- Tumbarumba Multi-purpose Health Service
- Ardlethan Ambulance Station
- Coolamon Ambulance Station
- Newell Highway realignment, Grong Grong

South East & Tablelands

- Braidwood Multi-purpose Health Service
- Charleyong Bridge replacement, Mongarlowe River, Marlowe
- Cooma Hospital redevelopment
- Goulburn Ambulance Station
- Queanbeyan Police Station - new
- Yass Ambulance Station
- Yass Multi-purpose Health Service
- Yass, Queanbeyan and Karabar High Schools
- Robertson Aquatic Centre
- Blue Haven Aged Care Centre of Excellence, Kiama
- Barton Highway corridor improvement works
- Monaro Highway and Kosciuszko Road overtaking
- Pedestrian railway line overpass, Moss Vale
- Seal Extension of Binda Road (Main Road 54)



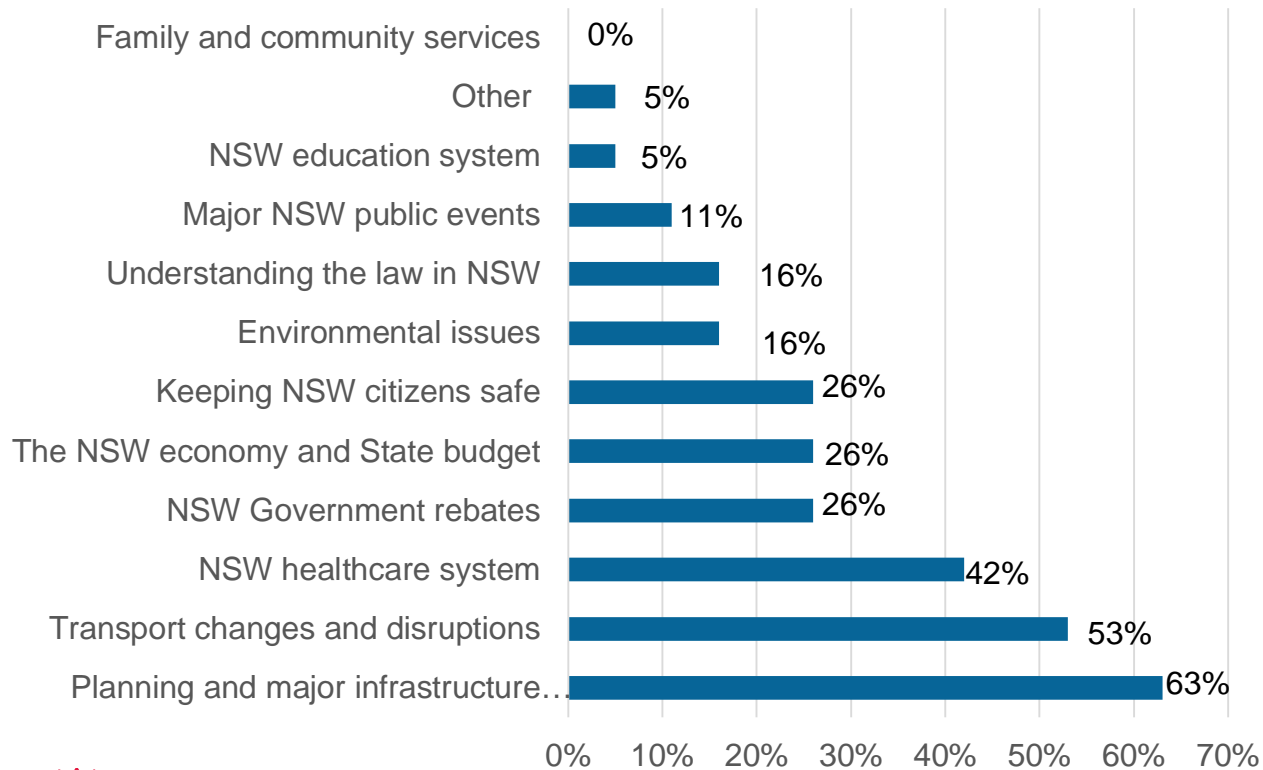
Appendix D: Customer Service Commissioner research on engaging businesses



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Customer Service Commissioner research on engaging business

What are the top three topics that you feel are most important for the NSW Government to communicate to businesses about?



“The NSW Government is putting out lots of info regarding all the ongoing projects. There seems too much happening to take it all in”

“If the campaigns are significant the Government should use various channels to get the message out”

“Be more upfront, honest and compassionate. Regular updates would be better than trying to send out a booklet with 50 pages in it, and then findings that half of it ended up being modified”

“It is also important for businesses to know what the plans are for the local infrastructure and what changes if any are planned or being undertaken”

“Knowing transportation changes are critical for supply chain”

“I believe they have a legal obligation to be open and honest...If it is in written form I have great trust. If it is verbal I don't place much trust in it”



**Customer
Service
Commissioner**

Customer Service Commissioner research on engaging business

Business perceptions of government infrastructure projects are varied

Some businesses expressed support



- “Infrastructure and building for the future will help place Sydney as a global city able to compete with the large Asian business hubs”
- “The Government have a significant number of road and rail construction work going on, which when completed should help to ease the congestion on the cities’ roads”
- “The NSW Government is trying to be proactive and catch up with infrastructure for the population that we have in Sydney now. They have made some positive contributions, but they have also made some mistakes”

However, many businesses expressed frustration



- “The work that is going on in the city will have a positive impact, however the group that they have given the contract too are not performing well. The fact that the city is an eyesore and that businesses are losing their customers has been exacerbated by the fact that the time for the project keeps blowing out”
- “Businesses are suffering because of the chaos that is now the city. Roads are being blocked off and directions changed continuously as you try and move through the city. The city after 9pm on a week end night has become a ghost town. The city is not as an inviting place as it was 1 or 2 years ago”
- “The construction of the light rail ... how it will improve the traffic issues in the city and how the small business community will benefit from it, I just don't believe”
- “I'm upset there's no one is listening and when the NSW Government made decision on building it as a small business owner I have no say in the matter”
- “[The NSW Government] should have consulted more widely with the population BEFORE making decisions”

Customer Service Commissioner research on engaging business

Three key preferences for businesses were identified through qualitative research around accessing information from the NSW Government

1 Businesses appreciate having **straightforward access to information, policy and procedures at their fingertips**, without needing to go through time consuming application processes

"I am dissatisfied because of long amounts of time, different answers received from different staff, too rigid and not flexible. This makes me feel [that they are] lazy and not bothered to interact with the services especially those whose customer service and performance not up to standard"

2 When interacting with staff, businesses expect to be **given accurate information, that is relevant to each situation, so they can make critical decisions**. There can be significant impact to businesses when incorrect information is provided, and this can deter businesses from attempting to use the service in the future

"Governments on the whole are complex, and knowing what services or assistance might be available at which level of government is always a learning curve"

"... the gov should be able to target specific communications to me directly through the most relevant & appropriate channels"

"...unless the information was specifically targeted at me it may not be relevant"

3 **Businesses expect to be able to obtain information through their choice of channel at anytime**. With increased investment in online services, real time access to general information is becoming more available, and businesses are relying less on staff interactions. Further, businesses would appreciate access to information via channels that are remotely accessible outside of business hours

"Face to face is only really critical when I need to work through a more complex issue and want to sit with someone and go through it, to better understand or get a better outcome (usually both). My preference is to use online as it is more time saving for me"

"I would suggest that the Government immediately look to further enhance its online presence and its Service NSW app and make sure both platforms provide the unfettered access to info that customers expect and that searching for such information is easy and intuitive"



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Appendix E: Parramatta Light Rail qualitative feedback



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Parramatta Light Rail qualitative feedback

Nine interviews with small businesses in the Parramatta region were conducted in the week of 14 January 2019, of which eight were face-to-face. They represented different business types across the proposed light rail alignment. They were asked six questions with answers provided on an anonymous basis. A summary of some of the themes are outlined on Page 2.

“

Great, more work, more customers to get here from Parramatta, more regular public transport for customers. ”

“

Have a lot of questions but no one can answer because nobody knows. (questions about the detail of construction such as when it will start, how long it will take, what section of the road will be closed, where traffic will be directed).

”

“

Signage to help my business be visible and show customers where I am. Asked to fill a form for local council for a signage to be more visible for customers, but the form was too complicated and the business advisor hasn't helped. ”

Parramatta Light Rail qualitative feedback

Q1 Expectation about the construction	Q2. Information about the project	Q3. Timely communication to address the issues	Q4. Access to information and support	Q5. Preferred method of communication from Government	Q6. One thing to improve
We are happy about this as it's long overdue.	Received through emails, personal visits, media outlet.	Timely, but issues are not resolved and early days to know if issues will be resolved.	Face to face visits, phone conversations, and media outlet (monthly newsletter).	Prefer to receive information and be contacted via email.	Have good broad knowledge of the project and general information about it, however need detail of the project to start preparing.
Positive about the construction and happy to see cars off the roads.	Kept well informed through emails and newsletters, Light Rail Committee (member) and free media.	Asked to fill a form for local council for a signage to be more visible for customers, but form was too complicated and business advisor hasn't helped.	Unsure about scope of help from Business advisor but they helped set up Facebook page and website.	Face to face and via phone.	Don't know what issues will come up and what support will be helpful during the construction.
Value for workers, citizens who will go to Western Sydney Stadium and with the Westmead Health District.	Felt well informed through visits from Parramatta Light Rail (PLR) staff.	Communication is frequent but anxiously waiting for the details of construction - when it will start, how long it will take, what sections of the road will be closed to plan for staff who work till late and staff parking onsite?	Have access to information via email and reference groups.	Risk of letters and emails going to "Junk".	Deliver on promises.
Concerned about parking, customer access to business and negative impact.	Receiving emails and newsletters.	Felt the visits and information came after the decision was made. Worried about the impact on stock delivery into my business, dust, noise, carpark construction impacts for customers. Worried about the negative impact of the construction phase. Customers might not be able to access the store.	Member of the Business Reference Group for good information and have access to the project business advisor.	Prefers different types of communication such as email, face to face, phone and newsletters.	Provide information ahead of time to better prepare and prefer at least a month before impact.
Would've liked to be involved in the planning stage. Was not happy about stop locations.	Very timely and good responses.		Was offered assistance to create website but we are already established.	Prefer face to face.	Need to know what will happen so we can make changes such as to our delivery trucks and do we do more online?
Losing outdoor café dining (will there be compensation or waiving of outdoor rental fees to council?)			A way to know how small businesses managed disruption for other projects, and get some ideas about what to do, would be really helpful.	Email is best.	Need to know that customers who come from down the street know we're still open once the barricades go up. Signs and flyers will help.
			Getting information such as how many people visit Parramatta when there is an event on would help us plan and make the most of opportunities.	Helping visualise what the construction will look like would be very helpful.	



Appendix F: Sydney Light Rail engagement activities



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Sydney Light Rail engagement activities

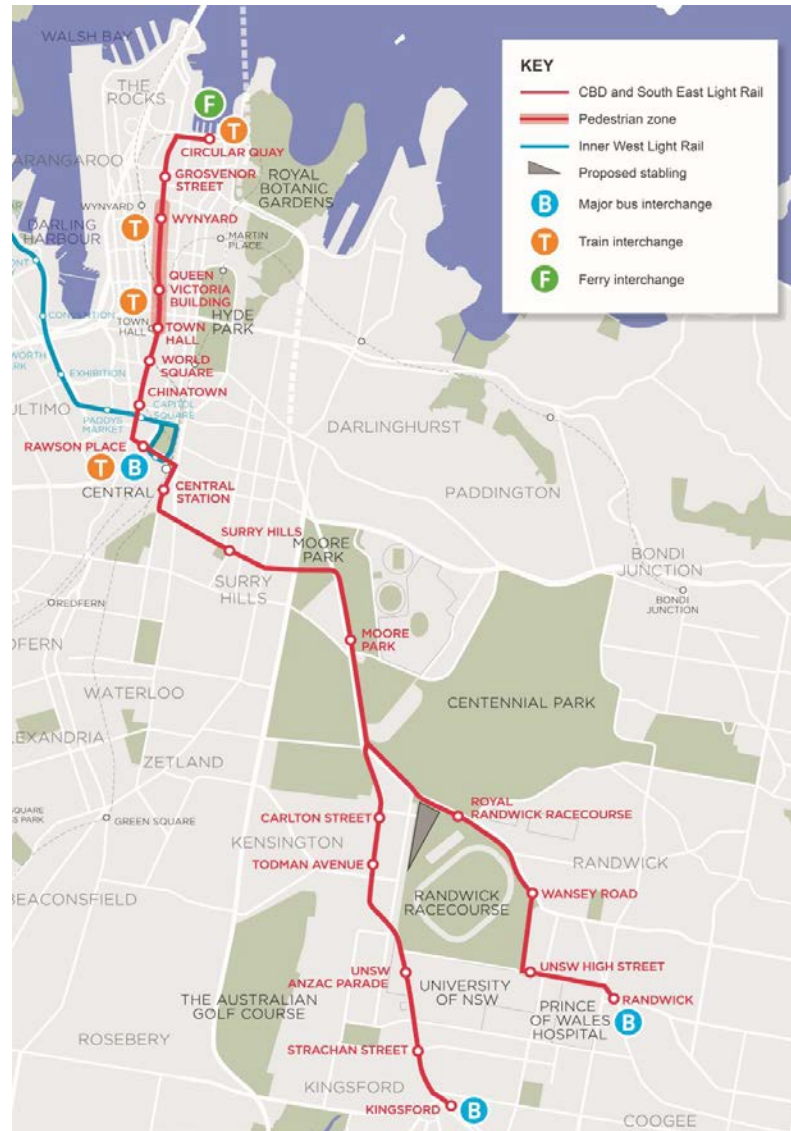
Project imperatives

An extra **million** people are expected to live and work in Sydney over the next 10 years

Congestion across Sydney costs the NSW economy **more than \$5.1 billion per year**; this is forecast to **reach \$8.8 billion** by 2021 unless new transport modes were created

Trips to the city will increase by **a quarter**

Experience from the Gold Coast light rail project showed after the difficult construction period, businesses **thrived** once the civil work was completed and light rail started operating



Project benefits

The project will generate \$3 billion in economic benefit for NSW

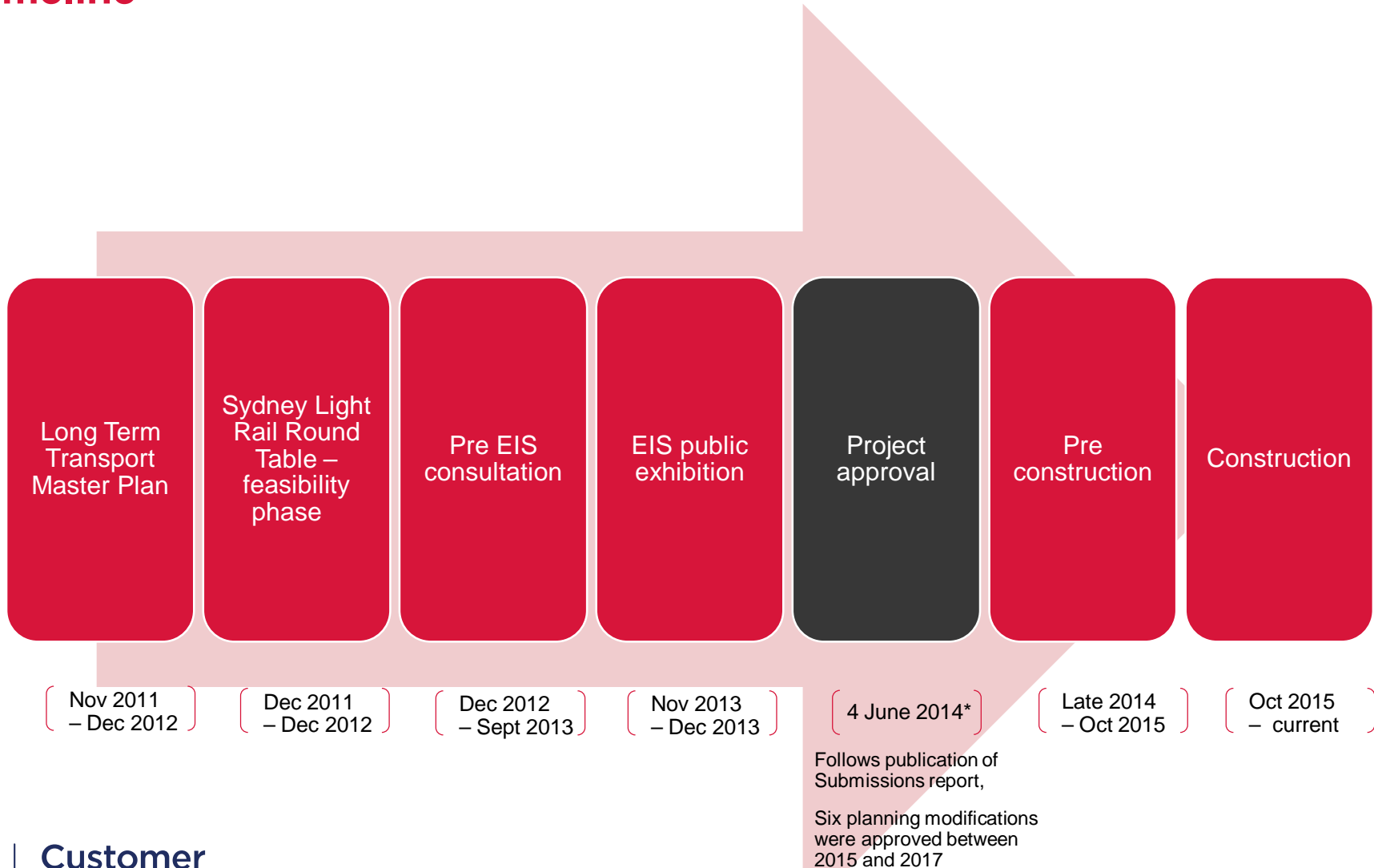
High frequency 'turn up and go' light rail services operating up to **every four minutes** in the peak

A one-kilometre **pedestrian zone** along George Street, between Hunter and Bathurst streets, providing **new opportunities** for outdoor dining, creative spaces and entertainment

Additional special **event** services between Central and the Moore Park and Alison Road stops

Sydney Light Rail engagement activities

Timeline



Sydney Light Rail engagement activities

Milestones

Date	Phase	Engagement activities
Nov 2011 – Dec 2012	Long Term Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over 1,000 people at 14 regional forums across the State.• Over 130,000 hits on the dedicated website.• Over 270 stakeholders at launch industry briefing.• 55 representatives on four advisory groups.• More than 1,200 discussions submissions.• Over 480 comments on draft plan.
Sept 2011 – Jun 2012	Sydney Light Rail Round Table – feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key state, council and industry representatives involved in six round tables. It included the Sydney Business Chamber and Property Council.
Dec 2012 – Sept 2013	Pre-EIS consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of the feasibility group invited as members of the Sydney Light Rail Delivery Phase Round Table (As at July, 2018, this group has met 16 times since mid 2014).• Stakeholder and industry briefings (including property owners).• An information line and email address were established (still in operation today).• Proposal on Transport for NSW website and a Have Your Say dedicated website.• Place Managers (now called Engagement Managers) as the direct point of contact.• 100,000 brochures in two letter box drops were delivered to all residents and businesses within 500 metres of the proposed alignment.• Five information stands established at locations near the alignment.• A Community Information Centre on George Street was opened in Nov 2013 as an information hub for the project (this was subsequently transitioned to a mobile hub).• A business survey of 100 businesses was conducted in June 2013 with 83 per cent respondents saying they had been made aware of the proposal with 69 per cent either supportive or neutral.

Sydney Light Rail engagement activities

Milestones

Date	Phase	Engagement activities
4 Nov – 16 Dec 2013	EIS public exhibition and approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wide publication through established channels to support the EIS public exhibition. The EIS was available in hard copy at multiple venues.• The ensuing Submissions Report noted 480 formal submissions made to the EIS• Design changes were made to the project as a result of the EIS.• The project was given formal approval on 4 June 2014. This included the requirement to set up the Business Reference Group and a Community and Stakeholder Involvement Plan (see below).
2014 – 2015	Pre construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Community and Stakeholder Involvement Plan was required prior to construction commencing. It included methods of informing the community about the proposal, complaints management, consultation of property and business owners, and out of work hour construction.
Oct 2015 – current	Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See more detail in Construction engagement on Page 6

* Metrics cover wider community and stakeholder consultation inclusive of small business

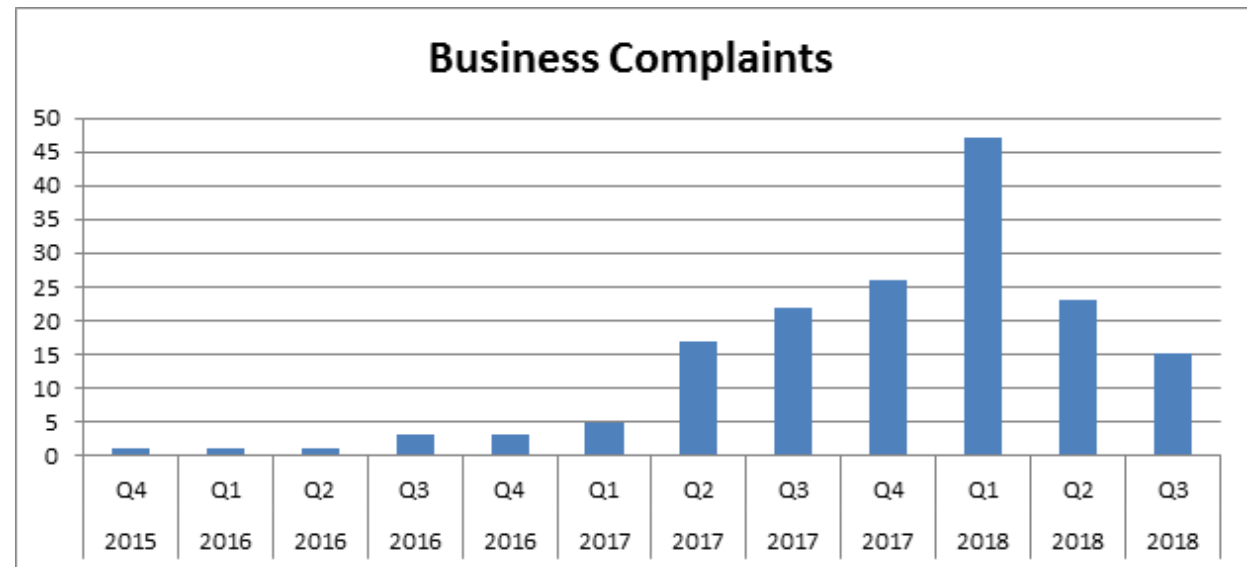
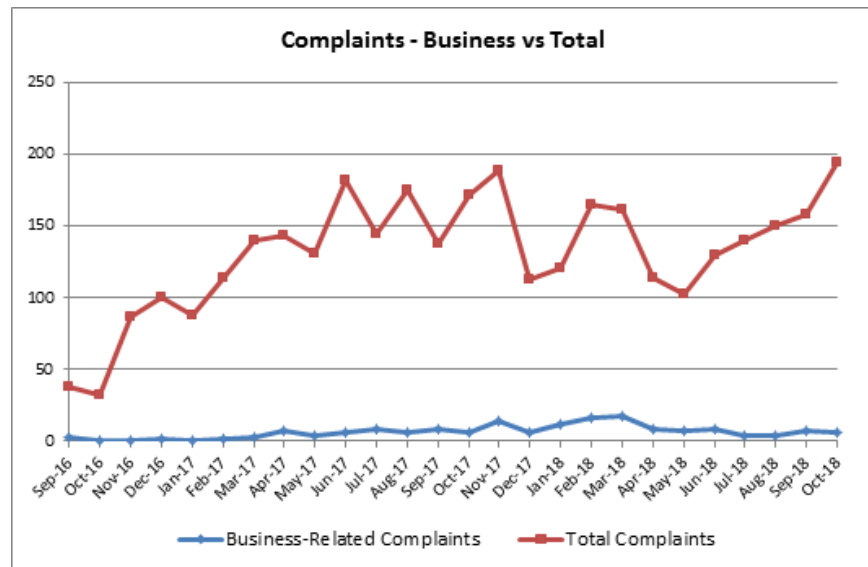


Sydney Light Rail engagement activities

Interactions

Since construction began up until November 2018, Transport for NSW advises there have been 3,366 interactions from business via all channels. Of these, 166 were complaints. These interactions do not generally include forums or face-to-face visits, however if a complaint is raised at a face-to-face visit it would be recorded to ensure resolution and close out.

Transport for NSW also reports that the 166 complaints from business represents 5% of the total 3,570 complaints that have been received through all channels – predominantly around specific issues such as construction trucks blocking sightlines, noise, access etc.)



Sydney Light Rail engagement activities

Construction engagement

Channel	Summary	Metrics
Phone Information Line	The 1800 684 490 was operational prior to the project commencing as an information portal servicing a number of Transport for NSW projects. It is open 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year	As recorded in the project database, between 1/10/2015 and 05/12/2018, there have been 4,342 phone calls to both the Phone Information Line and the Construction Response Line. Of those, 2,805 were complaints
24-hour Construction Response Line	The 24 hour Construction Response Line – 1800 775 465 – started taking complaints and enquiries for the project from 2014	
Email	People can email projects@transport.nsw.gov.au	Since October 2015 to December 2018, there have been 5,800 emails recorded in the project database
Website and social media	The dedicated project website sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au was redesigned in June 2015 introducing an interactive map and notifications. Messages are typically turned around in 24 hours	Traffic to the website increased by 45% from Jun 2016 – Jun 2018. An interactive map has seen over 500,000 views. In the 12 months ending November 2018, Sydney Light Rail Facebook followers has increased by 57% (to 30,980 followers)
Small business site visits	Regular small business visits are made by Transport for NSW, the contractor and supported by the Small Business Commissioner’s team at various intervals of the project, such as prior to zone closures. The purpose is to proactively advise about upcoming works, small business activation initiatives, general construction and financial assistance	There are regular small business visits since the project began. Each business in a zone due to close is visited. The most recent all-alignment small business site visit was in June – July 2018
Construction notices / fact sheets	Construction notices (and fact sheets) have been regularly published through all the key light rail channels	As at end of November 2018, almost 1,000 construction notifications have been distributed

Sydney Light Rail engagement activities

Construction engagement

Channel	Summary	Metrics
Business forums	There are three business forums: CBD – Surry Hills / Moore Park – Randwick / Kingsford / Kensington. This is a joint exercise between Transport for NSW and the contractor	Since Sept 2013, over 140 business and community forums have been held. Forums are open to residents and businesses. Invitations are circulated to stakeholders within a 500 metre radius and other interested parties who have enquired about particular areas
Engagement Managers	Previously called Place Managers, these direct account managers have been on the project since the EIS phase. Place or engagement managers are often employed in the delivery of large developments and/or infrastructure	There are about 15 dedicated engagement officers on the project, with 10 working for the contractor and a further five for Transport for NSW who service separate precincts along the route, working with stakeholders independently of the contractor to seek feedback
Info Hub	A mobile version of the Community Information Centre was devised to move from zone to zone. It was launched in May 2016, Virtual reality goggles provide customers with a 3D view of what the project will look like when complete	From June 2016 to June 2018, the Info Hub has been active for 450 days, engaging with 70,000 people
Business advisors (Business Connect)	Business Connect provides practical business advice through experienced, independent business advisors. The NSW Department of Industry light rail advisory support is delivered by Realise Business. The Business Connect bus has also visited high impact zones to help small business with information	From July 2016 to November 2018, advisors have helped almost 400 small businesses (representing close to 1,800 hours of one-on-one support)
Business Reference Group	The SLR Business Reference Group was established as a planning approval condition comprising representatives from council, peak bodies and large and small business	Meetings are held quarterly and as at July 2018, there have been 16 meetings from mid-2014



Appendix G: Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Phone information line

The project phone information line for the Sydney Light Rail project was set up at the end of 2012. It should be noted under statutory planning requirements, dedicated contact services (such as phone and web) are required to be established. Resourcing was ramped up as the project moved from planning to delivery. When customers ring, they are given the option to ring the main transport line 131 500 or to visit the Government's job and tender websites if they are prospective employees or contracting business respectively. They are also advised to call the 24-hour Construction Response Line for all urgent enquiries or complaints regarding construction.

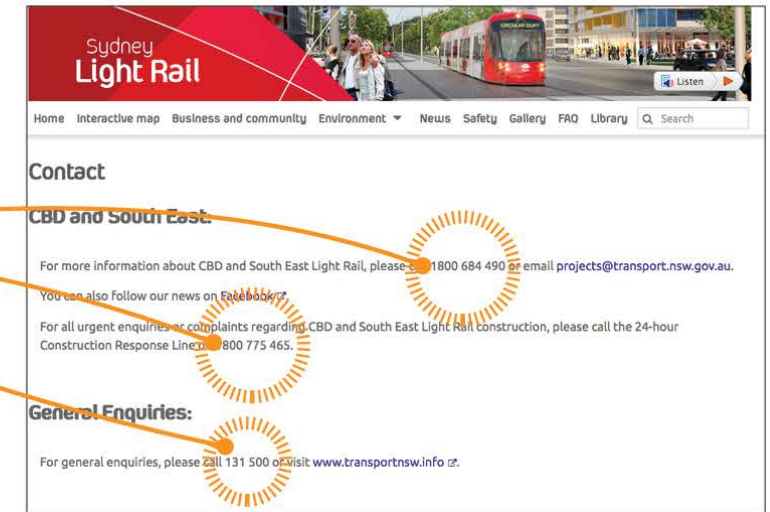
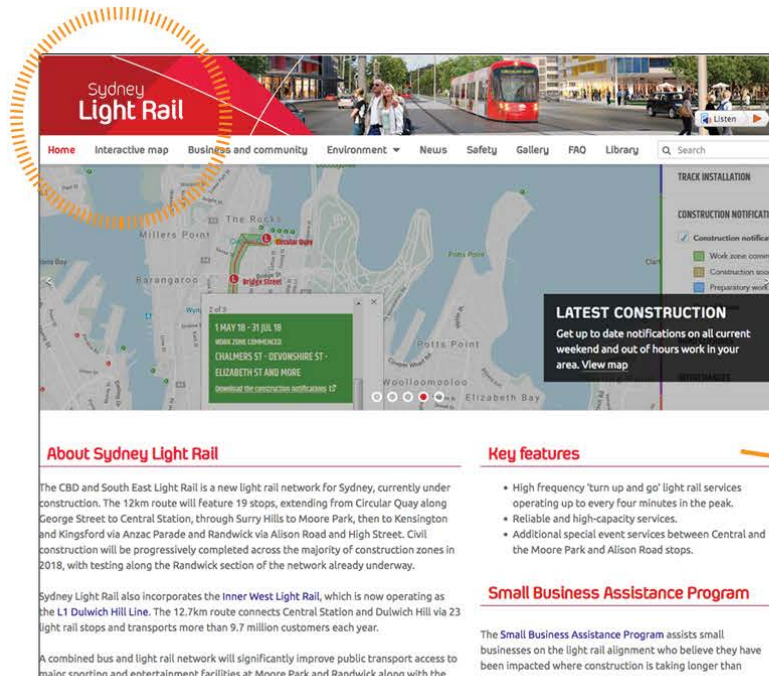
The main phone information line provides high level project advice. In addition, for small-business specific advice, advocacy and assistance, there are at least five other relevant phone numbers for various support services for small business. This does not include chambers of commerce, the current inner west light rail operator (Transdev) or local government.

- The 24-hour project phone information line – 1800 684 490
- The 24-hour Construction Response Line – 1800 775 465.
- Transport for NSW main customer number – 131 500
- Sydney Light Rail financial assistance program – 0477 477 776
- Business Connect (Department of Industry) – 1300 134 359
- Realise Business (the outsourced provider) – 9545 5900
- Office of the Small Business Commissioner 1300 795 534, 8222 4800 or 0429 596 498 (The Commissioner's mobile no.)

Observation: The City of Sydney and other witnesses to the Parliamentary Committee noted difficulty accessing who to call and when. The contact numbers are not on the Sydney Light Rail home page (but a 'second' click in by scrolling to the Contact Us section). The City of Sydney noted that on large scale infrastructure projects such as Sydney Light Rail, it was critical residents and businesses could easily and directly contact the right people to assist in resolving issues promptly.

Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Finding phone contact information

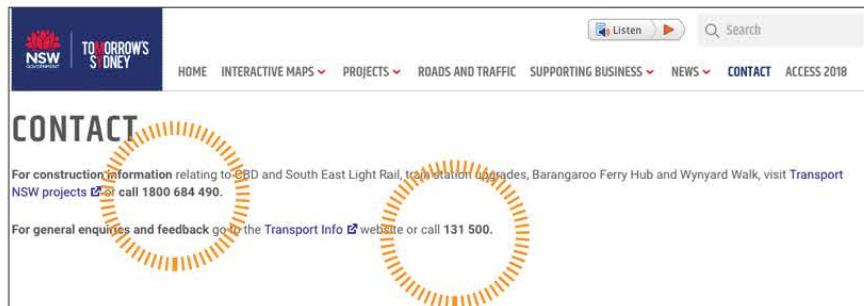


The Sydney Light Rail project website – the first site on Google / Bing search (see more under website section). The contact icon is at the bottom of the home page (see above right screen shot)

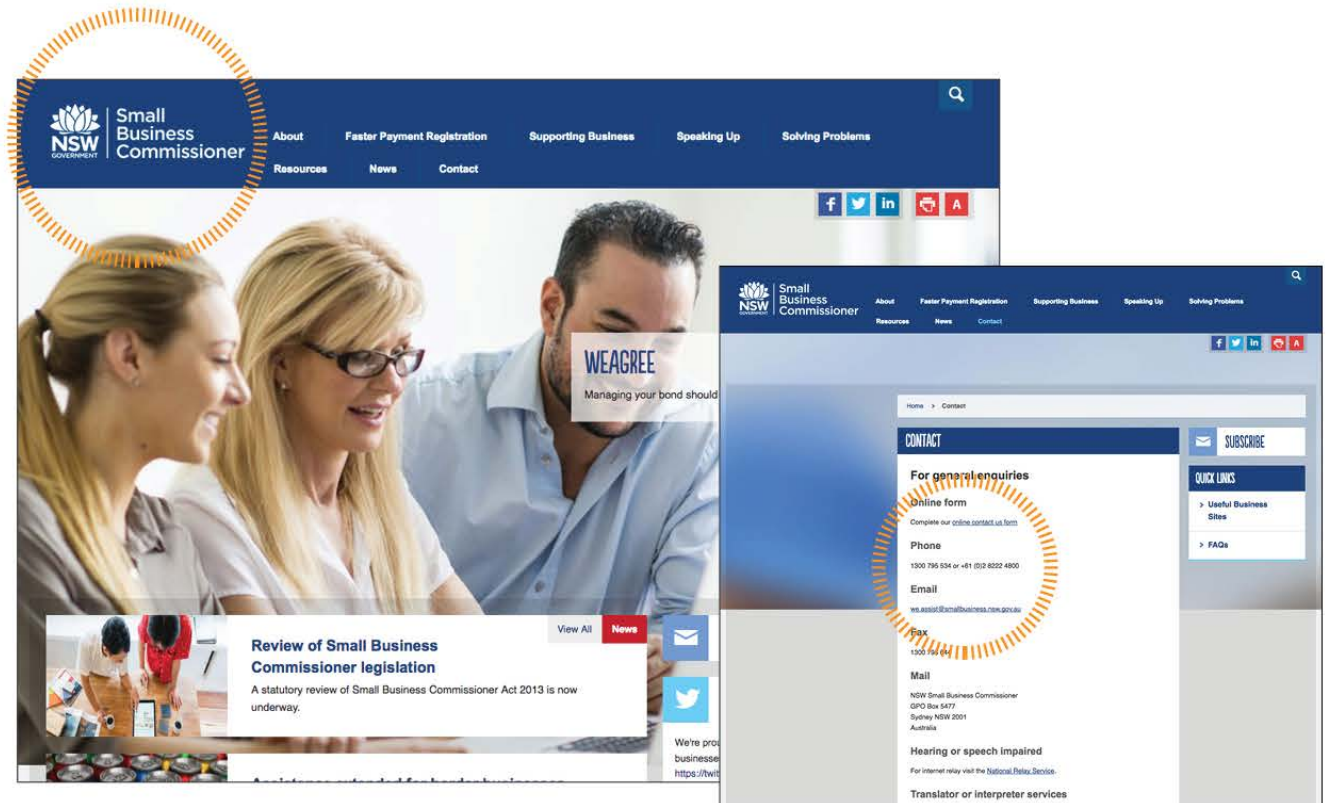
Contact landing page second click through at Contacts provides three phone numbers – the main project information line, the 24 hour construction complaints line and the general transport info line

Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Finding phone contact information



If customers visit the main Transport for NSW website (the major project hub) or the Tomorrow's Sydney website (as above), they are provided with the Sydney Light Rail project information line or the Transport Info line at 131 500 or a hyperlink direct to the Sydney Light Rail project home page



Small Business Commissioner landing page shows two phone contact numbers

Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Finding phone contact information

The Sydney Light Rail project website provides a link and a phone number for Business Connect

The Business Connect information on the Department of Industry website provided local business advisor contact phone numbers once customers typed in their postcode. That clicked through to Realise Business – the outsourced provider with another set of phone numbers

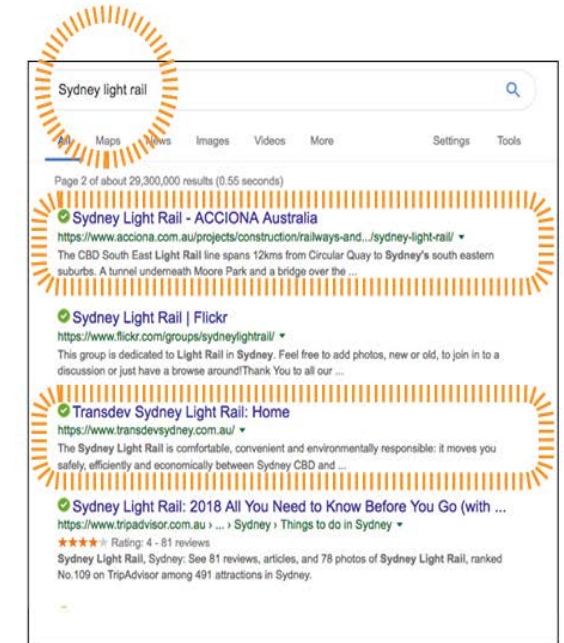
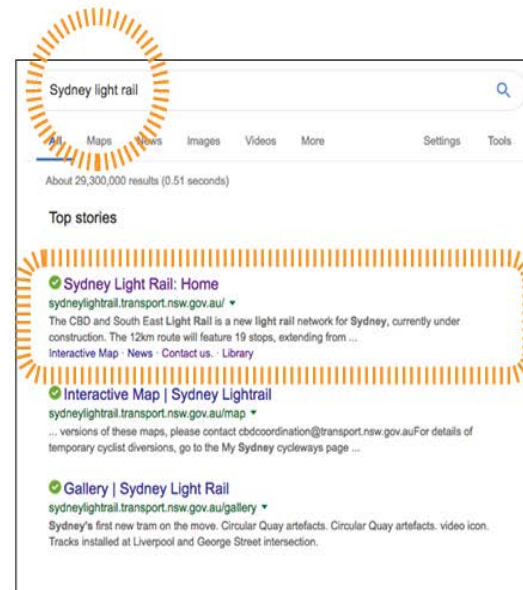
Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Websites – Overview

The digital journey for a customer or stakeholder seeking support on this project would naturally start with the Sydney Light Rail project site sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au. It is the first site that comes up if someone types in the phrase “Sydney light rail” into their web browser (Google/Bing).

Transport for NSW notes traffic to the website has increased by 45% from Jun 2016 – Jun 2018.

Other sites that come up are Acciona, which is the contractor delivering the project and Transdev which operates the 12.7 km light rail from Central Station to Dulwich Hill light rail and will be the operator of the new 12km CBD and South East Light Rail.



Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Web information

Transport for NSW also established the Tomorrow's Sydney campaign website at mysydneycbd.nsw.gov.au which outlines all major projects in the city, with hyperlinks to the various project websites including Sydney Light Rail.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS

The CBD and South East Light Rail will build a positive future for businesses with improved connections to commercial, education, hospital, sporting and entertainment precincts. Building major infrastructure in Australia's busiest city will be challenging but we're making every effort to minimise the impact on businesses. There will be disruptions along the way, but benefits will be considerable once light rail is in operation.

TRAVEL CHOICES

To prepare for changes to the transport and road network, visit our [Travel Choices](#) page.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW LIGHT RAIL ACTIVATION PROGRAM

The Transport for NSW CBD Coordination Office is supporting business through its Light Rail Activation Program, working with retailers along the light rail route.

For more information email businessactivation@transport.nsw.gov.au

MORE INFORMATION

- GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES IN
- ▶ RANDWICK, KINGSFORD AND KENSINGTON
- ▶ LOCAL AREA GUIDES

CBD & SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL

The new CBD and South East Light Rail will transform public transport in Sydney, providing high capacity, clean and reliable services. The light rail will extend from Circular Quay along George Street to Central Station, through Surry Hills to Moore Park, then to Randwick and Kingsford via Anzac Parade and Alison Road.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

Major construction started on the CBD and South East Light Rail in October 2015. Work is now underway across the Sydney CBD, Surry Hills, Moore Park, Randwick and Kensington.

A combined bus and light rail network will significantly improve public transport access to major sporting and entertainment facilities at Moore Park and Randwick along with the University of NSW, TAFE and health precincts. Additional light rail services will provide extra capacity for major events.

KEY FEATURES

- High frequency 'turn up and go' light rail services operating up to every four minutes in the peak.
- Reliable and high-capacity services.
- Additional special event services between Central and the Moore Park and Alison Road stops.

MORE INFORMATION

- [Sydney Light Rail website](#)
- [Light rail in Randwick](#)
- [CBD and South East Light Rail route alignment map](#)
- [Sydney Light Rail tree revegetation strategy Q&A](#)
- [Sydney's Light Rail Future \(pdf\)](#)

Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Accessing services

The digital journey starts to traverse other digital touch points for small business such as the Small Business Commissioner and Business Connect. For example, when moving from the Sydney Light Rail website to the Business Connect (Department of Industry) website, the user was prompted to put in their postcode to seek a local business advisor. They were directed to an outsourced provider, Realise Business. Note: this process has been further refined in late December 2018 with a new advisor gallery and an updated registration process which provides a prompt email to the small business, explaining more about the service.

The screenshot shows the NSW Department of Industry website. The main heading is 'Supporting business in New South Wales'. Below this, there are navigation tabs for 'Start and grow', 'Supporting business', 'Speaking up', 'Solving problems', 'Forms & publications', 'Innovation & research', and 'Assistance support'. The 'How it works' section is highlighted, featuring a photo of David Hancock and the text: 'About our advisors: Business Connect advisors are experienced professionals who provide confidential advice independently from the NSW Government. Advisors have experience running a small business themselves with a formal qualification in a business-related discipline. Our accredited advisors have management, consulting or prior advisory experience giving business advice with a broad range of skills covering essential business topics. Learn more about our advisors. Your local advisor can come to your business premises at a time that suits you (including outside normal business hours), or you can choose to meet at a convenient location or have an advisory session by telephone. Register for our advisory service: Register online or call 1300 134 359 to connect with your local Business Connect advisor. To speak with a specialist or multicultural advisor call 1300 650 058. To view the complete list of service providers download the Business Connect service providers list and map. Find your local advisor'.

The screenshot shows the Business Connect website. The main heading is 'Business, made simple.' Below this, there is a paragraph: 'Whether you are just starting out with a great business idea or looking to expand and grow your business, Business Connect services can help you on your journey to business success. Business Connect is a dedicated and personalised NSW Government program that provides trusted advice to help you start or grow your small business. Learn more about our services: Start or grow your business and set up for success. Meet experienced advisors in your area. Receive ongoing support through the online portal. Choose your journey: START YOUR BUSINESS, GROW YOUR BUSINESS. Join the NSW Business Connect community: Set your business up for success, get trusted advice from a business advisor and gain access to informative seminars and events. REGISTER NOW'.

The screenshot shows the Business Connect website. The main heading is 'Register for our advisory service'. Below this, there is a paragraph: 'Register online or call 1300 134 359 to connect with your local Business Connect advisor. To speak with a specialist or multicultural advisor call 1300 650 058. To view the complete list of service providers download the Business Connect service providers list and map. Find your local advisor: Enter your Postcode: 2000. Local advisor: Realise Business. Eastern Suburbs Head office: Unit 1A 29-33 Wacahah Street Kirrawee 2232. T: +61 (0)2 9545 5900. bookings@realise.business. realise.business'.

The screenshot shows the Small Business Commissioner website. The main heading is 'WEAGREE: Managing your bond should be safe, simple and easy. READ MORE'. Below this, there is a section for 'Review of Small Business Commissioner legislation: A statutory review of Small Business Commissioner Act 2013 is now underway. Assistance extended for border businesses impacted by Container Deposit Scheme: The government has extended CDS financial assistance provided to independent NSW retailers near the NSW-Victoria border until 2020. SUBSCRIBE TO OUR UPDATES. FOLLOW US ON TWITTER. We're proud to be supporting communities and small businesses in regional NSW. @ServiceNSW @Remembrance... 5 hours ago. https://t.co/KGEi980cj Yesterday. https://t.co/KPNh2LUDG Yesterday'.



Customer Service Commissioner

Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

Observation: The Sydney Light Rail project website is a popular resource and provides all key information on the project. Enhancements to the website including the interactive map has seen a huge impact in visitation. Spikes are seen based on content featured, such as the first glimpse of the new light rail vehicles and the opening of George Street-post construction in December 2017. Even though the Review recommends establishing an overarching web presence across all significant Government projects through Service NSW, there will still be a significant customer base that will still be drawn to the Sydney Light Rail website. However, with other related small business support services – such as those offered through the Business Connect program – it would be ideal to coalesce the information in one easy to navigate government portal accessible to small business impacted by any type of significant government infrastructure. The Sydney Business Chamber also noted in its submission to the Parliamentary Committee that a central portal be available through Service NSW to assist small business. By providing a single source of truth portal on one website will minimise inefficient web browsing for small business. In addition, some business owners such as those operating cafes will receive value adding services through the Service NSW Easy to do Business program, including an interactive dashboard on all their business licences across the three levels of government and a streamlined applications process to obtain / renew those licences.

Sydney Light Rail project small business digital/contact channel journey

*This customer experience illustration utilises the Sydney Light Rail project case study – but this methodology could apply to other significant infrastructure projects. This is **not** intended to replicate or replace the resourcing required at the back end but to serve as the one single customer support navigational portal into different services available*



Appendix H: Sydney Light Rail project small business support



Customer
Service
Commissioner

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Business Assistance Program

Transport for NSW established the Business Assistance Program and began accepting applications in August 2017. Under the original criteria, small business with an FTE of 20 and which had been impacted by a longer than published scheduled construction timeframe, or 'overstay' could apply for financial assistance to cover rent and other bills.

The Small Business Program targeted business tenants rather than landlords who were set to benefit from significant property value uplift. In May, 2018, the program was expanded to increase the threshold of those businesses able to apply to having 50 FTE and to fund reasonable accountant costs incurred in connection with an application to also be reimbursed.

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Business Assistance Program criteria

The criteria for assistance are:

- Small business employing fewer than 50 full-time equivalent employees
- The place of business is situated along the alignment or in close proximity to and impacted by construction activity
- The place of business is located in a zone where construction is taking longer than initially advised

The businesses must provide:

- Signed financial statements prior to the beginning of Light Rail construction, and for the period since construction began
- Any additional information showing how the Light Rail construction has impacted the business

Process and communications

As at 22 January 2019, 158 businesses had officially applied and provided all necessary information for assessment with 122 businesses offered assistance. More than \$20.3 million in ex gratia payments to businesses has been approved by the Minister.

From the time contact is made and the information received is appropriate, applications are generally dealt within a four week timeframe as committed. Once the applications are assessed as being compliant, they are referred to an independent assessor, PKF Australia for initial determination and recommendation.

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Probity

Transport for NSW appointed an independent auditor, APAC, to review the assistance scheme. Its observations included:

- The assessment process is well structured and has clearly articulated steps;
- The assessment process has been implemented consistently;
- The eligibility criteria for financial assistance have been applied with an appropriate level of consistency;
- There has been a balance between following the assessment process to ensure appropriate use of taxpayers' funds and recognising the urgency of providing financial assistance; and
- The appropriate processes for identifying and managing conflicts of interest and for maintaining confidentiality have been established.

The full probity report was tabled with the Parliamentary Committee.

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Small Business Financial Assistance – Ex Gratia Payments by Zone/Category Data as at 20 January 2019

Categories as defined in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 (cat.no.1292.0)

Category (as per ANZSIC 2006 classes)	No of businesses provided assistance	Sum of Total payments approved \$	Range (lowest payment)	Range (highest payment)	Sum of < \$100k	Sum of \$100k to \$250k	Sum of > \$250k
Cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services	49	\$ 9,437,310	\$ 7,938	\$ 692,997	18	18	13
Clothing, footwear and personal accessory retailing	4	\$ 1,049,666	\$ 57,198	\$ 629,220	1	2	1
Food retailing	15	\$ 2,315,999	\$ 32,400	\$ 660,428	9	3	3
Household goods retailing	5	\$ 700,101	\$ 51,684	\$ 351,712	3	1	1
Other retailing*	49	\$ 6,806,870	\$ 6,733	\$ 570,019	28	14	7
Grand Total	122	\$ 20,309,946	\$ 6,733	\$ 692,997	59	38	25

*includes cosmetics, pharmaceutical, newsagency, florists, ancillary medical, speciality shops

Post Code	No of businesses provided assistance	Sum of Total payments approved \$	Average per Zone
2000 - Sydney	53	\$ 11,144,789	\$ 210,279
2010 - Surry Hills	36	\$ 6,066,493	\$ 168,514
2032 - Kingsford	13	\$ 1,283,369	\$ 98,721
2033 - Kensington	15	\$ 1,284,471	\$ 85,631
2031 - Randwick	5	\$ 530,824	\$ 106,165
Grand Total	122	\$ 20,309,946	\$ 166,475

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Small Business Financial Assistance – Ex Gratia Payments by Zone/Category Data as at 20 January 2019

Zone	No of businesses provided assistance	Sum of Total payments approved	Av. Payment per business
1 - Alfred Street, between George and Loftus streets	3	\$ 758,956	\$ 252,985
2 - George Street, between Alfred to Grosvenor streets	1	\$ 468,350	\$ 468,350
3 - George Street, between Bridge to Margaret streets	4	\$ 800,371	\$ 200,093
4 - George Street, between Hunter to King streets	7	\$ 2,334,942	\$ 333,563
5 - George Street, between King to Market streets	2	\$ 311,240	\$ 155,620
6 - George Street, between Market to Park streets	6	\$ 1,903,882	\$ 317,314
7 - George Street, between Park to Bathurst streets	1	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
8 - George Street, between Bathurst to Liverpool streets	5	\$ 717,996	\$ 143,599
9 - George Street, between Liverpool to Goulburn streets	5	\$ 820,706	\$ 164,141
10 - George Street, between Goulburn to Hay streets	8	\$ 1,210,633	\$ 151,329
11 - George Street, between Hay Street to Rawson Place	6	\$ 951,560	\$ 158,593
12 - Rawson Place between George and Pitt streets	3	\$ 467,086	\$ 155,695
13 - Eddy Ave between Pitt and Elizabeth streets	2	\$ 149,067	\$ 74,534
14 - Chalmers Street between Elizabeth and Devonshire streets	4	\$ 684,168	\$ 171,042
15 - Devonshire Street between Chalmers to Elizabeth streets	3	\$ 158,879	\$ 52,960
16 - Devonshire Street between Elizabeth to Steel streets	13	\$ 2,822,078	\$ 217,083
17 - Devonshire Street between Steel to Crown streets	11	\$ 1,778,325	\$ 161,666
18 - Devonshire Street between Crown to Bourke streets	5	\$ 623,043	\$ 124,609
26 - High Street between Wansey and Belmore roads	5	\$ 530,824	\$ 106,165
28 - Anzac Parade between Dacey to Todman avenues	9	\$ 612,938	\$ 68,104
29 - Anzac Parade between Todman Avenue to High Street	4	\$ 458,389	\$ 114,597
30 - Anzac Parade between High to Rainbow streets	10	\$ 1,044,073	\$ 104,407
31 - Anzac Parade at the 9 Ways roundabout	5	\$ 452,440	\$ 90,488
	122	\$ 20,309,946	\$ 166,475

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Business Activation program

“Our program has graduated over time. It commenced with proactive marketing to promote businesses, but as delays became apparent we graduated that program to provide financial assistance to help businesses because we want the businesses who are located on the route today to be the ones who experience the uplift.”

Marg Prendergast
Coordinator General
Transport Coordination
Transport for NSW

*Public Accountability Committee
Parliamentary Committee, 20
August, 2018*



The Sydney Light Rail Activation program has used opened spaces on George St to support businesses for Christmas between 2015 and 2018.

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Business Activation program

Sydney Light Rail is expected to generate \$3 billion in economic benefit for NSW. Transport for NSW notes light rail is a catalyst for urban renewal with more than 120 government and private sector projects in planning or construction in the CBD alone. Experience cited in the EIS economic assessment (Technical Paper No. 4) found similar uplifts where light rail was constructed including the Gold Coast, Calgary in Canada and Portland in the United States. It found other positive gains including increased property values, increased pedestrianisation and patronage and less congestion.

Transport for NSW established a Business Activation Program in 2015, a first of its kind for a transport agency internationally. The program was developed with key stakeholders such as the Sydney Business Chamber, Australian Retailers Association, Property Council of Australia, the Small Business Commissioner, Tourism Accommodation Association, Destination NSW, City of Sydney Council and Randwick City Council.

It includes tailored local area marketing for different precincts across the alignment such as cultural and arts in Surry Hills and shopping in the CBD north and placemaking and art displays to attract footfall. The program works closely with local business to develop and deliver initiatives.

Transport for NSW noted in its submission to the Parliamentary Committee that the leading placemaking expert, New York's Projects for Public Spaces, called the Sydney light rail program the best practice worldwide associated with transport construction.



Sydney Light Rail small business support

Activation at a local level

Precinct

Activation activity

CBD North

- Christmas activation on George Street for 2015, 2016 and 2017
- CBD Christmas 'open for business' TV and print campaign for 2015 and 2016
- 2 x Local Area Marketing videos
- Activation of George Street in 2016 during Anzac Day
- Head on Photo Festival and VIVID
- Public art activation on Hunter Street in 2016
- Place making activity in Wynyard during VIVID and Circular Quay during VIVID 2017
- Closing Market Street on Boxing Day (2016 and 2017)

CBD South

- Activation of George Street with light-up monkeys in trees and smart poles, and additional pop-up seating area
- Place making outside of World Square shopping precinct
- 2016 Chinese New Year activation
- 2 x Local Area Marketing videos
- Sponsorship with Haymarket Chamber of Commerce and Live Work Play guide for Haymarket

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Activation at a local level

Precinct

Activation activity

Surry Hills

- Working in partnership with the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre to deliver Double Take, Support Surry Hills Festival and delivery of curated culture walks
- Delivered two 'Head to Surry Hills' campaigns, in late 2017 and March-April 2018, reaching 400,000 people in each campaign and raising the profile of businesses in Surry Hills
- Pedestrianised Devonshire Street for the 2016 and 2017 Surry Hills Festival
- Working in partnership with the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and Northcott residents
- Shopping and dining guide (50,000 copies)
- 4 x Local area Marketing Videos
- Place making in open zone 15 (Devonshire Street between Chalmers and Elizabeth streets)

Randwick, Kensington and Kingsford

- Artmoves – art and sculpture program transforming five sites along Anzac Parade in partnership with Randwick City Council
- Meeks Street – furniture and art to transform a new public plaza
- Shopping and dining guides for each precinct (160,000 copies)
- Shopping advertorial in the Southern Courier in partnership with the Kingsford Chamber of Commerce
- 4 x Local Area Marketing videos on social media

Sydney Light Rail small business support

Customer experience

Transport for NSW commissioned customer sentiment surveys along the route, prior to construction and are undertaken in major retail zones in the CBD, Surry Hills on Devonshire Street and on Anzac Parade in Kingsford and Kensington.

In 2017, Transport for NSW surveyed within the completed zone 5, George Street between King and Market streets where Christmas activation was occurring. The results showed:

- 94% of visitors noticed the Christmas activation features
- 90% said the features had improved their experience.
- 87% of respondents that recalled George Street prior to construction said that George Street was improved.
- The proportion that said they would visit the area more often following construction increased to 28%, up from 2-4% in previous surveys.