

## OPINION 35

# Sydney Metro is wanting to grow

**Paul Nicolaou**



**W**hen the Sydney Metro extension from Chatswood to Sydenham opened, Sydney was spellbound by the grandeur of the newly-opened stations.

The genius of the Metro and its designers was evident in these veritable 'cathedrals' of 21st century transport infrastructure.

CBD stations such as Barangaroo, Martin Place and Gadigal were clearly designed to cater for our city's growth this century and perhaps even the next.

We now know that the Metro magic is much greater than the stations. The vast Hunter St station for the Metro linking the Sydney and Parramatta CBDs, for example, includes some nice 'extras'.

The extras are two spur lines, each about 700m long, radiating from Hunter St and heading south as if to suggest to the NSW government where the next Metro connection should go.

These spur lines would make it possible to build potential extensions without disrupting services on the Western Metro.

Not only is that clever engineering, it opens all sorts of possibilities.

Specifically, a southern Metro would make redevelopment of the Long Bay Jail precinct feasible.

The jail complex is well and truly past its use-by date and NSW would benefit from its replacement in a regional centre.

Its transfer would free up space for thousands of new homes in a mini city of the thwarted Rosehill kind.

It is becoming more obvious by the day that the Metro is not just another transport project.

It's the backbone of our city's future, a once-in-a-generation investment that is already reshaping how people live, work and socialise.

Suburban centres such as Sydenham, Chatswood and Crows Nest are seeing a surge in economic activity.

It's a pity that the delay in delivering the Sydenham to Bankstown extension is an unfortunate but rare blemish on the Metro project.

We must support Premier Chris Minns and Transport Minister John Graham in getting the project back on deadline.

The government should focus on building more Metro links in Sydney and those spur lines at Hunter St are a great headstart for at least one of them.

**Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney**