

## **UP LIKE ASIA FOR SYDNEY'S GROWTH**

**Chris Johnson, Urban Taskforce**

Dr Bradfield laid out Sydney's railway network 100 years ago based on visits to New York, London and Paris metros. He planned 60 trains an hour on the Western line – that is one a minute – but unfortunately the density of development was far too low to realise Bradfield's vision. A century on and the NSW government is rolling out Metro rail across Greater Sydney in a manner similar to what Bradfield saw in London. Much of a Circle Line is planned from Rouse Hill via Chatswood to Bankstown and on to Liverpool. A Central Line is proposed to connect the Sydney CBD with Parramatta. To justify the metro system significant new density and height of development must occur around the new metro stations but in a typical Sydney governance mix up the state government has passed the planning decisions down to the local councils. The result will be less height, less density and fewer people on the metro. It is almost understandable that 100 years ago when Sydney was only 1 million people that the city grew out in low rise development but Sydney is now 5 million people and is heading to 8 million. We must go up and the key lessons on this are coming from Asian cities.

The biggest roll out of new Metro rail networks is happening across Asian cities. From New Delhi, and Mumbai to Shanghai, and Beijing to Hong Kong and Singapore the biggest urban change is the roll out of new Metro rail networks. Shanghai has built 1,000 kilometres of metro in a short 25 years and Singapore is not far behind. But related to this mass transit roll out is a boom in apartment towers and office buildings and a more urban way of living. Australian cities must learn from this new urban lifestyle as their populations increase. So we must move from car based travel with large detached homes remote from amenities to a public transport and walking environment with smaller apartments that share facilities and amenities. Rachel Botsman has written about a swing to a more co-operative, sharing way of living as evidenced by Uber and Air B&B. Singapore has graphed quality of living scores for various cities against density with Singapore coming out quite strongly. Sydney can learn from Singapore here. As our density inevitably increases with population growth we need to maintain our lifestyle quality but it will be a different lifestyle

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