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CLEAN GREEN FUTURE FOR LEICHHARDT DEPOT

State Transit is to redevelop its Leichhardt Depot in a \$34 million upgrade to make it home to Australia's largest environmentally friendly bus fleet.

The state of the art redevelopment of the historic transport hub will cater to increased demand from passengers for bus services in one of Sydney's population hot spots.

The "clean green" depot will:

- improve bus services for passengers in the Inner West
- support the largest gas bus fleet in Australia
- protect the heritage buildings on the site
- minimise the impact of noise and light on its neighbours
- clean up residual site contamination
- use recycled water.

Sydney Buses plans to lodge a development application with the Leichhardt Council to develop and protect the historically significant site that has been used for public transport for nearly one hundred years.

The design includes the restoration of the historic Tram Shed, Cable Store and Traffic Office buildings.

The depot, which operates 15 bus routes, will remain open during the redevelopment to continue to meet the needs of the local community.

Sydney Buses CEO, John Lee said Leichhardt and the surrounding district are areas of population growth, and Sydney Buses was targeting its services to meet expected increased demand.

Mr Lee pointed to figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics which showed the Leichhardt local government area, along with North Sydney, has experienced the biggest surge in fertility rates in Sydney.

"What we are aiming for is a clean, green site that sends out the quietest, most reliable and environmentally friendly buses in Australia to get people where they need to go."

The upgrade will allow the depot to support, over time, a fleet of up to 200 environmentally friendly, low-emission gas-powered buses compared to the 98 older style buses it currently accommodates.

The buses generate the lowest emissions of any mass-produced conventional commercial buses in Australia – reducing city pollution. They feature low accessible low floors, are air-conditioned, and are designed to meet high safety standards for drivers and passengers.

“This will allow Sydney Buses to improve the reliability, comfort and safety of our public transport network and reduce emissions,” Mr Lee said.

The redesign aims to reduce bus movements on residential streets, free up parking on residential streets, and landscape the surrounding precinct with native vegetation.

Mr Lee said the current depot was operating above capacity and that the upgrade was identified as “paramount” in the 2004 State Transit Depot Strategic Plan.

Modernising the depot would relieve pressure on surrounding depots and help improve service quality throughout the CBD and south west.

The upgrade would reduce ‘dead running’ time; a term that describes the use of empty buses from other depots being brought into the area to start route services.

The depot itself will feature a purpose built maintenance facility and workshop, regional administrative offices with underground car parks, room for the parking of 200 buses, and two new access driveways.

Completion date for the project is expected to be two years from approval date.

The depot’s neighbours will be invited to learn more about the development at community information briefings that will take place towards the end of November.

Those interested in finding out more can call for free on 1800 047 470 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday or email leichhardtdepot@urbanconcepts.net.au

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