

Appendix 2: Response from Audit Office

The report acknowledges that transport agencies have plans and projects in development or being implemented to manage patronage growth up to and beyond 2019. This report takes into account the:

- Long Term Transport Master Plan (p2 and p5)
- planned procurement of new trains (p3 and p15)
- Sydney Metro North West which is expected to be completed by 2019 (p3, p21 and p22)
- Sydney Metro City and South West which is expected to be completed by 2024 (p3 and p23)
- enabling projects for upcoming timetables including track works, power supply upgrades, and other new technologies (p3 and p22)
- Rail Operations Centre (p3 and p21)
- planned new Customer Information Management System (p21), the potential of the Rail Operations centre to improve customer information particularly through telephone apps (p22)
- customer-centric service delivery culture now evident in the transport agencies (p21).

Our analysis of the facts led us to conclude that despite these plans, strategies and projects there remains a significant risk to punctuality after 2019 (p3 and p23). This is because:

- overcrowding is already compromising punctuality (p17)
- of the unprecedented levels of recent and projected patronage growth (pp3-5, p17 and pp21-25)
- infrastructure constraints, particularly signalling, limit the number of additional trains that can be run in peak periods on the existing heavy rail network (p19).

Our report acknowledges that Transport for NSW:

- in collaboration with Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, has undertaken work in developing additional strategies to increase the capacity of the heavy rail network to prevent a decline in punctuality, including an Advanced Train Control System to replace the current trackside signalling system (p3, p4 and p24)
- expects to put a plan for this purpose to the government by the third quarter of this (2017) calendar year. The likely scale of investment needed would require Cabinet approval (p4 and p24).

The absence of such an agreed and funded plan creates a high risk of overcrowding and a decline in punctuality beyond 2019, particularly as major infrastructure projects have long leads times (p4, p16 and p24).