This month:

- Barangaroo: A new place to celebrate on the harbour.
- Westconnex - milestone achieved.
- Sydney monorail track removal complete: Engineers Aust.
- Futuristic towers vie for Parramatta Square design competition.
- Full report on Western Sydney Light Rail released.
- Government releases business case for Sydney light rail.

Sources used in this report:

- Barangaroo website (www.barangaroo.com)
- Engineers Australia (www.engineers.org.au)
- Parramatta City Council (www.parracity.nsw.gov.au)
- Urbanalyst (www.urbanalyst.com.au)
- Westconnex (www.westconnex.com.au)
A major new waterfront park and event spaces form the centrepiece to complete the vision for Barangaroo, where construction is now progressing apace and the first two commercial towers and the Headland Park are on track for completion in 2015.

The Barangaroo Delivery Authority today released the new master plan framework for Central Barangaroo, which will be an exciting, diverse and active addition to the western CBD waterfront.

"Barangaroo is a $6 billion investment in the future of NSW – the Barangaroo precinct will help to cement Sydney’s place as one of the Asia Pacific’s leading financial and tourism destinations," Authority CEO John Tabart said.

"Barangaroo will be a place for Sydneysiders to work, live and enjoy the Harbour. Barangaroo will incorporate major public recreation, cultural and event spaces. We confirm our commitment to ensuring over half the new precinct will be assigned for public and recreational space, ending close to two centuries of port and industrial use.

"Central Barangaroo will include 2.6 hectares of waterfront public space, with the Barangaroo foreshore promenade completing one of the world’s great waterfront walks stretching 14 kilometres from Woolloomooloo to the Anzac Bridge.

"This public space will create a forecourt to a vibrant mix of residential, commercial and cultural uses at Central Barangaroo," said Mr Tabart.

"The refined master plan framework provides the opportunity for Central to be more active and engaging, with greater flexibility allowing for a diversity of uses.

Central will provide a platform for events such as live music, festivals and outdoor art exhibitions."

The master plan will be placed on public display as part of the consultation process prior to the lodgement of a planning application seeking a modification to the Barangaroo Concept Plan.

Master Plan Overview
Key aspects of the new Central Barangaroo master plan include:

- The “Sydney Steps” creating a new city gateway to Barangaroo and the waterfront
- A continuous 30m wide public foreshore walk
- New civic plaza and parks on the waterfront
- A network of laneways ensuring pedestrian and vehicular accessibility
- Preservation of a site for a future cultural venue
- Preservation of views from Observatory Hill to the horizon and the harbour
- Greater diversity of active uses to create a 24/7 environment all generally within the current approved building heights and footprints creating a more engaging, active and vibrant waterfront precinct – this can lead to up to a total of 121,500 of gross floor area within Central Barangaroo.

"Prepared by world leading master planners, Skidmore Owings & Merrill (Chicago) in partnership with Anderson Hunter Horne (Sydney), and shaped by public consultation, the Central Barangaroo framework will guide the future development of the central 5.2 hectare portion of Barangaroo," said Mr Tabart.

"Central Barangaroo will be a new place for Sydney to celebrate on the harbour. Its built area will be characterised by laneways where you will be able to walk or cycle along the streets, active with shops, cafes and restaurants. Above street level, the buildings will accommodate a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, cultural and educational."

Partner in charge of Urban Design and Planning for Skidmore Owings and Merrill, Phil Enquist describes Central Barangaroo as a remarkable district emerging in Sydney.

“Central is the place that will bring all of Barangaroo together. Its vibrancy will be driven by a mix of cultural amenities, apartments, commercial and, most importantly, a great harbour park we describe as ‘Sydney’s Urban Theatre’. Compact, active places create favourable urban characteristics such as walkability, mixed use, cultural uses, and increased public open space," said Mr Enquist.

The Authority has worked closely with Lend Lease to ensure the planning for Central Barangaroo, Barangaroo South and the Headland Park together deliver the vision for Barangaroo – establishing an international financial services hub with major new spaces and places for enjoying the harbour.

Next steps
Information about the master plan framework for Central Barangaroo will be publically available online at www.barangaroo.com and on display in the Authority’s public foyer during business hours at level 21, 201 Kent Street in the city from Monday 11 November 2013.

The Authority has commenced the planning process by seeking Director General’s Requirements from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

In the coming months the Authority will lodge a planning application which will be placed on exhibition for public comment by the Department.
The NSW Govt is steaming ahead with WestConnex with Roads Minister Duncan Gay calling for expressions of interest from industry to widen the M4 from six to eight lanes, while also releasing the concept design for the M4 East tunnel.

WestConnex is Australia’s largest transport project, which will transform Sydney by linking the city’s west and east with the airport and port.

“There is now strong momentum behind WestConnex and we’ve reached an important milestone before construction starts on the first stage,” Mr Gay said.

“The widening of the M4 and its extension via a tunnel along the Parramatta Road corridor will transform this part of Sydney,” Mr Gay said.

“Not only will it deliver improved travel times and reliability for all motorists by easing congestion, it will provide a new way of living for the communities along Parramatta Road.

“Taking through traffic off Parramatta Road will allow for significant urban revitalisation and reconnect the communities on either side of the corridor.”

Stage 1 of WestConnex includes widening the M4 from three to four lanes in each direction from Church Street, Parramatta to Homebush Bay Drive, Homebush.

Stage 1 will then extend the motorway, called the M4 East, via a 6km tunnel of three lanes in each direction from west of Concord Road, North Strathfield to Parramatta Road and City West Link at Haberfield.

Communities and businesses can now have their say on Stage 1. In addition to the release of concept design for the M4 East, the planning application has also been lodged today.

This follows the submission of the M4 widening planning application last month, meaning all planning applications have now been lodged for stage one of WestConnex.

“We’re getting on with the job of delivering much needed infrastructure for NSW,” Mr Gay said.

“WestConnex is a game-changer and this is another step towards bringing this important project to life.”

WestConnex supporting works which include new connections at Westmead, Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park will be delivered as part of the M4 widening.

“Building the motorway will require some property acquisitions, but we will try to keep them to a minimum,” Mr Gay said.

“The exact number is not known at this stage as the final route alignment has not been determined, but it is expected to be about 100 properties,” he said.

“This is substantially fewer than comparable projects such as the Warringah Expressway or the Sydney Harbour Bridge.”

The table below is a comparison of the likely property impacts of the M4 East relative to other major Sydney road projects.

Concept design plans are available at www.westconnex.com.au. The feedback period on the concept design closes 17 February 2014.

The NSW Government is investing $1.8 billion in WestConnex, with the Australian Government contributing $1.5 billion.

WestConnex will link Sydney’s west and south-west with the city, airport and port and provide a missing link in the Sydney Orbital Network.

The motorway will be delivered in three stages and is due for completion in 2023.

Visit www.westconnex.com.au for more information, to have your say, or register to receive project updates by email.
Sydney monorail track removal now complete.

Transport for NSW has announced that the final section of track from Sydney's monorail has been removed.

A total of 3.6km of steel track was removed as part of this stage of the decommissioning.

A Transport for NSW spokesperson said: “Dismantling the final 46m, 23t section from over the Western Distributor completes the removal of the monorail track.

“Work to remove the monorail infrastructure only started in August this year and already all of the track and support columns have been safely removed. Although the track is gone, there is still a lot of work to be done.

“Crews are now focused on removing the concrete pedestals that supported the monorail.”

Significant heritage restoration work will carried out on the Pyrmont Bridge as the last elements of the monorail infrastructure in the area are removed.

“The bridge’s control tower, which was moved when the monorail was built, will be shifted 6m back to its original position. Removal of monorail infrastructure on the bridge is underway and will continue over the coming months.

Futuristic towers vie for Parramatta Square design comp.

A pair of futuristic, conical commercial office towers wrapped in photovoltaic panels and topped with wind turbines has become one of four proposals being considered for construction in Parramatta Square.

Parramatta City Council’s Parramatta Square Stages 5 and 6 design competition jury yesterday confirmed those in contention to design towers in the Square are: Sydney-based Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp, Johnson Pilton Walker, Bates Smart and Italy-based Mario Cucinella Architects.

The four teams were chosen from a field of 73 designs from firms across the United States to Uganda, and Perth to Sydney, submitted to Council last month. Concepts ranged from contemporary interpretations of the traditional office block, to futuristic and sculptural towers.

When constructed, the commercial towers will add up to 140,000 square metres of office space to the Parramatta CBD and function as two of the key centrepieces of the vital three hectare Parramatta Square site in the heart of the CBD.

Lord Mayor Cr John Chedid said: “We’re delighted to see such forward-thinking, innovative solutions. Without question, this creative range of designs, submitted by many of the leading architecture firms across the world today, will help us meet our future business, cultural, entertainment and tourism needs, and signpost Parramatta in a distinctive, unique way.”

“Council is very confident in the strength of the four proposals selected, and looks forward to the construction of signature buildings for the city of Parramatta in the near future,” Cr Chedid.

“We thank our jury for their expertise - NSW Government Architect Peter Poulet, City of Sydney Director of City Planning, Development & Transport Graham Jahn, NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure urban design team leader Elisabeth Peet, and Parramatta City Council’s Director of Property Development Scott Gregg.”

Each proposal was assessed in terms of its sustainability, design, urban design, feasibility, and innovation.

Describing the four finalists, the jury said the Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp proposal was for “two elegant, connected, tapering geometric towers that have the potential to become signature buildings in Parramatta Square”.

Of the Johnson Pilton Walker proposal, they said it created links between Parramatta Square, Darcy Street and the Parramatta Station concourse, extending open public space over the two levels. They added: “The rectilinear towers hover high above the new open space, which is a grand gesture to Parramatta Square.”

The Bates Smart scheme “proposes a differentiated active podium that addresses Parramatta Square, activating it with a mix of retail uses. Two rectilinear towers with deep recesses form a backdrop rather than an iconic gesture”.

Commenting on the Mario Cucinella Architects proposal, they said: “This environmentally-focused scheme proposes a pair of conical towers whose surface is animated by a breathable photovoltaic system. The roof plane features sculptural wind turbines signalling the sustainable emphasis of this design.”

Each of the four chosen teams will now compete in a design excellence competition closing on 6th December. Each will receive $30,000 on submission of a complying scheme, with Council announcing the winning design before the end of the year.

The firm appointed for Stages 5 and 6 will join a range of internationally recognised architecture firms already appointed to design other landmark buildings within the Parramatta Square precinct.

Stage 1, a commercial building at 169 Macquarie Street, was awarded to Architectus; Stage 2, the Aspire residential tower at 160 Church Street, was awarded to Grimshaw Architects; and Francis-Jones Morehen Thorp was appointed to design community/Council facilities and commercial space for Stage 3.
Full report on Western Sydney Light Rail released.


Parramatta City Council will release the full reports into a light rail network for Western Sydney to the infrastructure industry, to encourage private sector investment in the project.

The release of these reports coincides with the start of the World Congress on Railway Research in Sydney this week.

The reports, commissioned by Parramatta City Council, cover the economic, land use, transport, environmental, health and social impacts of a Western Sydney light rail network.

Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Cr John Chedid said the NSW Government, under its open-for-business policy, are considering private sector bids to deliver the infrastructure NSW needs and this could include a light rail network for Western Sydney.

“The State Government recently launched an Expression of Interest process for the Sydney CBD light rail, which generated significant interest from the market place,” Cr Chedid said.

“We know there are two or three strong consortiums of world-class light rail companies preparing bids for the Sydney CBD light rail. We’re asking them to have a look at our light rail proposal, which has a strong case. Council has already been approached by several private investors interested in our proposal. However, we want to open this project up to the market place,” Cr Chedid said.

Council’s light rail feasibility study determined a four line regional network would deliver:

- $5 billion economic stimulus during construction
- $3 billion increase in Western Sydney’s Gross Regional Product
- $50 million in journey-time savings

and

- $35 million in resource and social cost savings

Cr Chedid said the State Government has identified the feasibility study into a regional light rail network as a priority in its Long Term Transport Master Plan.

“We now need the State Government to take the next step and transform public transport in Western Sydney by undertaking a $10 million detailed study of the first line,” Cr Chedid said.

“Our study recommended the first priority be the Macquarie Park Line. This is a no brainer – it connects the biggest medical precinct in the southern hemisphere, two universities, a rapidly expanding business park and Parramatta, Sydney’s second CBD,” Cr Chedid said.

Government releases business case details for light rail plan.


New South Wales Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian last week said that Sydney's proposed CBD and South East Light Rail project linking Circular Quay, Central, Randwick and Kingsford will deliver 10,000 jobs and more than $4 billion in economic benefits to the state.

The $1.6 billion light rail project, which involves a 12-kilometre light rail line extending from Circular Quay along George Street to Central Station, then to Kingsford via Anzac Parade and Randwick via Alison Road, is expected to be able to carry up to 9,000 people per hour in each direction, with additional high capacity services to cater for major events at the SCG, Sydney Football Stadium and Randwick Racecourse.

Releasing details of the business case last Thursday, Ms Berejiklian welcomed the fact the project would not only provide a reliable, high capacity new public transport option, but also bring thousands of jobs and economic benefits.

“The project will deliver 10,000 jobs during construction and operation and will be implemented with a redesigned bus network which will reduce the number of buses clogging CBD streets by up to 220 buses an hour – that will also help customers coming into the city on buses from the west and north,” Ms Berejiklian said.

According to the Minister, an economic appraisal of the project found that light rail would deliver more than $2 billion in benefits for public transport users, $264 million for road users and environmental and social benefits worth $308 million.

Ms Berejiklian said that five MOUs have now been signed with key stakeholders, including the City of Sydney Council, Randwick City Council, University of NSW, Centennial Parklands and the Australian Turf Club.

“I’m pleased with the support for the project from these key stakeholders who recognise the benefits it will bring to Sydney in terms of relieving congestion and supporting major health, education, sporting, business and cultural precincts,” she said.

Also last week, Ms Berejiklian opened a new light rail community information centre in the CBD and released the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project, which outlines the key features of the light rail project and assesses its potential environmental impacts during construction and operation.

“The CBD and South East Light Rail is an essential project as part of our plans to overhaul public transport in Sydney, address congestion and provide for future growth,” the Minister said.

“Transport modelling shows the increased demand for travel in the future cannot be accommodated on existing road and transport networks without generating more congestion, overcrowding and longer travel times – this project is crucial to addressing Sydney's transport challenges.

“While constructing a project of this scale in a busy urban environment will result in temporary disruptions, the benefits of this project far outweigh the impacts. Not only will the project provide significantly improved public transport links and less congestion, but also an improved environment for pedestrians.
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