



# Gladys Berejiklian MP

Minister for Transport

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **PLANNING STARTS TO CONVERT EPPING TO CHATSWOOD RAIL LINE TO NEXT-GENERATION RAPID TRANSIT**

Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian announced community consultation will now begin for a six to seven month closure of the Epping to Chatswood rail line in 2018-19 to deliver fully-automated rapid transit services for customers every four minutes.

The NSW Government signed the \$3.7 billion North West Rail Link operations contract this week, which includes brand new modern trains, eight new stations and upgrades to five existing stations between Epping and Chatswood.

Ms Berejiklian said with the operations contract now awarded, preparations can begin to upgrade the existing line between Epping and Chatswood – delivering new, fast, frequent and automated rapid transit services.

Despite the temporary closure being more than four years away, the project team is starting work with the community now to get the interim transport arrangements right.

"When Sydney's new rapid transit services start in the first half of 2019, 15 trains an hour will run in both directions between Epping and Chatswood during the peak – almost four times as many as today," Ms Berejiklian said.

"For example a customer at North Ryde heading to the city will see a rapid transit train every four minutes in the peak, compared to a train every 15 minutes today."

To convert the existing suburban line to next-generation rapid transit, major upgrades will be needed, including overhauling the stations, installing 26km of cabling, power and signalling systems and customer improvements such as platform screen doors.

The five existing stations along the line – at Epping, Macquarie University, Macquarie Park, North Ryde and Chatswood – will have screen doors along the full length of the platforms to keep people and objects away from the tracks, improving customer safety and allowing trains to get in and out of stations much faster, Ms Berejiklian said.

"We have the best companies from Australia and around the world on-board to deliver this project and after looking at all the options, we need to do this important upgrade and conversion work."

Ms Berejiklian said buses will replace trains for around six to seven months between Epping and Chatswood and it is possible there will be some changes to the train timetable for a few months before this, while early works are carried out.

“The project team will start talking to customers and stakeholders from this week and keep everyone informed every step of the way over the next few years. This will include consultation on a Review of Environmental Factors next month,” she said.

“There’s no doubt there will be inconvenience to customers between Epping to Chatswood during the temporary closure, but once completed rapid transit will completely transform public transport for Sydney customers.

**“The NSW Government and the North West Rail Link operator are committed to minimising the impact to customers and this includes providing more than 300 bus services along five bus routes every day.**

**“There will be both express and all-stop bus routes to carry customers directly to destinations along the Epping to Chatswood line and surrounding areas – limiting the impact on local traffic and reducing travel times.**

**“When the conversion is completed, the \$8.3 billion North West Rail Link will open straight away for customers, with 15 rapid transit services an hour during the peak from beyond Rouse Hill to Chatswood.**

“If the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government receive a mandate next March, the rapid transit network will be extended from Chatswood, under the Harbour, through the CBD and west to Bankstown – giving public transport customers right across Sydney access to fast, reliable and modern turn-up-and-go services.

“Sydney Rapid Transit will have the capacity to run up to 30 trains per hour in each direction through the city as well as reducing crowding right across Sydney – unblocking major bottlenecks in the city and allowing up to 60 per cent more trains every hour across the train network.”