



bai communications

Sydneysiders want safety and connectivity

Continuous connectivity research — Sydney report

BAI Communications' 2019 *Continuous connectivity research report* asked 2,538 rail users in five global cities (Sydney, Hong Kong, London, New York and Toronto) about their travel experiences and expectations. It arrived at three global findings:

- Innovative transport systems are a defining feature of smart, world-class cities.
- Commuters require continuous connectivity to realise the benefits of living in a smart city.
- Continuous connectivity transforms cities, helping citizens to be happier and more productive, and organisations to innovate and prosper.

Sydneysiders made it clear that they value good connectivity while travelling – in fact, when asked what makes a city world class, they gave the highest response across all cities to 'good digital connectivity'. They also led on rating 'a reliable public transport system' as the most attractive aspect of a city and 'comfort (e.g. seating, not crowded)' as an expectation of their rail network.

Digital connectivity is also foundational for many of the advanced technologies that are set to transform public transport in the coming years and decades, as public transport expert Adam Cohen notes: "the development and deployment of advanced algorithms, machine learning, and artificial intelligence can support the deployment of public transport innovations such as predictive demand responsive services, electrification, and automation."

This is the future of public transport; a future Sydneysiders have shown they're eager to embrace.



Technology can improve the effectiveness of public transportation by enabling transport providers to know their riders' preferences and provide targeted traveller information and services.

— Adam Cohen, Mobility Futures Consultant and Transportation Researcher at the Transportation Sustainability Research Centre at the University of California, Berkeley



Sydney commuters want innovation

The first part of the survey asked respondents about what makes a city world class, what makes a city a 'smart city' and what they expect from their public transport.

99% of Sydney respondents expect public transport to do more than just get them from 'A to B', and 77% believe technology innovations were changing or increasing their use of public transport.

Another key finding was the importance of reliable public transport to how a city is perceived. For Sydneysiders, reliable public transport (78%) emerged as the single most important factor in rating a city as 'world class', surpassing other factors including public safety (72%), tourist attractions (66%), good cafes and nightlife (64%), cultural centres (61%), and aesthetic beauty (51%).

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Sydneysiders regard their home as a smart city. When asked what makes a city smart, innovative transport systems (encompassing features like 'smart bus stops' and 'intelligent transport systems') topped the poll globally, with Sydneysiders again rating it more highly than commuters in other cities (85% compared to a global average of 83%).

The good news for transit authorities is that these factors all work together: innovative transport systems are typically viewed as more reliable than older systems that have not kept their digital infrastructure current.

This is the key to providing a good customer experience but as public transport expert Adam Cohen notes, with innovation comes expectation: "If travellers don't have a first-rate experience, they can go elsewhere. In addition to safe and reliable transportation, travellers are increasingly expecting amenities, such as good lighting, security, and digital connectivity".

This makes it imperative for transport authorities around the globe - and especially in Sydney - to continue their path of digital innovation.

Rail users are seeking innovation in transport across their cities

Innovation in transport is an important part of modern cities

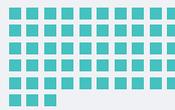
Total agree:

96%

43% Strongly agree



53% Agree



3% Disagree



1% Strongly disagree



I would prefer my government to invest in smarter public transport than roads

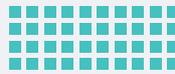
Total agree:

78%

28% Strongly agree



50% Agree



20% Disagree



2% Strongly disagree



Technology advancements in metropolitan areas that improve public transport, connectivity, help ease traffic, or improve the environment are important to me

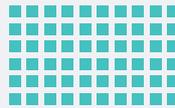
Total agree:

95%

35% Strongly agree



60% Agree



5% Disagree



<1% Strongly disagree



In 10 years' time my city will have driverless public transport options

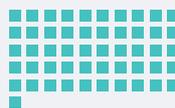
Total agree:

71%

20% Strongly agree



51% Agree

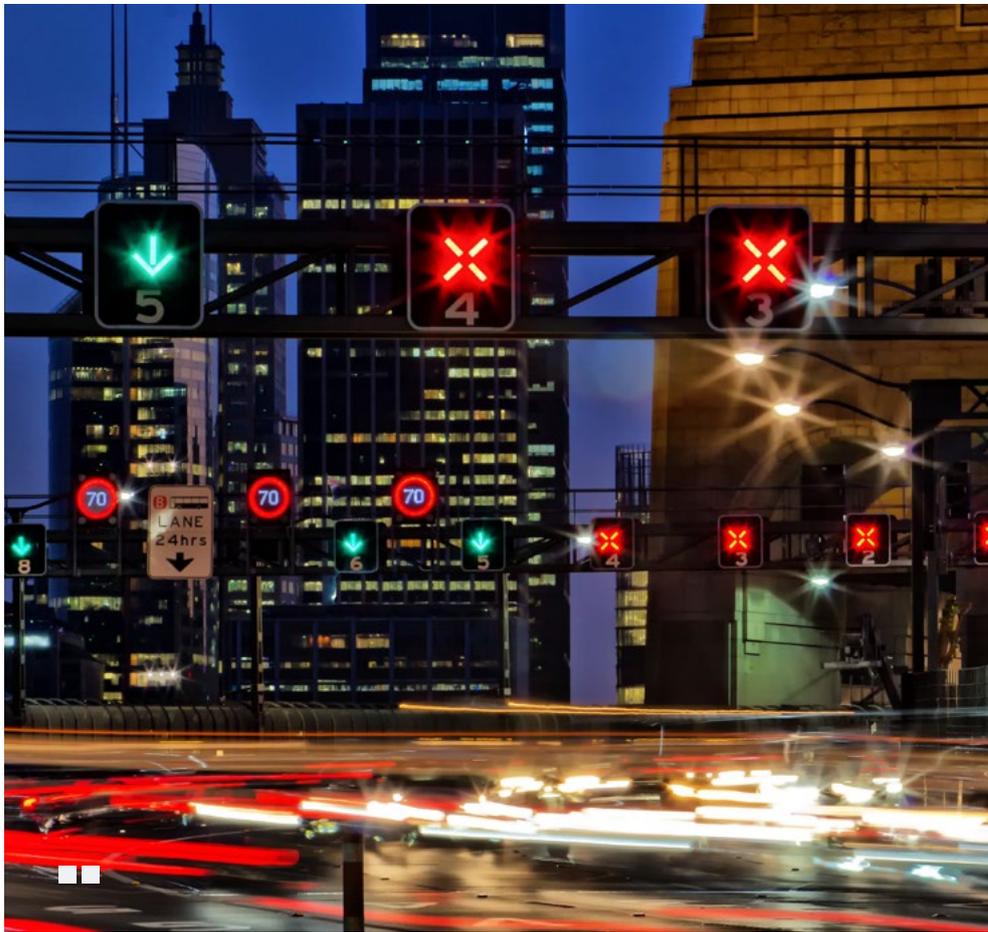


25% Disagree



4% Strongly disagree





Sydney commuters want to be connected

The survey tells us that those in Sydney don't want their commute to be 'lost time': when asked what would make them use their city's rail network more, key responses included the ability to use travel time productively, less crowding and greater cost-effectiveness.

For transit authorities to introduce these improvements, digital connectivity is the key. Ninety-five per cent of Sydney respondents said technology-driven solutions would make them more likely to use public transport, while 90% believed all rail networks should offer digital connectivity.

Safety plays a key role here; 98% of Sydneysiders want to see specific safety features, such as better connectivity to facilitate emergency services, real-time trip updates, and sensors to control crowding, all of which rely on digital connectivity.

The benefits are not trivial either, with 83% of Sydneysiders saying an even safer rail network would lead them to change their behaviour, for example using the network more, travelling late at night or making less use of ride-sharing services.

Such 'smart city' features depend on a reliable digital network that provides continuous connectivity. Crucially, the benefits would accrue to all parties:

- **Transit authorities** would be better able to gather data about their network, and use it to improve operations
- **Government service providers** would be able to respond to incidents faster and more effectively
- **Commercial service providers** would be able to meet customer demands and emerging market needs more efficiently
- **Mobile carriers** would be able to offer their customers continuous, black-spot free coverage
- **Travellers** would enjoy all the above.

This is especially relevant for mobile carriers, with 84% saying blackspots in mobile reception are unacceptable, 79% agreeing they'd think less of their carrier if they couldn't get good reception across the rail network, and 64% saying they'd consider changing providers if a competitor offered better coverage.

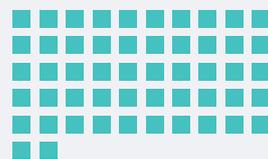
Rail users expect seamless coverage

All world class cities should have seamless mobile/cell coverage above and below ground

39% Strongly agree



52% Agree



7% Disagree



1% Strongly disagree



Keeping commuters happy

What would happen if rail networks evolved to provide the innovations and improvements commuters want?

When asked, 89% of Sydney respondents feel they'd benefit from such an 'evolved' rail commute. The top three reasons were 'I would be able to arrive at my destination relaxed and happy'; 'I would enjoy some 'me time', free from the distractions of family or chores'; and 'I would spend time researching or on my hobbies'.

This was not surprising, but more telling was what respondents said would deliver these benefits to them. Nearly two-thirds (59%) of the commute activities they nominated are potentially, if not entirely, data-driven (for example, listening to music, playing games and using social media); 72% if we add in the 13% who nominated 'reading'.

This is a significant finding. Sydneysiders enjoy a beautiful city with many options for employment and entertainment, yet often must plan their trips carefully to manage traffic congestion, crowding and other discomforts or delays. Digital connectivity can play a key role in minimising these disincentives to use public transport.

The ideal rail journey relies on seamless connectivity

● 1st response ● 2nd response ● 3rd response

Logistic improvements

- Real-time updates on departure and arrival time
- The ability to have 'last-mile' connectivity (i.e. automatically connect with buses, taxis or Ubers to get from the train station to your destination)
- Ability to check airport baggage in and have it end up at your destination

73%

58%

33%

28%

On-trip digital benefits

- Continuous connectivity (i.e. the ability to be online, or using a mobile phone)
- A journey with entertainment (e.g. appropriate length TV shows or interactive games)
- A journey that incorporates interactive mobile gaming

58%

43%

27%

14%

Mechanisms to ensure safety

A commute that allows me to work (reducing the time I need to spend in the office)

44%

33%

A journey that would be easy with children (e.g. keeping them engaged or entertained, preventing boredom)

25%

N/A - There is no ideal commute

7%

Other

2%

Sydney: a beautiful city deserves a beautiful network

Australians have a reputation for early and enthusiastic technology adoption. Our survey results confirm this trend, with Sydney respondents leading all others in expecting good digital connectivity and identifying innovative transport as the key to a city's greatness.

The key to managing change, especially the digital transformation that is sweeping and revitalising organisations of all types and sizes around the world, is flexibility. Yet ironically, flexible infrastructure requires a solid foundation. In the realm of data and communications, being able to deploy and deliver cutting-edge services as they emerge relies on a stable, secure and reliable network infrastructure.

For many people, Sydney is the gateway to Australia; and it's clear that public transport is the gateway to Sydney. Transit authorities around the world are looking to modernise their data and communications infrastructure. As Sydneysiders know, it's the key to greatness.

Download the full *Continuous connectivity research report*:
baicomcommunications.com/continuousconnectivityreport/

To learn more visit baicomcommunications.com



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