

ARIS VENETIKIDIS

The Greek who changed Dublin's transportation system

London Underground's iconic diagram has inspired an integrated map of Dublin transport routes, writes FRANK McDONALD, Environment Editor

EIGHT YEARS ago, a German-born graphic design student came for the first time to Dublin and was as confused as anyone about how to get around the city by public transport.

There was no handy map of bus and rail services, so it became a "pet project" for Aris Venetikidis (his father is Greek and his mother German) to make one as memorable as the London Underground diagram.

After being rejected initially as a project for his undergraduate degree in graphic design at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), because his tutors thought it would be "too complex", he got another chance to do it for his master's degree. And by then, he had years of experience of using public transport in Dublin.

"I found it frustrating and far below international standards," he says. "I grew up in the Ruhr Valley region in western Germany, where they have great public transport maps. But when I started using



graphic design to produce a map for Dublin, I came to the conclusion that the network itself is so complex that it's almost unmappable."

So Venetikidis, who is now 31, teamed up with Dublin Institute of Technology postgraduate and transport campaigner James Leahy, who had finished his master's degree thesis on bus rapid transit as a sustainable – and more affordable – alternative to Luas. Together, they created a "model network", which he then began to map.

"After spending about a year drawing maps over and over again, going back to square one and improving

them, I ended up with a city centre public transport map, based on a simplified network, that has an unprecedented level of detail and clarity – and this has been acknowledged by Dublin Bus, Dublin City Council and others.

"The reaction to my map has been outstandingly, overwhelmingly positive. There's still a lot of discourse about James Leahy's model, but it's clear to me that, without a fundamental simplification of the network, the system will remain confusing to new users and so will any endeavour to create intelligible public transport maps."

Essentially, the map Venetikidis designed includes all bus services and stops, as well as existing and proposed Luas stops, existing Dart stations and the proposed Dart Underground link between Inchicore and Docklands, with intervening stations at Heuston, Christ Church, St Stephen's Green, Pearse (Westland Row) and Spencer Dock.

Everything is colour-coded, and the 10 bus rapid transit lines proposed by Leahy are given names such as Beckett, Larkin, Stoker and Yeats.

These are shown on a large format map of the public transport network as a whole, then in detail on a separate map of the inner city area, so people can see exactly where they are going.

"Every stop is on it, because you can't assume that every new user has a working knowledge of Dublin's geography," Venetikidis says. "So even Dubliners invited to a friend's party, for example – all they would have to do is to identify the nearest stop on the map, which is not something they can do now, and then work out the route they need to take."

As the iconic London Un-

derground map had shown, "a successful integrated public transport map is the key to motivating people to leave the car and make the switch to a sustainable transport mode. Couple that with a modern network of rapid transit and you have the solution to congested city centre streets and an absent infrastructure."

Venetikidis is full of admiration for Harry Beck, the London Transport employee who drew the original diagram of its tube network in 1931 that still forms the basis of the map in use today. With its use of colour coding, spatial distortion and clear lines (like his own Dublin diagram), the underground map is the way most people relate to the layout of London.

"I think we've reached a point at which the different players involved in planning public transport in Dublin have realised the importance of simplifying the network," he says.

"I would hope that eventually they will also strive for true integration, including the long-awaited introduction of an integrated ticketing and fare system."

2010 CRC Awards for Volunteering Nominations now open



The 2010 CRC Awards for Volunteering are now open. The Awards for Volunteering honour those individuals in NSW whose tireless community service has enhanced the cultural and social wellbeing of their migrant communities. In this spirit, awards will be presented in the following four categories:

Community Service Award

For distinguished volunteer community service, which may include community service in health, settlement, social and welfare services, aged, disability and youth services. This award also encompasses those individuals who have made significant contributions to the establishment and/or management of community organisations or activities.

Volunteer of the Year Award

The purpose of this award is to honour the outstanding contributions of an individual through distinguished volunteer service in any area of community service in the Australian community.

Young Volunteer

In recognition of the valuable role of young volunteers, this award will be made for distinguished voluntary community service undertaken by a young person (under 25 years of age at the time of nomination).

Lifetime Achievement in Community Service

This award recognises an individual's lifetime commitment to voluntary community service within a migrant community. The individual will have demonstrated exceptional commitment by providing outstanding and distinguished community service over an extended period of time. Their contribution shall have had a significant impact on the social or cultural wellbeing of the community.

Nominations are open until 5:00pm Friday 22 October 2010 for the 2010 CRC Awards for Volunteering.

If you have any queries regarding the awards, please contact awards coordinator Rosa Stathis on 8255 6753 or rosa.stathis@crc.nsw.gov.au



PRESS RELEASE

The Consulate General of Greece in Sydney greets the creation of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Greece Group and its inaugural meeting on **September 21, 2010**.

Present, during the procedures for the election of office holders, will be the Group's Convenor,

the Hon. John Turner MP as well as the Hon. George Souris MP and the Oceania President of the Council of Hellenes Abroad, Mr. George Angelopoulos, while the Consul General for Greece, Mr. Vassilios Tolios and the Hon. John Pantazopoulos MP will address the gathering.