

**Submission
No 13**

**CRITICAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING THE WESTERN
SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND WESTERN SYDNEY
AEROTROPOLIS**

Organisation: Building Beautifully

Date Received: 26 March 2024



BUILDING BEAUTIFULLY

My name is Sharath Mahendran, and I am the creator of the YouTube channel Building Beautifully. I create videos that primarily focus upon the transport and planning needs of Sydney. My channel has achieved over 38,000 subscribers and 3.9 million cumulative views on YouTube. I have been featured multiple times in the media, most notably with a profile piece in the Sydney Morning Herald (04/08/2023) entitled “[Meet the 21-year-old YouTuber taking on Sydney’s bad planning](#)”.

The new Western Sydney International Airport represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Western Sydney, perhaps the most significant project ever to be constructed in the region. With that comes the need for high-quality public transport, that helps to reduce the reliance on expensive, polluting automobiles. However, as it currently stands, the airport will only serve to reinforce this car dependency.

Suffice to say, urgent action is needed.

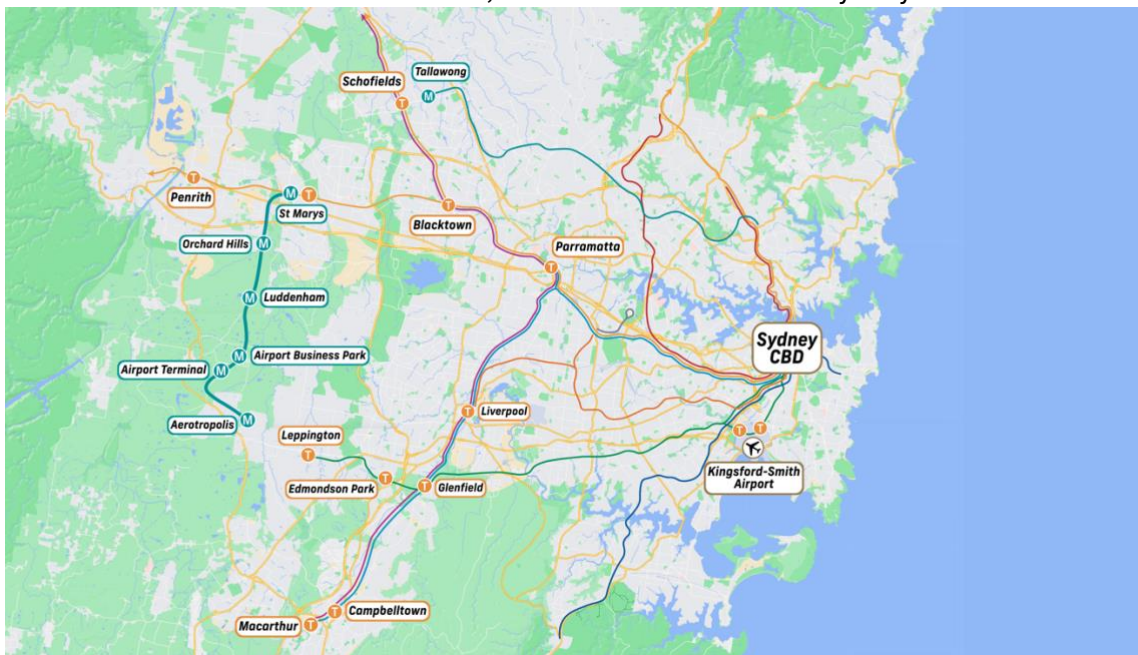
I write to this inquiry to urge the following recommendations with regard to critical infrastructure for the Western Sydney International Airport:

- 1. Strongly urge the extension of the South-West Rail Link as a heavy rail line to Aerotropolis station.**
- 2. Urge the government to commence construction of rapid bus links to the new airport as soon as possible.**
- 3. Recommend that a business case commences for the extension of the Sydney Metro West from Westmead to Aerotropolis.**

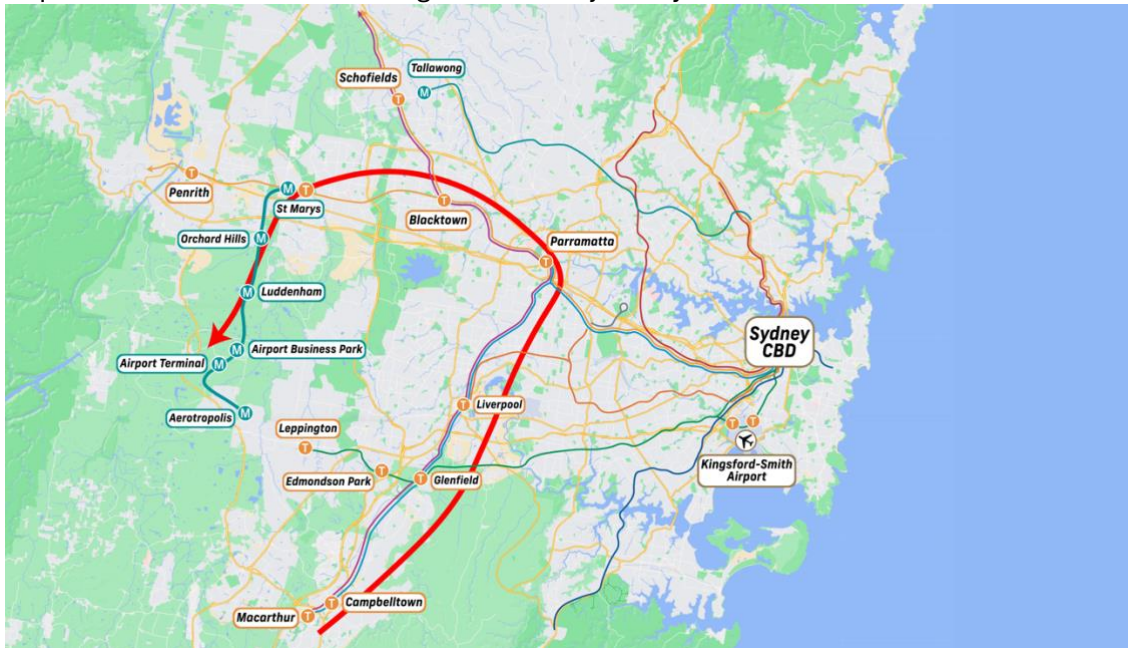
Recommendation 1: Extend the South-West Rail Link

I have, indeed, made a video about the [Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport](#) on my YouTube channel, which received 110,000 views. I would suggest that this inquiry watches the video as I believe it conveys my views quite thoroughly. I would even suggest reading its comments, which reflect what many Sydney residents think of the metro project.

The route of this metro is shown below, in context with the rest of Sydney:



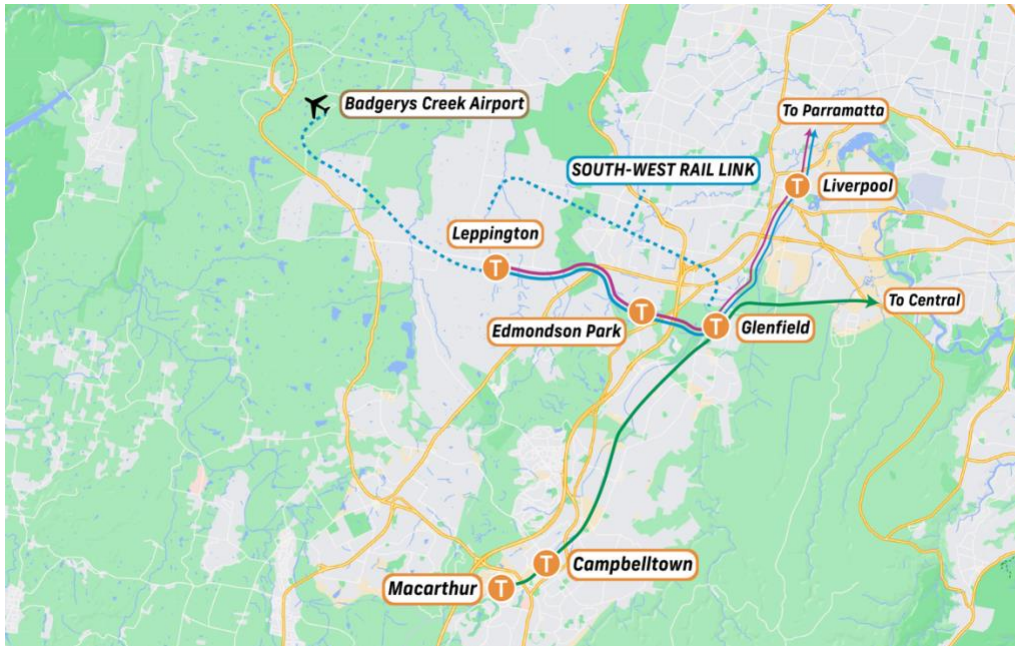
The new Western Sydney Airport will be located in Western Sydney. And yet, ironically, it is hopefully clear why this route does not benefit most of south-western Sydney. Key south-western centres such as Campbelltown and Liverpool – regions that employees and customers of the new airport are likely to reside – will not have an easy rail connection to the new airport, required instead to make this long roundabout journey:



It goes without saying that no one would make this commute, meaning most customers and employees are likely to drive to the new airport. This is despite the Western Sydney Airport Metro costing in upwards of \$11 billion to construct. The metro's benefit isn't zero; it will benefit regions such as Penrith, Blacktown, Parramatta and the Hills Shire once extended to Tallawong. However, in the interim, it will run through sparsely populated regions of Sydney, and fail to benefit the residents of South-Western Sydney who would have needed it most, instead reinforcing car dependency in these areas.

Consequently, I urge this inquiry to recommend that the current state Labor government **promptly** fix this dire situation.

You may have noticed just how close Leppington Station and the future Aerotropolis Station are on the map. There is an opportunity to link Leppington to the new airport that is currently being missed, and Sydney will suffer for it. I believe that a short, roughly 6 km extension to the South West Rail Link is absolutely essential in linking Liverpool, Campbelltown and other south-western Sydney centres to the new airport, as pictured below.



Now, there have been plans to extend the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport down south to Glenfield, by converting the SWRL to a metro. A business case study is currently being developed for this, although rumour has it that this case study has been quietly dropped (which is cause for concern, but I won't get into that).

However, I believe that the extension should be built in the form of **heavy rail**, *not* a metro. The reasons for this are numerous and as follows:

- The SWRL in its current form acts to provide additional capacity to the Sydney Trains network, allowing T2 and T5 services to terminate at Leppington instead of at Macarthur where they would otherwise clash with the T8.
- By extending the SWRL, the T8 could be switched to service the new airport instead of going south to Macarthur, while the T2 and T5 could go south to Macarthur instead. This would not only allow a more direct and faster link between the new airport and Sydney CBD, but would also allow both Kingsford-Smith Airport and Western Sydney International Airport to be linked by one railway, allowing for seamless transfers for passengers.
- There are also plans to extend the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport down south to Macarthur. Extending both to Macarthur and to Glenfield is not ideal, as branch lines limit their own capacity (branches will always receive less services than the core line). Instead, by extending the SWRL as a heavy rail line, the metro can readily be extended to Macarthur without a limit to its capacity.

The reasons why a rail link from Leppington to the new airport should be built at all are surely self-evident by now. But at any rate, the most essential reason is that such a link will link the new airport to the south-western suburbs far more directly, hence reducing car dependency. It would also improve the variety of connections to the airport, ensuring it is well connected to far more major town centres; Campbelltown, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith and Blacktown.

Recommendation 2: Construct rapid bus links to the new airport

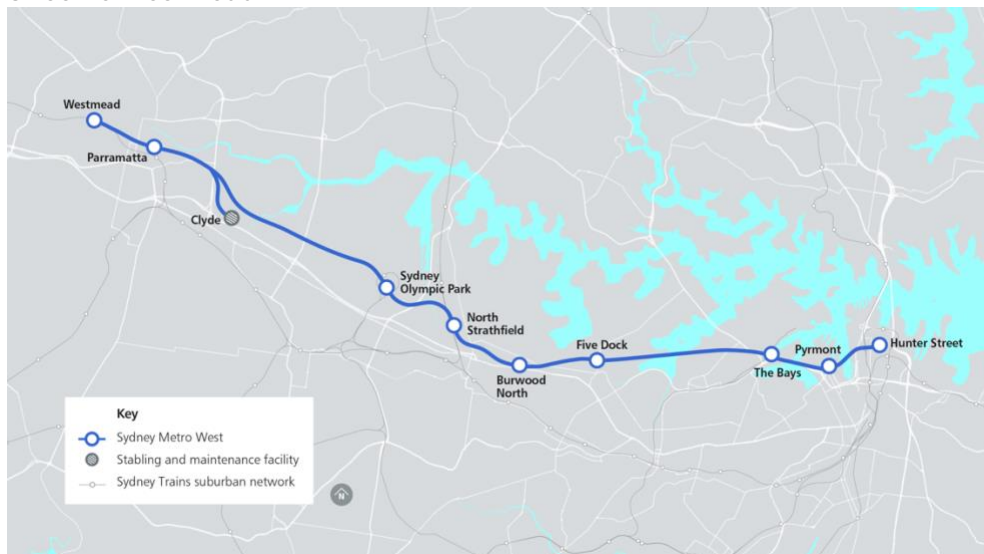
It goes without saying that, even if the government commenced construction on a SWRL extension tomorrow, it would not get completed for at least another 6-8 years. Certainly, this is not in time for the airport's opening in late-2026. Hence, this inquiry must urge the government to commence construction of rapid bus links to the new airport as soon as possible.

Government after government has vowed to build bus links from Penrith, Campbelltown and Liverpool to the new airport, to no avail. Not one shovel has been put in the ground in order to build these links. This is nothing short of abysmal.

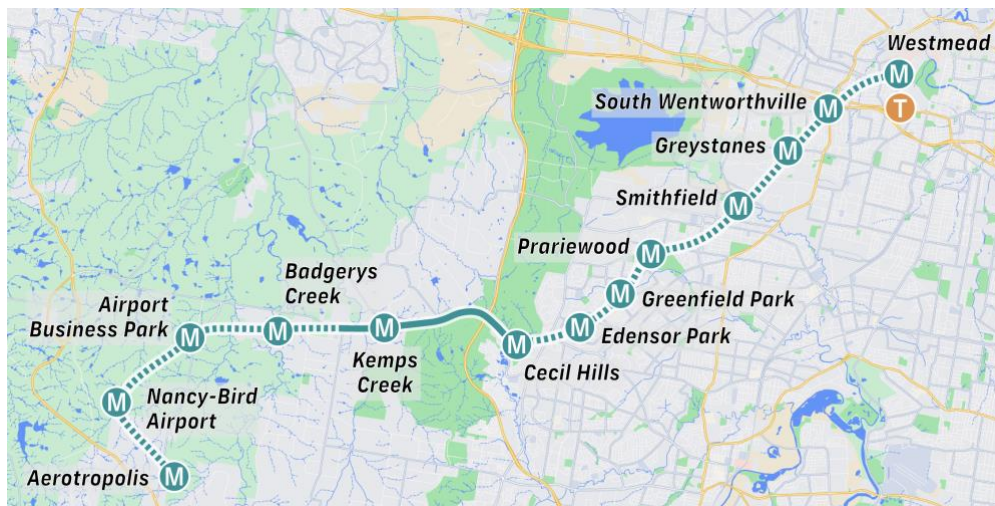
While the construction of the metro is brilliant, it is obvious that areas like Campbelltown and Liverpool are being forgotten in its construction. The bus links are a way to remedy this, at least until the SWRL can be extended. Hence, this inquiry must urge the government to build these rapid bus links. It is utterly worrying that employees and customers from areas like Liverpool and Campbelltown, very nearby to the new airport, are going to be forced to drive to the new airport because of a woeful lack of public transport links. This absolutely needs to be fixed before 2026.

Recommendation 3: Commence a business case study for a Sydney Metro West Extension

The Sydney Metro West project is currently under construction, planned to run from Hunter Street to Westmead.



A simple extension of this project to the new airport is essential, and could follow the route outlined below:



This would be an excellent route to follow, unlocking the potential for infill development and urban renewal in Fairfield and Liverpool Councils. Most importantly, it would directly link the new airport with many important town centres such as Westmead, Parramatta, Sydney Olympic Park, Burwood, Pymont and Sydney CBD.

Crucially, the business case study for the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport itself found that by extending the Sydney Metro West to the new airport, it would only take 27 minutes to get to the new airport.

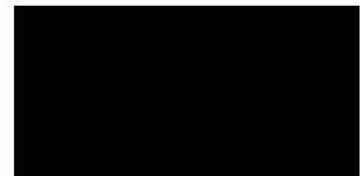
Option	In-vehicle train time (mins)*	
	WSA to Parramatta	WSA to CBD**
1. WSA to the South West Rail Link	52	55
2. WSA to Sydney Metro Northwest	35	57
3. WSA to Liverpool	49	64
4. WSA to the T1 Western Line via St Marys	33	48
5. Direct rail express service: WSA to Parramatta	15	27
6. A north-south link: Macarthur-WSA-St Marys-Schofields	35	55

This is nothing short of unprecedented. Given where the Sydney Metro West currently ends, it would be incredibly logical to extend it to the new airport. With Western Sydney International intended to become Sydney's main airport at some point in the next few decades, this metro extension would be transformational. A tourist could land at Western Sydney, take perhaps half an hour to get out of the airport, and then take only another half an hour to get to Sydney CBD. That's one hour from touchdown to Sydney CBD, despite landing in what is currently a semi-rural location! Importantly, it is also a substantial improvement on the journey time on the WSA Metro, currently estimated to be 48 minutes.

Conclusion

In summary, the Western Sydney International Airport represents one of the most transformational projects ever seen in Western Sydney's history, and hence the transport links constructed to it must be planned to the highest standard. I fear that, in their current form, they will prove woefully inadequate and will only serve to reinforce car dependency in what is already the most car-dependent region of Sydney. More public transport to the new airport is essential in order to ensure the best outcomes for employees and customers.

I thank this inquiry for allowing me to table this submission. I hope to address you at your inquiry hearing in a few months.



Sharath Mahendran
Building Beautifully Creator