

**Submission
No 15**

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

Organisation: Campbelltown City Council

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The Hon. Lynda Voltz
Chairperson
Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure
Via portal

Dear Chairperson,

Campbelltown City Council submission: Inquiry into critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis

Campbelltown is a city of ambition, innovation and opportunity, but is isolated from Western Sydney International Airport (WSIA) and the Aerotropolis.

It is imperative that WSIA serves the people of Western Sydney. As the designated Metropolitan Centre of the Macarthur Region, encompassing the local government areas (LGAs) of Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly, we're one of Australia's fastest growing cities. We're supporting nearly 50% of population growth in the Western Parkland City over the next decade, and it is critical that high quality connections be provided from Campbelltown-Macarthur and Glenfield to WSIA and the Aerotropolis.

We are committed to decreasing congestion across the network by providing our residents with attractive alternatives to car travel, including by improving access to public transport. Without significant and immediate infrastructure investment, our community will have no choice but to access the new airport by car, exacerbating existing congestion issues across Western Sydney. Commitment of funding to deliver transit connections is key to maximising the major public investments made towards the airport and broader Aerotropolis, and to ensuring they actually serve the people of Western Sydney.

Campbelltown City Council is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the key areas of the Terms of Reference of the NSW Legislative Assembly Committee Inquiry.

(a) Analysis of options for transport infrastructure

To date, the exploration of options for future transport infrastructure connecting Campbelltown LGA to WSIA and the Aerotropolis have focused on Metro extensions to Glenfield and Campbelltown-Macarthur, and Rapid Bus to Campbelltown-Macarthur. Access to the airport will be important for the large proportion of our diverse community with family ties overseas, and an attractive and convenient link from the airport can also support visitation to our natural, cultural and recreational assets, including the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan (NSW Government asset).

Transit intervention in the form of a North-South Metro from WSIA to Campbelltown-Macarthur was committed for investigation in 2018 as part of the Western Sydney City Deal. There has been no commitment to delivery of this vital infrastructure.

Similarly, the relatively short rail extension from Glenfield to the new airport (South West Rail Link Extension via Leppington) committed in the Western Sydney City Deal has not been committed for delivery. This would unlock a connection from WSIA to the existing Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport and provide a direct link to Sydney CBD.

A connection from Campbelltown-Macarthur to the airport and Aerotropolis would not just be an important route from end to end. It would represent a connecting spine between key centres of the Macarthur Region that are under-served by transit and communities that are severely car dependent. As the region's designated Metropolitan Centre, Campbelltown-Macarthur has an important relationship with Narellan Strategic Centre, Oran Park Town Centre, and surrounding communities of the South West Growth Area. The region's transit network is currently sparse and lacks frequent, direct orbital connections between centres.

Further to the Metro investigations, a commitment was made by both the former and current NSW Government to "establish rapid bus services from the metropolitan centres of Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown to Western Sydney Airport before it opens in 2026". To date, we have seen no progress on funding to provide that link from Campbelltown.

There is not sufficient bus lanes or other bus-prioritisation infrastructure in place to enable a rapid service. If the bus service from Campbelltown to Western Sydney Airport is not competitive with car travel, our residents will drive to access the airport, or not access that airport at all.

A true Rapid Bus connection needs to be fast, reliable, frequent and direct. We have proposed a route option to Transport for NSW that would perform well against strategic, land use, transport, and cost criteria. It would provide connectivity to existing and future key centres in the Macarthur Region, including potential stops at Narellan and Oran Park.

Our proposed corridor follows the shortest available end-to-end route and creates an opportunity to deliver travel times that are competitive with private car trips. However, in order to deliver a truly *rapid* bus service, immediate action and investment is needed to address the currently limited capacity for bus infrastructure on the Narellan Road bridge over the T8 rail line. The location of the bus stop at Campbelltown Station also needs to be resolved in collaboration with Council to enable the most expeditious route. Reallocation of road space also needs to be considered to support prioritisation measures for rapid buses.

We consider that any truly Rapid Bus must conform to the following requirements:

Requirements of Rapid Bus from Campbelltown-Macarthur to Western Sydney International Airport and Aerotropolis	
Frequent services	Turn-up-and-go bus service at least every 10 minutes in peak and at least every 15 minutes off-peak
Extended operating hours	Operational hours to suit visitor and worker access to the 24-hour airport
Competitive travel time	A fast end-to-end travel time that is not significantly longer than travelling by car (30 to 45 minutes), requiring a minimum average travel speed of 30 km/hr
Direct stopping pattern	A highly consolidated stopping pattern that strikes a balance between stop spacing and travel time, with no more than six total stops on the entire end-to-end route
Stop locations	Well-placed bus stops at the heart of places users want to go, including town centres and transport hubs
Stop access	Bus stops that are easily and safely accessible for all, with pedestrian crossings in surrounding vicinities
Bus stop amenity	High-quality bus stops including shelter, seating and passive surveillance
Network integration	A trunk service that provides easy transfers to other public transport services, creating an integrated wider network
Reliability	A service that runs on time and according to its schedule
Prioritisation	Supported by prioritisation infrastructure such as traffic light signal priority
Dedicated lanes	Dedicated lanes separated from mixed traffic and congestion
Legibility	Dedicated fleet, distinctive bus stops, wayfinding signage, and live passenger information systems
Efficiency	Operational measures such as all-door boarding, off-board ticketing, and integrated payment options

(b) Funding of transport infrastructure

In recent years, transport infrastructure investigations have had a renewed focus on Western Sydney as the fastest growing region in NSW. Major greenfield developments throughout the North West and South West Growth Areas have helped to drive this speed of growth. Many of these precincts emphasise increasing housing supply, but without commensurate employment, amenity or transport enhancements.

Rebalance investment

The Western Sydney Transport Infrastructure Panel's 2023 Independent Report suggests Western Sydney is projected to accommodate more than 30 percent of NSW's growth to 2026 but only accounts for 10.4 percent of infrastructure spend in this period. This has resulted in poor social and environmental outcomes for locals, where many residents drive for several hours a day to their jobs in the east of Sydney.

Based on analysis procured by The Parks (representing Sydney's Parkland Councils), infrastructure investments in the Western Parkland City are one-fifth of those for Sydney

CBD and one-third of those for Parramatta, and much lower again if expressed on a per-resident basis. This already-limited level of funding for the Western Parkland City is also being diverted away from existing centres in favour of enhancing new assets around WSIA and the Aerotropolis.

Despite growth occurring throughout the entire broader Western Sydney region, to date transit funding and delivery has been concentrated on the North West and the emerging Aerotropolis. There has been limited funding towards delivering transport connectivity to support growth in the South West or to better link this region to other places in Western Sydney such as WSIA and the Aerotropolis.

We are seeking a rebalancing of transport investment to reverse the under-provision of transport services and prevent further entrenchment of economic and social disadvantage. Communities across our region have borne large investment backlogs for many years, with their needs deferred while projects across Eastern Sydney, Parramatta, and other parts of Western Sydney have been prioritised.

Support growth with sustainable infrastructure to match

As the Metropolitan Centre of the Macarthur region, we're one of Australia's fastest growing cities, supporting nearly 50% of the population growth in the Western Parklands City over the next decade. By 2041, we will be home to an estimated 275,000 people, and will service a catchment of more than 900,000 people – more than double the size of the Australian Capital Territory's existing population. Investment is needed to connect the growing residential communities with employment centres and precincts, including Campbelltown, WSIA and the Aerotropolis.

Campbelltown is a significant employment centre with a large and diverse talent pool that services the broader Macarthur region, but car dependency is holding us back from performing that regional function to the fullest potential. We are concerned that the rate of population growth, combined with continual reliance on private vehicles, will lead to untenable road congestion, exacerbation of existing urban heat islands, and deterioration of amenity. This damage to 'destinational appeal' can have potential flow-on effects like making it challenging to attract high skilled workers, increasing retail vacancies, and driving overall poor economic performance.

Funding of an effective solution through Metro and a true Rapid Bus is needed to support modal shift and finally provide a real competitor to private car travel for this rapidly growing corridor. This would represent a step towards equitable infrastructure funding to support the high level of growth occurring, and would also maximise and expand the benefits of existing investments into WSIA, the Aerotropolis, and Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport.

We also urge that funding of future transit connections to WSIA and the Aerotropolis should not be based on implementing the kind of airport station access fees seen at Kingsford Smith Airport. For our community, this would make the choice to travel via public transport even less competitive with private car trips.

Avoid reactionary planning

The criteria used to assess funding and business cases for the transport links to WSIA and the Aerotropolis should not be based on existing patronage levels, but on the future vision. Existing patronage levels reflect the limited transit options currently available for the community. Waiting for a certain level of demand and growth to appear before delivering a quality transit service is the kind of reactionary planning we need to avoid.

Reaching a threshold of demand and growth *before* improving transit is a pre-requisite not seen for other transport investments. In 2026, turn-up-and-go Metro will service the Orchard Hills and Luddenham paddocks currently still awaiting water, sewer and electricity infrastructure. The Northern Beaches did not need to develop an appetite for land use uplift before the B-Line was delivered and achieved a significant mode shift.

The proposed connections between Campbelltown and WSIA should not be interim local solutions; but Metro and a true Rapid Bus. We do not want to see gradual delivery approaches that result in the abandonment of higher stages after observing that initial local, slow, indirect and infrequent services inevitably have low patronage due to a poor quality of service.

Funding of the committed links should be based on the potential to achieve sustainable mode shift in this under-served corridor that lacks a real alternative to cars. Important broader externalities related to the socio-economic disadvantage, health, congestion and productivity cost impacts of worsening car dependency in our region should be key considerations in the investment process.

(c) The impacts of employment movements in Western and South Western suburbs of Sydney

Campbelltown has a large, experienced and diverse workforce with wide-ranging skills, and our talent pool continues to grow through a steady pipeline of graduates from Western Sydney University's Campbelltown campus and our two TAFE NSW campuses.

Development of WSIA and the Aerotropolis have long been touted as the solution to the employment divide between Eastern and Western Sydney, wherein a lack of local jobs forces many workers to commute east for work every day. However, these major projects will not be able to effectively address the jobs deficit without unlocking access to the workforce of South West Sydney. Without the proposed transit projects, public transport options from Campbelltown-Macarthur to WSIA are even less convenient than the established train journeys directed east.

WSIA and the Aerotropolis have potential to compete with existing employment areas across Campbelltown, further reducing the number of local jobs. Jobs may move away from Campbelltown, but transport constraints mean the workforce won't be able to move with it.

Based on the 2022 State of the City report prepared for Campbelltown City Council, 62.1% of employed residents travel outside the LGA for work. Only 34.9% of residents are satisfied with local job opportunities. An overwhelming 82% of Campbelltown's young people (aged

12-24) have expressed willingness to relocate from the LGA in pursuit of better employment opportunities. As parts of our region have developed, employment totals continue to lag behind population totals, with the gap further widening over time.

Limited integrated public transport, car dependency and low access to local job opportunities may have a direct correlation with Campbelltown's increased chronic health issues. Campbelltown is home to some of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. According to the most recent SEIFA index of socio-economic advantage, several suburbs within Campbelltown LGA have the lowest decile of advantage.

The WSIA Business Park and parts of the Aerotropolis will have a strong focus on industries related to advanced manufacturing, circular economy, health, education, freight and logistics. These are all existing strengths of Campbelltown, and government investment could be directed towards effectively capitalising on our established clusters.

Recent publications related to the Bradfield City Centre suggest that new communities are unlikely to be living in and around the Aerotropolis for many decades to come. Heavy concentration of investment in the Aerotropolis and WSIA is not an alternative to the investment needs of existing communities, centres and precincts. The immediate needs of today should receive precedence ahead of the speculative potential of medium to long term opportunities.

Focus should be maintained on growing and diversifying the already established employment centres such as Campbelltown, while waiting for WSIA and the Aerotropolis to be established. There are businesses in our LGA who would be crucial to the supply chain at the new airport and beyond.

Economic development around WSIA and the Aerotropolis is important for long-term shaping of the Western Parkland City, but it is important to also ensure that the growing economy benefits all communities across the region.

(d) Integration with existing transport infrastructure

The transport options proposed to connect Campbelltown LGA to WSIA and the Aerotropolis have great potential to optimise network integration with existing transport infrastructure. We are the gateway between WSIA and an expansive regional catchment of workers, residents and visitors.

In addition to serving the significant growth corridors of the Macarthur Region, Campbelltown also services a much broader catchment as Sydney's southern gateway. Perfectly positioned at the junction of major strategic infrastructure, we connect Australia's political capital of Canberra, the Southern Highlands, and the Illawarra-Shoalhaven Region to Australia's financial capital of Sydney CBD. Other than Sydney's Central Station, Campbelltown is the only rail hub in Sydney that is positioned on the Capital Corridor connecting with Canberra and beyond to Melbourne.

Our city is strategically located between the key international trade gateways of Port Botany, Kingsford Smith Airport and Port Kembla; a connection to the future WSIA would further cement Campbelltown as the centre point between key trade gateways. Our city

enjoys access to major transport and freight infrastructure that enables quick and easy transport of goods to domestic and international markets.

The proposed Metro extension and Rapid Bus to Campbelltown-Macarthur would integrate WSIA and the Aerotropolis with existing major transport infrastructure. This includes the T8 Airport and South Line, the intercity Southern Highlands Line, and the regional/interstate Southern NSW Line. Campbelltown-Macarthur is also envisioned as a key hub of Australia's future High Speed Rail network, and long-term could offer a direct and efficient Fast Rail link between WSIA to Wollongong, Newcastle and Canberra.

The proposed Metro extension to Glenfield would connect WSIA and the Aerotropolis with three existing Sydney Trains lines (T2 Inner West and Leppington, T5 Cumberland, and T8 Airport and South) and the intercity Southern Highlands Line. Glenfield is also strategically positioned for freight transport, located alongside the Moorebank Intermodal Terminal.

In the absence of a dedicated Metro extension to Campbelltown-Macarthur, it is crucial that a future link from Glenfield to WSIA comprises one mode of either Metro or Heavy Rail along its length. A Metro extension solely from WSIA to Leppington would be a suboptimal outcome, forcing travellers from Campbelltown to change lines twice to reach the airport (at Glenfield and then at Leppington). This would lead to particularly suboptimal transport integration in the context of airport travel where interchange delays could lead to missed flights and passengers are carrying large luggage.

(e) Reducing road usage around the new airport and surrounding regions

Without funding and delivery of effective public transport options, roads around WSIA and the Aerotropolis will bear the brunt of worker, resident and visitor movements. Without significant and immediate investment towards alternative modes of transport, our community will be reliant on private car travel to access WSIA, or will instead develop a preference for trains to Kingsford Smith Airport.

Sydney's existing public transport network is CBD-centric, with a lack of orbital connections between centres of Western Sydney. For example, a rail journey from Campbelltown to Penrith would include three different trains and take around two hours. In the absence of alternative routes between Campbelltown and other Western Sydney centres, significant pressure is being placed on the road network around WSIA including The Northern Road and Bringelly Road. The north-south Metro from St Marys to the Aerotropolis is an important step towards an orbital rail link, but is incomplete and won't drive meaningful impact without the proposed extensions to Glenfield and Campbelltown-Macarthur.

Compared with Central and Eastern Sydney, the regional and state road network in the Western Parkland City is sparse and reflects incomplete grid structures. The delivery of the Outer Sydney Orbital could ease pressure by redirecting heavy vehicle movements quickly off roads surrounding the airport and Aerotropolis.

Communities of Western Sydney already disproportionately face impacts of congestion and car dependency, from higher annual vehicle costs to longer journey times. Today, the Campbelltown LGA has a very high level of car dependency with members of our community reporting significant barriers to public transit access and frequency.

Continued under-provision of sustainable access options risks extending those impacts of congestion onto WSIA and the Aerotropolis. A lack of investment in public transport infrastructure and services will drive high road usage, heighten congestion risk, sterilise otherwise productive land, limit liveability and environmental amenities, and condemn communities to losing time in car transit.

Conclusion

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to inform their consideration of critical transport infrastructure to support the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis.

We look forward to working with the NSW Government and its agencies to enhance the integrated transport network of broader Sydney and would be pleased to assist the Inquiry.

Should you wish to discuss the contents of this submission in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Grasso, Director City Futures at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

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