

**Submission  
No 16**

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

**Organisation:** Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue

**Date Received:** 28 March 2024

# **Inquiry into Critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis**

## **Submission by the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue**

March 2024

### **About the Dialogue**

The Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue (the Dialogue) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure's *Inquiry into critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport (WSA) and Aerotropolis* (the Inquiry).

The Dialogue is fiercely committed to enhancing the future of the Greater Western Sydney (GWS) region and has cultivated an extensive network of Partners from within the community, private, and public sectors who share this goal. The GWS region is home to over half of Greater Sydney's population and functions as the third largest economy in Australia, and the infrastructure, or often the lack thereof, that makes up the region has direct implications for these Partners.

Since its inception, The Dialogue has been advocating for sensible, equitable, and transformative infrastructure for the residents of GWS. The Dialogue has always been a vocal proponent of projects that will provide residents with better opportunities, services, and amenities, and enhance their lives, such as establishing recreational water spaces, developing health and education hubs, and increasing community and social housing. To realise the full potential of these projects, a comprehensive, integrated, and thoughtful public transportation network is crucial. Currently the GWS region is inordinately underserved by the transport infrastructure in place for residents, workers, and visitors, especially when compared to counterparts in the east.

The Dialogue has previously supported a number of key transport and urban planning projects that have the potential to deliver unparalleled benefits for the region through improved connectivity, job-generation and increased access to essential services.

### **Introduction**

Greater Western Sydney is on the brink of generational transformation, driven by the opening of the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) and development of the Aerotropolis. Transport infrastructure will play a key role in unlocking the potential of this region and securing its long-term growth and prosperity.

Our submission draws on our [2023 NSW Election Policy and Projects Priorities](#) paper to recommend a cohesive transport framework that meets the transport needs of the Western Parkland City and fosters sustainability and economic prosperity for its residents.

In response to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue presents the following matters for the Committee's consideration.

## A - An analysis of options for transport infrastructure

The WSA and Aerotropolis require at least three key transport modes to be delivered in parallel, comprising essential road upgrades, a new rapid bus network (supported by new local services), and strategic extensions of the Sydney Metro WSA in the medium term.

### Airport Road Network

The road network surrounding the WSA, Aerotropolis, and Western Sydney Employment Area zones is currently under-developed, reflecting the region's predominantly rural/peri-urban history.

Timely development of road infrastructure is essential not just to provide access to the airport, but also to secure crucial economic development through private investment in the broader precinct. Additionally, some of these roads are required to support a reliable and public transport network.

The Dialogue encourages the Committee to investigate the following critical road projects. We recommend that the NSW Government progress and fund these roads, including:

<i>Mamre Road Stage 2</i>	An extension of the Mamre Road upgrade between Erskine Park and Kemps Creek requires confirmed funding and delivery timeline, noting that the cost of the road could be met through developer contributions, given strong private investment demand in the region.
<i>Badgerys Creek Road</i>	Priority funding is recommended for the upgrade of Badgerys Creek Road to facilitate essential access to Bradfield City. This is a more cost-effective short-term alternative to the Eastern Ring Road and north-south Aerotropolis Connector.
<i>Southern Link Road</i>	The Southern Link Road is crucial for unlocking job-generating development by providing a connection between the Western Sydney Employment Area at Eastern Creek and the Mamre Road Precinct.
<i>Elizabeth Drive Upgrades</i>	Elizabeth Drive must be upgraded to handle the growth in industrial traffic around the Aerotropolis, Mamre Road, and Kemps Creek, offering a cost-effective and short-term alternative to the full M12.
<i>Luddenham Road</i>	As the main arterial road into the Aerotropolis and Sydney Science Park, a coordinated strategy for the funding, staging, and delivery of Luddenham Road upgrades is required to accommodate future traffic growth and land uses, essential for servicing critical employment lands.
<i>Ferrers Road Upgrade</i>	Investigation into options to future proof Ferrers Road for increased local traffic demand is advised, considering the intensifying land uses around Eastern Creek and surrounding areas.

## **Bus Rapid Transport**

### *Fleet composition and transport corridors*

The NSW Government has committed \$305 million over three years (2023-26) for three rapid bus routes and four local bus services, including design, planning, and local procurement of 84 zero emission buses (ZEBs).

This allocation is likely insufficient to deliver a full fleet of ZEBs and dedicated transport corridors. It may only deliver a predominantly diesel bus fleet, serviced by the existing road network. Additional allocations will be required to meet community expectations for sustainable transport options operating on a grade separated road network.

Dedicated corridors with 'turn up and go' frequency ZEB services will significantly enhance public transport appeal, encouraging public transport usage and avoiding a reliance on private vehicles being "baked in" to local travel patterns (see our response to section E for further detail).

### *Service delivery*

Services will need to commence on or before the mid-2026 WSA "first service" date. Procurement and service planning for rapid buses must commence immediately to avoid suboptimal service standards once the WSA is operational and the Aerotropolis has been activated.

Further investment in future years is required to meet the Government's transport and environmental commitments to Greater Western Sydney, and ensure buses offer a competitive alternative to personal vehicle use.

## **Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport**

### *Future extensions*

The government must outline a comprehensive plan for Metro Western Sydney Airport (WSA) extensions, particularly timeframes to commence future project phases as part of a broader program of ongoing Metro investment.

Originally envisioned as a pivotal north-south connector, Metro WSA's current scope as a shuttle service between the Western Sydney Airport and St Marys limits its catchment and utility. Expanding this service is crucial to fulfilling its intended role in supporting outer western Sydney and providing alternatives to the prevailing 'hub-and-spoke' approach to public transport development.

Detailed plans and timelines for extending the Metro WSA is essential to leverage its full potential as a transport backbone for Western Sydney. This includes future extensions along the north-south corridor from:

- Bradfield to Macarthur, and Aerotropolis to Glenfield via Leppington, connecting Sydney Metro WSA to the heavy rail network at Leppington and Campbelltown.
- St Marys to Tallawong, connecting Sydney Metro WSA to an interchange with Sydney Metro North West.

Completion of these extensions would "close the loop" on a ring network of railways around Sydney. It is suggested that the Leppington to Glenfield extension should be prioritised, and that the business case for this project examine possible future extension to Liverpool Station.

### *Maintaining a pipeline of Metro investment*

It is noted that the 2023 Final Report of the Sydney Metro Independent Review recommends that the NSW Government should develop and progress a staged pipeline of Metro projects beyond the anticipated completion date for the South West Metro conversion in 2026. This is principally to avoid the infrastructure sector's demobilisation into renewable energy projects.

The Dialogue encourages the NSW Government to maintain a continual program of Metro expansion. Accordingly, the government should confirm extensions to Sydney Metro WSA prior to 2026 to provide certainty to both the infrastructure industry and residents of southwest Sydney that the NSW Government is committed to continued expansion of the Metro Rail network.

## **B - The funding of transport infrastructure**

### **Value capture**

The NSW Government has limited capacity to fund major public transport projects. We note that the Restart NSW fund is now depleted, the era of cheap debt has concluded, and the new NSW Government has committed to no further asset privatisations to fund new infrastructure. This makes using a strategic approach to identifying new sources of revenue, stringent budgeting, and laser-focused project prioritisation more important than ever.

The Dialogue has consistently advocated for value capture mechanisms to offset public transport infrastructure construction costs. Value capture offers a strategic way to reduce the burden to the taxpayer, and ensure the private sector contributes its fair share to projects which drive uplift in the value of their land.

The Dialogue draws the Committee's attention to Recommendation 12 of the Final Report of the Sydney Metro Independent Review. This suggests that the NSW Government apply value-capture mechanisms to fund enhancement works in Metro precincts, principally through the Transport Project Component mechanism in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. It is understood that this was under consideration by Government in 2023, however no commitment to this approach was given.

### **Project Pipeline**

Despite a crowded infrastructure pipeline, the expectation is a future decrease in simultaneous major projects. Clarity on project sequencing and delivery timelines is imperative for effective planning and resource allocation.

## **C - The impacts of employment movements in Western and Southwestern suburbs of Sydney**

### **Employment Dynamics**

The Western Sydney Airport is projected to employ approximately 30,000 workers from day one, with numbers increasing as Bradfield and the Aerotropolis precincts develop. This significant employment hub requires robust transport solutions to support worker access.

For the employment catchment to the south and east, this will principally be supported by the rapid and local bus networks.

The westward shift of manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics underscores the need for comprehensive transport infrastructure to support these critical sectors and address land value pressures and limited supply issues.

These employment dynamics reiterate the need for a comprehensive and robust road network to support labour force access and economic activity in the broader Aerotropolis precinct.

## **D - Integration with existing transport infrastructure**

### **Integration of Metro WSA with the heavy rail network**

Extending the Metro WSA line to Leppington and onward to Glenfield is critical to ensure Southwest Sydney's is connected by public transport to the airport and Bradfield.

Designing stations with adequate facilities for interchanges, including lifts and luggage spaces, is crucial to accommodate the needs of travellers and enhance the public transport experience.

## **E - Reducing road usage around the new airport and surrounding regions**

### **Habituating public transport use**

The success in reducing road usage hinges on delivering timely and efficient bus and metro services. Making public transport a more attractive option than private vehicles is critical given the distances many travellers and employees will need to travel.

There is some evidence that habits are significant in determining daily travel choices. This is relevant as the new airport and Aerotropolis workforce become accustomed to daily travel patterns. To ensure that sustainable and affordable transport choices are preferred, the first experience of public transport to and from the region must be of a high quality to prevent a habit of private vehicle use forming.

In turn, road infrastructure for reliable public transport use, as well as freight and commercial traffic is crucial. Adequate road development is non-negotiable for supporting economic activities and logistics.

## **F - Any other matters**

### **Enhanced rail connectivity**

Delivering a metro extension to Leppington/Glenfield would enable rail connectivity between WSA Kingsford-Smith Airport at Mascot, offering a seamless transit option across Sydney's key airports. The economic and logistical advantages of this connection should be considered in the business case for an extension.