

**Submission
No 44**

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

1. Inadequacy of the Public Transport System

The public transport system will be inadequate to respond to Western Sydney International Airport and the future Aerotropolis. In particular, travel times will typically be longer. As a result, visitors, residents and workers are more likely to rely on vehicle access.

For Example

Current driving times for:

- WSA to Sydney CBD using tollways and the Rozelle Interchange is ~50 mins to an hour (this includes peak hours).
- WSA to Parramatta CBD using the M7 and M4 ~ 35 mins

These driving times are far shorter when compared to using Heavy Rail or the future Heavy Rail/new Western Sydney Airport Metro line.

Moreover, residents living in Western Sydney indicate driving times have substantially improved after the opening Rozelle Interchange (however at the cost to driving times to inner city residents).

These driving times are likely to further improve with the increase in speed limits to 90 km from 80 km, and the toll limit to \$60 a week (after rebates).

However the reliance on vehicle access, is also likely to create local 'hot spots' and bypass routes particularly after Western Sydney International Airport opens in 2026 given the large number of haulage depots and business parks near the airport.

2. Impact Transport Administration Amendment (TAHE) Act 2023¹

Late last year amendments were made to the Act. The Government also undertook to transition TAHE into a not-for-profit entity with the objectives amended to emphasis 'the principal objective of TAHE is to undertake its activities in a safe and reliable way'.

In addition, the key objectives include the necessity for TAHE 'to be a successful business' and, to that end, 'operate at least as efficiently as any comparable business' and 'maximise the net worth of the State's investment in TAHE'.

Notwithstanding precinct development and the redeployment of assets will be an important part of the equation, the objectives suggest that fare increases will be necessary to meet the business case. In doing so, this is likely to impede the potential for greater public transport use, particularly for heavy rail and the Metro services.

¹ <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/pdf/asmade/act-2023-50>

3. Absence of information and mitigation strategies

Currently the greatest population for Sydney is forecast for the Western Suburbs albeit a greater emphasis on development along transport infrastructure across Sydney is being planned.

However there is an absence of information regarding the 'city shaping' transport network indicated in the Greater Sydney Services & Infrastructure Plan (2018)² ; specifically the north-south rail link to accommodate Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis.

There also appears to be an absence of mitigation strategies in response to the rapid change from the frequency and duration of events associated with climate change. This includes the urban heat effect and its impact on transport infrastructure, as a consequence of the size and scale of the Western Sydney International Airport, which at 1780 ha is twice the size of Kingsford Smith at Mascot.

4. Dedicated Minister & Department

Given the impact and importance transport infrastructure has on Greater Sydney, a dedicated Minister should be responsible for both public transport and the road system.

In addition, the Departments should be (re)merged, rather than separated, to ensure a holistic approach.

5. Transparency & proper consultation

Detailed plans for major road and public transport projects should be transparent to enable proper consultation and public feedback. As an example detailed planning is now typically managed by the contractor(s) following the EIS process, with no obligation for detailed plans to be transparent to the public. This hinders feedback and the opportunity for the public who can often have valuable and more detailed knowledge on a particular subject matter, or area.

Moreover engineers and specialists should be available to respond to specific concerns during the EIS process (and pre-exhibition process) rather than the public effectively being fobbed off. For example at a community information session last year at Penrith regarding the EIS for Western Sydney International Airport flight paths, acoustic consultants were not available, nor would be available to answer any specific questions before the EIS closed. Rather the community 'engagement' staff had little knowledge.

Unfortunately this seems the norm, and reflects similar situations for a number of other major infrastructure projects under the umbrella of TfNSW/RMS, e.g. the Rozelle interchange where the Department and its engagement consultants failed to respond to specific concerns; with the subsequent outcomes now apparent.

² https://www.future.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-06/greater_sydney_services_and_infrastructure_plan.pdf

Submission in response to Parliamentary Inquiry: Critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis

In short it would appear community consultation is often hindered to ensure predetermined plans are approved. To improve infrastructure projects, the public should be encouraged to provide feedback, rather than the community engagement process deliberately hindered.

6. Key consultant reports & Peer Review

Large infrastructure projects should undergo a process of independent peer review. In addition, the motivation for projects needs careful review, given the upfront fees to bankers and the like.

7. Specialist in-house expertise

Specialist in house expertise within the government is needed to review, oversee and manage large infrastructure projects.