

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT
AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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

At Jamison Room, Penrith Panthers Leagues Club, Penrith, on Thursday 30 May 2024

The Committee met at 11:00.

PRESENT

Ms Lynda Voltz (Chair)

Mr Nathan Hagarty (Deputy Chair)
Mrs Judy Hannan
Mr Warren Kirby

PRESENT VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Mr Ray Williams

The CHAIR: Good morning, everyone. Before we start, I'd like to acknowledge the Dharug people, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet here in Penrith. I also pay my respects to the Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are present or viewing the proceedings online. Welcome to the first hearing of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure inquiry into critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis.

I am Lynda Voltz, Chair of the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure. I am joined by my colleagues Nathan Hagarty, member for Leppington and Deputy Chair; Warren Kirby, member for Riverstone; online, Ray Williams, member for Kellyville; and at some point we will be joined by Judy Hannan, member for Wollondilly, who is unfortunately at a funeral at the moment. We thank the witnesses who are appearing before the Committee today and the many stakeholders who have made written submissions. We appreciate your input into this inquiry. I declare the proceedings open.

Mr BEN TAYLOR, Chair of The Parks' General Managers Group, The Parks, Sydney's Parkland Councils, affirmed and examined

Mr JEFF ROORDA, Director, Infrastructure and Project Delivery Services, Blue Mountains City Council, sworn and examined

Mr ANDREW CARFIELD, General Manager, Camden Council, sworn and examined

Mr ANDREW MOONEY, Executive Strategic Planner, Fairfield City Council, sworn and examined

Mr WILL BARTON, Director, Infrastructure Services, Hawkesbury City Council, affirmed and examined

Mr DAN RILEY, Manager, Development Engineering, Liverpool City Council, affirmed and examined

Mr TODD CARNEY, Mayor and Councillor, Penrith City Council, affirmed and examined

Mr MATT GOULD, Mayor, Wollondilly Shire Council, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome our first witnesses for the day. Thank you everyone for appearing before the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure. Can you all confirm that you've all been issued with the Committee's terms of reference and information about the standing orders that relate to the examination of witnesses.

BEN TAYLOR: Yes.

JEFF ROORDA: Yes.

ANDREW CARFIELD: Yes.

ANDREW MOONEY: Yes.

WILL BARTON: Yes.

DAN RILEY: Yes.

TODD CARNEY: Yes.

MATT GOULD: Yes.

The CHAIR: Does anyone have any questions about this information?

BEN TAYLOR: No.

JEFF ROORDA: No.

ANDREW CARFIELD: No.

ANDREW MOONEY: No.

WILL BARTON: No.

DAN RILEY: No.

TODD CARNEY: No.

MATT GOULD: No.

The CHAIR: Would anyone like to make a short opening statement before we start? If you could keep it short, that would be brilliant.

WILL BARTON: Sure. I just want to apply a little bit of context to Camden Council's submission. Camden is the fastest growing local government area in the country. In the five years leading into the '21 census, Camden's population grew by 49 per cent. The next highest growth rate for a Sydney council over the same period was the Hills at 18 per cent. In comparison, New South Wales grew by just 4.9 per cent. The pace of growth we're experiencing at Camden is unlike anything in Sydney or in New South Wales.

Our demographic profile is also different from other parts of Sydney. We've got a young, rapidly diversifying community. The median age of a Camden resident is just 33 and there are more nought to four-year-olds than any other age cohort. Today our community is approximately 135,000 residents, but over the next 10 to 15 years, our community will again double in size to more 250,000. Regrettably, our growing community also has the fastest growing jobs deficit in a western parkland city region. When we compare jobs growth to population growth, we are lagging at a rate of 12 per cent, which is significantly higher than other local government areas across the Sydney region.

In the 2020-21 census, only 2 per cent of Camden's workforce used public transport for the journey to work. To address this, the recommendations that we are providing, and we'd be happy to discuss, are: Camden's priorities for public transport investment are clear. We are seeking commitment from both State and Commonwealth governments to fund and complete the metro all-rail connections from north-south, from the airport to Bradfield to Oran Park, Narellan and Macarthur as well as east-west from Glenfield and Leppington to Bradfield and the airport. These new rail connections were identified within the Western Sydney City Deal. We're happy to see progress is being made on stage one at the St Marys to airport connection. That work is welcomed. The same metro rail connections are also listed in high priorities within the Western Sydney Transport Infrastructure Panel's independent panel report, which was prepared a year ago.

The delivery of a rapid bus network between Campbelltown, Narellan, Oran Park and the aerotropolis is also a priority action and important interim service to support the opening of the airport in just two years. We have a rare opportunity right now to finalise the planning and delivery of the north-south and east-west metro rail connections in a coordinated, timely, cost-effective way which will support the fastest growing region in Sydney. Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence today. I would certainly welcome any questions from the Committee.

The CHAIR: Are there any other opening statements?

TODD CARNEY: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today with my partners from the western parklands councils as well. The regional context is key to this discussion because Western Sydney International Airport is within the rapidly growing region. Councils' support for a 24-hour Western Sydney International Airport is on the basis of the opportunities that it presents for Penrith but also the wider Western Sydney region. The Western Sydney airport is a jobs generator and a productivity gainer, but the success of the airport is contingent upon the infrastructure. We need the airport and surrounding transport network to be a well-oiled machine. Seamless travel between and within the region is not just for the airport's future efficiency but for all of us so we can have access to more jobs, spend less time travelling and more time enjoying our lives at home.

North-south rail is a step in the right direction, but this marquee city deal's project needs to be delivered to its full extent from Tallawong in the north to Macarthur in the south, thereby opening up greater opportunities for employment, education and the encouragement of industry to further develop in our region. It is important to note that this is not just about transport. Western Sydney needs better coordination for all infrastructure in a timely fashion in line with growth. To support the growth of these precincts, we require well-designed roads, supporting infrastructure that is fit for purpose and delivered in a timely fashion. Currently, many of our roads within these growth areas are rural roads. They are not designed for the increased volumes of congestion, related heavy vehicle movements and increased freight-related heavy vehicle movements. We need support from Government to manage the very rapidly transforming regions to support these local roads in these freight corridors.

Freight-related vehicle movements are estimated to increase by 50 per cent within Western Sydney by 2041. With this, the number of trucks will have significant impacts on local roads. In the absence of the ultimate road network solution, the inevitable move towards larger and heavier vehicles whilst reducing the overall number of trucks on the road will have an adverse impact on the quality of roadway surfaces and user safety of local roads. We call on both the Federal Government and the State Government to continue investing in Western Sydney, particularly in our road networks and in our public transport networks to really lift the growth potential that we see, that all our local government areas see, that could be the economic driver for Sydney in the future.

WILL BARTON: Hawkesbury City Council thanks the Committee for the opportunity to appear today and to speak at this hearing. We embrace the new opportunities presented by the Western Sydney airport and the aerotropolis, but we see a broader visitor economy in Western Sydney, a growth in local industry—particularly manufacturing and agriculture—and the increase in local employment opportunities that come with these. Investigation of infrastructure needs that includes the Hawkesbury is essential. Presently, the vision for critical supporting road and rail infrastructure that benefits the Hawkesbury is fragmented and unclear.

The Outer Sydney Orbital, since the exhibition of the proposed corridor in 2018, has been identified as key critical infrastructure providing a north-south connection between the Hawkesbury and the Western Sydney airport and aerotropolis for residents and industry. However, published material as recent as March 2024 indicates that this corridor is to terminate at Richmond Road, with no ongoing investigation to extend the corridor further north to provide that much-needed connection for our community, evidently relying on a twentieth century road network to support a twenty-first century economy. This is a disappointing outcome for the Hawkesbury community and our local economy.

Further, the Bells Line of Road-Castlereagh connection has been a point of ambiguity and uncertainty for decades. Despite the original corridor being established in 1951 and being identified in recent strategic infrastructure plans, there continues to be uncertainty about the timing and delivery of this project. This connection

is essential to ensure that the benefits of the airport and the aerotropolis are shared with Hawkesbury residents and businesses north-west of the Hawkesbury River and beyond, and to alleviate existing issues of congestion for Hawkesbury's few river crossings. The Hawkesbury's connectivity to the Western Sydney airport and aerotropolis via mass transit also remains unresolved, despite the progress being achieved to date of establishing Sydney's metro system.

Our council is resolute in promoting the continued investigation of the Rouse Hill-St Marys metro rail link that intersects with the Richmond line to allow for a direct as possible rail connection between the Hawkesbury and the aerotropolis to allow for efficient and equitable public transport access across the region. Additionally, to support the use of public transport and reduce private motor vehicle dependence and congestion on our roads, we recommend that first- and last-mile connectivity is considered also. Addressing these first- and last-mile connectivity issues through improving active transport around existing transport nodes and upgrading local bus services is critical in maximising the integration of existing transport infrastructure and promoting use of public transport.

Finally, it is also imperative that critical transport infrastructure which supports the Western Sydney international airport and aerotropolis is not viewed in isolation and that the broader benefits of the project are acknowledged. The aforementioned road and rail infrastructure projects serve multiple vital functions for our community, namely connecting Hawkesbury to the airport and aerotropolis, improving accessibility of transport connections to existing employment precincts within Greater Sydney, strengthening regional and local industry employment, and a critical role for regional evacuation during emergencies and following disasters. Council once again thanks the Committee for the opportunity to bring attention to the Hawkesbury's needs in respect to this critical infrastructure.

DAN RILEY: I appreciate the opportunity to make a statement to the Committee on transport and infrastructure on behalf of Liverpool City Council. The Liverpool local government area is home to the Western Sydney international airport and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. It is experiencing substantial population growth, with a forecast population increase from the current population of 245,000 to approximately 371,000 by 2041 and a housing target provided by the New South Wales Government of 16,700 new dwellings over the next five years. This growth and associated land release is occurring now, particularly to the east of the Western Sydney international airport and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis in locations such as Middleton Grange, Austral and Leppington North. Under existing conditions, connectivity between these locations is poor, with roads congested and major public transport corridors yet to be realised.

The following transport infrastructure is most critical to addressing the current and impending growth in travel demand, improving mode choice and reducing congestion; further development of the rail and/or metro network, particularly so that the Western Sydney international airport and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis are connected via Leppington to the existing rail network in the east; early introduction of interim and ultimate bus routes and services; and the upgrade and development of the supporting arterial road network. The local areas within the Liverpool local government area will be expected to provide a significant proportion of the employees needed to fill the jobs generated by the Western Sydney international airport and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis. As such, ensuring that the local population has viable and realistic alternatives to private vehicle transport will be essential for reducing car dependency and congestion in the area, growing the economy and ensuring equity for people who are unable to use private vehicles.

A broader risk of not providing strong local connections is that the Western Sydney international airport and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis could become more dependent on bringing in significant volumes of workers from further away, which will place additional strain on our already congested road networks. Improved multimodal connectivity between the Liverpool CBD and the Bradfield CBD and the Western Sydney international airport will also be critical for supporting the economy of the wider aerotropolis. The Liverpool city centre includes Liverpool hospital—one of the largest standalone hospitals in New South Wales—three university campuses, two TAFE campuses and significant manufacturing and logistics sector developments.

Fifteenth Avenue is the proposed east-west transit corridor between the Liverpool CBD and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis, agreed as part of the Western Sydney City Deal. Currently, however, Fifteenth Avenue is a poor quality rural road through Austral, which is Liverpool's fastest growing suburb. Austral is currently absorbing significant population growth, with an expected extra 30,000 homes to be built. At peak hours, the traffic is known to back up over three kilometres. The Western Sydney City Deal, signed on 4 March 2018, brought together all three levels of government: Federal, State and local. Under the deal, a commitment has been made to deliver a rapid bus connection between the airport, the new aerotropolis and the Liverpool CBD when the airport is opened. This commitment was a condition of council's support for the airport as our residents do not deserve to live in a traffic jam caused by the airport.

We acknowledge that \$50 million has been provided for Fifteenth Avenue; however, that makes up 10 per cent or potentially less of the expected cost of the required Fifteenth Avenue works. In my own role at Liverpool City Council, I see complaints from local residents relating to Fifteenth Avenue or the adjacent local road network through Austral and Middleton Grange on an almost daily basis. These include parents worried for their children's safety, who feel no choice but to drive to school because there are no footpaths or crossings in place. It includes locals frustrated that it can take them more than an hour to drive a couple of hundred metres during peak periods. It includes people with limited access to public transport, asking when buses will be improved or provided.

When responding to these complaints, more often than not I explain that Transport for NSW is currently undertaking planning for the corridor and that we need to wait for the planned upgrade of the road. This type of response would normally sit fine with me but, because Fifteenth Avenue has yet to be reclassified as a State road, because corridor protection has yet to be undertaken, because the corridor is still subject to a strategic business case and potential final business case, and because it remains unfunded, the corridor is clearly a long way off and will not be delivered in time for the airport opening, or even in the next decade. The problems on Fifteenth Avenue are now. The solution is too far away.

I would therefore like to challenge the New South Wales Government to prioritise Fifteenth Avenue, accept Liverpool City Council's request to reclassify it as a State road, undertake corridor preservation work where needed and commit the funds to deliver the transit corridor as soon as possible. In summary, Liverpool City Council is committed to working with the New South Wales Government to improve transport infrastructure and services within and beyond the aerotropolis to ensure these rapidly changing precincts are supported with the critical infrastructure required to maximise investment, improve modal choice, address congestion and enhance travel options. Thank you for the opportunity to raise these issues.

JEFF ROORDA: The city of Blue Mountains is somewhat unique in that it's a city within the World Heritage national park. We have a population of 78,000 and we currently receive 4.4 million visitors, and that's expected to grow to 6.3 million beyond 2036. This presents an opportunity to integrate the highway corridor, which is currently at capacity during peak periods, with a rail corridor that has potential additional capacity and put in place an integrated or a whole-of-government approach to transport planning for the city of Blue Mountains to deal with those peak tourism levels. It's a combination of all modes of transport.

The initial study would be minimal in terms of investment but would look at areas where ongoing government investment can particularly continue to support the World Heritage area and provide benefits for planetary health, which is something that councillors are particularly committed to in order to improve biodiversity and shift transport modes from individual cars, who currently completely clog a road network that can't deal with it. We see that the answer is not upgrading the road network; we see that the answer is to do a more strategic approach to shift to other modes of transport.

The connection to certain areas provides great opportunities. The proximity to councils such as Penrith, which provides opportunities for additional accommodation, also provides great opportunities. We see the missing piece as a study that could be led by Transport for NSW to look at all transport modes, working collectively with local government, to provide opportunities for improvement.

The CHAIR: Sorry, Andrew, did you want to say something? You looked like you were about to say something.

ANDREW MOONEY: I might save it for the next phase. The only thing I wanted to mention is that I've tendered an additional document today which is a summary-point snapshot of our main submission, so I'll be talking through that.

The CHAIR: Yes, I know we've got a copy of that document. At the end of the day we'll consider that document and whether it should be made a public document as a part of the Committee hearing.

ANDREW MOONEY: We're comfortable with that. That's fine.

The CHAIR: Matt, in your address can you include one response for me to an early question. Obviously there's a lot of issues once you get past a certain point in Sydney where movements start to be north-south rather than east-west—as opposed to what the infrastructure is. But I wanted to get a view on Wollondilly because your submission in particular looked at employment opportunities in terms of where movements are going.

MATT GOULD: I can certainly address that. Thank you for the opportunity to be able to present before the Committee today. Wollondilly is fairly uniquely placed in that we sit on the outer edge of Greater Sydney and are essentially the gateway between not only Western Sydney and the Illawarra but also Western Sydney and Canberra and regional New South Wales. We are seeing significant growth within our shire with State mandated

growth areas at both Wilton and Appin. The aerotropolis is identified as being the key employment solution for those growth areas. Unfortunately, as things stand at the moment there is no way for our residents to be able to access the aerotropolis using public transport. In fact, for Wollondilly and some of the other Macarthur councils, as things stand at the moment it would be quicker for our residents to go to Sydney airport than it would be to go to Western Sydney airport despite, at its closest point, the airport being only seven kilometres away from our shire boundary.

We have a number of opportunities that we can see. The economic benefits that could come from this airport for Wollondilly could be significant both in terms of employment and significantly increasing the tourism opportunities that we have, but that is only going to be the case if the infrastructure is in place. To date, that simply hasn't happened. My community is one of the most impacted by the airport. We are going to be copping the negatives that come with the airport in terms of flight noise and land restriction, but the benefits that should come from the airport, as far as economic development and infrastructure improvement—unfortunately at the moment we seem to have just been left off as a side thought. Our staff worked extensively on the Growth Infrastructure Compact and with the other infrastructure submissions. Our council invested a significant amount of time and effort into the meetings and the workshops. They were acknowledged and then subsequently ignored. We have a number of very significant concerns.

One of the things that Wollondilly acts as is essentially that north-south link. Other than The Northern Road and Narellan Road—if you're looking at that north-south link, particularly to the Hume Highway—it's through roads through Wollondilly, such as Silverdale Road and Montpelier Drive, down through Picton and then joining on the Hume at that point. Those roads are all council-managed roads and they are struggling now. We desperately need those roads, particularly roads such as Silverdale Road, to be made State-managed roads. Even at this early stage with the construction of the airport we have seen a massive increase not only in the volume of traffic but particularly in the volume of heavy traffic. If you look at somewhere like Picton, 20 per cent of the traffic that is going through Picton now are heavy vehicles that are getting to and from the Hume Highway.

The CHAIR: And possibly the Illawarra as well.

MATT GOULD: And possibly continuing on to the Illawarra. That is, obviously, a significant challenge for us. Likewise, when you look at where our growth areas are, for them to get to the airport via road transport—which is currently what is going to be required—you're putting them on the Hume Highway or pushing them through our roads to be able to get up towards there, or on Narellan Road and The Northern Road, which are already congested. Those alternative links, other than The Northern Road, when you're looking north-south have not been adequately considered. The impact on our residents and the impact on our roads have not adequately been considered, and they need to be. As things stand now there are no mass transport links, as I mentioned, between the LGA and the aerotropolis despite our proximity. Less than 1 per cent of my shire are able to use public transport. At the last census it was a 0.9 per cent that used public transport simply because it just doesn't exist. In parts of our shire we have got bus stops that have never had a bus stop at them.

In order to realise the economic benefits from this airport, we need to see public transport infrastructure extended. We need to be seeing critical public infrastructure links, such as the south-north rail link through to Macarthur which, whilst that doesn't come through to Wollondilly, will provide us a much closer link and would allow for a rapid bus that would then link us into the airport. We also desperately need to see the commitment of and the completion of the OSO as a functional road-freight system to be able to get that heavy traffic off the roads that they're otherwise going to be pushed onto.

Some of the other key issues that we are seeing are in the north of our shire. Silverdale Road in particular is problematic now. It's only 10 kilometres from the airport and it should be a State road. It meets the requirements to be a State road but, despite advocacy on the part of council for many years, we haven't been able to be successful in getting that made a State road. It contains Blaxland Crossing, also known as Wallacia Bridge, which is a one-lane-each-way bridge that is in desperate need of duplication. That is a huge issue for us with floods and is the main road link between Wollondilly and the aerotropolis. And yet, despite advocacy, we haven't been able to get that road upgraded in a significant way. That road needs to be duplicated now with the amount of heavy vehicle traffic that it's taking.

The CHAIR: I do have some questions, but I'll start with the member for Leppington, given that he's probably got a better on-the-ground feel for this.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Can I thank you all for working together in such a collegiate way. For want of a better word, to hunt in a pack is probably more effective and more strategic. Just as a general question, do you think there is sufficient transport to the airport for day one? If you had to pick one project that would give your community the best bang for buck in terms of getting people to and from the airport, what would that be?

MATT GOULD: Absolutely not. There is not anywhere near the sufficient infrastructure that is needed. For the major project, for us, public transport-wise, the south-north rail link through to Macarthur between the airport is absolutely critical regional infrastructure. The Macarthur region as a whole, and Wollondilly in particular, will not see the benefits of the airport without that piece of infrastructure being in place. For broader road transport, for us, it's probably that State road issue and the upgrading of roads like Silverdale Road.

TODD CARNEY: There isn't enough. We're fortunate enough in Penrith that we have got that first rail link from St Marys through to the aerotropolis and also the airport. This was the catalyst to actually drive the investment in Western Sydney and to actually open up Western Sydney. Our view has always been to work with our partners to get that complete north-south rail link in to make sure that we can actually connect through so that people in Campbelltown can work in Penrith and people from Penrith can work in Liverpool—to have that actual connectivity that we currently don't have.

That someone from Penrith takes two and a half hours by public transport to get through to Campbelltown is a joke. It's something that shouldn't have happened. It's something that should have been addressed many, many years ago. We're thankful that, in the recent Federal budget, there was the money invested into Mamre Road. The problem is that it's five years too late. The airport is going to be open before that road gets the upgrade. The significant amount of heavy vehicle traffic that we're going to see on that road before the airport opens is going to create havoc and chaos within all the local areas, whether it's Liverpool, Camden, Wollondilly—we're all going to feel it.

It's just unfortunate that the vision where the airport was done, that the road network—the road links weren't put in place at the same time. Then moving on to that northern road, they had a great opportunity to add the bus lane in there while they did the upgrades to the northern road. They didn't do so, so the rapid bus isn't going to be a rapid bus; it's going to be a generic, multiple-stops. As we have heard already, it's going to take our friends down at Campbelltown longer to get to the Western Sydney airport than it is to get to the current airport in the city.

The whole purpose of this airport was to open up our region, and it hasn't done that yet. I think that's something that all of us want to see. We've all been striving together as a group to make sure that happens. Like I said, it's thankful that Penrith has got that first link, but that's not what we want to see. We want to see it all open for the whole of Western Sydney, which will really engage the economic growth that we want to see in Western Sydney, which to be honest puts more money back into government coffers as well to be able to fund other things into the future.

DAN RILEY: It depends, I think, on what we consider to be sufficient. If we're talking about bare minimum, then I would regard it as sufficient. That's because we can access the airport via private vehicles, construction vehicles, freight—access is provided. If there is one project that supports that, it's the eastern ring road upgrade; it facilitates local access to the airport. However, if we are cognisant of the vision for the wider aerotropolis, it's clear that insufficient infrastructure is not in place to support that vision, which is more holistic about getting everybody to the airport via public transport, walking, cycling et cetera, connecting Western Sydney as a whole. For that purpose, to achieve that vision and to meet sufficient infrastructure, I would assume that the connection along Fifteenth Avenue that connects Liverpool from east to west and allows all of the people who live within Austral and Middleton Grange to access the airport and aerotropolis, that would be a minimum requirement to have that transit corridor in place so that everyone isn't forced into cars.

WILL BARTON: I would say that, in the context of community expectation, for our community at least there is insufficient infrastructure. The number one project to progress towards that would be the continuation of the metro north-south line. At the present time, the metro terminates at Tallawong, just 3½ kilometres from the Richmond line at Schofields. That means that on day one our community cannot easily take public transport, in terms of a mass transit system, to that airport. The continuation of the metro through St Marys and a connection to Tallawong would address that.

ANDREW MOONEY: My brief answer is that Fairfield has—we consider that we're completely deficient in terms of both short-term and long-term transport planning options. That's evidenced, for example, in a document that I've tendered from Transport for NSW. It shows the proposed rapid transit services to the airport from various centres. I understand what the other councils are saying, but there's absolutely no provision of a rapid transit bus service from within Fairfield to the airport. We've raised this with Transport for NSW on numerous occasions. Essentially, all we have is an intermediate service from Liverpool to the airport. We don't know if that will be sustained in the long term, with the opening of Fifteenth Avenue. We don't know anything about the capacity of that service, the frequency, how our residents will access it. It only operates to 10.00 p.m. and the airport is meant to be a 24-hour service. If we're talking about shift workers for the airport and the rest of the aerotropolis, we think that's completely inadequate.

In terms of the long term, in our submission, council talk a lot about east west rail. We call it, with respect to other councils, the true east west rail, which is on the 2050 State Government strategy for transport and also on the district plan to have a connection from Parramatta through Fairfield to the airport, which would stop Fairfield from being what we call the hole in the doughnut because at this stage there are no direct services from Fairfield to the airport, as I said, from buses, but in the long term that's deficient as well. I understand there are priorities of other metro, but council's position is that we really need to think about the business case for the true east west rail to address—it would not only help Fairfield but a lot of the deficiencies in east west rail or connections from the rest of Western Sydney to the airport.

ANDREW CARFIELD: Through you, Madam Chair, the airport is already today a large local employer. From a recent visit, I was informed that there are more than 3,000 employees on site each day. The largest number of those employees that come from one local government area is Camden—more than 500 of those 3,000 employees live in Camden. From day one, I would anticipate the growth in employment locally at that site and a continuation of a large number of those coming from local government areas such as Camden. Today there are really no facilities at all for public transport options for all those employees. The interim step in terms of improvements in public transport was designed through the rapid bus concept. I think earlier versions of the rapid bus concept that were contemplated a number of years ago were contemplating things like frequency of 15 minutes; the hours of operation being from 4.00 a.m. to 1.00 a.m.; zero-emission buses—double-decker, very modern buses and infrastructure; and network priority upgrades being along the routes to allow those buses priority through intersections and the like.

It appears now that the planning for the bus services is more reflective of a normal local bus service. Certainly, within the context of our local government area with frequencies of around every 30 minutes; the hours of operation being just 5.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m.; the peak travel times being in excess of an hour and just standard diesel buses, not a modern bus or bus stop environment. We think that that's not really sufficient. It's to be a 24-hour airport, yet the bus services for employees and people travelling to and from the airport just won't be there outside of those hours, and it won't be a very convenient bus service.

Even for a local government area like Camden that sits alongside or an adjoining part of that region, we don't think—and if I'm asked for the one piece of infrastructure as a priority in terms of transport, we would say that's the continuation of the north-south connection between the airport and Bradfield through to Macarthur, which would be via Oran Park and Narellan. There are opportunities along that railway connection or that railway line for other stations. Logically, there would be more stations along that line, which creates opportunities for our growth as well.

We're growing through the south-west growth centre, and that corridor would go through those growth areas and create big opportunities for uplift in some of those locations. Early decisions on that railway alignment and future stations and things like that would create certainty for the development of those precincts, and it would really create a catalyst too for local employment and other benefits along that area. That would be the piece of infrastructure that we would say is the highest priority.

JEFF ROORDA: It is an excellent question. My response would be an integrated transport strategy that goes from origin to destination. Current work has focused on strategic transport between key nodes. Like you've heard from and seen from the submissions, outside those key nodes there's a larger range of need that will exceed the current funding allocation. The strategic approach would allow a framework for benefit-cost risk that takes into account not only tourism, visitation, employment and the needs of residents but also can include things like planetary health and how we solve some of these problems. It's an opportunity to invest in infrastructure in a different way, rather than project by project and the need is great, but to provide a mechanism for local government together to work with other two levels of government to provide an infrastructure plan. But even if all of the needs can't be met in the short term—and they certainly can't—there's a prioritised way of councils both advocating within their own communities but also to State and Federal governments in order to get a better investment in infrastructure.

BEN TAYLOR: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr Deputy, for the question. On behalf of the eight councils of the Western Parkland City—the parks—I think what you'll hear today is consistency. As you described, Mr Deputy, hunting as a pack—the view of the eight councils is very consistent that there will not be sufficient public transport or transport connectivity to the new airport from day one. That's clear as day. As Mayor Carney said, the new airport was predicated and was agreed to on the basis of some key elements being delivered, one of those being the south-north rail connection from Macarthur through to the aerotropolis through to St Marys and through to Tallawong, and the second one of those was the rapid bus connections from the existing major centres. Rapid bus was the description, not a local bus stopping all the way along the way. It is clear that those are the commitments that need to be honoured so that all of the communities of the Western Parkland City can realise the benefits of the new airport and the aerotropolis.

The reality is that there will be a significant job opportunity or economic opportunity in the aerotropolis and the broader Bradfield. However, there are communities of the Western Parkland City, as you've heard here today from my colleagues, that will not be able to get there and will not be able to realise the benefits. I was at an event last week where the Prime Minister clearly said that he passionately believes the rail from the new airport needs to go to Macarthur. There are business cases underway. We need to get beyond business cases through to delivery, and the reality is, if you look backwards, unfortunately, the investment in public transport and broader social infrastructure for all of New South Wales has meant that there have been inequalities for the people of the Western Parkland City. They have longer travel commute times and they have lower economic opportunities. It takes them longer to get to recreation and it takes them longer to get to see their family. As a result, there is a lower quality of life.

If the Government is pursuing a pathway of rebalancing housing supply—which, in our view, is commendable—they also need to rebalance infrastructure investment and significantly increase the infrastructure investment in the Western Parkland City. The analysis that we have done suggests that over the last 15 to 20 years there has been five times the investment in the City of Sydney and three times the investment in Parramatta than there has in the whole of the Western Parkland City. I'm sorry to say, Mr Deputy, that is not on. There are 1.2 million people who currently live across the Western Parkland City. We are due to accommodate 34 per cent of the growth over the next 15 years. The infrastructure investment needs to at least match 34 per cent of the State investment but, really, it should go above and beyond to catch up with the history and the lack of investment over the past 15 to 20 years.

The CHAIR: I just want to ask a follow-up question, Ben. The airport terminal was built with a capacity for 2,000 parking spaces. Given there are 10 million passengers expected a year, which averages out at 28,000 a day, you would assume that the original concept was that there would not be a large number of people coming in private vehicles. Has there been any analysis of what was the expectation of how people would travel? Obviously, the north-south rail—was that factored into what the parking capacity at the airport was?

BEN TAYLOR: Madam Chair, I couldn't tell you exactly the analysis done into that, but I would say that the basis of the airport was—as Mr Carfield said, an interim solution was the rapid bus connections from the major centres. What the airport was based on was those rapid bus connections being there from day one so that you had clear, fast and desirable public transport connections from the major centres of Campbelltown, Narellan, Penrith and Liverpool. So if people could get to those centres, they had a public transport service as an interim until the metro connections were delivered over time.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I asked that question in about 2017 to the people building the airport, and I was told, believe it or not, they expected automated vehicles to be used.

The CHAIR: That's not happening.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: That's not happening?

The CHAIR: No, not at the moment. Maybe Andrew wants to elaborate.

ANDREW MOONEY: I just want to totally support what Ben and Mark have said. I think one of the issues is that we're in a bit of a frenzied state at the moment. It's a bit piecemeal—the planning, in some instances, about some of the projects and this integration moving forward. But the big unknown is that we don't know at this stage—or I don't know. There is no announcement about the operation, initially, of the airport and whether it's going to be a passenger airport—to what degree—or whether it's going to be freight. Until we know some of that, it's hard to work out what the actual needs, in terms of the transport needs, are—and the private vehicles. It will be predominantly private vehicles to start with, for sure.

The CHAIR: Warren, did you want to ask anything?

Mr WARREN KIRBY: I have heard a lot of conversations around the amount of job opportunities that the airport holds. I also note that there is significant warehousing and logistics being proposed for the area and that the future of warehousing does not have the same amount of employment opportunities it once did. Based on the projected jobs growth—and I am not quite sure where that has come from—what would you consider to be a priority for moving around? Is it freight or is it people?

BEN TAYLOR: Perhaps I could go first. I'd probably support the comments from Mr Mooney as well. We don't have a thorough understanding of the needs for the Western Sydney airport itself in terms of traffic going there but, for the Western Parkland City, Bradfield was predicated on the creation of 200,000 jobs for that region, so that suggests to me that the priority should be people.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Do you have any idea of where that number came from?

BEN TAYLOR: It was part of the Western Sydney City Deal. It said, "Okay, we're going to create the Western Sydney airport. We're going to create Bradfield around the centre and, as part of that development, there will be the commitment to 200,000 jobs being created." Obviously, that commitment came from that being a key factor for the support from all the councils because, at the moment, the people of many of these councils are travelling into the city, into Parramatta, or even down to Wollongong or up to the Central Coast, and what we want is local jobs because local jobs mean people are travelling less from their home to work. It means they have got more time in their lives for recreation and doing the things they love. So it increases the lifestyles and the way of life of the people that live across the Western Parkland City. That job was a commitment from the State and Federal governments as part of the city deal. We don't have a clear understanding of where that number is up to in terms of what's actually going to happen on the ground.

ANDREW MOONEY: From Fairfield's perspective, our team meets quite a lot with a lot of the major developers who have stakes in new development, and what they are saying to us is that, in the aerotropolis, there is just a lack of infrastructure at the moment. They can't plan for or give commitments to try to do development there until the infrastructure is there, particularly in terms of the advanced water recycling facility. That's a huge undertaking. In Fairfield, we are finding that we are getting huge developments and distribution centres coming into our older estates, knocking down warehouses and utilising that because there is no certainty about the aerotropolis and where it stands. I don't know if anyone from Penrith might be able to clarify, or anyone else, just in terms of when there are going to be suitable services into the aerotropolis to start seeing the development come in.

TODD CARNEY: I'll add to those. I don't think it's one or the other, to be brutally honest. We've seen a large proportion of freight companies moving out into Western Sydney around the aerotropolis already, especially around the Mamre precinct. So there is going to be a lot of freight movements in there. The intermodal around there and actually designating that moving forward with the intermodal is key to alleviating some of that pressure off the current roads that are there and the road networks there. At the moment, we'll have the north-south rail link going from St Marys through to the airport, but there is no commuter car park on the St Marys end, so people are just going to drive. The commitment by the Federal Government was torn up, as you know, quite recently, to build the commuter car park.

I think we heard earlier that it's that first and last mile travelled that is necessary to make sure that people can get to those modes of transport, whether it's in Fairfield or whether it's in Liverpool. To get to those rapid bus networks or what was supposed to be rapid bus transport networks is key as well. It's not one or the other. I think it needs to be both at the same time, unfortunately. The problem is this has been left too late to be dealt with. The airport has been built, but none of the surrounding airport infrastructure has been delivered in that same time. If you go down to the Mamre precinct at the moment, you've got building after building after building being delivered. To be brutally honest, Mamre Road is a goat track.

I'm thankful that the Federal Government has chipped in the half a billion dollars to get that going. But by the time we see the actual rollout of that investment, we're five, six or seven years down the track. It's not going to have that real impact until that time comes, which is also going to cause a bottleneck while those works are being done, which is going to push more traffic onto some of our rural roads. Luddenham Road, for instance, is going to have heavy traffic because that work is going to go on. We should have been done 10 years ago; we're way behind the eight ball on this. It's just unfortunate we're in this situation. The problem is it's now up to the current Government to pick up whatever's been left for them to deal with.

MATT GOULD: At this point, I don't think we have the luxury of being able to prioritise one over the other because they're both needed to make it work. If you look at Wollondilly, for instance, we've got 50,000 people that are going in at Wilton, about the same at Appin and a significant portion of the growth at Camden as well. Those growth centres are predicated on the majority of the jobs coming from the airport. As it stands now, the only way they're going to be able to get there is to drive on either The Northern Road or through the rural back roads of Wollondilly, so finding a solution to that problem is going to be urgent and imminent.

But I don't think we can be not also actively pushing for it on the freight side because, if we don't solve the problems with moving freight and moving it effectively, there won't be the jobs there for the people to come to in the first place—whether that be the increases in the rail link or whether that be something like the Maldon-Dombarton links down to the Illawarra. We're really behind the eight ball of where we should be at this point. We need public transport links to be able to get people to the aerotropolis for jobs, but we need the freight links for the jobs to be there in the first place. If you do one without the other, then it's just not going to work.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Given the uncertainty around whether it's going to be passengers or whether it's going to be freight, and all those sorts of things, do you think there has been adequate planning for the connecting infrastructure to the airport?

JEFF ROORDA: At the time, perhaps, but many of the assumptions that were behind the initial transport planning have changed. We have a housing crisis; we have had the impact of COVID. We've had many changes to the underlying assumptions. The Deputy Chair has referred to one of them, but there have been many underlying assumptions that require a revision and an update through a strategic plan that goes origin to destination and allows us to prioritise and plan projects at all three levels of government. My view is, currently, we don't have that. We have pieces of it, but we don't have an integrated and whole-of-government approach to it.

ANDREW CARFIELD: If I could add as well, through you, Madam Chair, I think that in terms of the earlier planning work and whether that was adequate, there's one major flaw that I'd like to highlight. That's through the State's own common planning assumptions. We've seen in our context in Camden that we're tracking well ahead of the State's common planning assumptions that are used to inform infrastructure decisions. To a significant degree, when we look out to 2041, the difference between the State's common planning assumptions and our predicted growth is more than 100,000 residents in our community—huge differences.

If we look at the impact of those decisions, just consider for a moment in Oran Park. The first primary school opened with 11 kindergarten classes. By the time the second primary school opened, there were 21 kindergarten classes in Oran Park primary school. The second primary school opened in 2021. Right now, there are demountable buildings being put on the playgrounds of that relatively new primary school, and that's the impact of not getting the up-front planning work accurate and realistic to track the growth that we are experiencing in some of our communities. There's a real lag in the infrastructure. It's causing a massive impact to our families and our communities, so that's something that I think needs to be addressed.

I think there's definitely a lack of urgency around the public transport investment that's needed to support the airport and its proper functioning from day one and through its early phases. There's a lot of employment that will be at the airport. I would not like to think that the community of Camden is locked out of those employment opportunities because they can't access the airport in a convenient way. The 500 residents at Camden today that work at the airport would be driving to the airport. If the car parking and public transport arrangements are not in place, they might not be able to work in the airport in the future. I think that there certainly needs to be a catch-up in the planning work to make sure that the investment decisions are taken in a timely way.

ANDREW MOONEY: I just wanted to reinforce what Andrew said there: In terms of the planning, there's been some moderate modelling in the aerotropolis and the type of road network that's needed, but there's no holistic modelling outside the aerotropolis to other councils to see what's happening on those networks that are marked—particularly of freight. Fairfield is experiencing a lot of that through regional traffic. It's been a while since we've had a forum and a collaboration between the councils, Transport and Planning to look at all this together and to work out just how all the parts are working together.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: What I'm hearing here is the need to update the assumptions, refresh future transport and have a Western Sydney focused version of that. Would that be a Western Sydney version? In terms of strategy, are you talking about a Western Sydney transport strategy or a Western Sydney airport transport strategy? What would be more effective?

BEN TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr Deputy. I suppose I would like to caution against stopping and rethinking and doing a whole new plan. I think the balance needs to be between delivery and planning. It needs to be a more agile and movable, iterative planning approach, rather than stopping and replanning. If you look backwards, there have actually been multiple plans. There's also been the Growth Infrastructure Compact or Urban Development Program, as it's called, for the aerotropolis. There's been a whole lot of planning and thinking and planning and thinking, and what we need more than anything is we need delivery on the ground. So I suppose I would like to caution against going down the path of developing a whole new plan again. I'd suggest we go down the path of delivering the things that have already been committed to and then continue to develop and enhance the planning and the thinking and the assumptions.

I'll give you an example. There is a present issue that particularly impacts on Fairfield, which is aviation fuel. You're probably well aware of it too, Mr Deputy. The reports are that to get the necessary fuel to the airport, by 2030, approximately 43 B-double fuel tanker trucks are required per day. This number is going to increase in line with the growth in airport traffic. Obviously, that's a lot of trucks, but it's also a lot of risk. Aviation fuel is highly flammable. It destroys areas if an accident happens, and it is a key risk. So that's an area where we need to adapt our thinking and prioritise the fuel pipeline, at the same time as getting on with the metro, the rapid bus and the major upgrades that we need to do. It's an iterative and forward-thinking program.

One thing I would comment, as well—I compliment the new Government for the way it has approached the collaboration with the councils through what's now called the tripartite forum. Kiersten Fishburn has been integral to forming that forum back up again. It is a tri-level government forum between the general managers of all the councils of the Western Parkland City, key secretaries within the State government and also key secretaries

at a Federal level. Josh Murray, the transport secretary, has offered to bring to the table to that group the future pipeline of transport projects—both funded, unfunded and wishful ideas—for us to have a discussion and to start talking about priorities as well. I do want to commend, as well, that approach. I think it is forward thinking and it could realise some real benefits for the area.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: So your suggestion is that it's all there and we've got all the glossy brochures, but perhaps that's the forum that should be driving and focusing what needs to be done and when.

BEN TAYLOR: Yes, I would think so. This is probably a symptom of a broader, perhaps, lack of resourcing, particularly in terms of delivery. That's happening all across the area. Every single one of these councils will have an example where lack of resourcing of infrastructure planning on the ground—be it Sydney Water, Transport, Health, Education—is actually slowing down housing supply. Again, it's getting the resources in the teams to do the planning, and do it fast and agile, so that they can deliver on the ground faster.

The CHAIR: But is it also a lack of efficacy in what you're delivering? For example, you've got the Metro West, which is \$25 billion. The metro link from St Marys to the airport that's currently proposed, which is basically the same distance, is \$11 billion. It's a cheaper delivery because it's a greenfield site for what is a driver of future homes and job growth in New South Wales. I'm glad Transport and everyone is bringing it together in a tripartite approach, but is there an argument there that's being put forward about where there are limited resources—in government there is never unlimited pots of money—or where there is a pot of money where the efficacy is going on the best delivery to deliver something?

Obviously it's harder to go back and deliver a train, as we've seen with Tullamarine. It's harder to go back and put the public transport in at a later stage. The easiest way—and that's the example of Perth Airport—is delivering it while it's a greenfield site. Are those corridors there? The argument going forward about efficacy—particularly when you've got some council areas with 100,000 homes going into them. Sorry, Ben, just because you're in those discussions.

BEN TAYLOR: Very well said. I—100 per cent—support it.

The CHAIR: That wasn't a political—

BEN TAYLOR: In fact, if I could have said it better myself, I would have. That was very well put. That is effectively the argument we are putting forward on behalf of the Western Parkland City. We are growing very fast. Camden is the fastest-growing LGA in all of Australia. At the moment the areas that could be easily built are being built out. There will be houses there shortly that will mean that the infrastructure delivery will be very expensive.

The CHAIR: Do we have the corridor, for example, set aside for the metro? I've got two different answers on this so far.

BEN TAYLOR: As far as I'm aware, no. Not the connection down to Macarthur and not the connection up to Tallawong.

The CHAIR: Has anyone done the opportunity cost of not setting those aside for it now, and what would happen in the future to do that?

BEN TAYLOR: My understanding is that that is probably a key consideration in the business case, which is currently underway. There are jointly funded Federal and State business cases looking at the connection between the airport and Macarthur, the airport and Glenfield, and also the airport and Tallawong. If that's not a key consideration in that business case, I don't know what it's actually looking at.

The CHAIR: Then it should be about setting those aside. Ray, do you have any questions?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Chair, I think I take on board all of the discussion that has been presented thus far from the people who are on the ground. I thank you all for your attendance and for your frank discussions. There is an overwhelming theme that in order for both this airport and the future of the aerotropolis to succeed, there needs to be a clear priority with time frames and funding attributed to all aspects of the infrastructure that you speak of. The 200,000 supposed jobs around the aerotropolis was prefaced very much on the north to south rail link or metro link, which our Government had previously committed to. I think when you look at an area like Camden, which is growing at such a rapid pace, it is absolutely fundamental to that community alone, that rail link being implemented as a priority.

I think one of the great ironies being here in the Hills is that—and it's suffering, as Camden is now and has for many years prior to the implementation of the north-west metro and other road connectivity—we are seeing the great success of WestConnex, the extension of the M4. The travel times from the Hills to the Sydney airport can be now as little as 45 minutes, and that will be improved once the gateway is completed. I suppose I

ask the question to all of you: With the failure to implement the appropriate infrastructure on behalf of the new Western Sydney airport and the aerotropolis, how detrimental will that be to the future of that airport and surrounding growth of the employment zones when you can access the Sydney airport in less time than it's going to take me to travel over via buses on busy roads to the new Western Sydney airport when it opens in 2026?

The CHAIR: Was that a question to anyone in particular or a general one, Ray?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I think just a general question to anybody, Madam Chair. I'm starting to see that the failure to deliver on infrastructure to that particular airport is going to be detrimental to its future growth. I think that's going to affect everybody, and certainly the employment on behalf of the many councils that are represented in that room today.

ANDREW MOONEY: The thing that rings to me is that that's almost part of the business case for the airport, and a question for the Federal Government as much as anyone, because we still don't know who the operator is and whether it's viable.

The CHAIR: I welcome Judy to the hearing. As I said earlier, Judy was unfortunately delayed at a funeral this morning. Thank you, Judy, for coming.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: Thank you.

The CHAIR: I will refer back to the mayor of Penrith, who looks like he's about to give another answer as well, Ray.

TODD CARNEY: Having the lack of infrastructure is always going to be detrimental to anything that gets built, like an airport, but unfortunately a lot of that work should have started when the airport was announced. We are so far down the track that now we are trying to catch up and I think that's going to be the hardest thing. There's a lot of money that's going to need to be spent in a very short period of time to be able to give all these councils the comfort that they're going to get the benefit out of the airport. As I said, on a Federal and State level this should have been done many years ago and it hadn't been done, unfortunately. But we are in this situation now where we need to play catch up.

The CHAIR: Fairfield council, obviously once you get to the Penrith and the Campbelltown link, and certainly to Wollondilly it's a north-south movement. Fairfield is a bit of a different case, isn't it, because a lot of your movements aren't necessarily—Woodville Road on is where the changeover is. Possibly what's creating congestion, particularly around your area, is that east-west with the north-south connectivity. I'm just wondering, because the metro will skirt around, the biggest priorities for you are—the M12 is obviously making a difference, and the Elizabeth Drive overpass, but are there other priorities in particular, apart from the fuel pipeline, which I understand needs to run from Clyde? Can I just get back to that for a minute. When they say, "Run it from Clyde along an existing pipeline," are they talking about the existing water pipelines?

ANDREW MOONEY: No, we don't know yet. I think Deloitte did a study of that. At this stage the cost-benefit analysis is that they won't provide a pipeline until the airport is at that level where it's really pushing the demand. As Ben said, in the short term it will be major, big petrol tankers for quite a few years, I think. I know a little bit about that, but it sounds like Ben might have a bit more insight.

The CHAIR: Yes, I did have a look, but I couldn't quite work out which pipeline they were talking about.

BEN TAYLOR: I'm not entirely clear, Madam Chair. This was something Brad Cutts, the general manager of Fairfield, advocates about very strongly, as does Frank Carbone, to ensure that this is delivered. I think what they are looking for more than anything—and what all of Parkland City is looking forward to supporting Fairfield in—is certainty on the pipeline, such as when it will be delivered and where it will be delivered, so that we can get those trucks off the road.

ANDREW MOONEY: Our position is that Fairfield has had a lot of the infrastructure impacts from outside the service of the rest of the region, and the freight line is another one that is coming through Fairfield as well. That has a high impact on our city. But just to answer your question in terms of our context, we are a bit on the other side of the coin to the other councils. Our position is that—and it's in my summary notes—our needs or issues are driven by community need and not so much by growth, because our community is really disadvantaged. I've got the statistics there. We are the lowest on the SEIFA index.

The CHAIR: I'm the member for Auburn. I'm well aware of your statistics. We are your neighbour.

ANDREW MOONEY: We can see that; probably a lot of similarities. That's been an entrenched thing for the city—unemployment rates. There's a whole of list of things there about the cost of transport and the cost of living being 75 per cent of individuals' household budget compared to 30 per cent in more well-to-do areas of

Sydney. Our submission is underpinned by this community need issue and trying to bring some relief to mitigate that in the long term. That's really where we're coming from, but there's this issue of the impacts surrounding us with the freight and pipelines, and those things which are big unknowns to us.

The CHAIR: You also have a kind of physical barrier. I notice roads like Cabramatta Road where you run into the heavy rail line. It's very old infrastructure that's built there, and it kind of creates a physical barrier around your council.

ANDREW MOONEY: That's right. That's why the issue with the rapid bus planning is a bit of an issue, I think, from Transport because they haven't identified the corridors that would be completely suitable for a rapid bus from the built-up areas of Fairfield, but there are options you could look at with the engineers in terms of, if you have buses that have priority at traffic lights and things like that. As everyone has said, the rapid bus really stops at 10 o'clock. After that, if you've got a 24-hour operation, then there are no constraints to having rapid bus services. Particularly Fairfield, with our community employment, there are a lot of shift workers in the community because of the industrial areas and that kind of thing. But with the cost of cars and all that kind of thing, it's a constraint for them and another imposition on their being able to get to the airport without the benefit of public transport. That hasn't been looked at in terms of transport planning yet.

TODD CARNEY: Just going back onto the fuel line, one of my big concerns is, speaking to the Western Sydney airport authority quite recently, their view is they'll wait until a fuel company sees that it's viable to build their own pipeline—until it happens. When that is is the biggest concern. This could be 20, 30 years down the track before a fuel company sees it's viable, which is then going to put impact on local roads. As Ben was saying, when you get down that far, that's going to be exceeding the number of flights that Sydney Airport currently has. The number of fuel tankers that we're going to see on all of our regional roads is going to be huge. Having that comfort of when that's going to come, I think, is important for all the councils in the Western Sydney region.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Just to follow on from Ray Williams's point, how do you think that the lack of surrounding transport infrastructure will affect the capacity of the airport? We spoke a lot about how it affects the individual councils. How do we think it will affect the capacity of the airport?

BEN TAYLOR: I suppose, looking at it from the other way, through you, Madam Chair, it will probably affect the amount of demand for the use of the airport. If people can't get there, particularly through public transport—if parking is limited; if the roads are congested—they'll choose to go elsewhere. That is human nature. They'll choose to fly out of Kingsford Smith because it will be quicker to get to; it will be more efficient to get to; it will be easier to get to. As a result, they will choose to take their business elsewhere which, unfortunately, may affect the viability and the feasibility of the airport more generally. That's a key risk and it's a key risk that's been identified by the airport authority. The CEO, Simon Hickey, is out there advocating very strongly for better public transport connections. He knows that the future of the airport really is dependent on quality public transport. Because, if people can't get there, they will choose to go elsewhere.

ANDREW MOONEY: Could I just add: The last point I meant to say is that it must be imperative that the M12 is toll-free to address some of these issues and with access in the short term for the whole of Western Sydney with the pressure of cost of living and all those kinds of things.

ANDREW CARFIELD: If I could just add, too, through you, Madam Chair, in terms of the take-up of opportunities at the airport, I feel that that would be slowed down unless the supporting infrastructure is there to ensure that the connections for people who work at the airport, for the businesses who need to access those precincts. If the transport infrastructure is not in place early—the airport has been carefully designed around a growth plan. The first runway will be delivered by 2026. There's a metro station, which is alongside the first runway, but also neatly positioned between the first runway and the second runway, and other growth opportunities within the airport. The councils that surround the airport are keen to see the employment opportunities being fully realised. We know there's a jobs deficit in our community, as there is in surrounding communities, and the local employment and take-up of investment by businesses is really important to that strategy. But without the equivalent investment by government into the supporting transport connections, that will certainly slow the growth of the airport and the opportunities that exist.

The CHAIR: It's the "build it and they will come" model, yes.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Continuing on with that and tying some of the threads that have been discussed recently—things around freight, gas pipelines, that kind of thing—I just want to engage each of you outside of transport infrastructure but enabling infrastructure and the impact that has on employment opportunities. I'm well aware of the issues with Sydney Water. It's impacted my community quite significantly, but in terms of businesses, both domestic and international, knocking on your doors and going, "We want to get

in at the airport, but the fact is that you're being held back by enabling infrastructure," could I have some examples, or the impact that it's had on each of your councils?

WILL BARTON: If I could perhaps jump in. For the Hawkesbury, I suppose both the opportunities and the impacts are fairly minor compared to those communities and those councils closer to the airport. It is still transport infrastructure but perhaps not direct. We have the RAAF base, which now has got its future secured with a decision by the Federal Government in the last 18 months or so. We've also got one of the primary agricultural precincts or research areas in the Sydney metropolitan area. We're starting to see inquiries from companies and enterprises around what our future looks like. To some extent, that has depended on what those more distant connections, such as Richmond Road and even indeed across to the other side of the river, how they are being planned in conjunction with the broader infrastructure that I suppose is earmarked for the airport. Coming back to Jeff's point, this has ramifications outside of those immediate communities.

The classic example is the upgrades that are going on on Richmond Road with the North West Growth corridor, the second Richmond Bridge, or the new Richmond Bridge, and the connections into Richmond Road. There are about two kilometres or three kilometres of Richmond Road that will remain unaddressed between these new significant improvements and upgrades. I'd suggest, in the context and the scheme of things, for a relatively small upgrade we can get that continuity and that connection through to, and open up, not just around the RAAF base, and the Western Sydney University Hawkesbury campus, but then over to the other side of the river, where we've got significant agricultural activities.

TODD CARNEY: I'm happy to add on to that. With Penrith having around 37 per cent of the available employment plans that are left within the Sydney Basin, especially around the aerotropolis, the Mamre Road Precinct, there are a couple of issues there. Sydney Water, again, is a massive issue around that in getting the supply in and also getting the sewerage in and out of there as well. The other big one is around the roads infrastructure. When the Mamre Road Precinct was done under the State planning, we've had a lot of buildings there approved without the accessibility that is needed for those types of facilities to be built. Councils now are trying to play catch-up on a lot of those things to try to make sure that we can actually get them in and out of that precinct. It's getting to the stage where we've now got that investment from the Federal Government, but it got to the stage where the department of planning is going to say, "We're going to have to stop this. There's enough. We can't keep going because there's not the roads to deliver on it." They're the type of catch-up things we've been trying to play with within Penrith through State decisions that were made previously to make sure that we can move forward. But, yes, water and local roads are huge issues for us.

MATT GOULD: I echo the sentiments of some of the other panel members that Sydney Water in particular, for us, has been a huge challenge for our growth area at Wilton. We are at the point now where it looks like that's likely to grind to a halt, purely because Sydney Water can't service the area the way that they indicated they were able to. That obviously has very clear downstream ramifications for the development of the growth area and the realisation of the services that were meant to be provided there. For Wollondilly, the Wilton Growth Area was meant to act as a strategic centre for us, and that was to be a key linking to the airport and more broadly. But that lack of broad enabling infrastructure spend across the board has proven to be a real handbrake on the development that we are seeing there and elsewhere across the shire.

As I touched on earlier, local roads are a huge issue for us as well, as far as basic enabling infrastructure that is needed. It is an incredible frustration of mine that in the entirety of Wollondilly there are only three State roads, one of which is the Hume Highway. A number of key roads, such as Remembrance Drive, Menangle Road and Silverdale Road, are essentially State roads until the point they hit the Wollondilly boundary and then they miraculously become council managed roads. Council, as far as our investment in our road network, has a significant road backlog that we are trying to address. Having to put so much of our road budget into trying to hold together a couple of roads that should, by all reasonable standards, be State roads has a huge impact not only on council but on the broader community.

The other big piece of enabling infrastructure that I think is missing for the entire region is looking around that linkage to the Illawarra and the airport link between the Illawarra and Western Sydney and the Illawarra and Port Kembla and the airport. The Maldon-Dombarton link or the SWIRL link—or whatever we want to call it this week—has been on the radar for decades. It was partially built. We've got the corridor booked. The corridor is there. The completion of that piece of infrastructure would fundamentally change both Western Sydney and the Illawarra and would provide a critical link for the airport, but we just aren't seeing the focus there to actually deliver things at the end of the day.

ANDREW CARFIELD: Thank you for that question, Deputy Chair. As you would be aware, in precincts like Leppington there is significant growth that's planned within those areas. I think in the Leppington town centre we have just exhibited earlier this year a proposal which would see another 10½ thousand homes

being delivered right in the town centre and 11,000 jobs. That supports a lot of the growth that we are planning in the south-west growth area within the Camden LGA. Alongside Leppington, there are other growth areas within Camden, such as Pondicherry, Oran Park, Lowes Creek Maryland, the South Creek West sub precincts as well as Catherine Field. In all of those areas—and I echo some of the feedback from other councils—the availability of sewer and water connections is really slowing the delivery of housing and growth. In the context of each of those areas, there has been significant challenge in the utility services, particularly Sydney Water.

Other local infrastructure is required to support growth. We are planning, in our context, to double our community's population across the next 10 to 15 years. But we won't be able to do that without support from government at all levels. We can do so much as a council but, certainly, in terms of financing local infrastructure, that's a challenge. The timely delivery of schools, community facilities, hospitals and that kind of infrastructure is beyond the capacity of councils but needs to be thought through early in order to avoid significant costs. We are seeing right now in Gregory Hills land being acquired in a commercial precinct to build a new high school, possibly at significant cost to the Government and not in a way that's in time for the needs of our younger community in Camden. Certainly, the experience shared by others is that the timely delivery of that full array of infrastructure needed to support growth needs greater focus.

DAN RILEY: Just to add a little bit further, businesses are knocking on the door of Liverpool City Council. We know they are undertaking a lot of preliminary work looking at getting ready to submit development applications. As identified by everyone else around the table, in terms of the water, sewerage infrastructure and, in many cases, the local or arterial road network not being in place, many of those applications are being held off. It is slowing the growth.

WILL BARTON: One thing that came to mind is that there is a lot of focus on water and sewer but I think the other thing that should be held right up high in terms of a significant risk is waste management. A lot of people don't know that during the floods in 2022 we were days away from the Sydney Basin being unable to dispose of waste within the Sydney Basin, following the impact of some critical rail links and loss of access to some landfills. That is something that has risks not just for the airport and aerotropolis but for the greater metropolitan area. I think it is a key consideration and one that should be kept in mind, whether it's through closer attention to circular economies, which a greenfield development like the aerotropolis has. How that's going to be managed into the future should be front of mind as well.

ANDREW MOONEY: Briefly, our key three priorities—in terms of going back to the road infrastructure and quick wins—are three primary corridors at Horsley Drive, which is long overdue in terms of upgrades. It's been going for 10 years. That's a very convoluted, undulating and dangerous road almost, which is serving our industrial areas. There is going to be a high demand on that when the airport opens because it takes you straight onto the M7 and out the M12. There is some funding allocated federally—\$95 million—but that still isn't sufficient. But it's there and waiting. To get that project underway would be vital.

The other one is the Southern Link Road. I'm not sure if you are familiar with it, but that's a road that has had a lot of planning gone into it. It's a connection from Wallgrove Road in Fairfield to Mamre Road. Again, that would be another freight road which would take the pressure off the regional road network and local roads. It's just south of the Sydney Water pipeline. That would connect the industrial areas of Penrith and Fairfield into the aerotropolis. The last one in terms of road priorities would be Elizabeth Drive. That would become a major road as a destination for the eastern areas, including going into the areas east of Fairfield and Auburn, and would upgrade Elizabeth Drive as a major road connection for the airport as well.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: I know we've talked a lot about the effect upon local areas and I know that we always talk a lot about the east connection and connectivity. I am curious as to what you might think about the western connectivity, certainly through the Wollondilly, the Camden and the Hawkesbury areas, and the impact you might see with no critical infrastructure for freight when we start to get the big companies talking about inland rail, which would actually miss this particular airport if they are travelling inland if we don't have the critical infrastructure to bring freight through. The Maldon-Dombarton is an example from the port or through Hawkesbury coming down from the mountains. I'm trying to think about the impact to the whole of New South Wales and freight. Has anybody got some thoughts about if we lose a lot of our freight coming into Sydney via that inland or, in fact, the effect of the freight coming on trucks through your particular areas? What effect do you think that will have?

TODD CARNEY: I'll start with that. A lot of us spoke about it before you arrived as well. Freight is going to be a big issue. As I said earlier, a lot of the freight companies have moved out into Western Sydney, whether it's through Penrith or whether it's through Campbelltown or Blacktown and also around the aerotropolis. There is going to be a lot of truck movements through there. I know that for the outer ring road—or the outer orbital, as you would like to call it—there was supposed to be a heavy rail within that which would be able to

service a lot of that movement of freight in and out of Western Sydney. That's something that I think there were discussions around about 10 years ago, but that seems to have gone off into the ether at the moment. Those types of things are going to be critical into the future, especially as the airport grows and as Western Sydney grows.

Western Sydney airport is going to be that vital link between our manufacturers and our growers to the rest of the world. To be able to get freight in and out of there quickly is going to be really important, but not having that infrastructure in place now is going to have a heavy burden on our local roads. As I said earlier, a lot of those local roads are rural roads. Whether it's through Campbelltown, Wollondilly, Camden, Fairfield or Liverpool, a lot of those roads need to be taken over as State roads. There needs to be that prioritisation around that—for us, Luddenham Road is a key one there, and I know Fifteenth Avenue is for our friends next door. There are many of those roads that really need those upgrades to be able to handle the heavy loads that we're going to see. We're going to see an increase of 50 per cent in freight until 2041, which is going to have huge impacts if we don't have that enabling infrastructure.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: Do you think there will be any impact if freight starts to shift inland and away from the airport if we don't have that critical infrastructure coming into the airport?

TODD CARNEY: A lot of businesses—and businesses where I've worked in the past—have started to go around airfreight because it's quicker, easier and sometimes cheaper to get it in and out of the country, especially for small freight. Western Sydney airport is always going to play a vital part in freight in and out; there's no doubt about it. But what it's going to do is increase the traffic loads on our local roads. At the moment, on a lot of our roads from Penrith into the airport, in peak time there's about a 20-minute delay. That's just going to increase, and the time frame of that is going to expand as well. Instead of having an hour of peak we're going to have three hours of peak. I think it's always going to be there. The opportunities around freighting and, especially around the ag precinct, getting things in and out of there and out to other markets of the world is going to be important—other than the bigger stuff that's going to go by sea of course. A lot of the smaller stuff, business is transitioning away from that, especially as we move into a world of things like Amazon where things are being freighted by air. That's why it's always going to be necessary and why we also need to continue working on a solution for freight.

The CHAIR: We are due to break for lunch, but I'll take Matt's response.

MATT GOULD: For us, it's certainly going to have a very significant impact. As I said earlier, 20 per cent of the traffic moving through Picton now is freight, and that's just going to increase. That is on roads that were never designed to handle that kind of load, and we're only going to see an increase in that. It effectively acts as a rat run around the alternative routes. Those roads are winding, they are narrow, they are rural roads in most cases within Wollondilly and there are practical impacts that come with that. I am, sadly, quite sure that if we continue to see increases in the amount of heavy traffic, we will see increases in loss of life on those roads purely from the amount of traffic that is going there because those roads are not designed to handle it. The impact on those roads for council—they need to be State roads. It is stretching the capacity of council to be able to properly service them, which means other roads within the shire that desperately need funding don't get it because we put between 30 per cent to 40 per cent of our roads budget into those roads.

There are some critical infrastructure links that are going to be needed, particularly if you're looking at the freight impact there. The Picton bypass is something that has been needed since I was in primary school, but it's incredibly important if we're looking at a potential world where there is, once again, more freight coming through. Similarly, up at Blaxland Crossing on the northern end of our shire—once again, a road that needs to be a State road, along Silverdale Road there—there is a need for duplication now with the amount of freight movement, let alone what is coming.

To the broader challenge of the Inland Rail and what does that mean if that moves away, we spoke at length earlier around the challenges to the potential passenger use of the airport from the lack of infrastructure and that the community will go to Sydney airport if it is quicker and easier for them to be able to go there. The thing that Western Sydney has, other than that, is the fact that it's a 24-hour airport and a lot of freight movement can then happen at night. If you get something like the Inland Rail which then starts taking a portion of that freight movement away as well and you haven't resolved the issues that potentially make Sydney airport more appealing for a large number of passengers, then at that point it does really question the overall ongoing viability if neither freight nor passengers have a really strong argument for why it is used and there are better alternatives available.

(Luncheon adjournment)

The CHAIR: Thank you, everybody, for coming back. I just wanted to ask a follow-up question in regard to freight. It's probably for Fairfield to consider. As you know, as the member for Auburn, we have a lot of flow-on effects from your area across to ours because of congestion around Woodville Road and Parramatta

Road—the tolls on the M4, Parramatta Road and Silverwater Road. Is anyone considering what the freight impacts are going to have on local traffic and the flow-on effects in peak hour? I'm particularly conscious of areas like yours that are constrained in terms of movement.

ANDREW MOONEY: Madam Chair, it's a good question. I know that there have been investigations by Transport for NSW. I don't know if they're part of this inquiry. They look after what's called the Sydney area traffic model, or something, that gives them an insight into the traffic data and freight data. The simplest solution, which they're looking at, is the Western Sydney freight line from Botany Bay. I've mentioned it briefly before. It would go through Fairfield and into the Mamre Road intermodal, which is to the north of the aerotropolis. It's all geared around what's happening at Botany Bay at the moment and the road network around there.

The CHAIR: Is that the freight line that comes around the back of Rookwood Cemetery?

ANDREW MOONEY: No, the Western Sydney freight line is kind of connected in with the Southern Sydney Freight Line, which goes through Fairfield as well. We get a lot of exposure to freight lines. Southern Sydney Freight Line comes from the south, from Liverpool. There's an intermodal there.

The CHAIR: The Moorebank—

ANDREW MOONEY: Moorebank. It's a separate line. That was built 10 or 15 years ago. The Southern Sydney Freight Line would connect onto that, and that gives them a connection into Botany Bay. It goes from Leightonfield, which is in Blacktown—I don't know if that's your area—through Yennora and through the top end of Fairfield. There's an investigation area for it. They have already set aside some of the corridor in Fairfield. It is reserved land. Basically, how it works, I think, is the capacity of the road network around Botany Bay is going to reach capacity in about 2035. There's already planning for it. I've been involved with some of the working parties.

I can't answer on behalf of Transport, but they have got an understanding of this issue of transport of freight. I don't know how much they've looked at the actual airport itself. I don't know if that helps. It's a complex thing because it is all interwoven with the rest of the industrial areas around Botany Bay, Wetherill Park and areas like that. There's exponential growth in freight happening in Sydney because of the lack of manufacturing here. Everything is coming from overseas. There are these big logistics centres. There is still a big demand for them in Western Sydney. All of the freight goes into those areas and then gets distributed around the rest of New South Wales.

The CHAIR: Camden would have the same problem, possibly, with Camden Valley Way, around Narellan and those kinds of regions?

ANDREW CARFIELD: Yes. We have had recent improvements to The Northern Road between Narellan and the new airport site. However, at the Narellan end, the traffic congestion is quite significant. The infrastructure is limited to deal with a greater amount of freight.

DAN RILEY: Freight impacts on local traffic in Liverpool and more broadly. When we've got a road network that is not completely built, it tends to force them to operate on the same corridors. Freight and local vehicles are all moving on the same roads, which means that the few roads that we do build end up being incredibly wide—a large community with dividing roads that serve all functions, rather than having more of a network solution where you can get greater separation between modes. At the moment, the case in and around the aerotropolis area is that, because of the lack of the road network, it is forcing a lot of these things together. It seems like we end up with a lot of the roads serving all functions.

TODD CARNEY: Just to add to that, what we find is that a lot of the roads that are built to take freight are built at the bare minimum and not to take B-doubles and B-triples. The things that we currently continue to see and will in the future are causing massive problems to the infrastructure on the sides of those roads as well. It's making sure that those roads are fit for purpose when they're built in the first place. I've seen a lot of that around those industrial parks, where comparably they're quite narrow. They're just for standard trucks, not for your B-doubles. Making sure that infrastructure is built for purpose is something that is key to a lot of our council areas as well.

The CHAIR: And is that also simple things like waiting areas for trucks to get in and out of precincts, width of lanes and the one-metre separation that places like the Newell Highway have had to start putting in?

TODD CARNEY: Exactly right. At the moment, there is no place for trucks to park in a lot of those areas. If you go to Wetherill Park, with our neighbours next door, or whether it's in the Mamre precinct, they just don't have the ability to park those trucks at night. Most of them are parking in no-parking zones. They're all getting fined on a regular basis. I think a lot of them do that because it's actually cheaper than moving them somewhere else. But it is causing congestion.

The CHAIR: I was more thinking about waiting to get in and out of some of these spots. If you've got a truck that's reversing in or big trucks coming out, they need wider roads.

TODD CARNEY: That's right.

The CHAIR: Other trucks are waiting, and that's congesting traffic more.

TODD CARNEY: Exactly right. If they don't have the room to be able to move, especially in some of the older sites and areas, where they weren't built to take trucks in the complete site and then turn them around—some of the newer sites are better at that. They can actually turn internally. But it's the external roads where they're cutting corners. They're going over roundabouts because the roads aren't specifically built for B-double trucks to be able to handle those roads.

The CHAIR: I've got the Tooheys brewery in my electorate. They've started bringing trucks in at evenings and during the night rather than during the day, simply because the roads are so congested during the day. Is that a model people should be moving to? Is that the trend across Sydney?

TODD CARNEY: I think the general increase in freight is making them use it at all hours of the day. It doesn't matter whether it's night, day, afternoon or morning. Just to be able to get the amount of freight that is needed to support Sydney and New South Wales, they're running nonstop now. A lot of those places are 24/7, so they need to get the freight in, but they also need to get the freight out at the same time. They're just a holding place. The freight comes in. The freight then gets distributed by either smaller trucks or larger trucks, moving into Victoria or up into Queensland and areas like that as well. It's really hard for them to then just dictate a time that they've got to run between these hours, because you don't have those peak-hour traffic models. They just need to run all the time.

ANDREW MOONEY: I was going to say that in Fairfield we've had a couple of proposals for State significant developments. That's correct, Madam Chair, that they're moving towards this 24-hour operation. Coles and Woolworths are doing these massive distribution centres, which is an amalgamation of different sites that they're moving into the one location. Typically, they have up to about 1,700 truck movements within 24 hours.

The CHAIR: It's a lot.

ANDREW MOONEY: Yes. That was a big issue for us in Fairfield—the impact on the local roads. That still hasn't been resolved. That's a major concern in existing urban areas, that amount of heavy trucks and the impact on the roads.

The CHAIR: Given we've already got this uplift in freight; we're going to have more growth, particularly in housing; and now we got a new freight mechanism to come in through the airport—I mean, the airport's not necessarily shifting freight, is it? Is it bringing new freight or is it meant to shift some of this freight into the airport precinct that's travelling on road?

ANDREW MOONEY: I understand it would initially be specialised, high-needs kinds of freight, like medical supplies and things that aren't large, bulky materials.

The CHAIR: Pharmaceuticals?

ANDREW MOONEY: Yes, rather than larger scale things that come through shipping into the ports at Botany.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: A number of people heard me mention a little bit earlier about the north-south metro connection, particularly between Tallawong and the airport. Particularly Mayor Carney, Mr Barton and Mr Roorda, how do you see the implementation of that metro connection impacting on the local road network?

TODD CARNEY: I think not being able to have those is just going to force people onto the road. If we push people onto the road to start with, it will then just become a natural habit for people to be able to drive to and from the airport. You need that infrastructure up-front so people actually learn that's the way to do it. If they're already in a pattern of driving, you will never get them out of their cars. That's why it has always been critical to get the infrastructure up-front and ready to go.

As I said before, the disappointing part is not having the commuter car parks at stations like St Marys, which people then can't drive to to get onto the Metro, so people are just going to drive. Moving on to the north-west and into the south-west as well, because they're going to be in habits of driving to the aerotropolis, whether it's to catch a plane or whether it's to go to work, it's going to be systemic and you're not going to get people out of that pattern when they've already got their cars. My fear is that if we don't deliver it now, this will become the norm for Western Sydney. You can build all the public transport you want and it's going to be useless if we don't get it up-front.

WILL BARTON: For us in the Hawkesbury, that absence of—as I was corrected at lunch—the 2.7 kilometres of metro line between Tallawong and Schofields stations really is a significant disruptor. I completely echo the sentiments of Mr Carney that once people are in their cars, generally they're going to continue on for their full trip. For us, what it means is that where there is an option to take public transport from as far as Richmond down to Schofields and change at Schofields to jump on a metro line, they're already in the car. The absence of commuter long-term parking, as well, at these other stations means that they are just going to continue on. To have that integration of the Tallawong through to St Marys and down to the airport with the heavy train line, the Richmond line, would be a significant opportunity to see that mode shift from day one.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Just on that broad topic of patterns in travel, I'm thoroughly disappointed that we haven't spent much time on the Leppington extension, which is a passion project of mine. One of the big questions around the Leppington extension is the mode change. At some point along that line you're going to have to go from metro to heavy rail. There has been an assumption that, in Sydney, people don't do mode change. I want to get your thoughts on the Leppington extension and whether you think a mode change would be an impediment and if there was a preference for where that would happen. Should the whole line be converted to metro? Just your general thoughts on the Leppington extension.

ANDREW CARFIELD: We view the Leppington connection to the airport as vital in Camden as well as in the Parkland City region. It's one of our top priorities in terms of rail connections. Our council, along with Liverpool council, is working through the town centre planning process for Leppington—a very ambitious town centre vision with 11,000 new jobs and 10,500 new dwellings, all within walking distance of Leppington station. For that vision to be realised, the absence of the connection to the airport is a real impediment. That will slow down investment decisions and businesses that are looking to relocate or to locate in that centre. It'll slow down the viability of new homes and other infrastructure as well. So we feel very strongly that that connection is required. It needs to be done as soon as possible.

In terms of the heavy rail to metro connection, from my perspective, we're interested to see what the business case will present in terms of the logic set behind that. I don't think it's a huge impediment if it's done well. There are other connection points within the Sydney rail network which enable that connection. Coming from Camden's perspective, where our only train station is at Leppington—not having any heavy rail at all, we would be satisfied with any format of connection into the Sydney rail system and that sort of public transport.

If you look at it from an equity perspective, Camden today is 135,000 residents. We only have the one rail station in Leppington. Sydney has over 170 railway stations. By comparison, a community like Sutherland shire has 13 railway stations, as well as a ferry which transports people between Bundeena and Cronulla. Sutherland shire is a community of around 250,000; Camden will be the same size within a decade. We feel very strongly that those rail connections are needed, whether or not it's a metro to heavy rail. From our perspective, we'd like to see money invested in new railway infrastructure rather than the replacement of existing railway infrastructure, and I think there should be a good solution for the transfer between metro and rail.

BEN TAYLOR: Madam Chair, on behalf of The Parks—apologies, Mr Deputy Chair. I've been remiss in not mentioning that connection. It's strongly supported by the eight Parkland councils. I would be remiss in not saying that the chair, Mayor George Greiss from Campbelltown City Council, also sees it as fundamental to the success of the Western Sydney airport and also the growth in the existing centres, particularly Liverpool, Camden and Campbelltown. In terms of mode, we are largely agnostic about mode. I would agree with Mr Carfield's comments that we're looking forward to seeing what the business case says as to what the best mode would be. I probably would lean towards metro, but I'm very happy to be corrected if heavy rail is a better option.

TODD CARNEY: I think, in general, as long as the point of changeover is integrated quite well, I don't think most people really mind the way it happens. My understanding is that the metro line coming from the airport is actually different from the one that goes from Tallawong. The two metros won't actually integrate at all, so there will have to be a changeover there. There's going to need to be a changeover at St Marys. As long as they're done well and it's encapsulated within the same system so that people can get off one and go up a set of lifts into the next. I think that's going to be the important part. Even with the new airport, the integration between international and domestic is going to be in the same building. If that's going to happen, people are going to be happy with that. If they have to then get out and cross over the road to another site, that's where you're going to have issues.

The CHAIR: And we'll be able to see fairly soon because the Bankstown connection to Birrong and Yagoona will be exactly that—a heavy rail to metro changeover.

TODD CARNEY: That's right.

DAN RILEY: Madam Chair and Mr Deputy Chair, thanks for the question. Liverpool strongly supports the connection from Leppington to both the aerotropolis and Western Sydney international airport. In terms of mode, I echo Ben's comments in that we're broadly agnostic. However, if there is an option that is considered as part of the business case that involves fewer interchanges, that would be a preference—and also for that line to be a direct connection not only from Leppington to the aerotropolis but also potentially onward to the airport itself as a direct connection. I'm not aware that any of those has been ruled out completely yet, but I would hate to see a situation where we have to interchange twice to get to the airport from the east.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: On that point, I'm thinking about the outskirt areas and the interchange. They talk about the last 10 minutes of travel where people are coming from their houses. Do you think the impediment of changing will be more from the car to the public transport system in some of those areas that don't have any public transport as such—Camden, Wollondilly and Hawkesbury—to get into the system and then change around? Do you think it's that portion—once they're in their car, do you believe that's more likely to keep them in their car versus an easy way onto the system?

MATT GOULD: I think, certainly from our experience in Wollondilly, because you've got to travel half an hour before you can connect to reliable public transport anyway, for a lot of our residents once you're in the car for half an hour, staying in the car for another 20 minutes makes sense. If we're talking getting in a car and you are five minutes to a rapid bus service or to a reliable train station, I don't see that as a huge impediment. But once people are travelling for any meaningful time in the car, then getting them to change mode at that point becomes far more difficult.

The CHAIR: Just to play devil's advocate, there are price mechanisms you can use. Certainly Sydney airport car parking is one good example, where you make it so expensive to travel by car there, particularly from Western Sydney. Even though there is a platform fee at the station at Sydney airport, people tend to travel by train from Western Sydney, even though they have to interchange at Central. One of the great advantages, I assume, will be that there will be no platform charges for the metro because it would be a publicly provided transport system unlike the airport one that was built as a private, coming in. You can use that price mechanism on parking to drive people towards public transport—although, for your electorate, that's going to be a negative effect, isn't it?

MATT GOULD: Yes. I have gone to Sydney airport many times and not once have I ever used public transport, even with those additional costs that come with the parking, because having to try to travel by public transport, it takes so long and it's so inconvenient that you take the cost hit; otherwise you'll miss your plane, and that's going to be the far more expensive choice of the two.

The CHAIR: Whereas if you were coming from somewhere like Granville or Auburn, it's actually quicker to get on the train than to try to get across the streets.

TODD CARNEY: Just adding to that, if you don't have that first 10 minutes, whether it's a metro line or a rapid bus, if you can't get to it by reliable public transport to start with or have a parking option there at the start of the metro line, people will drive. It's just unfortunate. That first mile, last mile is always going to be crucial in making sure we have that integrated system.

The CHAIR: It's that question of does someone drop you at the airport or does someone drop you at the train station that gets you to the airport?

TODD CARNEY: Even for someone like myself, I live in Glenmore Park. To get from there to Penrith, it's a 45-minute bus trip, so I'm not going to catch the bus.

The CHAIR: Do you do that often, Todd?

TODD CARNEY: No. That's the thing—people don't do it because it is 45 minutes.

The CHAIR: The story across Western Sydney is it's impossible to get people out of their cars, but that's because it's so difficult to travel by public transport, whereas in the inner city you might walk down the street and jump on a bus, and there is one every five minutes—or you could walk to town probably quicker.

DAN RILEY: Just to add to that, I notice we are talking quite a lot about the people accessing the airport for travel. I'm going to make a guess that most of the people using the rail network and a future Leppington connection are more likely to be commuters going in on a daily basis or something similar.

The CHAIR: Workers.

DAN RILEY: For those people, travel time is going to be important. Having that competitive—a private vehicle is going to be essential. If we slow that down too much and it's twice as fast to come by a private car, people will do that.

ANDREW MOONEY: Just to add, in terms of established urban areas like Fairfield and Auburn, until we get an east-west connection from, say, Parramatta through Fairfield into the airport, there are options there with the 24-hour operation of the airport to look at special or amplification of night services, fast services, on the existing Cumberland and other two—I forget which one goes through Auburn—that would connect into Leppington until we get those other options. That Fairfield supports the Leppington connection is vital in terms of a rail connection to the airport and making that work.

The CHAIR: The advantage of the Auburn electorate is, of course, that the Sefton-Chester Hill-Fairfield line runs through the electorate as well. That connectivity now, on the closure of the Bankstown line, will then become a line on which more services, I assume, will go out into the west as well?

ANDREW MOONEY: Yes, that's correct.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: One of the submissions drew a comparison between the Sydney CBD and Kingsford Smith, and Parramatta and Western Sydney airport when you do that east-west rail link. The Government has decided that that's not of priority. I think it was in Fairfield's submission that, until such time as that's built, there needed to be a rapid bus from the airport to Parramatta, and the proposal was via the T-way. How much thought has been put into it? Are there preferred routes? Where do you see it going from the airport to get onto the existing T-way? I think it says through to Bonnyrigg. Would it come down Elizabeth Drive?

ANDREW MOONEY: Yes, it's Elizabeth Drive at this stage, but it is purely a service from Liverpool to Bonnyrigg out to the airport. It's shown on this document here that has just come out on the Department of Transport website. It gives you a bit of a picture of the rapid bus service as to how they work; I touched upon it earlier. There are still a lot of unknowns about that, how that service is going to work. There were a lot of discussions with councils and Transport initially when they were looking at the whole network and how it's going to work, but we didn't see the final analysis and why these options were chosen. As I said, we believe there are voids or gaps for Fairfield because there are no direct services from within Fairfield via the existing T-way onto the new rapid bus links or otherwise. That will be something that Fairfield will be going back talking to Transport about in the future because at this stage we believe we are just being totally left out of this option for rapid bus service—a proper one.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: When you say Fairfield, do you mean the Fairfield CBD or the LGA?

ANDREW MOONEY: In general, the Fairfield LGA. It's a bit hard to make out from that diagram, but it shows where the stations are for the rapid bus. They all go from around the main regional centres. We've just got this an intermediate stop in Bonnyrigg in the south, but that's right down near the border of Liverpool and not near the main population areas of our city. We would have a discussion with Transport about how our community is going to access that location and whether there are other options for other services if we go onto the T-way, which goes through Bonnyrigg as well.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Potentially, an additional bus service, endpoint to Parramatta via Bonnyrigg T-way?

ANDREW MOONEY: Yes, or even within Fairfield because there are bus routes that go up to the T-way from Fairfield and Cabramatta town centres under the T-way, but that's not shown on this plan. As I also said earlier, it needs to look at the 24-hour operation. These services stop—I think it was at nine o'clock.

ANDREW CARFIELD: Ten.

ANDREW MOONEY: At 10 o'clock. But we're talking about a 24-hour operation. As Andrew said, originally there was going to be more frequent service, we understood, but I think it has been cut back down to about every half-hour. But we haven't seen the demand analysis and all that kind of thing that shows that service is adequate.

The CHAIR: Any final comments anyone would like to make? Ben looks like he's going to make one.

BEN TAYLOR: I just wanted to add to the comments on that last question, Madam Chair. I suppose, from all of the Western Parkland City's point of view, the whole point of the Western Sydney airport and the transport connectivity was to connect the west to the west. At the moment we've got a Western Sydney airport that is a very shiny toy, and everyone is focused on the airport and all of the infrastructure close to the airport. But it is the view of all of the councils of the Western Parkland City that the connectivity to all of the people, the benefits from the Western Sydney airport and the job creation within that area should be spread far and wide.

The priorities remain the south-north rail connection from Macarthur, through to the airport, through to St Marys and up to Tallawong and, in the interim, the rapid bus connections, which should happen all across the Western Parkland City. It shouldn't just be reliant on those key centres. It should be places like Fairfield that have

existing demand as well and other areas that are growing fast such as Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly, that are growing really fast. Our growing population deserves better. It deserves to have a public transport system that the rest of Sydney has. The basics are that we are going from a zero base. When Government looks at prioritising public transport investment, it should look at actually investing in areas that are going from a zero base rather than enhancing those areas that have already got a good service.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I want to talk about the feds and the State government, who are doing the heavy lifting here. Local government has a big role to play here in infrastructure delivery and, generally, the capacity to deliver these projects. There is a lot of infrastructure building going on in this State and around the country. If you take the M12, for example, I think we ended up breaking that up into three different tenders to deliver it, because the tier 1s are at capacity. But as that works through and you guys need to build infrastructure, is that a risk? Is it a concern that if we do build all of this stuff—and we do and need to build all of the stuff. Given you are smaller players in comparison to State and Federal governments, your capacity to build, source and get organisations who contract and build that stuff is something that has not been discussed. I wanted to see if that is a concern or a risk.

TODD CARNEY: For me, it definitely has been a risk in the past, and we've seen that within the construction industry. I've got friends who are electricians getting paid \$45 an hour wiring up houses. They've moved into doing tunnel work because they're getting paid \$60 to \$65 an hour. Why would you go back to wiring a house? It has sucked a lot of people away from a lot of those industries we need to build houses and build some of the smaller infrastructure we need. But some of the other issues are the way we have to go around the grants processes and, by the time we actually go through all of the processes that the governments want us to tick off, we are one, two and three years down the track, and the cost of those construction jobs has now doubled. Usually, we don't have the available funds to then finish them off to their full extent. How do we actually make sure that we are able to roll them out in a better time frame to ensure better outcomes at less cost, because the longer we take to do things, the more it's going to cost us both financially and socially?

ANDREW CARFIELD: If I could just add to that, Madam Chair. In the context of our growth at Camden—I mentioned earlier just how rapidly we are growing—the bigger risk would be to not have the delivery of that public transport infrastructure that could support our growth in the future. We are investing a lot as a council. Our four-year capital program is \$1 billion, and you won't find that from a council our size anywhere else. We are forward funding a lot of important local infrastructure for our community, understanding that the growth in rateable properties and income streams from rates in the future will help support the operations, the depreciation and the ongoing costs of that infrastructure, but our bigger financial risk would be that our growth slows down. The things that will likely slow our growth down would be not having water and sewer available, which is a pretty significant risk today; not having local employment opportunities; and not having sufficient transport infrastructure that, as a council, we can't deliver. Those things could slow our growth down and create more financial risk for our organisation. In terms of competing for contractors and delivering works, yes, that's a challenge for all of our councils.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Leading on from the question of the member for Leppington, in your opinion, is there a role for councils to play in terms of land acquisition for corridors? Given that we have to get this stuff done and get it done as quickly as possible, is there an avenue to explore where councils begin work on corridor preservation through some of these areas with a view that the State or Federal governments will eventually come through to get that construction underway?

MATT GOULD: I think the challenge that you would find there is that for most of these corridors it's not clear on exactly where they are. So, in effect, councils would be acquiring land for a corridor that the State Government might then put six kilometres further away.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Assuming final business cases have been done, corridors have been identified. I take on board some of the earlier commentary that we're not quite sure where these things are going to go, but once corridors have been identified and they are clarified, if we can have multiple councils working together with State and Federal—there is a lot of talk about all levels of government. Is part of that working together at all levels of government, once those corridors have been identified, that councils would start towards corridor preservation?

MATT GOULD: In the case of Wollondilly, in that circumstance, we would certainly take an approach from a planning perspective of trying not to have anything within those corridors. As far as council actively being the ones that acquire those corridors, on any large scale, that would exceed our capacity. It may be different for some of our larger neighbours, but something like that, on any scale, would be completely beyond our council's capacity.

The CHAIR: Not many councils have spare money in the bank.

DAN RILEY: Liverpool would echo Mayor Gould's view.

ANDREW CARFIELD: Through you, Madam Chair, I might just add that we have some very large, active development fronts in Camden, and we've got developers who are actively pursuing works that are complementary to the railway corridor—as in ensuring that their subdivision layouts and their design of the areas that are alongside the corridor will respect the corridor and keep services out of it.

The CHAIR: Anticipates it.

ANDREW CARFIELD: Yes. They're doing the design work already in anticipation for the railway to come. There is certainly good potential to work with active developers in getting the planning right early.

The CHAIR: I ask you to take this last question on notice. There were a number of roads that were mentioned as arterial—Menangle Road and Silverdale Road. Is it possible you could provide arterial roads that you think may be impacted by freight that are local government? What are those routes and those projections—just for our benefit so we can have a look at them? We would appreciate that. Thank you very much for attending. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript of today's proceedings for corrections. Committee staff will also email any questions taken on notice from today and any supplementary questions from the Committee. We kindly ask that you return those answers within 14 days.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

Ms GAIL CONNOLLY, PSM, Chief Executive Officer, City of Parramatta Council, affirmed and examined

Mr ROB COLOGNA, Acting Executive Director, City Planning and Design, City of Parramatta Council, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome our next guests. Thank you for appearing before the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure today to give evidence. Will you please confirm that you have been issued with the Committee's terms of reference and information about the standing orders that relate to the examination of witnesses?

GAIL CONNOLLY: I have.

ROB COLOGNA: I have.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions about this information?

GAIL CONNOLLY: No.

ROB COLOGNA: No.

The CHAIR: Would you like to make a short opening statement?

GAIL CONNOLLY: Thank you. I will take it as read that the Committee has received a copy of the City of Parramatta Council's submission dated 28 March 2024. It contains a brief summary of council's position on the extension of the metro to the Western Sydney International Airport and aerotropolis. I won't read through the entire submission; however, I will go straight to the recommendations that the council requests that the Committee consider.

That includes, should the Committee make some formal findings, a request they make reference to the City of Parramatta's position on two critical issues. In regard to improving public transport connections to the Western Sydney airport and the aerotropolis, the prioritisation of the extension of Sydney Metro West from Westmead should occur to serve as the east-west rail link from the airport and aerotropolis to Parramatta and on to Sydney CBD. Secondly, we request that formal inquiry findings should make reference to the establishment of a rapid bus service between Parramatta and Western Sydney airport via Bonnyrigg, as an interim measure only, until the east-west rail link is delivered.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Can I go back to your statements about the prioritisation of the extension of the Sydney Metro West from Westmead to serve as the east-west rail link. What exactly is your proposal there for the considered extension? Is that along the existing rail line?

GAIL CONNOLLY: Our preference is that a dedicated metro be extended from Westmead to the airport, and part of the reasoning behind that is because we want what we call a one-seat journey, which is you embark on the metro at Western Sydney airport and you are able to travel on the same mode of transport into Parramatta and potentially on to Sydney without having to change modes or seats. So it's a one-trip affair, if you like.

The CHAIR: And that's to go from Tallawong, is it?

GAIL CONNOLLY: Our priority is the extension of a metro system from Westmead to the airport. If the Committee was not of the view that it should be a metro, then the council's second preference—and it is a second preference, with a lot of daylight between first and second preferences—is that there would be a heavy rail link between Westmead and the airport, but with priority for passengers through to Parramatta. But, certainly, our starting position is that it's the extension of the Sydney Metro West from Westmead to the airport.

The CHAIR: So, essentially, there are two ways you can go from the St Marys link: metro, which is what is being proposed at the moment, but there's some debate at the moment around having that; and the options on heavy rail. Your preference—sans a dedicated metro line following the existing Sydney Olympic Park line through Westmead and out directly to the airport—would be heavy rail from St Marys to the airport and then linking it on to Leppington. Would that be consistent with your preference?

ROB COLOGNA: I think we'd be agnostic in terms of the north-south link. What we're looking for is a link from Westmead to the airport precinct as an extension of the metro, so that would then connect the east-west both to Parramatta and then on into the city, in a one-seat trip.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Effectively, it'd be a new route that travelled south-west from Westmead through parts of Cumberland and Fairfield councils.

ROB COLOGNA: Sure. We see opportunities for potential stations around Prairiewood or Smithfield in order to provide further public transport advantages for that part of Western Sydney, but also providing the longer term advantage of connection to the broader metro network.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Given that there's already a direct rail link between St Marys and Parramatta, and there are millions of people in north-west Sydney and south-west Sydney, why do you think a direct metro link to get from the airport to Parramatta would take priority over the extension from Tallawong down through to the airport and then around through to southern Sydney? Why would that be a priority?

GAIL CONNOLLY: Our view in our *Parramatta 2050* vision document is that Parramatta will be home, in the future, to an additional 150,000 jobs. We've tabled a copy of this report for all of the Committee members, so I hope you have it. Our view is that the priority is a direct connection between the airport and Parramatta, and the jobs that exist at both of those destinations. Our vision for the future is 150,000 additional jobs in Parramatta, located in a range of districts—in a future jobs district at Silverwater and also, of course, in the heart of the Parramatta CBD, in what we're calling our headquarters district. Our priority is a direct, fast connection between the airport—as also a jobs destination—and Parramatta, which has, in our view, the largest jobs destination out of all of the Western Sydney councils.

The other thinking behind that—and it's backed up by the Government's announcement yesterday of the housing targets for Western Sydney. Having a quick look at those, the Government has said around about 150,000 dwellings over the next five years is the target for delivery of councils pretty much west of Parramatta—centred around Parramatta and west of Parramatta. East of Parramatta, it's only 100,000, so once again the Western Sydney councils are doing the heavy lifting on dwelling targets. With that has to come jobs and connections between the major jobs destinations and within those council areas. That is why we also have on our radar that the council supports not only a connection from Westmead to the airport but also additional stops between Sydney Olympic Park and Parramatta—at Silverwater or Newington, and Camellia-Rosehill—because our view is that that's going to be our jobs destination.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: But that's east of Westmead.

GAIL CONNOLLY: Yes, those two new stops.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: So you would rather connect jobs to jobs rather than people to jobs.

GAIL CONNOLLY: No. What we're finding since COVID is that people don't travel to jobs in the same way that they used to, and this is evidence I gave previously. The original thinking around the metro was a high-speed trip from Parramatta: Everyone got on the metro at Parramatta and went into the CBD to their job. COVID has changed all of that. It doesn't need to be a high-speed, low-number-of-stations trip from Parramatta into the city because people are not moving that way to work anymore. People want connections within areas.

It may not have been important, when the business case was first done for Metro West, for the metro to have stations between Olympic Park and Parramatta—that seven-kilometre distance—because the idea was that no-one would be moving between those two destinations; everyone would get on at Parramatta and go to the CBD. But that's not the case anymore. People are wanting connections within local government areas, so our view is that the connections between Westmead and, say, Prairiewood and stations that may be located along a metro line to the airport are just as important as connections to large destinations from, say, the airport to Westmead or Parramatta. So it's what happens in between those major destinations as well.

With the release of the dwelling targets and people wanting to work closer to home, there's an opportunity to create employment around those additional metro stops. So you can still have major destinations—Parramatta, Westmead, Western Sydney International Airport—but what happens between those two modes and the number of metro stops between them is just as important now. People don't want to get on at Prairiewood and go into the CBD for work anymore; that's not how the economy is functioning in Western Sydney anymore. As I said, after COVID we found that a fast trip into the city is not what people are looking for. They are looking for connections within areas.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: I understand. I'm not sure whether—

The CHAIR: I think we agreed with that. Certainly the Committee in the previous hearing supported the inclusion of two more metro stops at Silverwater and Camellia or whatever suited, but there certainly needed to be more along that nine-kilometre stretch between the two metros. I think one of the questions we've looked at in the last hearing session is that there is a limited pot of funds available for government. As we know, we've got \$25 billion going on Metro West at the moment, and there is also the light rail stage two for Parramatta. Probably what we are trying to get at is: Where do we get the greatest efficacy from the spend? Is the greatest efficacy creating that non-existent north-south connection between Liverpool and Western Sydney airport and St Marys to

link up with Parramatta—that's also an important consideration—as opposed to a dedicated line that doesn't take in where we are expecting future growth?

Part of the conflict here is that to the east in Sydney Olympic Park you've taken significant growth—Carter Street is a good example, with 15,000 in half a square kilometre—as opposed to what we know will go in and have seen in Oran Park and Leppington and into the north-west in Riverstone, where that Tallawong through to Liverpool connection is also fundamental. From an efficacy point of view, do you have anything that says there is a greater efficacy for that kind of mode rather than the proposal that is currently on the table between the Leppington, Campbelltown and St Marys connection?

ROB COLOGNA: We do have a study that goes back to 2018 that talks about the economic impacts associated with a direct link between the airport and Parramatta CBD, but that study didn't go to the extent of comparing that to the impacts of a north-south line.

The CHAIR: This is a bit of an aside. On that study, did that look at freight movements and passenger numbers, or was it as a greenfield site for the airport and making assumptions? Did you have those figures in it at the time?

ROB COLOGNA: As I said, it was a 2018 study. At that time a lot of decisions hadn't been made around metro and those sorts of things. It was a high-level study that looked at generic economic impacts.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: Have we got those documents online?

ROB COLOGNA: We can certainly make that available.

The CHAIR: You could table that as well if you do have it, or you could take it on notice and provide it. I also note at the moment that this document has been provided, and at the hearing at the end of the day we will consider making that document public. Is that okay?

GAIL CONNOLLY: It is public already; it's on public exhibition.

The CHAIR: We will take it on notice then to publish that as well as part of the proceedings.

GAIL CONNOLLY: Chair, could I just build on what Rob said? Whilst we don't have a specific study that does a cost-benefit analysis or looks at the efficacy between the two different modes, my view is more of a long-term one. The Government has announced housing targets for Western Sydney. Once again, they're larger than eastern Sydney. We've seen what happens before: If you build the infrastructure, people locate around it. There is no reason why the Committee should rule out building both heavy rail and metro rail connections and just talk about the fundamental timing of each one. Traditionally, what's happened in Sydney in the evolution of the transport network is that the heavy rail has come first and then, due to population growth and the extent of growth, a metro has followed after because both modes are required to cope with the population.

The Committee could form the view that the next 50-year solution is this—it could be heavy rail, north-south. But it could also acknowledge that a corridor—and we all know planning is a 30-year exercise—should be preserved now for a future metro because it's likely that if the population growth continues in Western Sydney as it is, in 30 years time we will need the metro to supplement the heavy rail because the heavy rail will have exhausted itself. That could be through passenger and freight or just passenger volume. Planning is always a long-term exercise. The M7 was planned I think 40 years before it was actually built. The corridor was preserved. I'll put my old town-planning hat on. The Western Sydney Parklands were planned 35 years before they were delivered. Transport corridors are exactly the same.

Whilst the Committee's preference may evolve to be a heavy rail preference, the planning for a metro corridor should also be undertaken and recommended at the same time. One may be more efficient and cheaper in the short term, but there will be a tipping point in about 20 years time where that mode will soon become overcrowded, it will be above capacity and something else will have to happen. That's when you would have to have your corridor for metro ready to go.

Our preference, of course, is metro right from day one because of the benefits it brings and the station locations. There has been a lot of discussion around the cost of metro stations. One of the largest costs for metro stations is because someone—I don't know who—a long time ago when we were first building metros decided that the station boxes had to be column-free spaces for safety reasons. It came out of a study around perceptions of safety and safety for female passengers. In other words, they didn't want columns in the middle of metro stations, similar to what happened in almost every other metro station around the world, for safety reasons. We've built beautiful column-free spaces and large, cavernous boxes with massive spans that are probably a billion dollars more expensive than they need to be because they don't have any columns.

The CHAIR: That would be about line of sight, though, wouldn't it?

GAIL CONNOLLY: It is about line of sight, but things have moved on and there are lots of ways you can surveil stations these days. But if it does come down to a cost issue, you could decide to put columns back into metro station boxes—a lot of cities around the world function quite nicely with metros or subways that have columns in them—and reduce some of your costs. You would have to have that discussion around the perceptions of public safety versus cost. But that is something that the Committee should keep in mind because we are building beautiful, state-of-the-art station boxes now, but they are very expensive compared to the cost of other stations around the world. That's a piece of work that Infrastructure NSW I know could do for you. If you sent them some questions with notice and said, "What's the difference?"

The CHAIR: We'll certainly raise that with them, but there is also an argument around building on greenfield sites for metros, rather than—as you know, the Metro West is about \$25 billion at the moment, whereas the proposed St Marys to the airport link is sitting at around about \$11 billion and the distances are kind of similar, I think, in terms of what you're covering. But that's the difference between a greenfield and a built-up site.

GAIL CONNOLLY: Chair, the Committee would have to interrogate an above-ground metro versus below-ground too.

The CHAIR: Yes, I agree. The fundamental question here is—your first preference is obviously the metro directly from Westmead to the airport. Reserving those corridors for the long term is a great idea. Whether that would be a priority over the north-south would be something the Committee would consider. In the absence of that being the first priority, would your second priority—obviously there's the rapid bus transport to Bonnyrigg, if I'm correct, and possibly the proposed extension from St Marys perhaps even as far as Campbelltown as the option of a heavy rail rather than metro. Is that right, or do you not mind that it's a metro option from St Marys through to the Leppington or Campbelltown extensions? Would you have a preference either way on what is actually dealt with at the airport?

ROB COLOGNA: Our preference would be a metro system that then integrated with the east-west so that you wouldn't have the interchange of heavy rail running north-south and then a metro in the future east-west. There is an issue of timing there. If you assume the link that we are seeking followed at a later date, you would have two different modes. I think there would be some efficiency in having a similar mode in terms of that. The other issue in terms of the north-south link is that, given that the airport will build slowly and start to provide jobs, you're essentially providing a link to a jobs location that is building slowly. The advantage of working with a link to Parramatta is that you would be able to open up areas like Prairiewood and Bonnyrigg and connect not only to future jobs at the airport but also to existing jobs in Parramatta. There is a shorter term benefit from the link running east-west in terms of accessibility for people in Western Sydney to jobs; it's just different parts of Western Sydney.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: I'm still confused because, when you talk about the population growth in Western Sydney, you're actually talking about north-west Sydney and you're talking about south-west Sydney. You're not talking about Parramatta and east, and you're proposing to connect jobs to jobs rather than connect the large growing communities in Leppington and Riverstone, where we're literally talking about hundreds of thousands of people who are without jobs and without connections to jobs. So you're proposing to prioritise job-to-job connection rather than people-to-job connection.

ROB COLOGNA: I think that the city of central Western Sydney, of which Parramatta is the centre, has a significant population and also significant growth targets in terms of the figures that were released from the State Government yesterday, so we're still talking about connecting people to jobs. It's just that those jobs would be at the airport and those connections would be also enhanced to Parramatta, where there are existing jobs today.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: At the expense of the existing populations that are there today.

ROB COLOGNA: In terms of prioritisation, yes.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: We're asking the people of the north and the south to come into Parramatta to get out to the airport as a priority. You're seeing that as an alternative for these people that have no direct connection—you're seeing that as a priority to people who have no direct connection to where they've hung their hopes for a long time on the new airport. Is that right, or wrong? Am I wrong in that the housing in Parramatta, the number of increases, went down in Parramatta versus other councils? Maybe I'm wrong in that.

ROB COLOGNA: It's a substantial target of close to 20,000—one of the highest targets in Sydney and the region—so it's not an insubstantial amount of growth.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: But still not as high as north west, which is over 20,000.

GAIL CONNOLLY: That's correct, but the council's view is the extension of numerous lines. You'll see in our document we extend the Metro North and we do advocate for north-south connections. Rob referred

previously to the analysis that we did, which looked at extensions to Epping, Kogarah, Norwest, Sydney airport, so we have a range of transport studies that we've undertaken. We have our vision document. We've redrawn the map of the Sydney rail transport system, which puts grand central station in Parramatta rather than being in Central, with north-south connections that are quite clearly shown out to Richmond, Rouse Hill et cetera. The council's view is that the focus on new transport infrastructure should well and truly be centred around Parramatta and to the west, and then we'd prioritise them.

I'm reluctant to use the words Parramatta to the Western Sydney airport and Westmead to the airport is prioritised at the expense of north-south connections. We're greedy. We want them all, but we have given priority to the ones that we think will benefit Parramatta, which is our job, in the first instance and then our surrounding neighbouring councils in the second instance. We hold the view that all these connections are necessary. It's just the order in which they should be delivered and then the mode.

The other thing I wanted to build on is the question around heavy rail versus metro, and underground versus above ground. The other thing that is not done a lot here is the reserving of transport corridors through transitways that then become a heavy rail corridor. There's a lot of planning that's done that designates the corridor as a transitway and then it's always a transitway; it doesn't become anything else. But there is nothing stopping transitways and bus corridors then becoming a light rail corridor, an above-ground metro or heavy rail. If the corridor is preserved correctly with sufficient size, it can start its life as a bus corridor, for example, and then eventually become a light rail or metro.

My view is let's get the corridors right and then the actual mode—it can start its life as a baby bus corridor and then it can grow up into an adult heavy rail, if it has to. As long as you've got the corridor, you're okay. Metro, underground, requires a little bit more planning because you've got to preserve station boxes and you've got to be careful that buildings with basements aren't built where you want to put a station box, but the philosophy is the same: Preserve the corridor, make it wide enough for any type of mode in the future and then do your economic analysis on what needs to be provided now and what needs to happen in 50 years. Then you can do your cost-benefit analysis of whether you head straight to one mode or another.

The CHAIR: I'm not sure that we're at cross-purposes with that. Obviously, one of the things we are looking at, in particular, is the preservation of corridors because the hardest thing to do is to go back and reinvent the wheel—to build, which is what we're finding is very difficult and really drives up the cost of metros. That is the difference between the greenfield one and going back on the Metro West and having to build it through existing areas.

GAIL CONNOLLY: Yes. In the old days when I worked at planning, we used to reserve corridors via a SEPP, a State environmental planning instrument. My view now is that SEPPs can be changed from Cabinet to Cabinet, so if you're really serious about preserving transport corridors, you should legislate them.

The CHAIR: And that's the M6 is—

GAIL CONNOLLY: Yes. There are more recent examples but, as I said, 20 or 30 years ago people would draw a line on a map and there would just be a SEPP, for example, or a planning instrument, but it was at the whim of the latest government. These sorts of infrastructure projects should survive successive governments, local, State and Federal. It should be a bipartisan approach to preserving corridors. It's much easier to preserve and protect corridors through legislation where you need both Houses of Parliament to change it than it is to just whack it in a SEPP or a planning instrument, cross your fingers and hope that the next government doesn't change their mind. There should be long-term bipartisan visions for the State. The best way to secure them is through legislation, in my view.

The CHAIR: To an extent this has been part of the problem here. The original package for the airport included these transport criteria around them but the actual delivery of the airport has been about the airport infrastructure rather than the other commitments that were given at the time when the airport was announced. That would be fair enough to say, wouldn't it?

GAIL CONNOLLY: It could be. I was in charge of metropolitan planning for the Sydney metropolitan area back in the early 2000s. One of the main ways that the airport was protected was through notations on 149 certificates from the local council. In hindsight, it was pretty unsophisticated and an almost appalling way to do it because you were at the whim of successive councils wanting to remove those planning restrictions. It should have been at the very least a SEPP and a whole-of-government approach to protecting that land. But, luckily, those announcements from the Federal Government—I think it was Hawke and Keating originally—survived and they were protected by the local council working in partnership with the department of planning. But times have moved on. We need to be a whole lot more sophisticated because the constant pressure that a maturing city has is

going to mean that the old ways of preserving and protecting are not going to survive. They are not going to be robust enough to survive changes in governments and really harsh economic development cycles.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: There has been a lot of talk today and in the submissions about metro rail buses. I'm pleased to see here in your proposed transport map high-speed rail. There hasn't been much talk about high-speed rail, but I note that your high-speed rail plan doesn't go through the airport. Do you think that's an oversight and that any successful high-speed rail connection up the eastern seaboard probably should go through the airport?

GAIL CONNOLLY: We've spoken to a few people, and they have different views on this. We have actually spoken to the airport corporation. There are mixed views about whether it should go through the airport or not, but the prevailing view, certainly amongst the staff at council, is that if you had a metro connection to the airport that came into "Parramatta Central", as we called it in our document, it would be a matter of minutes where you got off the metro and got onto high-speed rail. It would require a transfer in modes, but it would be quick and efficient enough not to cause a problem. High-speed rail should connect the major job centres and, no offence to the airport, but Parramatta's going to be a much bigger job centre than the airport, in our view.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I can't remember the phrase you used, but I guess we don't get off the metro to get to the airport, but if we want to get on high-speed rail, we have to make a change as long as it's through Parramatta.

GAIL CONNOLLY: Correct.

ROB COLOGNA: Parramatta's position is that it should be the centre of a hub.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: That's coming through very clearly.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: I am somebody who grew up in north-west Sydney. The connection to get from the T1 line into Blacktown and then out to Penrith has historically incentivised people to drive directly from the north-west into Penrith. To Judy's point a little bit earlier, your proposal is that everybody from the south-west and everybody from the north-west comes into Parramatta and turns around and goes back. Isn't that at odds with the whole argument of maintaining a single trip?

ROB COLOGNA: I'm not saying that the north-south link would be completely at the expense. It's a matter of prioritisation and timing. We see that there is an opportunity for a north-south bus transitway to deal with that load in the short term, while an east link and west link is provided to Parramatta, and then in the longer term the north-south rail link would then add to that system and network. The north-south links in the short term—in the same way that, if the heavy rail north-south link was to go ahead we would request that it be augmented by a fast transit bus service to Parramatta, you could just flip that on its head and put the metro into Parramatta and the fast transit bus network runs north-south and then might be replaced by heavy rail at a later date.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: Is the high-speed rail going to be above ground? I'm just looking at the last line. Is there corridor protection? I'm just curious as to how that's going to work.

ROB COLOGNA: We would like to see corridor protection for fast rail. The purpose of our strategy is to identify Parramatta as the centre of that hub. We would be more than open to the fast rail also stopping at the airport. But the key point we want to make is that we want to have Parramatta servicing the central city as the hub and therefore have it as a stop that can connect to light rail and can connect to ferries and can connect to future metro lines that we think should go through Parramatta. That is the reason why it also needs to stop in Parramatta. In terms of how it would work, there is a lot of feasibility to be done in terms of underground routes and all those sorts of things. I think the key message we are trying to give with our strategy is that it needs to be part of that hub in Parramatta so that people land in Parramatta and can then disperse.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: It looks like a very expensive land acquisition through the middle of there.

GAIL CONNOLLY: To follow up on that, when I was on the airport taskforce—Mike Mrdak was running it for the Feds—20 years ago the idea that every fast rail proposal that was put before the Federal Government and the States and COAG was for above-ground very fast rail between the metropolitan fringes and then, basically, the closer you got to a major stop like, say, Parramatta or Wollongong, or when you approached a regional city or a metropolitan city, you would go underground. It would be above ground for the vast majority of it but, as soon as you approached a metropolitan area, you would go underground. That idea was always based on the premise that none of the corridors for very fast rail in metropolitan areas that had already been built out could be above ground. I am assuming—and I won't be able to swear to it—that that philosophy still applies with the Federal Government and that you would dive underground when you got to the suburban fringes.

The CHAIR: We have run out of time. Thank you very much, Gail and Rob, for coming back in. Thank you for appearing before the Committee today. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript of today's proceedings for corrections. The Committee staff will also email any questions taken on notice from today and any supplementary questions from the Committee. We ask that you return those answers within 14 days.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

Mr CHARLES CASUSCELLI, RFD, Chief Executive Officer, Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils Ltd, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: I welcome our next witness. Thank you for appearing before the Committee on transport and infrastructure today to give evidence. I know you are a former sitting member, but can you please confirm that you have been issued with the Committee's terms of reference and information about the standing orders that relate to the examination of witnesses?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Yes, I have.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions about this information?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: No, I do not, thank you.

The CHAIR: Would you like to make a short opening statement before we begin the questions?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Never deny an Italian an opportunity to make a short opening statement, I say.

The CHAIR: I did say "short".

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Did you?

The CHAIR: I'm joking. Knock yourself out.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: I thought you were Roman.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: That's an important distinction.

The CHAIR: For your information, we are joined by Mr Williams on videoconference.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: G'day, Ray. How are you?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Very good, mate. How are you?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: You're looking well.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Thank you, mate. Likewise.

The CHAIR: Mutual appreciation society. Maybe we should get on with that short statement, Charles.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Committee, thank you very much for having me here today. I am delighted to be invited. Western Sydney—Australia's third largest regional economy, sitting at almost \$170 billion a year of gross regional product—has 2.7 million residents. It's a fabulous place to live, especially for immigrants looking to fulfil their aspirations or looking for a little bit of greenery and a little bit of space. It would be fair to say that, even with the recent investments in roads and public transport, predominantly east of Parramatta, Western Sydney's transport network has and continues to suffer from underinvestment.

The Western Sydney international airport and the emergence of Bradfield city created yet another layer of transport network complexity, necessitating its own investment, to connect it to Greater Sydney. Depending on how this is executed, it may not necessarily mean that it will substantially improve in intraregional connectivity. By 2036 Western Sydney will grow by another 800,000 residents and contribute another 250,000 resident workers that will need to travel outside of Western Sydney for a job. The reality, based on recent and historical trends, is that by 2036 half a million Western Sydney residents will need to travel to and from the east, where the jobs are going to be located.

Western Sydney has a number of challenges. WSROC is unaware of any plans, nor any funding commitments, towards transport infrastructure at sufficient scale or timeliness to deliver the roads and public transport capacity to address this particular growth challenge. Many of the region's commuters already face longer travel times, greater costs and greater inconveniences than most in Sydney, due to underinvestment in transport infrastructure manifesting over decades. Unless there is a serious commitment to the region's transport infrastructure needs, the projected population growth will seriously compound these difficulties, affecting quality of life, impeding productivity and retarding the region's economic growth.

At a meeting of Western Sydney mayors in 2015, the group identified the lack of intraregional access and connectivity as the number one regional priority because it affected every aspect of life. It remains true today. WSROC's continuing advocacy to prioritise the funding and delivery of the entire rail link, from the Hawkesbury to Campbelltown, not only enhances connectivity between Western Sydney, the airport and the aerotropolis but also very much facilitates this intraregional travel challenge.

The number and location of railway stations across Western Sydney is particularly important for a number of reasons. The most compelling is that a recent study conducted by WSROC, based on the accepted practice that residents within an 800-metre radius of a train station are deemed to be serviced by a train station, indicates that by 2036, under the current plans for rail across Western Sydney, over 560,000 extra people will be underserved by train. Essentially, this means that proposed train stations, transit-oriented development and major public transport oriented residential development is simply not forecast to keep pace with population growth. Forget about historical deficiencies; we can't even meet population growth.

We have an incomplete but reasonable vision for land use for greater Western Sydney. We have a reasonable perspective as to likely population growth. We have documented aspirations for investment and job creation. What we don't have is a Western Sydney transport plan that not only ties all of these things together but explicitly supports their desired outcomes. We have all those elements that would allow the development of a 2036, perhaps even a 2056, end-state transport network for Western Sydney given all of the challenges before it. This plan must be in sufficient detail—and this is important—to encourage development that is moved from rail and road corridors to actual alignments, actual locations of stations and other transport nodes. It must do so with regard to funding and timing. It must be more than just a list of potential projects. We have lots of lists with lots of potential projects, but we don't have a coherent plan.

WSROC recommends the accelerated delivery of the whole north-south rail link: the northern extension from Tallawong to St Marys and the southern extension from Western Sydney International Airport to Campbelltown. The south-west rail link between Liverpool and Leppington has been a public transport investment disappointment in that it has not been a catalyst for substantial residential commercial development along that corridor. It is a very expensive solution to simply connecting a number of commuter car parks together. The extension of the Leppington line to Western Sydney International Airport will not only provide direct access to the airport for local communities but will also connect the major regional centre that is Liverpool to the airport and will most likely also attract greater investment and housing along that entire corridor. If you don't know what I'm talking about, go to Google and have a look at a 2009 picture of that corridor and look at a 2023 picture of the corridor and tell me what has changed other than a few commuter car parks that have gone in around railway stations.

The CHAIR: Nathan was elected as the member for Leppington; that's all that's changed.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Of course. My apologies for missing that auspicious event!

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Things are on the up.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Regardless of the pronouncements of former Prime Ministers and Premiers, I remain—as, indeed, my board remains—unconvinced that the majority of the workers for Western Sydney International Airport and Bradfield City will come from the growth areas further south around Wollondilly and Campbelltown. I believe that the Liverpool to Western Sydney International Airport rail corridor could have the most potential for housing those residents that will eventually find work in the aerotropolis—not necessarily by the time the airport opens, but certainly into the medium term and longer term.

The CHAIR: In terms of the projects—as you say, there's always a long list of projects—what would WSROC see as the priority project that should be delivered as part of the transport infrastructure?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Our priority project would be the entire north-south rail link that links the Hawkesbury down to Campbelltown. At the moment, we have one-third of that link that's been funded and delivered by 2026, when the airport opens. The St Marys to Tallawong extension to the north would actually service the new growth areas around Marsden Park and Schofields and further to the north-west. The issue there is that there is also significantly disadvantaged communities between St Marys and the north. That rail line would actually enable urban revitalisation and urban renewal on a scale that would be unprecedented for that area.

The other one would be from the airport down to Campbelltown. There is a corridor of liveability that could be created around that particular rail line. I think there is a study that said that if we build that rail line and we spaced the railway stations at the same intervals as we find for the rest of Sydney—up to maybe 1.4, 1.5 kilometres—we would have space for over 24 railway stations that could become community centres that would allow residential development for up to 700,000 new residents for Western Sydney. So we could accommodate the growth of Western Sydney along a rail corridor and have them within walking distance of the railway station if we so choose to do so. That's why we've got to prioritise that rail link from the north to the south.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: So, effectively, you are talking about closing the link or completing the link?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Correct, yes.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: One of the issues at the moment is that the south-west rail is heavy rail and you've got the metro. There are questions around mode change and where that would happen. Does WSROC have a position or view on that? Should the south-west remain heavy rail or should it be converted to metro? If it stays as heavy rail, where should the mode change occur? Any views on that?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: We have a very community-oriented perspective. The community doesn't care as long as you can get around Western Sydney, but there are some very technical issues that come into play. To be honest, as a transport professional, I was somewhat surprised that, even at the design level, there is design incompatibility between the metro lines. I find it hard to believe in this day and age that we would actually put in place a design that makes metro lines that have been delivered in recent times incompatible with one another. And yet the question is going to arise: Do you extend the metro from north-west down to St Marys or do you do it from the airport link going north? The two technologies are somewhat different; they're not compatible.

Whatever we do, can I make a plea, as a transport professional, to anyone who's watching this: Can we have a little bit of consistency across the technology we deploy in the area? If there's going to be inconsistency, it should be driven by the time you actually deploy a technology—being a better one, of course you want to do that. Right now we're not talking about better or worse technologies; we're just talking about technologies that are inconsistent with one another for no good reasons other than someone may have saved a cent or two. That's a little bit of exasperation coming out as a professional.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I share that exasperation.

The CHAIR: We all share that exasperation. You're talking about the Campbelltown spur across, and of course that would join up with Leppington, which would make Leppington the interchange. As long as the interchange is there and there's a capacity to do that, then it's irrelevant which way you go. Is that right?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: That's correct, and our advocacy position from a board level. Our position at a regional level is that we're not driving competition between links. What we're saying is there's a level of investment that is required across the region, and there's a number of projects that should be delivered almost concurrently. The reality is that it's difficult for governments to do things concurrently on the scale that we're talking about. In addition to the north-south rail link, almost at the same time, you would need the Leppington spur and you would need the connection from Leppington to the airport for no other reason that you have a major regional centre in Liverpool that is going to get enhanced connectivity with the east.

Putting a direct connection between the airport and Leppington allows another alternative way to get into the city probably at the same time, I would imagine, as going around the T1 line. Our position is that the north-south rail link and the Leppington spur are very important components of a future Western Sydney transport network that should be built before 2036. There is population growth there that needs to be accommodated. If we're fair dinkum about making sure that 800,000 people have access to reasonable public transport throughout the region then you can't just keep putting this off.

The CHAIR: Do you know whether the corridors were preserved with an anticipation? Obviously, the original proposal had the train line in there, the Leppington spur, and the line through to Campbelltown. Evidence earlier today was that the lands hadn't been preserved. Do you have a view on the preservation of land for these transport corridors?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Our view is that preserving a corridor as quickly as you can makes absolute social, economic and environmental sense. That is a no-brainer. The question that plays on our minds is that preservation of corridors doesn't actually spur development or investment. The corridor doesn't actually say to someone to go out and spend \$1 billion in putting in place the infrastructure and new communities. Actual alignments and railway stations actually do. I'm not sure how much of the corridor between Leppington and the airport has actually been preserved. My view is that the sooner we get to having an alignment—actual location of stations spurs the investment, not the corridor itself. That is our position on that particular issue.

The CHAIR: Do you mean the construction? Once the construction starts then the development starts.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: What we're saying is if you get a map and there's an actual location and an alignment of a railway line with stations that have been spaced along that railway line and those locations are known, then people are going to start looking at investing in land around where the railway stations are and they will be starting to invest money in infrastructure.

The CHAIR: So once you've actually started the planning proposal?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Well, my question is this: There is a process we go through and that process could be as short or as long as the government of the day wants it to be. I've noticed that things that are really important to government get done really quickly; other things that they're not interested in, but maybe the

community is interested in, take a little longer to do. Do we have to wait until we are prepared to make an investment on a particular railway line, or can we actually say the Government will be making an investment in this railway line roughly in this time period, but this is the actual alignment and these are the projected railway stations for future communities?

I don't think we've ever done that before, and I'm just wondering why don't we? What's stopping us from—

The CHAIR: That was the question I asked you. Why wasn't that done when the original announcement of the airport was made?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: I don't know, but there is something that I do know. I've been trying to chase up the business case for the north-south rail link—that is the entire rail link from the Hawkesbury down to Campbelltown—since 2020, trying to find out what was the reason why there is a high priority given to stage one between the airport and St Marys when I said to the joint rail needs study group at the time, "But what if the business case comes back and says that there is a higher priority to do perhaps two investments? It could be one from St Marys to the north to connect with the metro up there, and the other one could be between Leppington and the airport as opposed to having the St Marys-to-airport link?" What I was told was the Government is committed to actually doing stage one. I said, "But what if the business case comes back and says it's not the right priority and the same thing happens?" They simply said, "This is going to be the Government's priority, and we will look at the business case and see how we fund future projects, based on the business case." To some, that—

The CHAIR: So it was a budget decision, essentially?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Essentially, it was a budget decision, and I thought it was a poor budget decision because if you look at the rail line between the airport and St Marys, it's okay for people who want to travel to the airport from other parts of Sydney, but it does very little for inter-regional connectivity or connecting even the rest of Western Sydney to the airport through public transport. It does very, very little. They've put the minimum of railway stations at maximum spacings. It makes no sense to me in trying to develop a liveability corridor along that railway line. What doesn't make sense to me is that as of today I still can't get a copy of the business case that underpins the decisions along that railway line. I know that business case was promised in 2020, 2021, 2022. Now, I'm not sure whether it exists or not, but we would love to have it because we would like to know the assumptions and the reasons why we have what—to do today. It helps us develop our own aspirations for what the transport network for Western Sydney should look like at local government level.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: We're still trying to track down the Western Sydney metro business case, so maybe we can add this to the list.

The CHAIR: Yes, we'll add this one to it. It's almost the similar argument, where you had a \$23 billion—now \$25 billion—investment, with only five stations. What was the fundamental reason behind having so few stations on such expensive infrastructure? Your background is transport. Obviously with metros, the understanding is that they are shorter stops; obviously the French metro works that way, and that's how they achieve their movement of people.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: There have been arguments put forward about—we can only invest in two railway lines. If you've only got two railway lines, you can't have express services; they've got to be an all-stops to service everyone along the line. But the reality is, with a little bit of design change—I'm sure they don't call them overtaking lines. At intervals along the rail line where you have railway stations, where you have a train that—they're in conflict, going in one direction. Sitting at a railway station while an express train goes past—remember, these are metro lines, computerised, where scheduling trains so they can pass one another where you can have express services passing all-stops services ain't going to be difficult. It's not high risk; it's low risk. But there is an incremental amount of investment. My view, as a professional, is I don't think the government of the day had the money, or were unwilling to commit the money, given the other projects that were happening at the time.

The CHAIR: Obviously the St Marys spur is to get you on the western line. Essentially, on that model, at the moment the biggest pick-up would be Penrith, Blue Mountains, possibly Parramatta, those regions which would go to St Marys and interchange. But, essentially, the way that's constructed at the moment, you're not going to travel from Liverpool on train to Western Sydney airport because it's impossible; Campbelltown, they're much quicker to get to the existing airport.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Yes, true. There are a few things that I haven't been able to get to the bottom of. One of them is while we are significantly increasing capacity of rail between Westmead and the CBD, the capacity of rail from Westmead west hasn't changed—isn't changing. I know of no significant investment in increasing the capacity of that line to actually cater for the increased capacity of the rail line east of Parramatta. My question is how are the people of Western Sydney going to get to that metro station at Westmead that has all

this additional capacity when your main rail line between Parramatta west at Penrith, St Marys and Blacktown is for most periods of the day already at capacity? How does that work? Are you going to expect that people in Western Sydney are going to jump in the cars, drive to Westmead, find a community car park and jump on the metro?

At some point in time, someone has got to plan that the capacity of the current heavy rail line between Parramatta west is going to have to be increased or the rail line between Parramatta and Western Sydney airport is going in to try to alleviate the capacity constraints along that rail line. I'm not sure. All I know is that there is a gap in time where people of Western Sydney are going to have difficulty getting to the increased capacity of the metro line from Westmead east.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Based on, particularly, the responses you've just given, what recommendations would you make to the Committee on funding options for transport infrastructure supporting the airport and the aerotropolis?

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: I think the start point would be something along these lines; I think this is what the board would like us to do in the next half-a-dozen months or so. We don't have a coherent transport plan that looks at road and rail and says, "To meet the projected growth of Western Sydney and the improvements of liveability and a whole range of other factors, there's an in-State transport network that's required." What I say to people today is if you want to imagine the level of infrastructure investment that is required to cater for this growth over the next 20 or 30 years, go and stand on a tall building at Parramatta and look east, and then imagine the transport infrastructure that was there in 2021—which is not a whole lot different to what is there in 2023—then turn around and look west and say that by 2041, or around about that time, you'll need that same level of transport network west of Parramatta. That's the reality.

The question I have for people is are there any plans in government, any aspirational funding arrangements, that could fund a level of investment that I'm talking about? This isn't an aspiration; this is simply meeting projected demand. The question is what do we do? I think the first thing is have a clear picture of what the transport network for Western Sydney should look like in terms of rail and bus and other infrastructure and find out, given the projected population growth, when do these things have to be delivered in a timescale.

Let's start at 2056 and work backwards and say at some point in time there's a chunk of infrastructure—let's say the Leppington to airport line needs to be delivered by 2034. If it has to be delivered, you can work out how long it's going to take the project to actually materialise. At some point in time, you have to give approval. Government is going to have to commit to this, and when they commit to it, they need funding. At that time that you need the funding, where is the funding most likely going to come from?

I'm actually asking more questions than actually answering them, but I'm describing a process that I don't actually see when these things are done. What we do is see announcements driven by a whole range of other factors, which is not based on a coherent plan that will deliver the capacity requirements at particular points in time and work backwards in terms of likely establishment and development times, the time to get the funding, the time to get the environmental approvals so that we have a pipeline that everyone understands—industry understands, communities understand and three levels of government understand, because the funding for these things come across, whether we like it or not, most likely by two levels of government.

The reality is, increasingly, local government has an increasing investment in the transport space, especially the first mile, last mile part of a commuter journey. We may see local government in the future getting more involved in that local public transport and other roads infrastructure. My solution is let's get an in-State definition of a network and work through the development and delivery components and then the funding components and make them known to everyone. There is no reason to believe that—I know this is out there, but if Stephen Bali was here, he would probably say, "Great idea, Charles!"

The CHAIR: He's sitting behind you.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Is he? I was incorrect—Stephen Bali would never say this.

The CHAIR: We will ask him later, Charles.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: If government doesn't want to affect its credit rating and it's loath to borrow money—something I really have difficulty coming to grips with. I mean, borrowing money for good projects is always a good idea. But if you actually had a rail line that was well known by everyone well in advance of the need and you had spots picked for railway stations based on a whole range of factors, by government, why couldn't you hand over to the private sector the development of the railway station and its immediate surrounds in terms of supporting infrastructure? Why does the Government have to own it? Why can't you get the concession of private industry to make the investment and take it from there? I think that's an opportunity to actually get some

of the development that Chris Minns desires. He wants to fast-track communities where infrastructure is either already there, can be enhanced without too much investment or someone else could pick up the tab based on a whole range of opportunities.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Talk me through that one. A private company builds a metro line—

The CHAIR: No, a public metro line, but the space above the station—it is a model that has been used before.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Value capture, like in Hong Kong.

The CHAIR: The station is paid for the development above it.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Yes. You build a hotel and a shopping centre above.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Take a motorway model right now. Motorways are sometimes built by joint ventures between the Government and private sector. Sometimes the private sector on its own will actually build a motorway, given a concession period, and it then gets its profit. But why can't that model be utilised for rail, for example. Maybe you'll have a railway station in Western Sydney called Coca-Cola. I don't know.

The CHAIR: Only in Stephen Bali's electorate.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: That would work, wouldn't it? I get very nervous when Stephen is behind me! He is quiet. But what I am suggesting is that there may be alternate funding models that could be looked at when governments have a reluctance to either borrow money or have other priorities at the time. The one thing that doesn't change in all of this is the need for the community to have access to transport. That's cemented, and whether we deliver or not is pretty much going to determine the quality of almost 3½ million people by 2036. We need to do better.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for appearing before us today. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript of today's proceedings for corrections. Committee staff will also email any questions taken on notice from today and any supplementary questions from the Committee. We kindly ask that you return those answers within 14 days.

CHARLES CASUSCELLI: Madam Chair, can I also table a document called *Current and future public transport needs in Western Sydney*, because that was a detailed analysis. It went to another Committee, but I think it's pertinent to your discussions.

The CHAIR: Certainly. If you give it to the staff, we will consider it being made a public document as part of our proceedings.

(The witness withdrew.)

Mr STEPHEN BALI, MP, member for Blacktown, before the Committee

The CHAIR: I welcome our next witness, Mr Stephen Bali, member for Blacktown. Thank you for appearing before the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure today to give evidence. Can you please confirm that you have been issued with the Committee's terms of reference and information about the standing orders that relate to the examination of witnesses?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions about this information?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: No.

The CHAIR: Would you like to make a short opening statement before we begin questions?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. My thanks to the Committee for undertaking this inquiry. It is an extremely important aspect, as we all know—how do you move Western Sydney people around as we continue to grow at a rapid rate? A couple of key things to embellish what was in my submission—obviously, we're not here to re-prosecute the pros and cons of an airport, but it is here. The vertical bus stop I will refer to as an airport is here, but what we need to look at—and picking up on the last witness, Charles Casuscelli, from WSROC. I used to be the president at WSROC, and we did a few submissions when the debate was on. One thing I noticed—and as Mayor of Blacktown at that time—was the challenge we had was that when they made the announcement, it was just really an announceable. The supporting infrastructure and the cost of getting people to live in this area was not really factored in.

All of the road projects that have been built—the upgrades that we have seen in The Northern Road, et cetera—were actually scheduled to be built about five years afterwards. It was only brought forward by five years. They spent all of this money building an airport without actually looking at the sewerage, the drainage and the water et cetera that needs to sustain a major population there. The other challenge we have is the definition of Western Sydney. The Government at the time came up with using the Greater Sydney Commission version of the parkland city. That actually excluded Blacktown, the Hills, Parramatta and Cumberland councils. If I could quickly quote some of the numbers, for instance, looking up recent numbers on the internet that you can find from the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research—research says that the Western Sydney economy is about \$102 billion. Blacktown city is \$24.8 billion. Parramatta is \$28 billion. The Hills is \$8 billion. Cumberland is \$14 billion. That's \$76 billion of the gross regional product of Western Sydney in those four councils, which are excluded from the aerotropolis council—75 per cent.

If you look at Penrith at \$12 billion plus Liverpool at \$11 billion, that's \$23 billion. That is smaller. Penrith plus Liverpool—sorry to all those MPs from the south-west who are thinking how gigantic their areas are. If you add those two councils together, it does not even equal Blacktown. To exclude Blacktown, Parramatta, Cumberland and the Hills—there is no way that economically or by tourism et cetera you are going to have an aerotropolis that is going to work. The previous Government set up this economic bureau that excluded central Western Sydney. When you're looking at economic growth, the growth rates in Blacktown and Parramatta are a lot higher than the growth rates in the south-west. We've got to work together. We are not just lines on a map; we are people, and people move around.

I was talking earlier this morning to the winter sports people who are travelling around meeting all the various MPs. When you look at the tourism strategy, there are basically three models. The Hawkesbury City Council, Penrith City Council and the Blue Mountains City Council are part of the Hunter tourism strategy. Then you've got the aerotropolis tourism strategy of the eight councils. And then you've got the forgotten ones, which are Blacktown. It's a similar message all the time: Blacktown, Parramatta and Hills are excluded from a Western Sydney tourism strategy. WSROC—the previous people that presented—I know, over the years, has talked about how, if you want one-third of the New South Wales economy to actually benefit and drive jobs and tourism and all sorts of other important aspects, then you really need to have one economic body that looks after the whole of Western Sydney, and stop splitting us up.

Even the transport people, when they presented recently to parliamentary MPs in various different groups, when they're talking about the aerotropolis they talk about three bus routes—one to Liverpool, one to Penrith and one to Campbelltown. There is never any discussion about Blacktown. Blacktown is going to hit the population of Tasmania by 2035 and will cross to 600,000—I note the member for Riverstone there, who is probably going to have the smallest electorate in the next eight years—as 12,000 people each year are moving into Blacktown. And yet we get ignored. Progressive governments over the years haven't put the resources and requirements into treating Western Sydney with a holistic approach to make sure that there are transport routes up and south.

Just as a final aspect, I note that the Government at the moment and the previous Government keep talking about coming up with where we put railway stations and bus stops across Western Sydney. I've got a map here which I'm happy to table that was published on 18 January 2009. The Government at the time was actually looking at the Western Sydney rail infrastructure—the improved Sydney public transport expansion of Sydney metropolitan railway line.

Unfortunately, when Labor lost government and the new Government came in, they basically scrapped this plan completely and went back to the one metro line that we're seeing. But if you look at this map, there are actually lines that technically go where the metro line is today. A bit further west it goes through Box Hill, through Riverstone, through Lethbridge Park, Shalvey, Willmot, Marsden Park—all these stations. We're trying to work out where should the railway line go; here's a 2009 map that was all planned. Maybe the inquiry should actually ask Transport.

I'm a collector, not a hoarder. Luckily, when I was on council, I kept this map. Not only has it got that railway line; there was another one that went straight through from Eastwood, Epping, North Carlingford, Castle Hill, Kellyville and then coming down through Quakers Hill, Rooty Hill and joining up at Erskine Park. The railway lines down south—there are quite a few of them. Why did this come about? Mainly because, back in 2010, 2011 and 2012, I recall we had a gigantic map of the Sydney Basin. If you chopped it in half, from Hornsby straight down south, when you looked at the eastern seaboard and the bus and train routes that you got on that side and then looked at Western Sydney, it was basically a quarter of the lines.

This is my final point: This costs an absolute fortune. Back in 2014-2015, when we were still having the debate about the aerotropolis et cetera, senior government bureaucracy and other people got up and said, "It won't work at Western Sydney airport unless you present a coordinated infrastructure program", similar to what Charles was talking about. At that stage they said no government, either Federal or State, was prepared to commit over \$120 billion—which was what it was priced at—to put the railroad and sewerage to get the people in there over the next 10 or 15 years. They said the competing interests, when you looked at south-east Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania—everyone would be bidding for money. How can you put that much money into one part of Sydney? That's the challenge governments in the future have: How do you finance and fund the infrastructure to take the extra one million or 1½ million people that are moving into Western Sydney? I'll leave it at that. There's plenty more to say about economics and everything else, but—

The CHAIR: I assume you'll be happy to table that map for the Committee.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Yes, I've got a few maps if anyone wants a copy. I'll pass it over to the member for Castle Hill.

The CHAIR: We'll consider that as part of our hearing later on. I know you were talking about \$120 billion but, in particular, we're looking at the rail infrastructure at the moment. There's a current proposal for the St Marys metro to go to the airport, but at the moment it goes no further. If one priority was at the top of the list, what would it be? For Blacktown, and in particular for connectivity, what's the one infrastructure project that's at the top of the list?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Right now, the corridor has been earmarked from Tallawong station to Marsden Park. Obviously, looking at this map, you can punch through to St Marys, so that needs to be identified. So that's the first priority. But I would also suggest that the grand debate that this Committee and the government of the future needs—obviously, I have one version, but there is an alternative viewpoint. If you look at the map that's been distributed, from Parramatta to Badgerys Creek, essentially, the question is which route do you take.

There are two schools of thought; I know WSROC has put both of them forward. There's the one, basically, if you use Prospect Reservoir as a pivot point. Do you go south of Prospect Reservoir through Fairfield to Badgerys Creek airport? Part of the idea to pay for that would be an uplift and having units et cetera to pay towards that transport. The counter school of thought is actually running it to the north of Prospect Reservoir. That is the employment and tourism corridor—the Eastern Creek Raceway. You have the largest industrial precincts in Australia located through Arndell Park, Huntingwood, through Eastern Creek, Erskine Park, on to the airport.

If the airport is made out to be more jobs orientated and for transportation of goods et cetera—cargo planes—therefore, running north of the Prospect Reservoir makes more logical sense to move people for tourism, through the motor racing precinct, the Sydney zoo et cetera. If you just want to build additional houses beyond the Government's announced targets yesterday, if you want to put a lot more people into Fairfield et cetera, to build units and do a southern with no jobs, you've got to look at the employment corridors.

If you're looking at the south of Prospect, I think an issue that this Committee could potentially recommend is to go from—it needs a further study from Transport looking at both corridors—either north of

Prospect Reservoir heading through the industrial and tourism belt to the airport, or you go south. Obviously, it won't be funded for the next 20 years, but it'd be nice to actually work out where you're going to punch through, from Parramatta to the airport, the railway line. Obviously, I'd prefer if it goes north of Prospect, but anyway.

The CHAIR: Don't worry, we've had plenty of people who have their own personal preferences of where it should go.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Exactly, but you need to look at those two corridors.

The CHAIR: Aside from the rail or metro options, there's been a lot of talk about the rapid transport corridors going through as well. Is that something you've formed a view on? If you used the rapid bus transit in the first instance, there was a view earlier that that could later be converted, as well, if they were dedicated lanes.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Well, if they're dedicated lanes, there's potential, because it's obviously a lot cheaper to put down tarmac and have rubber wheels moving people around. Obviously, more people get moved using light rail, but it's a lot more expensive. Having the potential to swap is important, especially over the next 20 years as more people move in. The key thing to look at is—dare I slightly digress?—when we look at the economics of the airport, everyone, if you recall the charlatans that came out supporting the airport back in 2014, keeps basically talking about jobs, jobs, jobs.

The reason I say they were charlatans is because, if you look at the economic impact statement—Borger and the rest of them—that came out, and Chris Brown, it's simply saying that we need an airport to be the economic driver. Well, Blacktown was growing at 4½ per cent per year. The jobs that were in the economic impact statement said that in the year 2060, you'll have 60,000 extra jobs, so that's basically 1,000 jobs per year. Are you telling me Western Sydney can't generate that? People are what drive jobs and infrastructure, not the vertical bus stop. So what we need to actually do is work out—as people are moving in there to schools, to shopping centres et cetera that we need to support, and the way technology changes—how do we support the population that moves out there?

The mode of transport is irrelevant, apart from ground transport, which comes back to the rapid transit lanes that you need to get people moving. Right now if I live in Doonside, in Blacktown, which I do, and I want to go and watch a football game in Campbelltown or want to go by train or go down to Wollondilly—a wonderful place down there; I did it about six months or so ago—it just takes forever through the different roadways. We've got to make sure that people in Western Sydney can interconnect and have, really, the half-hour city that actually works. It takes half an hour for me to go from Blacktown to Riverstone, let alone outside of Blacktown.

The economic arguments—even this morning, on the traffic report, a cow was walking across Badgerys Creek Road and blocked traffic. Let's face it: You're not going to have a massive population in Badgerys Creek for about 20 or 30 years, so we have about 10 or 15 years to look at that area of south-west Sydney and make sure the plans are built and the roads are delivered. But right now, in Blacktown city, 12,000 people a year are moving in there.

Thankfully, the Government, both Federal and State, announced that they are upgrading Richmond Road, but there is a hell of a lot more that needs to be done to support, in 10 years, 120,000 people moving into the City of Blacktown, one local council area alone—120,000 people in 10 years. No government over the last 20 years has worked out the hospital system. I know the Government has thrown in for Rouse Hill Hospital now. The previous Government just had shovels there, didn't they, Mr Castle Hill? But we need to make sure that we put in the infrastructure to support it.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Apart from the \$300 million that you have in the bank.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: It's a \$700 million hospital now, with an emergency section.

The CHAIR: Can we get back on topic?

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I was just suggesting that the first \$300 million is already in your bank account.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Mine? I don't think so!

The CHAIR: If we could get back onto the topic.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: I never saw it as a budget item.

The CHAIR: One of the questions on that, Steve, is that geographically Blacktown is a much—for example, if you compare Cumberland council to Blacktown, geographically it covers a lot larger land space, so the targets in terms of what you are housing to some extent is reflecting the sheer size of the area that Blacktown represents. As you said yourself, in terms of LGAs it would be one of the biggest in Sydney, wouldn't it?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: It's a reasonable size. It wouldn't be one of the biggest. Hawkesbury is large. There are lots of LGAs right across.

The CHAIR: Some of the ones on the periphery where there are sparse populations would have been considered largely rural in the past.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Yes. Probably 90 per cent of the rural land that was located in Blacktown just 12 or 14 years ago has been converted to industrial or residential. But you're right: It's a big area. I think it's 200 square kilometres. I think it's about 60 square kilometres smaller than Malta. It's slightly the same size as Fiji. But the challenge is putting so many people in, and only just recently schools have been opened up. The Government had a great privatisation policy of education where you had the Anglican schools, Catholic schools and other schools opening up in the Riverstone area before you even had one government school have an extra classroom put in there.

The CHAIR: That has been problematic in a lot of these new estates and areas that are seeing huge growth—Leppington and Oran Park and those kinds of places. The question here is—it can go one of two ways. There is a view that there are existing communities that need connectivity because they need job creation and they've got those large centres. I've got pockets of very high unemployment in the Auburn electorate. We know that there is going to be an explosion—and we've seen it at places like Oran Park and Riverstone. They are coming. One of the problems we've faced is that governments have allowed a lot of housing to go in without the infrastructure with them. If you look at the airport—I went out there yesterday—you're right: There are still cows walking across the street. But is it a thing of "Don't build that metro that goes across to Leppington and Campbelltown until they start putting housing in because these other areas through to Tallawong and further back into Blacktown need some connectivity," or do you put that there because we know that's going to drive some growth and ease the pressure of other areas?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: To a large extent, we are at a point in Sydney's growth that, putting aside the funding issue, you don't really have a choice. You've got to do both. How you fund it will be the interesting question. The reason I say that—and to add even more money to the equation, which I will come to in a second—is if you land at Badgerys Creek airport and you get off the plane at two in the morning, assuming there is a 24/7 metro, it's going to dump you into St Marys. The heavy rail gauge is closed at that time. Where are you going to go? You're going to need the rapid transport; you need taxis. It's going to be expensive to get out. You need to have a connection. People are going to be connecting flights. We may like the idea that there is an airport in Western Sydney, but most of the flights will be connecting also back through Sydney. You need to connect the southern link so that you can get to Mascot reasonably quickly from Badgerys Creek if you've got to change flights. The other challenge you have is the fuel line. There is absolutely no designated fuel line. At the moment it's by truck.

I remember talking to Paul Fletcher, the Minister at the time, when I was mayor. He came in and sat around the table to have a chat about it. When I raised the issue, "At what point would you put rail or put through pipelines to Badgerys Creek?", he said, "It's an economic market decision." Part of the decision process would be all the various factors such as truck crashes. How much does that cost the economy? When you've got a thousand flights a day—I think, as with one of my opening lines and from looking at your video, what people don't talk about is that it's more than a thousand flights a day that will be going in and out of Badgerys Creek. You need to actually work out what is the infrastructure to support at that point in 2060.

Don't just talk about the 10 million passenger movements. For this airport to work it needs 80 million passenger movements per year. Imagine the flights. Imagine the noise. Imagine the flight paths et cetera. The economic impact statement—and the reason the can was kicked down the road for 40 years is that the EIS says it just doesn't work because of the noise. Right now we have a 24/7 proposed airport for Western Sydney, yet if you live on the eastern seaboard you have curfews. Queensland has been reported with Brisbane's additional runway—they don't have a curfew. There has been a mass outcry about the noise. They are feeling left out. People said there was nothing to worry about with noise. Now that there is a noise problem, no-one wants to talk to them about it. Where is the insulation? Where is the support?

The previous Coalition Government—it is being examined by the current Government—kept using the 60 decibel factor. You look at Heathrow Airport. They are saying that 45, 50 or 55 decibels has a major impact on a child's learning. Childcare centres, primary schools, all sorts of different areas need to be actually—if we want our children to be able to have a decent education and a chance to compete against the eastern seaboard, we need to look at that 50 decibel mark and not 60 decibels and, at the same time, for the rest of the housing. The infrastructure is not just roads. We should be looking at how does the population survive with noise over their heads. Fifty decibels should be the cut-off point, not 60.

The CHAIR: That's diverging from what our Committee is actually dealing with.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: You can make a recommendation to the Federal Government to consider it.

The CHAIR: We can.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: That would be my suggestion, Committee Chair.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: In your submission you mentioned extending the existing corridor from Tallawong station to Marsden Park, extending through to St Marys via Mount Druitt. Can you expand on the potential benefits of this extension?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: The largest employment corridor is as you go through Badgerys Creek through Erskine Park, through Mount Druitt, through to the Norwest Business Park and onto Riverstone. The Norwest Business Park was fast-tracked in 2009 and was just recently officially released. You've got hundreds of thousands of potential jobs there. If we are building an airport to drive economic activity, which is what we have been sold, then you need that connectivity not only just for moving people to job locations. Yes, there is a secondary benefit of going to the airport, but at the same time it's the perfect corridor to support the population movement. It's also great for tourism because through that corridor is the Blacktown International SportsPark. You've got the zoos and the Eastern Creek Raceway et cetera. You can move people around. It also has the ability to rejuvenate some housing estates through that area so that if governments of any persuasion are looking at putting more people into a location, and railway lines, that's a perfect way of getting more people into an area.

The map I distributed identified a few stations. Hopefully, those real estate prices don't go up tonight as people move in thinking there will be a station there. You're then moving the people from Hornsby to be able to use the Western Sydney airport as well. It's an important missing link in the Transport strategy that you can now go from Tallawong into Sydney Wynyard station within an hour. Imagine if you can do a full loop down to the airport. It would be probably an hour and 20 minutes and you can get into the Sydney CBD without ever having to change a train. So it just gives a lot of advantages.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: Given it's a different train going from St Marys South to St Marys North, you would be changing trains.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: From the airport to—

Mr WARREN KIRBY: St Marys. The voltage on the line from St Marys South is different from the voltage on the line going to St Marys North—two completely different trains.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: There you go. You should recommend we need one. We're in the one Sydney Basin, you'd think—anyway, we've got two sets of trains.

The CHAIR: It's not the only problem that's been pointed out to us today.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Okay. Heck, I'm not a train expert, but I like sitting on them.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I enjoyed your section on—in your words—the "charlatans". I note that there has been a plethora of people stepping into the Western Sydney thought leadership space.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Especially people who don't live in Western Sydney or failed politicians. That's why I believe WSROC should be the one that leads.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: To that question, your recommendation is that the State Government ensures that WSROC is the voice for Western Sydney. Should it be up to the State Government to decide these things, given that I think Penrith and Liverpool councils have left WSROC.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Exactly.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Shouldn't it be up to the councils themselves to come together and decide the appropriate forum?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Let's explore that. Thank you very much for that question, Mr Hagarty.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Thank you. My pleasure.

The CHAIR: I feel like I've entered some other world here.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: I'll try to summarise and break it down, because we can have a few chardonnays and talk about the political ramifications.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I'm more of a riesling man, but continue.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Why did it happen? The important aspect is you've got a situation where firstly, the Government, if you go to regional New South Wales, they have the joint—

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: JROCs.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: What are they called?

Mrs JUDY HANNAN: JOs.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: They're mandatory for people to be at. You may not like your fellow council down the road—heck, you may not even like your fellow councillor on your same council—but by working together—if you look at south-east Queensland, those mayors coming together have basically turned south-east Queensland around. Brisbane is the king of the castle there, and that's great, but they actually work together with the others. I know we have our own little chips on our shoulders about the role of Parramatta. It is, I suppose, the capital of Western Sydney, or you can look at it from the point of view that it's the capital of the eastern suburbs of Western Sydney. But, regardless, having 12 councils working together as a voice that's going to represent over one million people—or two million people in the next few years—would be great.

What we have seen over time is Fairfield council pulling out. Why? Because they were politically upset with who was going to be chair of WSROC et cetera and other issues. You had Liverpool and Penrith. God knows why. Essentially, it was the debate over Western Sydney airport. Let's face facts. I was the chair at the time. Parramatta council and Cumberland council were under administration and, unofficially, the previous Government, under those administrators, tried to tell those councils to pull out. They were looking for any issue to say that WSROC shouldn't be there, especially with a Labor mayor at the time.

But we were able to manoeuvre from bringing Blue Mountains through to those who were totally anti the airport to pro the airport to come up with a five-point plan that actually said how Badgerys Creek airport would work. We came together. Then both the Liberal State and Federal governments tried to kill off WSROC. Who wants to have a strong Western Sydney voice that is not aligned to business interests and that's not 100 per cent aligned to different lobby groups? WSROC is the people's council. People are elected to get onto council, therefore the councillors then get elected to WSROC. We might not always agree with them, but they can bring that voice and that competing interest to come up with one interest for the area.

We had a situation during the great debate in 2014-15, where they were still trying to work out will the airport will go ahead or not, each of those eight councils—excluding Blacktown and Parramatta, which were excluded from the negotiations—were all given \$20 million, \$25 million that I would refer to as blood money to say, "Join us and then pull out of WSROC and we'll negotiate with each one of you." All the mayors were patted on the head and the GMs. They had their meeting with Ministers and Prime Ministers and Premiers. The moment they signed the deal and it got announced that the Badgerys Creek airport was going ahead—you can ask any of those mayors today, they were all complaining how they can't get access to the Government.

So the very thing that everyone was talking about—the eight mayors and the eight GMs and that they created their own little committee that they had representation for—hardly ever now meet. All of them came out in Liverpool and Penrith at Christmas time and January in articles saying, "They promised us all this and nothing has been delivered." They got \$20 million as blood money and then tried to destroy WSROC. That's why the State Government needs to step in and make it mandatory for all ROCs that all councils, whether you like it or not, join your local ROC. That way, you have an opportunity to actually have a voice for your region.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Unfortunately, we've run out of time. Thank you, Mr Bali—our good mate—for coming in. Thank you for appearing before the Committee. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript of today's proceedings for corrections. The Committee staff will also email any questions taken on notice from today and any supplementary questions that Nathan can come up with. We kindly ask that you return these within 14 days. I again place on record my thanks to all the witnesses who appeared. In addition, I thank the Committee members, Committee staff, Hansard and AVB staff for their assistance in the conduct of the hearing.

(The witness withdrew.)

The Committee adjourned at 16:15.