



Transport for NSW

Responses to post-hearing questions

Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and the Arts

Current and future public transport needs in
Western Sydney

Hearing Date – 9 February 2024

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTION 1. (p38)

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: If your primary source of data is the census, that's a five-year cycle. In a place like Austral, where it's undergoing very rapid change, you're really not getting the data in sufficient time to actually be able to have a very agile response to the emerging demand, are you?

SIMON HUNTER: It's a very good question, and it is a challenge. Part of what the New South Wales Government does do, though, is, through the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, produce population projections that are the expected forward look in terms of the growth and development of areas, as well as a forecast called the Sydney housing supply forecast. These two sources help inform us of where people are likely to go, where development is likely to be, and allow us to do some of that planning ahead of the curve—and development. I don't know if Ms Van Laeren wants to add anything.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: What about other data sources, like Google? Presumably they've got massive amounts of data that's very fine-grained in terms of its accuracy around individual journeys. Does the department purchase in data from those kinds of sources?

SIMON HUNTER: We do access a range of data sources, including some data around live trip measurement and things like that. We have other subscriptions that give different levels of data and sources. **If you want an exhaustive list of all of the inputs, I would probably have to take that on notice;** otherwise I might be here all afternoon.

ANSWER:

Between Census updates, Transport for NSW (Transport) uses data prepared by other Government agencies, including population projections and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) dwelling completions, to estimate population increase across Greater Sydney on a six-monthly basis.

To assess travel demand and the network's performance in meeting this demand, Transport uses a number of different key datasets. These include:

- SCATS – data from all signalised intersections
- Opal – public transport patronage – tap-ons/off
- Household Travel Survey – results from a population-weighted continuous survey about travel behaviour
- Permanent vehicle counters on key roads.

Transport also utilises additional data to fill in gaps in the data ecosystem, these include:

- Google Travel Time API data – which provides travel time for a bespoke selected route. This is a discrete data source from publicly available Google data.
- HERE data – aggregated speed information from connected vehicles, used to measure average speeds on road links.
- Compass IoT – anonymised and aggregated vehicle Telemetry data sourced from connected vehicles.
- GPS location data – this is mobility data aggregated from mobile phone app users accessed through Planwisely software.
- D-spark- anonymised mobility data sourced from mobile phone subscribers.

QUESTION 2. (pp38-39)

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: The other issue that Ms Coorey raised was an apparent inadequacy around the community consultation. I asked her a question about whether there was some kind of community reference group or consultative group for the project. Perhaps you could elaborate on the mechanisms of community consultation that are supporting the project.

REBECCA McPHEE: Absolutely. No problem at all. Community consultation is a significant part of any major construction effort, and a project like Sydney Metro plans right from the outset. From the really early stages of planning right through delivery and construction, we have a really significant community engagement program, and that's with all levels—so State Government agencies, councils, communities and peak bodies. We have both formal and informal mechanisms of engaging—so newsletters that go out to the whole community, we have community engagement forums and sessions, and we have more formal engagement with the councils at times through project control groups. It's an ongoing daily effort to answer questions and respond to issues that are raised with us.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Ms Coorey suggested that she'd been briefed in a confidential briefing that she wasn't able to disclose the contents of. Is that correct, that that's a mechanism that's—

REBECCA McPHEE: I would have to take that question on notice. I'm not aware of—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is there a reason why you would insist on confidentiality in terms of those briefings as opposed to having an open—

REBECCA McPHEE: I'm sorry, I'm not aware of that particular session, so I would like to comment.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: As a general practice, is that something that the agency would undertake?

REBECCA McPHEE: I'm happy to take that question on notice.

ANSWER:

Representatives from Transport for NSW (Transport) and Sydney Metro presented an overview of 2024 Temporary Transport Plan planning and engagement principles, and Sydney Metro City and Southwest, at a City of Canterbury Bankstown Council Meeting on Tuesday, 21 November.

The presentation was not confidential and was shared with Council the following day via email. The same content was presented to Inner West Council and Cumberland Council as part of early engagement activities with key stakeholders. Since this initial briefing, Transport and City of Canterbury Bankstown Council officers have met across a number of forums about the Temporary Transport Plan and associated work programs.

Transport looks forward to continuing to work closely with City of Canterbury Bankstown Council in the lead up to 2024 Temporary Transport Plan.

QUESTION 4. (pp43-44)

The CHAIR: I might jump in to cover a few more issues that have been raised by witnesses throughout this inquiry. The issue of bus shelters has come up a lot, and the fact that it's often the councils that have to fund those shelters. That's the arrangement, I think. What is there from the State Government perspective to support councils doing that? Is there any policy targets in terms of upgrading bus shelters across Western Sydney? Let's just stick with Western Sydney.

ADRIAN DESSANTI: There's no policy or targets that I'm aware of in terms of upgrading bus shelters. A lot of our work obviously is the bus service itself and getting more frequent services so that people aren't waiting as long for buses to turn up. But in terms of the bus shelters themselves, you're correct in saying that largely that is a local government responsibility. But clearly where we have people using our public transport network, we want to make sure that they can access that network safely and efficiently. We know in Western Sydney, as in other parts of Sydney with hotter summers and wetter and colder winters and so forth, that that is a big issue. One of the ways to address that is through shelters and working with local councils. We certainly do have discussions with council from time to time in terms of where we will be putting future investment in bus services so that their upgrades to bus stops can be in concert with that. But certainly from a shelter perspective, we don't have any particular targets so to speak or necessarily policy around increasing the number of shelters.

The CHAIR: Do you keep a tally of the different types of bus stops in Western Sydney, how many don't have shelters, how many are just a pole without a seat? Do you have those statistics across the different LGAs?

ADRIAN DESSANTI: We have information about the types of bus stops we do have. Specifically whether or not we have number of shelters at each bus stop, I'd have to take that on notice. But obviously in our service planning, if we're putting new services in, we work very closely with those councils.

ANSWER:

Information as at 29 February 2024 indicates:

- There are 15,807 active bus stops in Western Sydney, of which:
 - 849 (five per cent) are known to have some form of shelter (e.g. awning, advertising shelter etc).
 - 2,070 (13 per cent) are known to have no shelter
 - 12,888 (82 per cent) are unknown if there is the presence of a shelter or otherwise.
- There are 15,807 active bus stops in Western Sydney, of which:
 - 2,206 (14 per cent) are known to have some form of seating
 - 8,299 (53 per cent) are known to have no seating
 - 5,302 (34 per cent) are unknown to have seating or otherwise.

Transport holds information about stops including, but not limited to:

- Wheelchair accessibility
- Lighting
- Quantity of shelters
- Quantity of seating
- Type of stop indicator signage.

Bus stops in Western Sydney are defined as those contained in the following LGAs:

- Blacktown

- Camden
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Cumberland
- Fairfield
- Hawkesbury
- Liverpool
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- The Hills
- Wollondilly.

QUESTION 5. (pp48-49)

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Is it currently the policy to try to reduce car dependence, or is there no policy on mode?

SIMON HUNTER: In the Future Transport Strategy that was released under the former Government in 2022, there was a commitment to or a direction to stabilise growth in vehicle kilometres travelled across Greater Sydney. With the growth rates in Sydney and the growth of private vehicle use that typically goes with that, that would have the impact of encouraging more use of public transport to meet that target, and it gives our agency that government-led imprimatur to consider a range of methods and measures to change that travel behaviour.

The CHAIR: How is that going, in terms of stabilising?

SIMON HUNTER: I think we are still seeing a normalisation of behaviour post-pandemic. I think the travel patterns and behaviours changed quite considerably because of that. **We are seeing a slower recovery on public transport than on road use. I think road use is back to levels that it was at pre-pandemic.**

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: How do you measure that? How do you measure how many kilometres are being travelled in vehicles? I am curious about how you quantify that. What is the metric you are relying on to determine whether they are increasing or decreasing?

SIMON HUNTER: I think, to give you the best answer to that, I will take that on notice, if that is okay?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Great.

ANSWER:

Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) is an aggregate measure of the kilometres driven by all vehicles on roads. It is used to quantify total road travel demand. There are two key data collections that provide aggregate observed VKT:

1. The Australian Government, through the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE), publishes aggregate VKT data for Australia and for each of the states and capital cities in their [statistics yearbook](#). BITRE uses the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Motor Vehicle Use (SMVU) and annual fuel sales volume data, together with BITRE models of road transport activity, fleet and fleet fuel efficiency. BITRE has noted that these data sources are becoming generally more approximate over recent years, since the ABS discontinued the SMVU in 2020. BITRE

is assessing possible data options to aid the estimation of on-road vehicle utilisation, to address this major data gap caused by discontinuation of the SMVU.

2. Transport for NSW (Transport) runs a continuous Household Travel Survey (HTS) with a population-weighted annual sample of 2,000 to 3000 residents in the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area. The VKT metric is calculated and weighted based on a number of questions in the survey, including “Where was the stop” (i.e. detailed address information for origin and destination of each trip) and “How did you get to the stop” (i.e. travel mode). HTS results, including VKT data, are published by region on Transport’s website.

Transport also prepares modelled estimates of VKT for future years, taking into account the size and shape of projected population growth.

Budget Paper No. 2 also contains a chart on page 28 that illustrates VKT results from 2010-11 to 2022-23, showing growth from 80 million driver kilometres per average weekday to 89 million in 2022-23, with a downturn during COVID (2020-2022). This data is sourced from the HTS collection described above.

QUESTION 6. (p49)

The CHAIR: How is the planning for active transport undertaken within Transport for NSW: the need for cycleways, pedestrian access and pathways? How is that undertaken? It would be appreciated, even in terms of the unit itself, how is that done? Then, if you are aware, the portion of the Transport budget that is going into active transport cycleways? We heard evidence about that as well.

SIMON HUNTER: Transport for NSW does have a Cities and Active Transport division with a specific, focused active transport lead, and that team works across Transport to promote and plan for the needs of our active transport users across the network. They have got a range of programs underway, including their strategic cycleway corridors and various cycleways including, around Parramatta, the active transport link. **From the figures I have seen, this year's budget contained an additional \$60 million in funding. I don't have a global number, so I will have to take that on notice.**

The CHAIR: You can. We will also have an opportunity in a few weeks to get into the numbers a bit more.

ANSWER:

Transport for NSW (Transport) undertakes various initiatives, programs and projects to improve walking and cycling outcomes across the State. The NSW Government committed to provide an additional \$60 million in active transport funding as part of its election commitments. This is enabling local councils to deliver projects that expand cycleway networks and increase opportunities for walking, including in greenfield developments in Western Sydney.

Transport provides funding to Councils through grant programs such as the Get NSW Active Program. This Program funds the planning, development and delivery of local walking and cycling infrastructure, by Councils, across the State. It is a rolling program, of which \$60 million has been allocated in FY24/25. 15 per cent of this funding will be directed to Western Sydney.

The 2023-24 NSW Budget also allocates \$97.9 million for standalone active transport infrastructure projects.

At a strategic level, Transport is progressing the Strategic Cycleway Corridors which provide the foundation for safe and convenient cycleways that better connect centres, precincts and

places, and support Council's local networks. The Strategic Cycleway Corridors network has been identified for Western Sydney in close consultation with local government and other key stakeholders. Transport is now progressing the next stage of developing the first tranche of priority locations in Western Sydney, as well as for other regions.

A significant amount of active transport infrastructure is also delivered as part of major projects in accordance with Transport's policy: *Providing for Walking and Cycling in Transport Projects*. For example, Parramatta Light Rail includes a 5.7km shared path from Carlingford to Parramatta, as well as a number of other place and active transport enhancements.

Transport also undertakes continuous improvements to transport assets to improve walking and cycling outcomes, such as changes to signals to better prioritise pedestrians, road and footpath improvements to include ramps, or through the provision of bike parking at transport hubs.