

**Submission
No 21**

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE PUBLIC
TRANSPORT NEEDS IN WESTERN SYDNEY**

Organisation: Campbelltown City Council

Date Received: 13 September 2023

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The Hon. Cate Faehrmann MLC Chair
Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 –
Transport and the Arts
Via portal

Dear Chairperson,

Re: Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6: Transport and the Arts Inquiry into the current and future public transport needs in Western Sydney

Campbelltown is a city of ambition, innovation and opportunity. As the designated Metropolitan Centre of the Macarthur Region, encompassing the local government areas of Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly councils, Campbelltown City Centre serves one of the most significant growth corridors in Australia. The Macarthur Region is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth, driving demand for enhanced transport services and infrastructure, and the need to shift unsustainable patterns of travel behaviour.

In Campbelltown, we're committed to achieving the following objectives:

- Decreasing the need for car dependency by improving access to public transport
- Activating centres by prioritising pedestrian movement within the centres and enabling vehicle movement to occur around the centres (particularly Campbelltown City Centre) rather than through the centre.
- Support delivery of housing, particularly through intensification of land and jobs in Campbelltown City Centre and density around the rail spine.

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

(a) Availability and accessibility of public transport services across Western Sydney, the adequacy of connectivity between public transport hubs and commercial hubs and any gaps in services

We share the aspiration of the Greater City Commission's 30 minute city, whereby our community can access jobs and services via public transport in their nearest Metropolitan/Strategic Centre within 30 minutes. Unfortunately, however, the principle of the 30 minute city is a fallacy for the vast majority of our community members.

Council's Reimagining Campbelltown City Centre Master Plan 2020 and the NSW Government's Campbelltown-Macarthur Collaboration Area Place Strategy 2020 both emphasise the need for mode shift, especially to facilitate the Metropolitan Cluster function of Campbelltown's City Centre. Campbelltown City Council is concerned that the rate of population growth in the Macarthur region, combined with the continual reliance on private

vehicles will lead to:

- untenable road congestion
- the continuing deterioration of amenity and ‘destinational appeal’ of key destinations in the LGA, resulting in an increase in existing retail vacancies, challenges in attracting high skilled workers and overall poor economic performance and urban decline
- an exacerbation of the existing urban heat islands in the LGA

Campbelltown’s community benefits from having access to seven electrified rail stations within the Local Government Area. However, many people in our region cannot even access their closest railway station within 30 minutes via public transport to get them to a Metropolitan or Strategic Centre, particularly as 35% of the Campbelltown population currently live further than 400m from a regular 30-min weekday public transport service (Source: RMIT - Australian Urban Observatory).

There are currently 110,424 cars owned by Macarthur residents. 63.8% of our homes own two or more cars. Currently, there is a strong preference for private vehicle usage for most trip purposes in Campbelltown LGA. For example, the below graph shows that, currently, use of private vehicles accounts for at least half of all travel to work.

Method of travel to work for residents of Campbelltown LGA

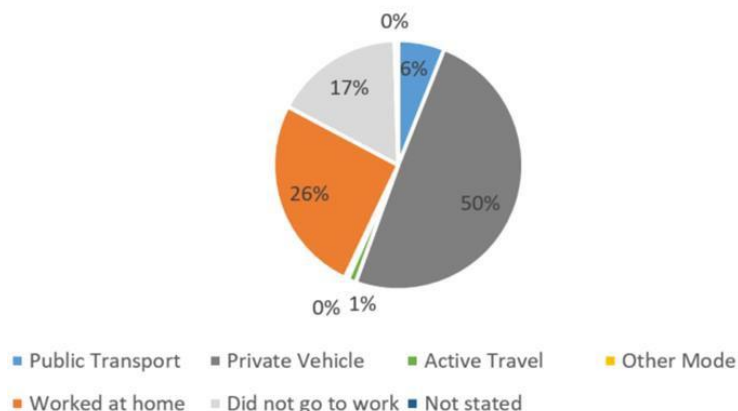


Figure 1: Method of travel to work for residents of Campbelltown LGA, ABS 2021

In spite of this, a recent Community Travel Survey conducted by Campbelltown City Council in 2022 showed that:

- 43% of respondents stated that they were either interested or very interested in driving less than they do now.
- 42% of respondents were interested or very interested in catching the bus or train more often than they do now.

Our community reports a number of barriers to using other modes of travel besides private vehicles. Travel times to key destinations by public transport in our region continue to be uncompetitive when compared with travel by car and high rates of car dependency are likely being driven by a lack of other viable options to reach destinations, including by public transport.

In particular, our Community Travel Survey from 2022 highlighted two key barriers to

catching public transport for our community, including:

- 33% of respondents said that travelling by public transport takes them too long to get to their desired destination
- 31% of respondents were frustrated with getting on and off multiple routes to reach their desired destination

When asked what would improve their experience of catching the train or bus, greater frequency, regularity and directness of services, particularly bus services, was the most common response from respondents, followed by upgrades to shelters and stops through lighting, cleanliness, signposting and security.

Antisocial behaviour and harassment on public transport services contributed to a lack of feeling safe, particularly for women. Overall, 12% of respondents indicated that they didn't feel safe or confident when catching public transport.

Based on the latest travel survey by TfNSW, average bus travel times within the Campbelltown LGA were almost double that of driving (bus averaged 3 min 15 sec per km, driver vehicle 1 min 43 secs per km). This issue continues to drive demand for car ownership, and therefore car dependency, increasing congestion, impacting the performance of our road network, in a self-perpetuating cycle. This unhealthy cycle requires a circuit-breaker commitment from government to enhance the public transport services and improve the infrastructure, to make public transport attractive to our residents.

Campbelltown Station serves as a major interchange for buses and coaches in the Macarthur region, with bus services generally focused on moving people to and from the interchange. These bus services branch out into surrounding residential suburbs, some of which do not have rail access, such as Camden and Narellan to the north-west. There are few bus connections from residential areas, such as Narellan and Camden, to local centres of employment, including industrial precincts. In particular, there is a deficiency of bus services from Campbelltown Station to nearby Strategic Centres in the South West Growth Area to entice bus patronage for residents accessing rail stations in Campbelltown.

Bus frequency on some services is low, with some areas serviced less than four times an hour during peak periods. Outside of peak periods, this may decrease to once every 30 minutes.

In addition to low frequency, there is a lack of direct bus routes from residential areas to key destinations, including rail stations. Instead, routes meander through suburban areas. This increases travel time and reduces the convenience of bus services as a viable means of reaching rail stations by bus. This means that bus services are uncompetitive when compared with travel by private vehicle to reach rail stations, creating a high demand for commuter car parking. This, in turn, sterilises high value land surrounding rail stations that could otherwise be used for employment uses or to increase housing supply.

Currently, 67% of commuters that park at Campbelltown's railway stations are from outside the Campbelltown Local Government Area; mainly from Wollondilly and Camden. This means that Campbelltown City Council's strategic landholdings in prime locations within the city centre are being sterilised by commuters from out of area.

Communities moving into growth areas south of Campbelltown are relying on infrequent and unreliable diesel train services to stations such as Douglas Park in the Wollondilly Local Government Area. Due to the unreliability of these services, residents tend to drive to

Campbelltown's commuter carparks to catch more reliable services on the Sydney Trains network.

Despite Campbelltown Local Government Area being serviced by seven electrified railway stations, these services are over capacity. The latest peak utilisation data (excluding COVID lockdown periods) shows trains on the T8 Airport line operated at 148% capacity during the morning peak.

Without significant, and immediate infrastructure investment, our community will not be able to access the new Western Sydney International Airport via public transport. Metro rail infrastructure in the form of North South Rail from Western Sydney International Airport to Campbelltown-Macarthur was committed for investigation in 2018. There has been no commitment to delivery of this vital infrastructure. Similarly, the relatively short Metro connection from Glenfield to Western Sydney International Airport has not been committed for delivery. This connection would enable connection from Western Sydney International Airport to the existing Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport, and a direct connection to Sydney CBD.

Rapid Bus services, promised by both the former Liberal Government, and the current Labor Government, to Western Sydney International Airport from Campbelltown, have not been delivered. There is not sufficient bus lanes or other bus-prioritisation infrastructure to enable a rapid service. If the bus service from Campbelltown to Western Sydney International Airport is not competitive with car travel, our residents will either continue to drive to access the airport, or not access the airport at all.

Services from Campbelltown to Parramatta are not direct. This historical connection now requires train passengers to change trains at Glenfield, often waiting half an hour, or more, for a connecting service due to a timetabling misalignment.

Campbelltown is currently connected to Canberra via a diesel rail service. A faster rail connection from Sydney to Canberra, via Campbelltown as a first stage, would be a social and economic game-changer for the communities between Campbelltown and Canberra, including Goulburn and the Southern Highlands. It has been acknowledged that:

- The benefits of the Southern Inland Corridor (from Canberra to Sydney via Southern Highlands) have been established. The 2011 study commissioned by the Australian Government in 2011 found the Southern Inland Corridor to be the best performing corridor on a standalone basis, with this line preferred for the first stage of development. Developing the Sydney to Canberra via the Hume Highway Corridor was found to generate the most user benefits after Sydney to Melbourne and Sydney to Brisbane. On a per km basis, the cost of developing the line was estimated to be half the cost of the Sydney to Newcastle line and 16 per cent less than the cost of developing the Sydney to Canberra line via Wollongong and the Southern Highlands.
- The existing rail line south of Macarthur is constrained and will not cope with future growth. The current rail service between Sydney and Canberra makes nine stops and takes over four hours, making it the least time efficient and least popular transport option. The regional passenger services are heavily constrained by rail freight and alignment issues.
- The Southern Inland Corridor, with an interchange at Campbelltown would benefit the most residents and employed residents of any of the four corridors investigated.
- Fast rail can build on investment already planned for the Macarthur Region to allow greater accessibility to Western Sydney Airport for the Regional South West residents.
- Staged delivery of the Southern Inland Corridor would deliver benefits similar to the progressive roll out of faster rail in Greater London.

(b) Current and anticipated levels of demand for public transport services and the public transport requirements to meet this demand

Campbelltown City Centre is identified as the metropolitan cluster for the Macarthur region, one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. As at the 2021 census the Macarthur region was home to 351,816 people. Over the next 20 years the region is anticipated to grow to between 517,000 and 615,000 residents.

Currently across the Campbelltown Local Government Area around 1,200 people use a bus as their primary method of transport to work, equating to around 0.9% of the employed population. Based on the Department of Planning's most recent population projections, the number of working aged residents is forecast to increase by 88.5% by 2041. Assuming no changes in employment participation or travel to work method, the number of residents using a bus to commute to work will increase by 1,030 people. Of course, with increasing density within the region, it is likely that public transport use will increase to be more aligned with broader Greater Sydney. As such, these estimates are considered to be conservative estimate of future bus users.

Without provisions for future public transport networks and assuming a constant rate of employment participation it is estimated the number of residents within the Macarthur regions using a vehicle to get to work will increase by 77,000 persons. Our road network is insufficient to support that level of traffic generation. Therefore, public transport services require significant enhancement.

(c) Changing nature of public transport needs due to shifting demographics, new suburbs, planned infrastructure and increased density

Campbelltown is committed to delivering a true Metropolitan Centre for Macarthur; with high amenity, job density and transport access. This means, that over time we will need to reclaim space in the Metropolitan Centre from cars and convert it to either public space or to productive land uses. Real CBDs all over the world work by concentrating people, jobs and activities at high densities. This is only possible if more people are getting in and out without a car. With this in mind, we are considering:

- Investigating a mode share target for the City Centre and would welcome the opportunity to undertake this as a joint project with Transport for NSW
- the role of streets in the Metropolitan Centre, to ensure traffic flows *around* the City Centre, rather than *through* the City Centre, to support the densification and place function of the Metropolitan Centre. This would require, however, new roads to be delivered south of the City Centre including Spring Farm Parkway, Outer Sydney Orbital Stage 2, Greater Macarthur Transit Corridor, and legislative change to Campbelltown's Local Environment Plan.

We are committed to improving opportunities for active transport in the City Centre, considering that 42% of all trips with an origin and destination within the City Centre are three kilometres or less.

Campbelltown City Council owns 56,300sqm of land in the Campbelltown City Centre that are currently used for car parking. Within our Local Government Area, we have 100 full sized football fields worth of public car parks. With 67% of carparking within our city is not taken up by Campbelltown residents, this is an extraordinary amount of public land, that could be used in more productive ways to benefit the ratepayers of Campbelltown.

Consistent with modern greenfield development patterns, we are noticing smaller lot sizes, relying on street parking, increased street occupancy and narrower streets. For these greenfield developments, trunk public transport infrastructure, delivered early, is required to attempt to establish patterns of behaviour for residents. For example, greenfield development south of Macarthur on the eastern side of the M31 (Gilead and Appin) will potentially occur over decades. The Greater Macarthur Transit Corridor that is planned to support circa 20,000 dwellings in this area, to be delivered as development occurs, will not be completed until the last land release. This could, in turn, reinforce car dependency for developments reliant on Appin Road, without a viable route for public transit. If this transit corridor was delivered by NSW Government, prior to the development, with contributions claimed retrospectively, this would enable the corridor to be:

- centrally located in the corridor,
- delivered early to service the growth,
- delivered in a continuous length (with no missing links)
- delivered consistently across development/council borders.

This corridor, supplemented with strong east/west connections in the south of Greater Macarthur Growth Area have the potential to:

- significantly reduce volumes of traffic along Menangle Road to/from the Campbelltown direction, that are either coming from the M31 from the south, or are heading to the M31 to go to the south
- positively affect capacity and extend the expected life of Menangle Road, Gilchrist Drive and Narellan Road through the reduction of traffic on those roads.
- reduce congestion within the Macarthur Square / Hospital precinct which is already at capacity in peak periods
- reduce through-traffic in the Campbelltown City Centre
- reduce heavier southern focused building and construction traffic involved with not only the development of Menangle Park, but also the Glenlee employment lands, having to travel along Menangle Road, Gilchrist Drive and Narellan Road
- provide direct access and lower transport rates to waste services moving to/from Jack's Gully and the south, in return reducing upward waste charge pressures for the Macarthur area lower
- reduce the level of heavier building and construction vehicles and volumes moving between the major southern development areas of Menangle Park and Wilton, having to use Menangle Road, Gilchrist Drive, Narellan Road
- provide a southern access to the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan.

These east/west connections include the entire Spring Farm Parkway, Appin Road to Menangle Road connection, and early delivery of the Outer Sydney Orbital Stage 2 from Appin Road to the M31.

(d) Social, economic and planning impacts of vehicle dependency and poorly integrated public transport

As stated above, Campbelltown City Council provides 56,300sqm of land in the Campbelltown City Centre for car parking. These publicly-owned land parcels are some of the most significant land holdings within the city centre. Improved public transport and a reduction on car dependency could provide significant uplift within Campbelltown and

unlock the city centre's potential as the metropolitan cluster for Macarthur. For example, the current provision of car parks within the city centre could accommodate 180,000sqm of commercial floor space and employ 8,700 workers, highlighting the significant opportunity cost of city centre car parking.

The lack of investment in transport infrastructure and services in Campbelltown continues to heighten congestion risk, sterilise otherwise productive land, limit liveability and environmental amenities, and condemns our residents to losing time in car transit.

Limited integrated public transport, car dependency and limited access to local job opportunities may have a direct correlation with Campbelltown's increased chronic health issues.

As concluded by Lancet, Giles-Corti and others in their 2016 article on City Planning and Population Health:

"Transport is a determinant of health that contributes to the existence, persistence, and (sometimes widening of) health inequities within and between cities. In cities around the world, the mobility benefits afforded by private and public motorised travel are less accessible to the poor and disadvantaged (including elderly, disabled, and young people) who are also more likely to experience the externalised costs of motor vehicle dependency (e.g. exposure to noise, pollution, and road trauma). Urban and transport planning must therefore prioritise policies, infrastructure, and services that favour the most socioeconomically disadvantaged populations."

Campbelltown is home to these "most socioeconomically disadvantaged populations." According to the most recent SEIFA index of socio economic advantage, a number of suburbs within Campbelltown have the lowest decile of advantage.

The Evidence Check Review brokered by the Sax Institute for the NSW Ministry of Health in March 2012 found "a significant proportion of public transport users (30%) met all their recommended levels of physical activity just from their transport walking, and public transport users were 3.5 times more likely to be sufficiently active compared with car drivers... Greater use of public transport was associated with better access or proximity to transport modes."

Campbelltown residents unfortunately suffer a higher instance of the following chronic health conditions:

- 70.1% of adult residents are categorised as overweight or obese
- 7.7% of residents suffer from mental health conditions
- 6.6% of residents live with diabetes
- 3.7% of residents live with heart diseases

Furthermore, transport systems that promote public transport use, walking, cycling and other healthy activities, in turn reduce urban air pollution and emissions, leading to a healthier environment for its residents.

In a report commissioned by Central Coast Council (an area with demographics that may be regarded as similar to Campbelltown), Urbis found that long commute times impact stress responses within families with increasing risk of divorce and prevalence of family violence. The Macarthur region unfortunately displays a prevalence of domestic and family violence which could be linked to these stressors.

The ramifications of heightened private vehicle usage have a particularly pronounced effect on councils such as Campbelltown, in contrast to other Local Government Areas that enjoy robust public transport infrastructure and services. Campbelltown Council allocates a recurrent budget of circa \$27 million per annum for road maintenance, a significantly larger sum compared to councils with comparable road network sizes but better public transport provisions.

A recent anecdote shared with Campbelltown City Council in the 2022 Travel Survey stated:

"I have found bus connections unreliable in the past. Trains are usually OK but they don't connect with bus services very well. The train pulls into Campbelltown station as the bus pulls out. I will take a cab to and from the station rather than waiting for a bus that may not come or be on time." Sigrid (65-74), resident of Bradbury

(e) Affordability compared with other areas of Greater Sydney and New South Wales and relative to means

The Australian Automobile Association's transport affordability index suggests typical annual vehicle costs in Sydney amount to approximately \$25,600 per annum, with fuel approximately 20% and tolls approximately 19% of that cost. These cost impacts will disproportionately fall on households with more vehicles, longer trips, or both.

With median household incomes within Campbelltown LGA at 22.2% lower than Greater Sydney, and more vehicles per household, our residents feel the pressure of transport affordability more than other areas in Greater Sydney.

(f) Role of public transport and future transport technologies to reduce car dependency in Western Sydney, including barriers to improving public transport services

Visibility of on-time connections is the best form of marketing to induce people to take up public transport. Currently, in Campbelltown, bus services are not generally understood by members of our community as services are not direct, predictable, frequent, reliable or legible. There is great opportunity for NSW Government to partner with the private sector to develop technology applications, similar to what has been delivered with the train network, to make bus locations and routes visible to patrons. Other cities around the world, e.g. Seoul have delivered very integrated mobile phone apps that are simple to use and identify live location and routes of buses in a colour-coded network. This would enable patrons to have confidence with connections to other services e.g. bus to train.

The visibility of convenience is also important. If a driver in a car sees a bus service moving along a dedicated bus lane, faster than the congested traffic, they may consider buses an attractive option. In order for buses to appeal to drivers, however, they must have priority at traffic signals (through bus hops etc.), have dedicated lanes, and limited stopping patterns to enable speed of travel.

Generational change is a significant opportunity for public transport take up. Young people are more generally more sustainably-conscious, mobile and willing to take public transport if a safe, convenient and legible service is presented to them. Establishing sustainable travel patterns of behaviour of school-aged people present an opportunity for generational change.

Establishing co-working hubs, or locating government jobs in metropolitan centres in Western Sydney will also reduce impact on the public transport system. Providing satellite

co-working hubs to reduce impact on the public transport. The number of employed residents working from home increased from 2.3% in 2016 to 25.7% in 2021. Despite the last Census being undertaken during the height of the COVID pandemic and associated lockdowns, which likely inflated the working from home statistics, working from home and hybrid work schedules continue to be common workplace practice.

(g) Role of the public and private sector, including local government and the use of innovative funding models, such as transit oriented development and value capture mechanisms, in public transport provision

The opportunity of transit oriented development is ripe in Campbelltown. Consistent with the NSW Government's Glenfield to Macarthur Corridor Strategy (2016), Campbelltown can support further density of living and jobs.

Transit oriented development above a revitalised Campbelltown Station Interchange, would provide enhanced access across the railway corridor and an opportunity for housing and other integrated uses. This opportunity is adjacent to the Community and Justice Precinct and would align with the future plans for the precinct.

There is also an opportunity for government to consider broader arrangements at satellite centres throughout neighbouring Local Government Areas, where developers could incorporate a rapid bus interchange within their development with services direct to Campbelltown station. This service could be provided by the developers, enticing commuters to visit the satellite commercial centre as part of their daily commute. This solution would alleviate the need for further commuter carparking at train stations, and enhance the economic activity at local commercial centres.

(h) staffing and future workforce planning, taking into account predicted service demand based on predicted population growth in Western Sydney

Campbelltown hosts 58,792 local jobs (Profile.id) with 80,991 employed residents (at 2022). The jobs to residents ratio for Campbelltown in 2021/22 was 0.73, meaning that there were less jobs than resident workers. This is particularly the case for 'higher order' jobs, e.g. with a job to workers ratio in the financial and insurance services sector of 0.20. This means that a large portion of workers in Campbelltown must leave the area each day to access work. This is particularly so for 'higher-order' jobs.

Campbelltown City Council has been advocating to NSW Government to support the relocation of Government Agency jobs into our city centre to provide local employment opportunities for our residents. We are also calling on the NSW Government to invest in the development of the Community and Justice Precinct in Campbelltown which will provide potential job opportunities, particularly in the sectors with job deficits. The Community and Justice Precinct also has the opportunity to support community members access vital services within their closest Metropolitan Centre without having to travel long distances.

Conclusion

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to inform their consideration of the current and future transport needs of Western Sydney.

We look forward to working with the NSW Government and its agencies to enhance Western Sydney's transport infrastructure and services, and would be pleased to assist the Inquiry.

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

Yours sincerely,

Lindy Deitz
General Manager