

Submission  
No 25

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

**Organisation:** Business Council of Australia

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Inquiry into Current and future public transport needs in Western Sydney  
Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and the Arts  
Legislative Council  
Parliament of New South Wales

To Honourable Members, Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport and the Arts:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the important issue of public transport provision for Western Sydney. The BCA represents Australia's leading employers from across the economy, including many with both workplaces and staff in Western Sydney.

### **Supporting growing Western Sydney**

In August the BCA released our Seize the Moment report, in which we highlighted the importance of funding infrastructure for areas experiencing the most rapid population growth. There must be a focus on projects that facilitate new housing in areas with strong demand, including enhancing local and regional connectivity so residents have access to quality transport. Infrastructure must also be productivity enhancing, supported by quality business case work and economic benefit cost ratio evaluations above one.

Population projections from the NSW Department of Planning show that many Western Sydney local government areas, including Camden, Parramatta, Liverpool, Blacktown, Wollondilly, Campbelltown, and The Hills will grow faster than the overall growth rate of the state. These are areas where both major greenfield as well as infill development is occurring, together with the new Western Sydney Airport and Bradfield Aerotropolis. Meanwhile, work from the Greater Cities Commission shows a 10+ per cent gap in the number of homes able to access a strategic centre within 30 minutes by public transport in the Western Parkland City compared to the Central River City or Eastern Harbour City.

### **Projects underway**

The three new Metro rail lines currently under construction – to Bankstown, to Westmead, and between St Marys and the aerotropolis via the new airport, are all critical parts of a new high capacity, high frequency public transport backbone for Western Sydney. The BCA welcomes the government's commitment to proceed with the conversion of the Bankstown line to high-frequency Metro operation. It is important that the other two lines already under construction are followed through to completion. This is essential both from a connectivity perspective, for private sector confidence in NSW's long term infrastructure commitments, and for improving productivity outcomes in NSW. Delivery packages for these lines have been tendered and contracted, with major construction

already commenced. Retreating from them at this stage will have significant impact on business confidence when engaging with NSW government projects and commitments going forward. As these projects come online, bus and Sydney Trains services should be reconfigured to make best use of connections and new capacity these new assets unlock.

### **Future planning**

Planning must continue for other short-, medium-, and long-term improvements to the transport network in Western Sydney. While public transport use in Western Sydney (and across greater Sydney) fell significantly during the pandemic, Opal data shows that it is rapidly again growing, and will soon reach and then exceed pre-pandemic levels.

The government must be ready to support future growth, and the BCA strongly believes that major infrastructure investments should be based on strategic planning and proper business case processes. These take time to get right, and even longer to deliver.

Transport for NSW and the Western City Parkland Authority both have undertaken strategic planning to inform long term transport needs in Western Sydney. This work should be reviewed and updated to ensure there are consistent long term strategic plans underpinning future decisions. This includes rail service improvements on the Sydney Trains network, future Metro rail extensions, light rail extensions, and new express bus services supporting both connectivity within Western Sydney, to the new Aerotropolis and Airport, and for journeys into and out of Western Sydney.

Business case work should then follow to confirm the best approaches and need for projects. The government should be preparing projects for the future pipeline so that projects are in a good state to proceed when timing is most appropriate.

The BCA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to the inquiry, and we hope the above comments prove useful for the committee's deliberations.

Yours sincerely

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