

Western Sydney Transport

All Aboard!



June 2009

Getting Involved in Transport Issues in Western Sydney
and

Insert: A Beginner's Guide to Transport Advocacy in Western Sydney

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1. Introduction

This guide, 'All Aboard! Getting Involved in Transport Issues in Western Sydney' and 'A Beginner's Guide to Transport Advocacy in Western Sydney' has been compiled by Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) to inform and educate the community about Western Sydney transport issues.

WSCF is the Western Sydney regional peak organisation providing regional leadership, facilitating collaborative action and developing resources to enable community organisations effectively address issues relating to social justice and social inclusion. The overall vision of the 'WSCF Transport Project' is to work towards reducing transport disadvantage in Western Sydney.

The aim of this paper is to

- ◆ Raise community awareness on current transport disadvantage in Western Sydney
- ◆ Identify key issues faced by the community
- ◆ Give basic background information on transport planning and infrastructure in Western Sydney
- ◆ Provide an opportunities to work with the WSCF Transport Project

Transport is the means of most people getting access to education, employment, health services, shopping and recreation. Lack of transport options is a major cause of social exclusion.

WSCF Transport Project workers and staff at WSCF consult with over 200 networks and inter-agencies across Western Sydney over the year. The consistent message we receive is that public transport is inadequate and that urgent work is needed to improve connections in Western Sydney.

We believe that there is an obligation on policy makers to provide transport services that the community need and have requested for many years. Failure to invest significantly will have dire consequences, social, economic and environmental. Outlined in this position paper is our blueprint of a transport policy which contributes to the wellbeing of people and enhancement of liveability in Western Sydney. We hope that this document is useful in assisting your understanding of some of the challenges that Western Sydney and its transport system are facing.

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2. How Can the Community Make a Difference?

If you want to advocate for better public transport, please support the WSCF Transport Project. Your support can include attending transport forums, hosting community education campaigns or informing us of your transport issues

Several focus areas for the WSCF Transport Project are:

1. **Working with communities** – e.g. Bus reform process & advocating for improved bus services that meet the needs of the community and reduce transport disadvantage from occurring.
2. **Planning and research** - on transport disadvantaged people and areas.
3. **Supporting public transport users** - assisting with the creation of a voice for people in Western Sydney on transport issues.



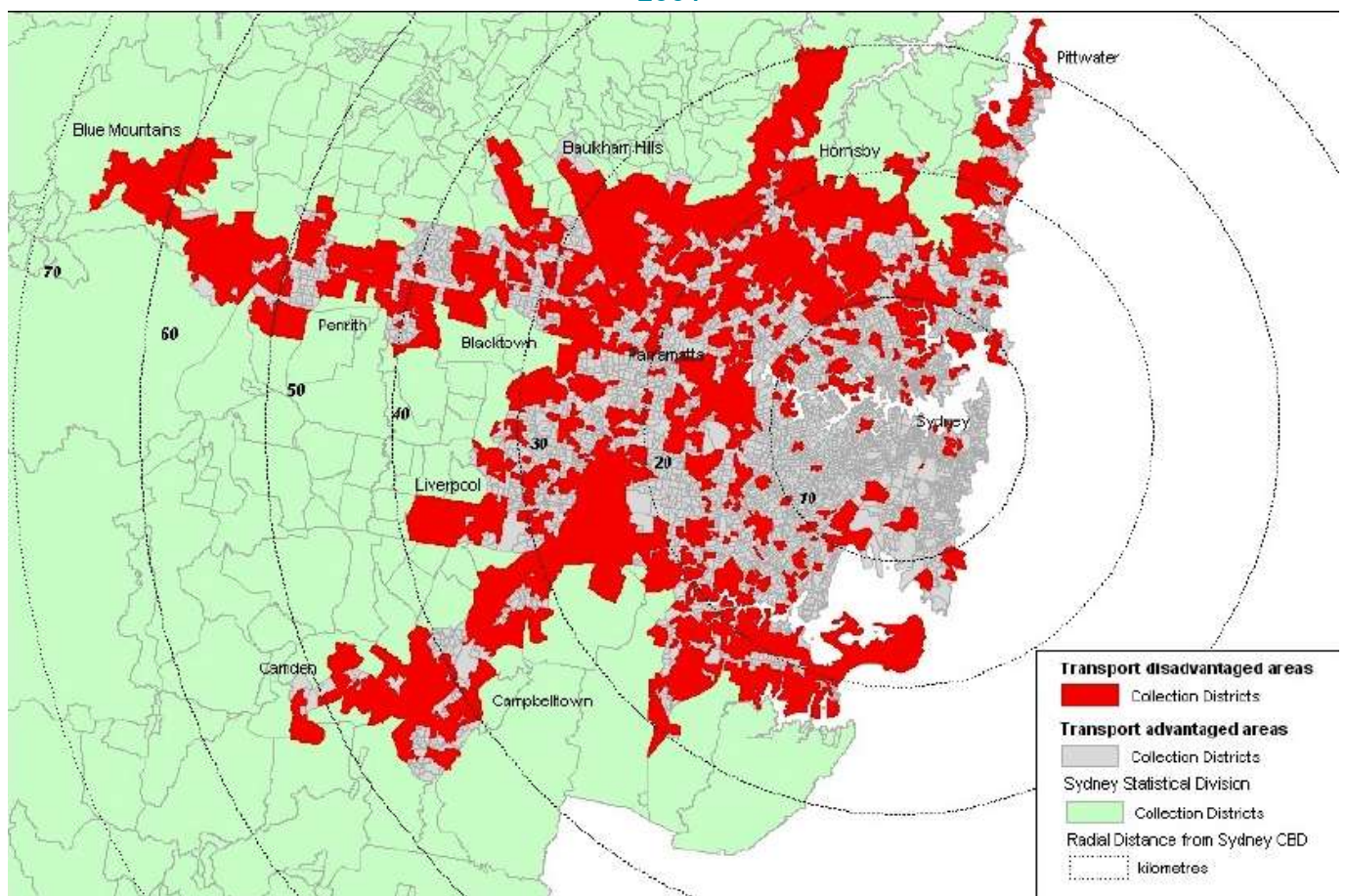
3. Transport Disadvantage in Western Sydney

The ability to obtain transport is an access and equity issue and has a direct impact on the community's health and well being. There is a high level of transport disadvantage in Western Sydney, which is identified by the work of Anne Hurni and WSCF¹. Public transport enables participation in society through health care, employment, recreation and socialising which are basic human needs and rights.

Transport disadvantage and transport poverty occur when a person has little or no access to transport and a household needs to spend an unreasonable proportion of their income on transport costs. These costs include the necessity of maintaining and using multiple cars or reliance on taxis for accessing health, education, employment and food services.

“One of the key social issues faced in the region is transport and accessibility. Reliance on the private car is very widespread due to limited choice for intra- regional travel and the lack of key public transport linkages to employment opportunities, facilities and services. This has the most profound impact on those households with no, or one car, and on older people, young people and single mothers in particular – who can spend the whole day ferrying people around between school, the local doctor, the shops, the place of employment and so on. Average travel times for commuting trips by both car and public transport for Greater Western Sydney residents are longer than for the rest of Sydney”²

Figure 1: Distribution of transport disadvantaged Census collection districts Sydney urban 2001



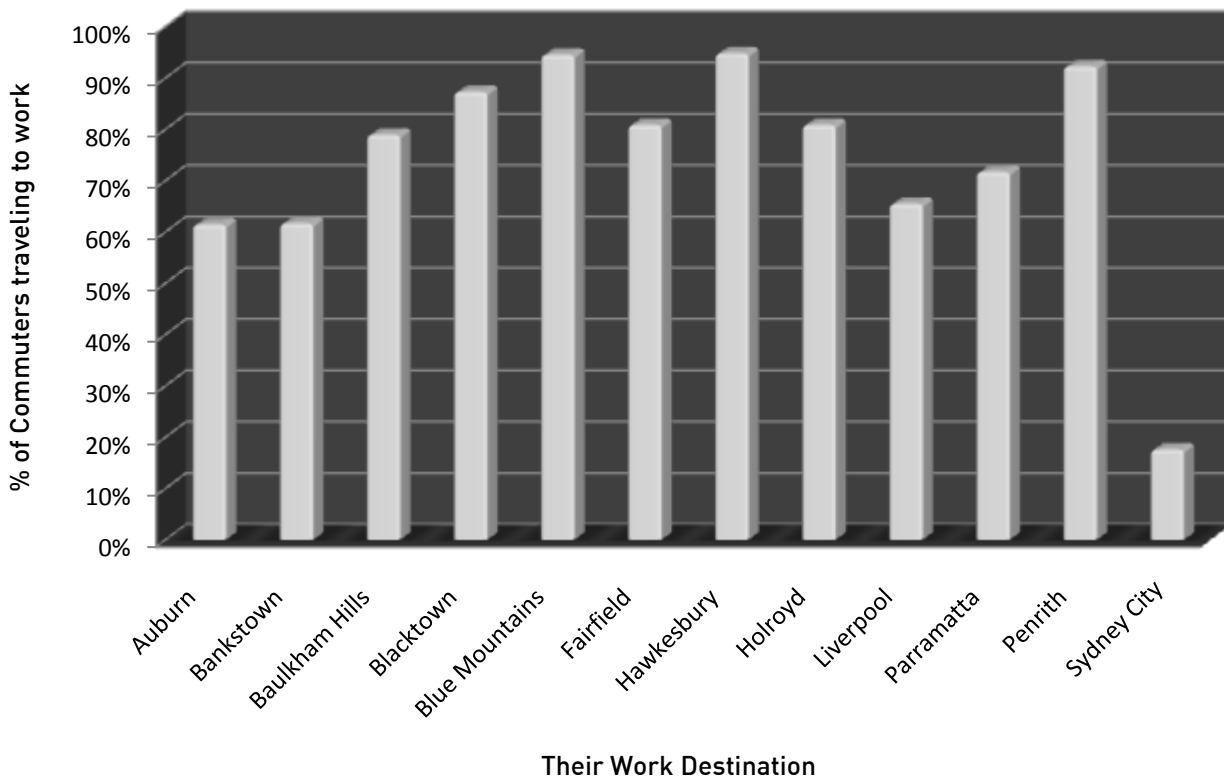
Source: Transport and Population Data Centre (“Transport & Disadvantage in Western Sydney” Report)

Western Sydney has 1.85 million people living in 14 local government areas. By 2026, it is estimated that there will be 2.3 million people living in the region. The Gross Regional Product (GRP) of the Greater Western Sydney region was estimated at \$71.5 billion in 2004-05³. Within the Western Sydney region, there are not many options for travel within the South West, West and North West Sydney areas.

The need for commuters to use private vehicles for travel purposes within the region itself is evidence of this:

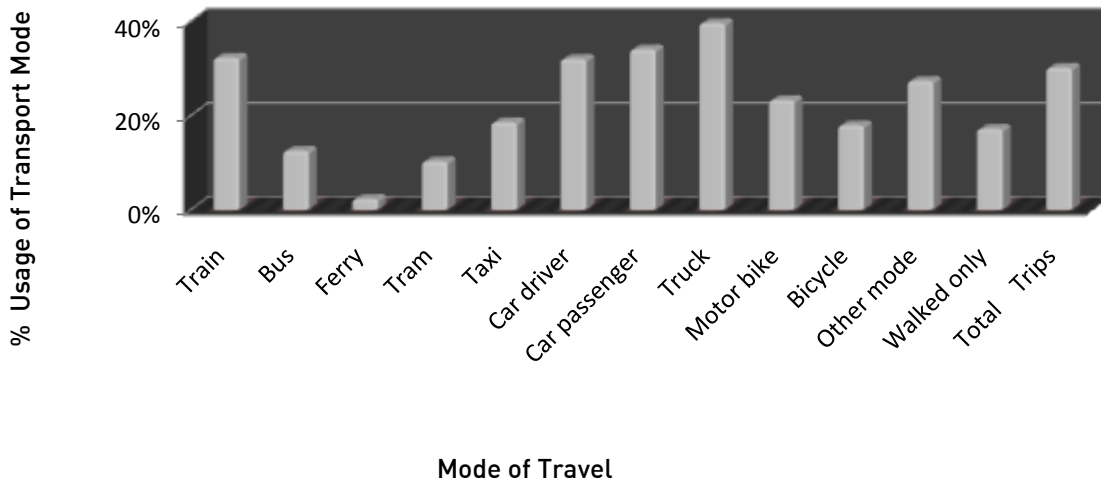
“Travel patterns evident from the Journey to Work data from the 2001 Census and the Sydney Household Travel Survey show that the vast majority of trips for both work (71%) and other purposes (90%) by Western Sydney residents are within the region itself (PPM, 2004). Only 7% of workers from Western Sydney travelled to the Sydney CBD.”⁴

Western Sydney Commuters by Work LGA



The 2006 Census data indicate that approximately 94% of Blue Mountains Residents, 92% Hawkesbury residents and 87% of Blacktown residents work within the Western Sydney region, however, on average, 13% of Western Sydney dwellers travel to Sydney SD for work purposes and 17% of Sydney SD residents travel to Western Sydney for work purposes.

Travel to Work by Mode of Transport



Since the 1970's, over 100kms of motorways have been constructed to serve Western Sydney. This included the M7 Orbital which added 40kms of highway and largely completes the motorway network. In the period since the 1930's, the rail network in Western Sydney has had less than 15kms of railway network added. Two bus transit ways have been constructed⁵. Even within such new developments, poor transport planning is evident. Most of the transport planning concentrate on facilitating commuters to travel to the Sydney CBD with an assumption that most Western Sydney dwellers work and travel daily to Sydney CBD rather than regional cities such as Parramatta, Penrith, Campbelltown, Liverpool, Castle Hill and Bankstown. However, according to statistics, 6.5 million trips are taken each weekday across Western Sydney, with each person averaging 3.6 trips per day on a weekday and 3.2 trips on the weekend⁶.

People who don't work or travel to the Sydney CBD has little option but to drive or face inflexible and/or infrequent services. Peak services to the CBD are at breaking point⁷, and there are clear reasons to promote transport policy to prioritise cross-regional transport connectivity.

The 2006 census data also indicate that the majority of trips taken by Western Sydney commuters are in private vehicles with 32% as car drivers and 34% as car passengers⁸.

*"The high usage of cars and transport deficit is most noticeable in areas where there is limited access to rail, in the northwest LGAs of Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury, and in Camden and Wollondilly in the Southwest. In these LGAs there are higher proportions of dwellings with two or more cars (more than 60% of dwellings), lower proportions of dwellings with no vehicles (fewer than 5% of dwellings) and higher rates of journey to work by car (around 60% of people drive to work) compared to Sydney averages. The costs to households of owning cars are considerable and it has been estimated that a household could save \$750,000 over a lifetime if a second car could be avoided (Newman, 2003.)"*⁹

4. How Does Transport Disadvantage Impact on Us?

While the above statistics are only indicative of the Western Sydney residents travel to work purposes, it must be noted that 75% of trips in Western Sydney occur for non-work related purposes. Policy makers however must base the policy and transport planning decisions on actual everyday travel patterns e.g. the Transport Data Centre's *Household Travel Survey* rather than just focusing on the *Travel to work* census data.

People travel in Western Sydney for a variety of reasons. They often travel for education and childcare purposes, shopping, personal business, and/or social recreational purposes. What makes one person's travel more important than another's? The travel data also indicates that 20% of travel occurs solely for the purpose of driving people around. This could indicate significant amounts of time wasted by one family member acting as a driver, as well as contributing to traffic congestion in the peak periods.

Reduced transport options impact on people's access to their community as indicated by families that don't have "mum's taxi", i.e. access to a vehicle or driver. Given the complex nature of how poor transport planning impacts upon the community, we have separated the impacts into several areas below.

4.1 ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility refers to a person's ability to reach goods, services and activities, which is the ultimate goal of most transport activity. Many factors affect accessibility, including a person's mobility (physical movement), the quality and affordability of transport options, transport system connectivity, mobility substitutes, and land use patterns¹⁰.

Accessible transport is the keystone that facilitates a person's participation in their community, society and also impacts collectively on our community wellbeing. Groups who are vulnerable and affected greatly by lack of transport include the unemployed, older people, young people, single parents, migrants including refugees, the Indigenous community, people on low incomes, and persons with disabilities¹¹.

Accessible transport enables people to participate in:

- ◆ Social and community events
- ◆ Educational opportunities
- ◆ Community life
- ◆ Health appointments
- ◆ Work and employment related opportunities
- ◆ Shopping and purchasing of goods and services

Case Study 1:

An elderly gentleman (approx 89yrs old) living on the outskirts of Blacktown attended a public forum regarding proposed change in the local bus services. He had difficulty in walking more than 50 metres and used a walking stick. He stated that the proposed bus routes would mean that he will have to walk further to the bus stop and will have to catch three buses to be able to get to Blacktown Hospital for medical treatment. The previous journey in one bus took 30 minutes. It will now take longer. He was very upset and said that he didn't have the energy to do this 3 times a week as he visited the hospital regularly for treatment.

Positive benefits of people accessing public transport are:

- ◆ Improved health outcomes through “active living”
- ◆ Benefits for the environment
- ◆ Less congestion
- ◆ Less road accidents and associated trauma
- ◆ Volunteering
- ◆ Developing rich social capital between people

4.2 MOBILITY

Mobility of transport refers to the ability of all people to be able to use the transport infrastructure that is provided. The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* requires that the delivery of services should provide equitable access for those with a disability. The practical applications of the requirements of the Act are outlined in the Transport Standards. However, there are considerable deficiencies within the current transport provision that to date marginalises people with disability and frail aged as well as young mothers.

For example, while significant progress has been made with the purchase of low floor buses, many more are needed. They also support people using prams, trolleys and those with limited mobility. The groups who are more likely to be transport disadvantaged because they are more likely to be on low incomes and do not have a motor vehicle, as well as have at least one other mobility constraint include:

- ◆ People with a physical disability
- ◆ Older women living alone
- ◆ Sole parents with young children
- ◆ Young unemployed people
- ◆ Indigenous people and newly arrived humanitarian entrants

Case Study 2:

Rail overpasses and lifts that access overpasses often enable community access from one part of the suburb to the other. In 2007, the Lidcombe train station lift was rendered inoperable due to a fire from a nearby shop. The impact on the less mobile resulted in a severed suburb. For several months less mobile people from the local community were not able to access shops and services such as medical appointments on the other side of the railway station.

Only, “approximately 1669 of the 4011 buses in the Sydney and Outer Metropolitan Areas (41.6%) are currently accessible (approximately 47% Sydney Metro and 24% Outer Metropolitan areas). 30% of bus services in both the Sydney Metropolitan and Outer Metropolitan areas were timetabled as accessible as at 30 June 2008. It is not possible to more accurately estimate this percentage as a small minority of bus operators have not been able to provide accurate reports to the Ministry on how many of their accessible services are timetabled.”¹²

Another strategy used by CityRail to increase the accessibility of its train stations for passengers with limited mobility is the Easy Access program. The program facilitates the installation of lifts on stations. We believe that it is important that ramps are left intact wherever possible as lifts can go out of service for a prolonged period.

Increased accessibility for railway passenger with a disability also means the presence of a staff member who will assist when boarding a train at all times. Recently, there have been discussions about reducing station staff at CityRail stations¹³. We believe that station staff has an important role to play. These roles are assisting customers with enquiries and unlocking toilets, assisting people with limited mobility and disabilities and the comfort of knowing that staff are present if there is an emergency.

4.3 SUSTAINABILITY

As vehicle emissions affect air quality and increase the level of greenhouse gases transport systems (modes, networks and service levels) are internationally recognised as being key drivers of sustainable cities with minimised air pollution through travel and other activity. Our current transport system is not sustainable for Western Sydney residents as it is designed to take people to the Sydney CBD, with limited availability of public transport intra-regionally, where most people actually travel. This has forced increased car usage within Western Sydney suburbs. WSROC's Agenda for Sustainability and Wellbeing in Western Sydney recommends that infrastructure is invested to develop sustainable transport options which will influence how far people will be comfortable to walk or cycle. This will be influenced by urban planning incorporating vehicle congestion speed and road design¹⁴. Generally, it is more sustainable for people to work close to where they live. As travel times are reduced, people can increase their participation in their local community and spend more time with family. Regional and sub-regional centres will be a focus of employment and provide increased opportunities for better work-life balance due to the proximity of home to work.

4.4 SOCIAL INCLUSION

Transport disadvantage increases social exclusion of the community in Western Sydney by reducing community ability to participate in social activity. People need to travel for a variety of reasons. Those who are socially isolated are more likely to have poorer health prospects, than those who are not¹⁵. Government welfare programs are often reliant upon frequent and reliable public transport, for example, job seekers must participate in employment activities such as attending interviews and job seeking programs and are required to travel for a maximum of 90 minutes. Infrequent and limited transport options coupled with long travel distances are barriers to employment and study opportunities. Without flexible transport, options programs that are designed to promote participation and social inclusion, will not enable people to participate more fully in society.

Case Study 3:

Sustainability and reducing Vehicle Kilometers Travelled (VKT) are important considerations in planning sustainable transport. Whilst there is a T-Way service available to travel to Blacktown, there are several sections on the T-Way that do not have bus priority resulting in delays as the buses are held up at traffic lights. This poor policy encourages people to drive rather than catch the bus because that would be faster.

Case Study 4:

A young mother in Merrylands who has a 6 month old baby and 1.5 year old baby found herself unable to utilise public transport as she could not carry two babies and manage with a pram on the bus. She could not attend mothers groups or any other social activities. She felt extremely isolated being by herself which made her very vulnerable to depression. Mothers with young children should have access to community transport facilities similar to the frail aged people (HACC).

4.5 VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Access to transport affects affordability of living in Western Sydney. 11% of household had no access to a car and are entirely dependant on public transport systems.¹⁶ In areas where transport corridors and linkages are poor, this has a negative impact on quality of life (Case Study 5)

On average each household in Western Sydney owns 1.7 cars with 35% owning two cars. Owning one car costs the average household about 16% of its total budget, the same amount it spends on food. Increased petrol costs have a particularly strong impact in Western Sydney where residents are highly dependent on the private vehicle due to a lack of access to frequent public transport service. This impacts more heavily on low income households. People of Western Sydney, faced with less public transport choices and more dispersed services, employment centres and facilities, travel twice as far to carry out nearly the same number of trips as those living in Inner and Eastern Sydney

Each oil price increase will cause people living in transport disadvantaged areas to re-assess the cost of their housing and transport. This may have dire consequences for people in Western Sydney, if no other alternatives are provided.

WSCF has concerns about the long-term vulnerabilities built into the way in which parts of the Western Sydney growth centre areas are being developed. Dodson and Sipe, believe that this style of development, focused around the use of private transport and located at a distance from urban hubs, increases the vulnerability of the residents to mortgage and oil vulnerability¹⁷.

Case Study 5:

The NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Transport needs of North Western Sydney found that:

“Miss Claire Thompson, a local resident advised the committee that she suffers daily as a result of poor public transport. Four hour commutes are not uncommon which results in a terrible work/life balance’ and that she will have a ‘nervous breakdown from all the travel’ (p.15)

5. Transport Available in Western Sydney

5.1 ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Active Transport is utilising transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport for travel purposes without depending on private transport. "Active transport" increases the well being of the community by increasing their level of incidental exercise. However the current transport infrastructure in Western Sydney does not support active transport, as the lack of footpaths create a significant barrier.

"Research conducted by Jackie Kelly (MP), stated that Penrith had 55.8 km of footpaths and Penrith South had only 13.1 km. In contrast, the affluent north-shore suburb of Mosman had 360 km of footpaths. Her research showed 19 per cent of women from disadvantaged areas were obese compared to 11 per cent from advantaged areas. "Women are time poor, if you're looking after children it is hard to go to the gym, instead you just go out and go for a walk. (It is difficult to go for a walk if there are few footpaths)," she said"¹⁸

There has been a 22% increase in people cycling to work in Australian capital cities, but only 9% in Sydney¹⁹. The economic benefits of current cycling participation to the health system have been calculated to be approximately \$227.2 million per annum. The savings to the economy in terms of reduced congestion is approximately \$63.9 million per year, greenhouse gas emission reductions amount to \$9.3 million. Substantial increases in these benefits will flow from future growth in cycling participation²⁰. And the benefits to people's health are also significant.



5.2 BUSES

While Buses form a major mode of transport they are however, an under-utilised resource in Western Sydney. Only 2% of all 'trips' in Western Sydney are taken on buses²¹.



Through our *Connecting with Buses* project, WSCF has been working to encourage the improvement and development of the bus system in Western Sydney. We recognise that the bus system provides a significant part of the public transport system in Western Sydney and has great potential for growth. As we have mentioned, there has been no new development of railway infrastructure in Western Sydney and the bus system has been used to provide the growth of public transport in Western Sydney. WSCF believes that the evidence shows that increases in the service quality and the service levels of the bus system in Western Sydney could provide significant increases to the patronage of buses, and improved levels of “connectedness” for people living in Western Sydney²².

There has been, however significant inequalities between the way in which the bus system has developed in the different parts of Sydney. Close to the Sydney CBD the system is mainly provided by the State Transit Authority (STA) while in Western Sydney the system is mainly provided by a number of private bus operators. This means that there is a superior service quality to people using STA services than those using Western Sydney services in terms of pricing, ticketing types, timetable frequency, service reliability, route development and information provision. While some of these issues have been addressed, for instance there has recently been equalisation in the availability of the Pensioner Excursion Ticket; the situation still remains largely true. Unfortunately, we are currently a long way from equalising this situation.

WSCF broadly supports the Bus Network Review system that has been happening during the last few years since the completion of the *Unsworth Review* in 2004.

WSCF supports:

- ◆ Implementation of strategic bus corridors
- ◆ Increasing the use of bus priority and T-way infrastructure
- ◆ Improving the reliability, frequency and financial viability of route bus services
- ◆ Increasing the incentives to bus operators to improve service quality and patronage through revenue splits

5.3 RAIL

At present only approximately 32% commuters travel to work daily utilising the train as a transport mode. One of the main deficiencies related to utilising trains is lack of railway infrastructure within Western Sydney particularly in the Northwest growth sector. The lack of railway infrastructure forces commuters to utilise cars and other transport modes for travel purposes. We recommend that the NSW Government maintain its commitment to building the rail links in the North West and South West Growth sectors.



We recommend a return to the recent plan to introduce an integrated heavy rail system into the Growth sectors because:

- ◆ they are an integral part of the Sydney Metropolitan Growth strategy
- ◆ this is appropriate for the longer journeys
- ◆ does not involve a change of mode to access the North Shore, the North West employment zones and Macquarie business park areas
- ◆ has higher passenger capacity (1200 passengers per train)
- ◆ can be integrated into the rest of the CityRail network
- ◆ will relieve congestion on the Western line and through Parramatta station.

We believe a Metro system can more appropriately service higher density areas such as Parramatta. Trips would be shorter and frequencies higher. These rail projects are overdue and there has not been a significant investment in rail in Western Sydney since the 1930's. These links are needed to enable people living in Western Sydney travel within the Western Sydney Region. Parking at railway stations is also particularly important when transporting people to and from their homes. It needs to coordinate with trains. This will need a significant investment in travel behavior change programs such as travel smart programs to enable active transport to railway stations and buses that transport people to railway stations.

5.4 TAXIS



Taxis are a mode of transport utilised mostly when there is no public transport available or as a result of mobility issues where commuters cannot access public transport or are short of time or unable to utilise own vehicle. At present the Ministry of Transport provides the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme (TTSS) to assist eligible residents of NSW with severe or permanent disability to use the taxi service to increase accessibility to services. TTSS participants use vouchers to receive a subsidy on their taxi fare. The TTSS vouchers can be used in both Wheel Chair Accessible Taxis (WATs) and non-WATS. The NSW Ministry of Transport administers the Taxi

Transport Subsidy Scheme.

If a scheme participant travels with a companion who is not a member of the scheme they can choose to pay using a TTSS voucher for up to 50% of the fare, subject to the limit of subsidy, which is currently \$30.00.

5.5 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

The Community Transport Model funds two programs which are

- ◆ Home and Community Care Community Transport Sub-program
- ◆ NSW Community Transport Program

The above programs aim to provide transport to community members who maybe transport disadvantaged due to lack of mobility as a result of illness, disability, or due to living in low population density villages (less than 500 people) that renders them unable to use conventional transport systems. It is also available for people who are eligible for HACC programs but are unable to obtain HACC operated transport services.

The funding is divided between the two programs with 95% of funds allocated to HACC transport program and the rest to community transport. Funding for the Community transport program is limited with no new funds allocated in the last 10 years, with funding incremented annually based on CPI. Funding only enables increase of transport options and not purchase of new vehicles. The vehicles are owned by community groups or service providers such as councils which broker the resources to community.

At present HACC clients are asked to make a contribution to access community transport. Some people are unable to pay even though community transport providers cannot refuse transport when clients cannot pay. Some people may miss out believing that they need to pay²³. There are not any other similar flexible services to support people who need to go from point A to point B. The other service that could be used is a subsidised taxi under the *Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme*. This can be quite expensive for lower socio-economic groups living in Western Sydney, due to larger distances travelled. Community transport has the potential to support the mass transit system as well as work with HACC clients, but needs adequate funding and legislative changes to enable them to do this work.

5.6 THE FUTURE - DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT (DRT)

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is described most simply as any form of transport that is provided on request by/ or demands from users. In such instances the commuter/group is able to contact bus/transport provider and request/book a journey for a particular time on a particular day. The vehicle will pick commuter/s up from a designated place. In particular circumstances such as rural areas and off- peak hours, such transport can be more cost effective than running a regular hourly bus on a particular route utilized by only a few passengers. DRT can provide service for health related transport and transport for disadvantaged groups. It can improve accessibility in transport disadvantaged areas where other public transport is unviable or unavailable.

In future, funding bodies should consider providing public transport providers/owners financial incentives to serve major health facilities and invest in demand responsive services such as the *Smartlink Transport Project*.

The *Smartlink Project* is an example of a DRT service that was initiated by Great Community Transport Inc and comprises three individual projects:

- 1. Transport Register (Community Bus Brokerage):** A project using spare capacity or mini-buses in the community sector which can be booked by community groups. A small fee is paid to the community organisation for hire of their bus and a volunteer driver is sought if needed.
- 2. Driver Training:** A partnership between Great Community Transport, TAFE and WestBus aims to educate people who are female, an Aboriginal or CALD background. When students have completed the course, they receive a bus licence and volunteer / work opportunities in the transport industry where there is currently a skills shortage. Over 66 people have graduated from the course. Driver training has been provided by a consortium between TAFE, WestBus and Great Community Transport. Many drivers volunteer themselves to help community groups which hire a community bus from the transport register.

- 3. Passengers Choice (DRT):** A demand responsive project initiated under the Smartlink initiative, enabling buses and taxis and community transport to coordinate flexible transport solutions. The demand responsive software is still undergoing trial and the project is likely to conclude in June 2009.

This demand responsive transport could be realised by investing funds into community transport or /and amending the NSW *Passenger Transport Act* to allow community transport providers to provide this service.

This service model is common overseas with community transport providers operating a “dial a service” or a “paratransit system”. This service is not available in Australia. These “Para-transport” services can interact with mainstream transport services to assist those with limited mobility.

It is important to note that our population is an ageing population and there will be 2 to 3 times more people using transport services in the future. At present there are not the systems in place to cater for such demand²⁴.

6. Transport Affordability

At present, the cost of public transport has been increasing rapidly overtaking the cost of utilising private transport.

*"The national trend for public transport pricing over the last 15 years is for real increases in price: between 1990 and 2005, "the cost of urban transport fares has increased at 2.17 times or 117% above the inflation rate. During the same period the cost of private motoring increased at a rate of 5.78% below the underlying CPI."*²⁵

6.1 TICKETING & INTEGRATION

One of the main factors affecting public transport affordability is the current pricing structure. The current NSW pricing structure and ticketing system has been complex, costly and hard to understand and at times penalising commuters (peak /off-peak pricing). We need a ticketing policy which is easy to understand and can provide incentives for people to use public transport across Western Sydney. Zone based ticketing is used in Melbourne and Brisbane, enabling people to trip-chain, such as picking up the children by bus, travel to the doctors, go shopping and then getting back onto a train. Due to low frequency of bus and train services outside the morning and afternoon peak periods currently, this situation is expensive and in many places not possible. The data suggests that using a car is much easier than using public transport in Western Sydney²⁶.

Often there are problems with coordinating the variety of public transport agencies involved in providing public transport services; a recent example is the failure of integrated ticketing. We believe that better coordination of all modes of transport will support a better transport system. In NSW, indicators are yet to be developed for monitoring of the service quality of bus service provision and pricing. The NSW Independent Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR) suggests that 'better service quality would be expected to increase customer satisfaction and grow demand', and will be conducting a survey into bus reliability in 2009²⁷.

Worldwide there are many examples of consumer driven pricing and regulation. A best practice example of such a scheme is London's TravelWatch²⁸. TravelWatch is a statutory consumer body responsible for representing the interests of the users of London's various transport system²⁹. Its roles include:

- ◆ Investigating suggestions and complaints from users who are dissatisfied with the response received from the service provider
- ◆ Conducting independent research and produce publications on issues affecting transport users
- ◆ Maintaining a regular dialogue with operators

Such a scheme would be of great value to the travelling public.

6.2 SCHOOL STUDENT TRANSPORT SCHEME (SSTS)

The School Student Transport Scheme is one of the policy instruments utilised by government to facilitate accessible education to all students by providing subsidised transport on bus, train, ferry and long distance coaches to students. This scheme reduces the financial pressure on parents as well as children

enabling them to access transport for educational purposes.

WSCF has also been concerned about reducing the availability of School Student Transport Scheme. We see two main problems with this change in policy:

- 1) Students are a large part of the business for bus service providers in Western Sydney (and in particular the smaller regional providers) and if fewer students use the bus service it risks the viability of many bus routes in Western Sydney.
- 2) There are a number of education policies facilitated by the availability of free bus travel for students. Specialist High Schools are an example of this. WSCF believes anything that presents a barrier to children and young people attending school should be seen as a bad idea.

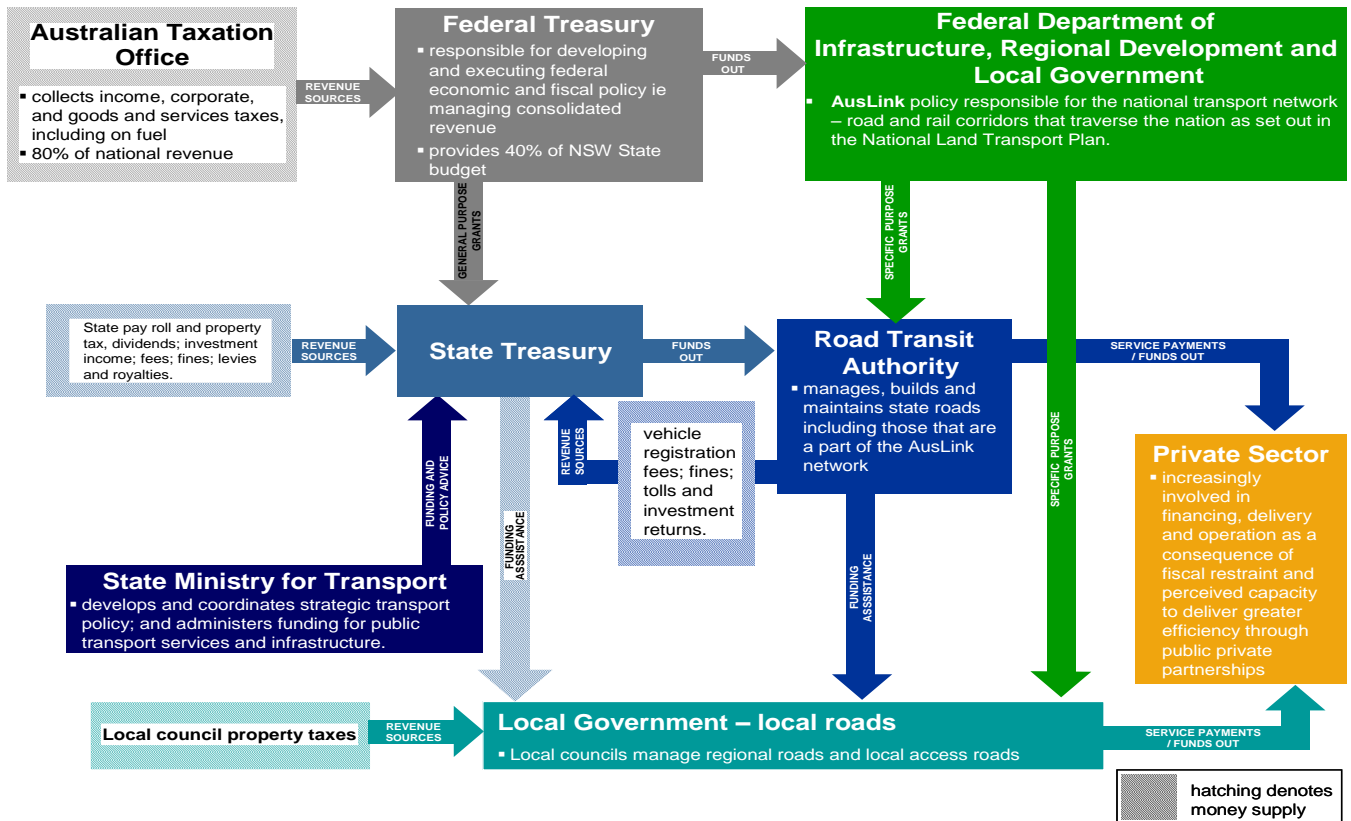
WSCF has developed a detailed *Connecting with Buses Policy Paper*. This Paper looks at the development of the bus service system using the recommendations of the *Unsworth Review*, the agreements outlined in the Bus Service Contracts and models of international best practice as guideposts. This paper is available from our website.



7. Financing Public Transport Infrastructure

The main funding source for public transport infrastructure in NSW is taxation revenue that is allocated by Federal Government through Federal Treasury to State Treasury and state revenue which includes, fines, taxed, dividends etc that is earned by State treasury and allocated to transport expenditure. The following diagram demonstrates the flow of revenue that funds transport investment in Australia.

Figure 2: Diagram illustrating revenue flow and bidding agencies in NSW³⁰



The road and Transport Authority is responsible for planning and construction of state road infrastructure while, Railcorp is responsible for NSW railway infrastructure. Funding is sourced through Auslink policy (federal infrastructure funding), some parts of funding is also sourced from RTA revenue, State revenue as well as 'public-private partnerships'³¹. However, the prioritisation and approval of infrastructure projects can depend on diverse factors as follows:

"Endorsed by all Australian jurisdictions, Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Australian Transport Corporation, National Guidelines for Transport System Management serve as a national standard for planning and appraising transport proposals for government funding. It demands the submission of robust business plans and thorough cost benefit analysis. Projects are then prioritised and funds made available from the AusLink capital budget. A project will proceed depending also on the state contribution to the project, as established within agreements with the Commonwealth."



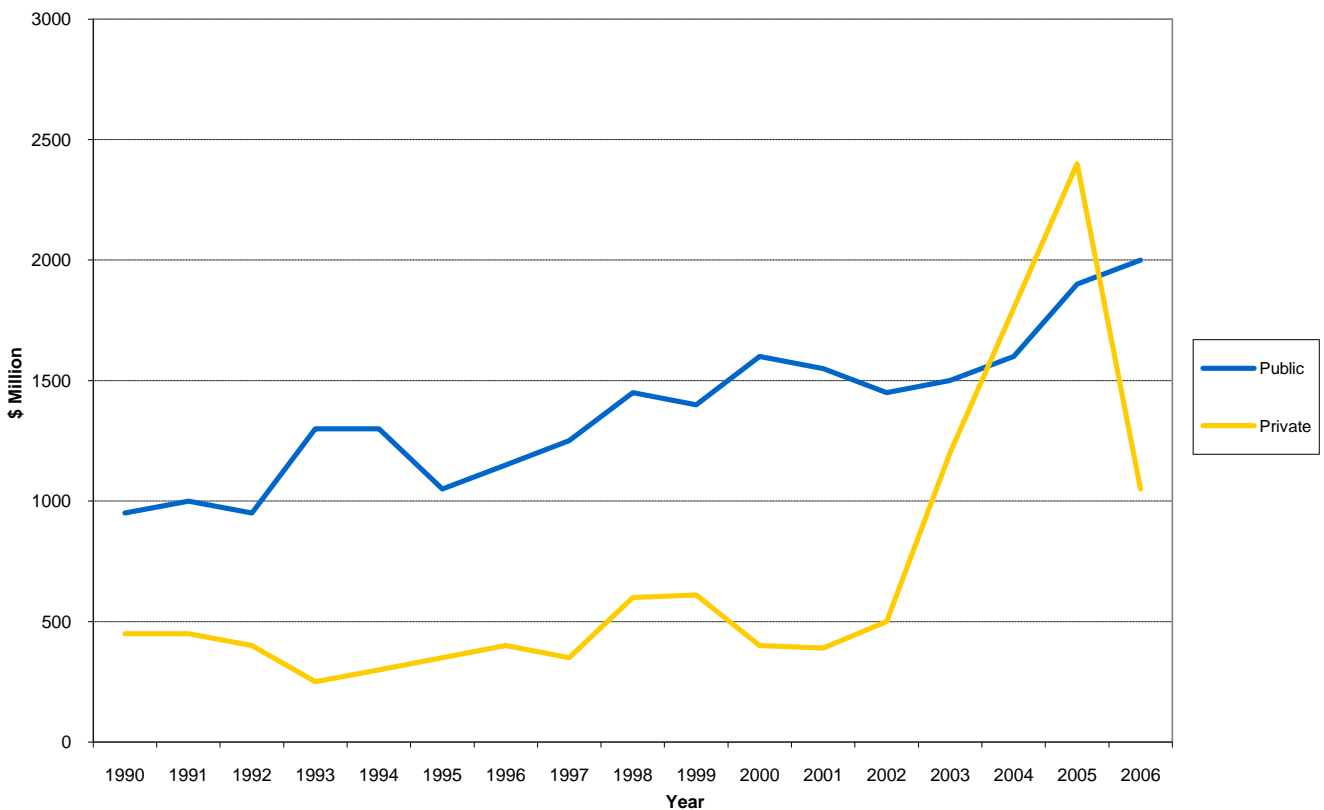
Public transport infrastructure spending benefits both the local and regional economies. Due to population projections as well as lack of infrastructure within the Western Sydney region there is a significant need for allocation of funding into rail and bus infrastructure. The infrastructure that is needed will, no doubt need considerable investment, and it is an opportune time to do so now. Investing in this critical infrastructure is important as it provides employment opportunities in times of economic downturn, which is now.

Similar projects such as the Snowy Mountain Scheme and other capital projects have provided such benefits to the

economy and the wider community and they still benefit the community many years after they were finalized.

WSCF is apprehensive about private sector funding of public infrastructure as the “higher cost of private sector finance, possibly inflated estimates of benefits that flow from the private to the public sector raises concerns over equity”³². WSCF does not support this. In future the heavy rail links within Western Sydney should be completed by government and the bus system should integrate with this rail system to provide the needed cross-regional and intra-regional transport options.

Chart 2: NSW Public Spending vs Private Transport Spending ³³



8. Transport Planning

8.1 FUTURE GROWTH IN WESTERN SYDNEY

Forecasting of population growth areas and employment flow is of paramount importance to all planning and policy initiatives and allocation of funding. Western Sydney is designated for significant growth (over 30%) in the next 30 years. Many of these communities will be built in green fields developments. We have an urgent imperative to get the transport infrastructure that Western Sydney needs to be built to serve many future generations to come. The last time any rail infrastructure was built in Western Sydney was in the late 1930's. This investment is political by nature and needs to be financed with sincere long term government commitment. This commitment must be led by NSW Treasury and NSW Government, by adequately budgeting for long term infrastructure debt. As this infrastructure will service many generations of people living in Western Sydney it is a sensible and prudent investment in the Western Sydney's future.



WSCF also acknowledges the importance of transport components that underpin the State Plan and the Metropolitan Strategies. Failure to budget for and deliver on those plans undermines the rationale and viability of much of Western Sydney. We call on the government to deliver infrastructure, especially heavy rail to these centers. The role of Government is to facilitate sustainable development in connecting regional and sub regional centers which are connected to social, employment, and education and health facilities. At present, those families who do not own multiple cars are transport disadvantaged. An integrated transport system, supported by integrated ticketing and information, which is easy to use and accessible by most people in Western Sydney, is needed. The backbone of the transport network is currently the road system. This is unsustainable with reducing reserves and higher prices of crude oil. We need to have longer term planning and an alternative policy framework. There are models for this such as those in Portland, USA³⁴.



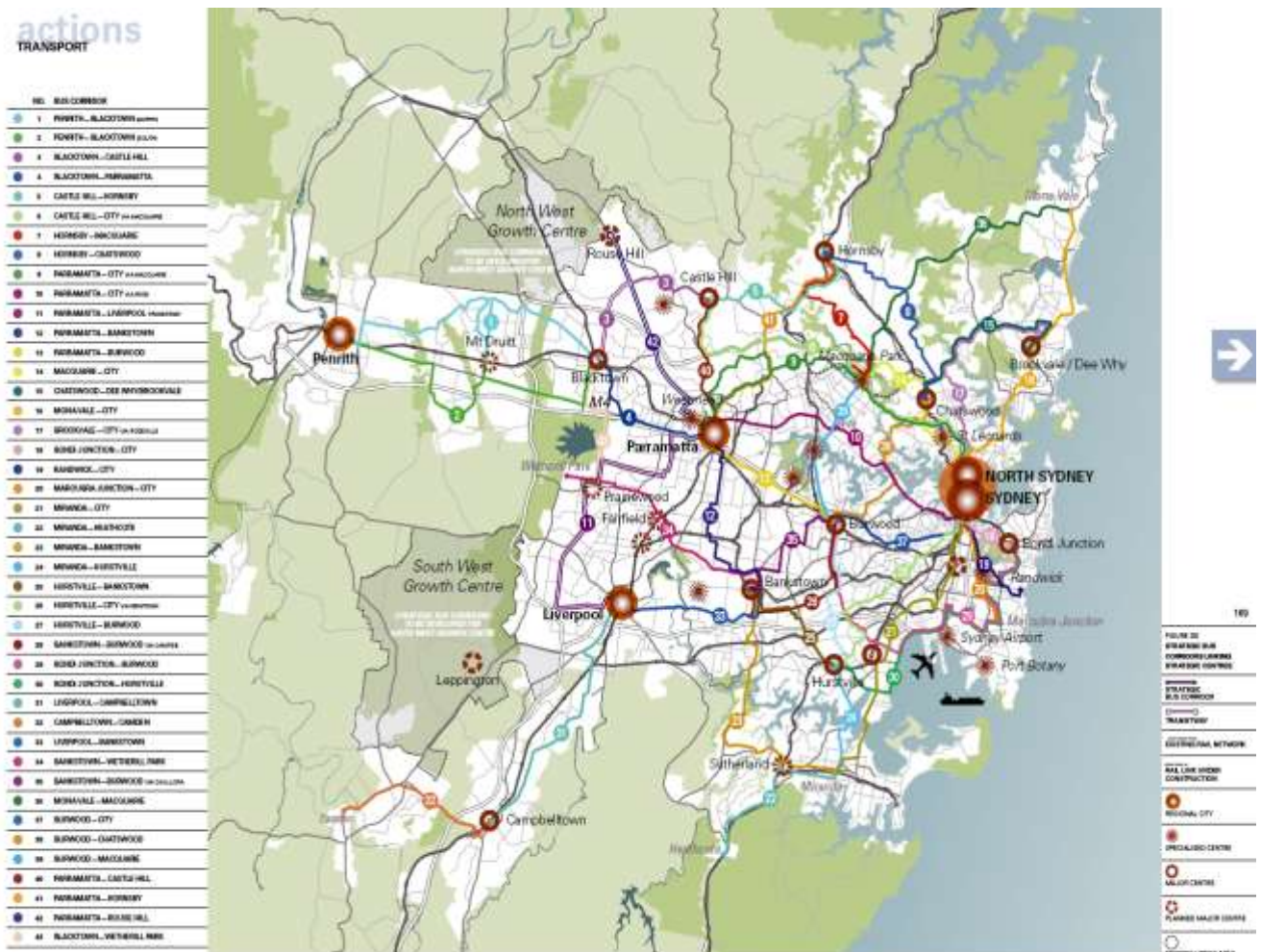
8.2 CASE STUDY: NORTH WEST SYDNEY EMPLOYMENT

According to the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy, jobs are developing in a global arc from the North West employment zones through to the Macquarie Park business area, the North Shore and into the Sydney city. There is also significant growth in Parramatta and the M4 industrial zones near Blacktown.

It is important that the workers in Western Sydney are connected to these areas. Currently they face considerable blockages and high tolls to be able to access their work. It is not an economically sound strategy to make it hard for these people to get to work³⁵. Part of the rationale for much of the North West sector is the growth of residential areas for higher income residents – professional workers. For this strategy to be successful it is important that these highly skilled and professional employees are able to access their workplaces. Conversely, there will be a need for people with different skill sets, e.g. people working in industries such as retail, hospitality and home care, to be able to move into and out of the North West sector for residence and work.

9. Opportunities to Influencing Planning and Policy

One of the main avenues for community to engage in influencing transport planning and policy is during public consultations that are held to obtain community feedback on proposed changes to transport infrastructure. One such form of consultation is Bus Network Reviews. WSCF has noted, however, several problems with the Bus Network Review as it aligns the bus system to a more 'mass transit' focus.



NSW State Plan, Metropolitan Strategy³⁶

9.1 CASE STUDY: UNSWORTH BUS NETWORK REVIEWS

When proposing new changes the ministry of Transport and Local government authorities hold numerous public consultation forums across the region. Within these consultations the public is presented with the opportunity to raise their concerns regarding any proposed changes giving voice to the commuters. However, the public consultation process in general, in the past, has been difficult for all parties involved. Even after consultation and protest by commuters the Bus Network Review has gone ahead and changes have been made to the system leaving many people feeling disadvantaged and unsupported by the process³⁷. The Ministry and Bus Operators have also felt unsatisfied, pressured and frustrated by the process.

We believe this is largely because of the sometimes different interests and needs of the customers, the community, the bus operators and the Ministry of Transport. There are limited resources available to allocate to the Bus Network and when changes are made it seems to create a set of people who feel that they have 'lost out'. There are no additional resources allocated to meet the needs of these potentially 'transport disadvantaged' people. These people tend to be old people and people with mobility problems.

WSCF believes, like the *Unsworth Review*, that there is an opportunity for community transport to provide some of these 'lost' services and to properly integrate with the route bus system. *Connecting with Buses* is trying to do some of this work but to do this task properly would require additional resources into the Community Transport Program, support for programs like Smartlink, and legislative changes that enabled Community Transport to fulfill this role. A model for this legislation exists in the ACT but a body of work needs to be undertaken to make this happen and make it integrated with the rest of the system. WSCF also believes that the proposed "Community Kilometres" mentioned in the Bus Contracts could be part of a solution and that some project trials should be done to test how this would work.

There has been significant interest in the development of bus priority and T-way infrastructure and WSCF supports this movement. This has considerable potential to develop the cross-regional transport links that are badly needed and that we have highlighted this throughout this paper.

WSCF has some concern, though, that these services are being considered as a replacement for the development of the heavy rail infrastructure that has been planned and promised for the North West.

Bus services re-routed

NEWS > TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC 13 JAN 09 @ 04:44PM | BY BRENTON CHERRY



Concerns about changes to bus services: Holroyd deputy mayor John Perry with residents Doris Buhagiar, her grandson Zachary Faddoul, Orma and Ray Hollands, and businessman Lee Yong at a Merrylands Rd bus stop. Picture: JOHN APPELYARD PP233133

FURIOUS residents, business leaders and Holroyd Council have spoken out against proposed changes to bus routes in the area.

As a result of recommendations in the State Government's review of bus services, a major audit of existing services is under way.

As well as services axed in Greystanes, South Wentworthville and Merrylands, most routes would be directed to Parramatta, bypassing commercial centres like Merrylands and Guildford.

Eldery couple Raymond and Orma Hollands, who live at Hayes Ave in South Wentworthville, said the proposed changes would have a massive impact on their lives.

"It is going to take away our freedom to go and do the shopping where we want and not have to go all the

way to Parramatta, which is very time-consuming," Mrs Hollands said.

"We go to the bowls club in Merrylands for a meal. It's the only place we eat out ... so that will have to stop."

Courtesy of Parramatta Advertiser 13th January 2009³⁸

10.WSCF Transport Position at a Glance

- ◆ **Active Living:** Through promoting mobility and accessibility by improving walking, cycling and related infrastructure to promote “active living” by urban design and transit orientated development.
- ◆ **Car sharing:** Supporting schemes such as GoGet Car Share, educating people about options to share existing cars in the community, with travel change behavior programs introduced.
- ◆ **Buses:** Bus frequency needs to be improved generally and extended to run more frequent services on the weekend and up to 12pm. Bus stops need to be clearly identified and bus shelters installed.
- ◆ **Rail:** Better use of rail network to service people living and working in Western Sydney, such as by using the Cumberland line. Enable more cross-regional transport such as the Epping – Parramatta rail link, supporting sustainable growth in the North-West and South West Growth areas.
- ◆ **Transport Infrastructure:** Build it now. Further postponement makes the problem worse. Infrastructure investment promotes economic growth, and provides a buffer against the recession. Investment in longer term imperatives such in the North-West and South West Growth areas, will support sustainable growth and reduce carbon emissions.
- ◆ **Health Related Transport:** requires a whole of government approach in using spare transport capacity, from the community services sector, health department and other government departments.
- ◆ **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT):** We support the use of DRT by community transport where mass transit is not viable, such as in health related transport or to service rural fringe areas of Western Sydney, such as modelled by the Smartlink project.



**Holroyd Council Meeting
in response to
planned bus route changes, May 2009**

11. Policy Recommendations

Within the above context WSCF proposes the following policy recommendations to address transport disadvantage within the region. The community can support us by joining in advocating on transport issues together with the WSCF transport project on the three areas of interest discussed in page.5 of this document. The following are the broader policy recommendations made to transport and land use planners.

Cross Regional Transport

- ◆ Policy makers must aim to plan for the 75% of trips that are non work related, to reduce transport disadvantage in Western Sydney. The community needs better cross-regional connections for public transport in Western Sydney, with increased frequency of services.
- ◆ NSW Government to provide increased frequency and connectivity of cross-regional public transport services across Western Sydney. This will increase accessibility to regional and sub-regional centres in Western Sydney and encourage sustainable growth away from the CBD.

Car Share Schemes

- ◆ Development of trial projects to investigate car-share schemes that can work for the Western Sydney growth sectors as well as other parts of Western Sydney. These projects need to be well resourced and sophisticated to encapsulate the complex nature of trying to share what are now considered exclusively private goods.

Accessibility

- ◆ The NSW Ministry of Transport seek Commonwealth funding to enable local government meet the Transport Standards.
- ◆ That the Easy Access program, which enables lifts to be installed at CityRail stations be doubled to \$100 million and prioritised in areas with a greater level of disadvantage.
- ◆ Ramps should be left installed when upgrading stations. This will provide access when the lift is not operable.

Social Inclusion

- ◆ NSW Government to acknowledge the role that transport plays in addressing social exclusion and to target transport disadvantaged areas with increased connectivity.

Ticketing

- ◆ WSCF recommends a time – based zone ticketing system. That the travel pass system is extended to Western Sydney. Public transport should be as easy to pay for as getting credit on a pre-pay mobile phone.

Transport Coordination

- ◆ That a Transport Coordination Authority for Sydney be established to coordinate decision making, communication and information for all modes of public transport.
- ◆ That the NSW government create a specialist government agency for active transport, that will secure funding and lead a whole-of-government approach to the development of infrastructure, facilities and educational programs aimed at making cycling and walking a more acceptable, comfortable, safe and viable for the community.
- ◆ Make bicycling and public transport work better together by actively promoting the value of riding to public transport, and by providing a range of bicycle facilities, such as accessible, undercover racks and lockers at CityRail stations, and bus stops and transport interchanges. Bicycles should be able to be transported on buses, as is done in Canberra Action buses.

Buses

- ◆ WSCF believes that the bus network in Western Sydney needs to be integrated into the rest of the public transport system through an integrated ticketing and information system which enables people to travel on a time and zone-based system facilitating mode interchanges without additional charges.
- ◆ The bus system needs to aim for high frequency services on all strategic corridor services, providing no less than 10 minute frequencies for peak and 20 minute frequencies for off-peak services from 6am to 10pm each day.
- ◆ Services need to co-ordinate with train services as much as possible and information about timetables should be on every bus stop (as per the bus contracts) and through 131500.
- ◆ All bus stops need to be numbered so customers can easily locate the timetable information using the 131500 service.
- ◆ The Bus Network Review public consultation process is reviewed so that the process is useful and meaningful for consumers, transport providers and the Ministry.
- ◆ Work should be done to include Community Transport as an accredited part of the public transport system servicing transport disadvantaged people, people with mobility problems and socially excluded people.
- ◆ The development of bus priority and T-way infrastructure be supported but not as an alternative to the development of the heavy rail into the North West and South West Growth Centres
- ◆ WSCF can see a role for The NSW Independent Safety and Reliability Regulator to monitor the safety and reliability as well as the quality of the bus service system.
- ◆ The School Transport Subsidy Scheme (STSS) is retained for all students but that an accurate accounting of the usage of student travel is maintained.
- ◆ A review is done to assess which bus routes and services are left vulnerable to any changes made to the STSS and these routes and services are discussed with the local community and supported if needed.

Rail

- ◆ Increase frequency of train services, such as on the Cumberland line, which promote greater cross-regional connectivity in Western Sydney. The infrastructure is already available, there needs to be at least 2 services per hour.
- ◆ Re-investment in the rail duplication to Richmond must continue, as this will affect the other parts of the CityRail network. This additional capacity should be integrated into whatever system is developed for the North West sector.
- ◆ The rail link connections between Parramatta to Epping and Rouse Hill should also proceed to increase capacity of the CityRail network, as was promised in the prior NSW Transport Plan, Action for Transport 2010.

Taxis

- ◆ Increase the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme amount to \$75.00, due to the larger geographical distances covered by people with disabilities travelling in Western Sydney.

Demand Responsive Transport

- ◆ That additional funding is made available to continue the work of the Smartlink project (Great Community Transport), and that the project is expanded across Western Sydney.

12. Conclusion

We have outlined several of the key transport issues which we believe to be the most critical for people in Western Sydney. Transport development and the building of infrastructure can take many years. So, it is important that transport policy is designed to cater for the whole community and supported by the community, so that the correct decisions are made.

Geography and your local electorate's political views have impact upon the government commitment to new transport infrastructure. With scarce resources being vied for and votes tied to the outcome of decisions, transport policy is political by nature.

In general we believe that a reallocation of resources be investigated to promote reduced congestion through transport orientated development principles³⁹, to reduce car dependency and provide real public transport alternatives, as described by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute⁴⁰.

We believe that for a genuine choice in transport options for people living in Western Sydney, transport rhetoric must be followed by financial decisions which indicate that there will be real infrastructure delivered. We hope that our community members will be able to influence transport policy in the longer term by understanding the process and following the debates.



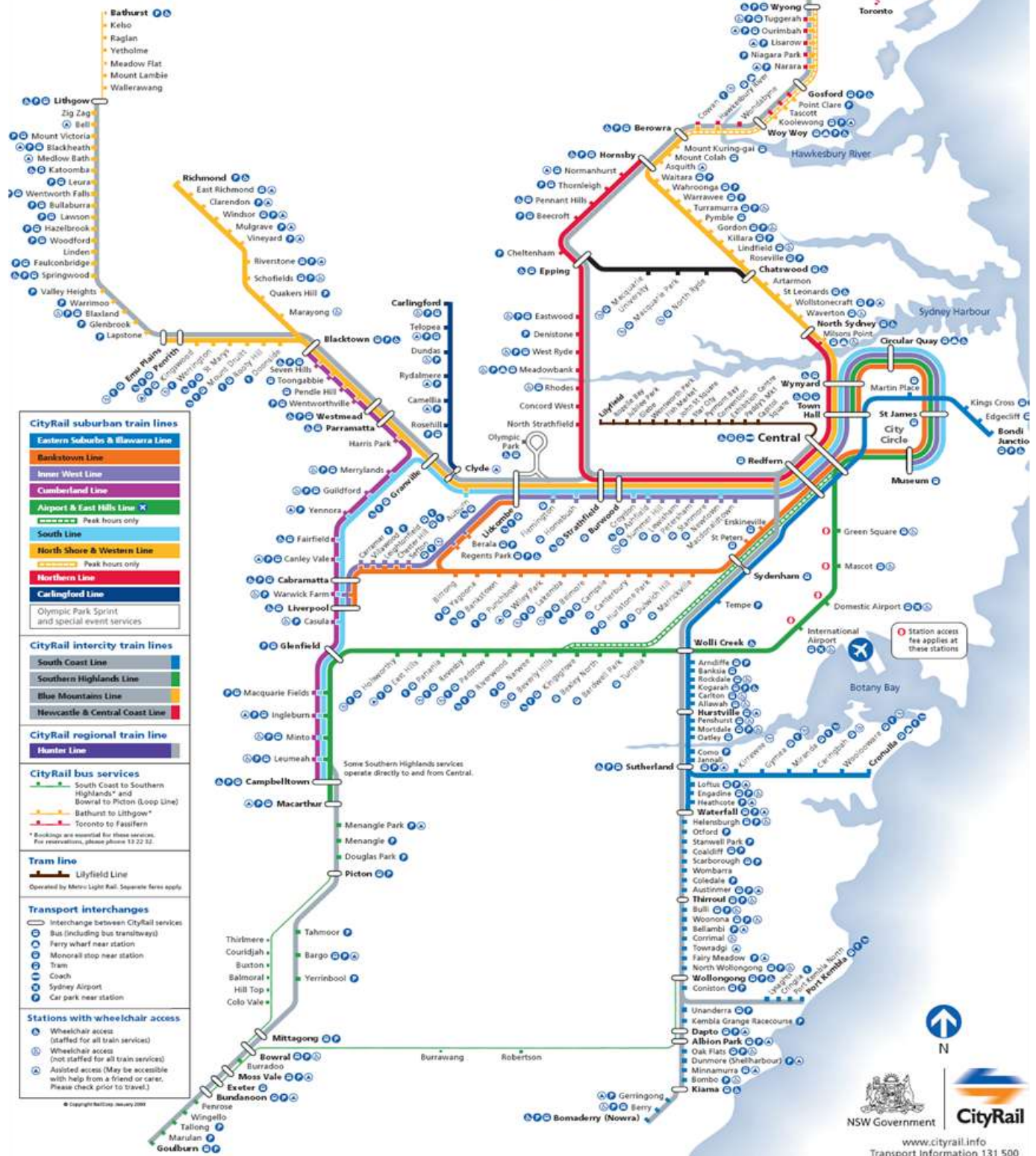
13. CityRail Network Map

CityRail network with new Epping to Chatswood train services

New train services

Epping to Chatswood Rail Link

New services between Epping and Chatswood, with three new stations now open



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