



Western Sydney Community Forum

Submission to the Department of Infrastructure
and Regional Development



Western Sydney Airport Draft
Environmental Impact Statement and
Draft Airport Plan

December 2015



western sydney
community forum

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Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
Western Sydney Unit
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18 December 2015

Western Sydney Airport Submission

To the Hon Warren Truss,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Airport Plan for the proposed Western Sydney Airport.

Western Sydney Community forum welcomes economic development into Western Sydney and supports the development of a diverse range of employment opportunities. We also support the development of vital infrastructure such as public transport and affordable housing. Our submission draws on our sector specific knowledge of communities in Greater Western Sydney and the views of our membership, which consists of over 200 non-government organisations in the community sector.

We advocate for stronger social inclusion to ensure that all residents in Western Sydney are able to take full advantage of the proposed economic growth in the region.

If you would like to discuss this submission further please contact Sabrina Caldalano, Policy and Projects Officer, on (02) 9687 9669.

Yours Sincerely,

Billie Sankovic
Chief Executive Officer
Western Sydney Community Forum

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On Monday 19 October 2015 the Draft Western Sydney Airport Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Airport Plan was placed on public exhibition for a total of 60 days. The 4,000 page document was prepared by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development over a period of eight months.
- 1.2 The Western Sydney Airport is one of the largest infrastructure projects currently proposed in Australia. A project of this magnitude will carry a number of environmental, social and economic impacts of a positive and negative nature. The EIS assesses the nature and scope of those impacts and outlines management and mitigating measures that will be implemented during the construction and operation stages of the Western Sydney Airport.
- 1.3 As a regional peak for communities and community organisations in Greater Western Sydney, Western Sydney Community Forum is a voice to over 200 non-government organisations in the community sector and the communities that they represent. Our submission focuses on the three key areas of employment, public transport and affordable housing. The topics chosen reflect the expertise of Western Sydney Community Forum and the topics elected by our membership as most important to the people they work with across Greater Western Sydney.
- 1.4 Western Sydney Community Forum welcomes economic development into Western Sydney and supports the development of a diverse range of employment opportunities. We also support the development of vital infrastructure such as public transport and affordable housing. Our submission advocates for communities that experience poverty and disadvantage to ensure that all residents in Western Sydney are able to take full advantage of economic growth in the region.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Western Sydney Community Forum welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development on the EIS.
- 2.2 Over the last two years Western Sydney Community Forum has consulted with our membership and conducted surveys to gain an understanding of the issues that are most important to the people they work with across Greater Western Sydney.
- 2.2.1 92.7 per cent of our membership surveyed identified increased **employment opportunities** arising from the development and operation of the Western Sydney Airport as a key benefit for the communities they work with.
- 2.2.2 90.2 per cent of our membership surveyed identified the construction of new **transport infrastructure** arising from the development and operation of the Western Sydney Airport as a key benefit for the communities they work with.
- 2.2.3 78.0 per cent of our membership surveyed identified the **economic growth** in Western Sydney generated from the development and operation of the Western Sydney Airport as a key benefit for the communities they work with.
- 2.3 Western Sydney Community Forum is a partner of the Western Sydney Airport Alliance. We have collaborated with the Western Sydney Housing Coalition and conducted a public forum discussing affordable housing and the Western Sydney Airport. We promote information and resources to help generate discussion about the possibilities of an airport in Western Sydney, and we provide information sessions to community sector organisations that may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed Western Sydney Airport.

2.4 This submission is informed by our ongoing work with our membership and partners.

3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1:

Provide a clear analysis of both the positive and negative economic impacts of the construction and operation of the Western Sydney Airport and outline mitigation and management strategies to reduce the economic costs identified.

Recommendation 2:

Undertake a comprehensive analysis of the types of employment generated by the creation of the Western Sydney Airport and develop strategies that will support the creation of varied employment opportunities that address sector-specific job- deficits in the region, and are reflective of the employment needs of communities in Western Sydney.

Recommendation 3:

Develop mitigation and management strategies to ensure that employment generated from the operation of the Western Sydney Airport does not adversely affect economic development in surrounding employment precincts.

Recommendation 4:

Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the transport needs of residents in Western Sydney, particularly the needs of communities experiencing transport disadvantage and develop mitigation and management strategies to address public transport deficits prior to stage 1 of the construction of the Western Sydney Airport.

Recommendation 5:

Prioritise the early construction and operation of the South West Rail Link in Western Sydney.

Recommendation 6:

Engage with relevant housing associations in Western Sydney and provide an analysis on the impact of rising house prices for affordable housing in Western Sydney, and outline mitigation and management strategies to reduce the negative impacts.

Recommendation 7:

Collaborate with relevant State and Local government departments to ensure that new residential developments near the Western Sydney Airport include a diversity of housing types that are affordable to low and middle income groups.

4. EMPLOYMENT

- 4.1.1 The development of diverse employment opportunities in Western Sydney will have a significantly positive impact on the health and wellbeing of communities in the region. Residents in Western Sydney have less access to employment opportunities close to their place of residence and experience longer commuting times.¹ Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that car dependence is far higher in areas surrounding the proposed airport. This has a direct correlation with poor public transport infrastructure in the region.
- 4.1.2 The EIS² estimates that during stage 1 of the construction of the airport, approximately 758 full time jobs will be created with an estimated 7,500 full time airport related jobs created by 2031. A further 4,400 full time jobs are estimated to be generated in the business parks associated with the airport. In the longer term it is estimated that approximately 61,500 full time jobs would be required for the airport to operate in 2063.
- 4.1.3 While the positive economic benefits of the Western Sydney Airport have been clearly outlined in the EIS, the negative economic impacts are not as clearly discussed. Chapter 24, volume 2 of the EIS suggests that there are negative economic impacts close to the vicinity of the airport. A reader may assume that this relates to the loss or relocation of employment generated from 16 agricultural tenancies and eight commercial tenancies in areas surrounding the Western Sydney Airport. However a clear indication of the nature and extent of the economic costs has not been outline and the negative impacts have not been be managed or mitigated.

¹ Robert Fagan and Phillip O’Neil (2015) “Work, places and people in Western Sydney: changing suburban labour markets 2001-2014” The Centre for Western Sydney, University of Western Sydney.

² Appendix P3 in volume 4 of the EIS.

Recommendation 1:

Provide a clear analysis of the real economic impacts of the construction and operation of the Western Sydney Airport and outline mitigation and management strategies to reduce the economic costs identified.

- 4.2.1 Western Sydney's population varies significantly with pockets of affluence existing alongside pockets of socio-economic disadvantage. Within the Blacktown LGA, the suburb of Bidwill has an unemployment rate five times higher than the suburb of Kings Langley, located only 13.6 kilometers away. Similarly education levels vary considerably between LGAs. Parramatta has more than three times more university graduates than Penrith.³ Therefore in order to ensure that employment opportunities benefit the entire community, a diverse range of skilled and unskilled employment needs to be generated in the region.
- 4.2.2 The EIS specifies that business development would "enable a mix of business, retail and industrial uses in locations that are close to and that support the functioning of the Airport." However detailed estimates of the type of employment opportunities generated from the construction and operation of the airport are unclear.
- 4.2.3 Moreover Western Sydney provides a concentration of employment opportunities in manufacturing, wholesale, transport, and agriculture, experiencing sector-specific jobs-deficits in information, finance, property and business⁴. However the EIS has not clearly identified the degree that employment opportunities generated from the construction and operation of the

³ Robert Fagan and Phillip O'Neil, above n 1.

⁴ Daniel Montoya (2012) "Western Sydney: An Economic Profile" (Briefing Paper No 6/2012), NSW Parliamentary Research Service.

Western Sydney Airport address these sector-specific job-deficits in Western Sydney.

Recommendation 2:

Undertake a comprehensive analysis of the type of employment generated by the creation of the Western Sydney Airport and develop strategies that will support the creation of varied employment opportunities that address sector-specific job-deficits in the region and are reflective of the employment needs of communities in Western Sydney.

4.3.1 The Western Sydney Airport will be in close proximity to the South West Growth Centre and Western Sydney Employment area where plans have been established for economic development. The impact of the Western Sydney Airport on the economic growth in these areas has not been considered in the EIS.

4.3.2 Moreover, the EIS does not differentiate between new employment generated from the operation of the Western Sydney Airport compared to existing employment which may be relocated near the Western Sydney Airport from surrounding areas. Without a clear indication of the nature and prevalence of the economic costs on surrounding employment precincts, those negative impacts cannot be managed or mitigated against and a clear assessment of the overall benefit of the airport is not clear.

Recommendation 3:

Develop mitigation and management strategies to ensure that employment generated from the operation of the Western Sydney Airport does not adversely affect economic development in surrounding employment precincts.

5. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 5.1.1 Western Sydney cannot take full advantage of economic growth in the region without an effective public transport system. Transport contributes to the wellbeing of communities, providing a means to access employment, social and recreational services. This is especially true for low-income households in Western Sydney who are at higher risk of social exclusion without an integrated, affordable and reliable public transport system.⁵
- 5.1.2 Transport disadvantaged areas are defined as locations where poor transport accessibility and low levels of urban accessibility exists⁶. In 2006⁷, 76.4 per cent of unemployed people with no access to a motor vehicle resided in Western Sydney. The difference in demographics between residents in Sydney and Western Sydney is not reflected in the EIS. Chapter 15, volume 2 of the EIS uses data of employees accessing public transport at Sydney Airport to predict the public transport needs of employees at the Western Sydney Airport. However the public transport needs of employees in Western Sydney will be considerably different to those of employees in the Sydney metropolitan area given the transport infrastructure in the area and lower socio-economic status of communities who reside there.
- 5.1.3 Moreover, limited bus routes currently exist in and surrounding the proposed Western Sydney Airport site. While the EIS⁸ forecasts that ten per cent of employees will utilise public transport in order to travel to and from work, it does not clarify whether this will be accommodated for with the current provision of

⁵ Anne Hurni (2006) "Transport and social disadvantage in Western Sydney: A partnership research project." University of Western Sydney and Western Sydney Community Forum.

⁶ Anne Hurni, above n5.

⁷ Limited research exists in Australia to indicate the impact of transport on social exclusion in Western Sydney.

⁸ Chapter 15 volume 2 of the EIS.

public transport in the area. Moreover, it “assumed that employees would not use public transport during early morning hours due to service limitations.” This is when a high number of construction workers and labourers will be employed at the airport, in a sector that requires employees to begin working in the early hours of the morning.

- 5.1.4 The assumption that employees will be able to utilise private transport means to accommodate this deficit is not reflective of the experiences of some communities in Western Sydney. The lack of public transport will have a negative impact on the ability for socio-economically disadvantaged communities to benefit from the positive economic impacts created by the construction and operation of the Western Sydney Airport.

Recommendation 4:

Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the transport needs of residents in Western Sydney, particularly the needs of communities experiencing transport disadvantage, and develop mitigation and management strategies to address public transport deficits prior to stage 1 of the construction of the Western Sydney Airport.

- 5.2.1 Increasing connectivity across Western Sydney through a rail line from the South West Rail Link through Badgerys Creek Airport and on to the Western Line is vital infrastructure that will contribute to the mobility of many communities in Western Sydney. The lack of public transport infrastructure has led to higher dependence on vehicle ownership in Western Sydney compared to the rest of Sydney where high-income households with no vehicle ownership are concentrated.⁹

⁹ Anne Hurni, above n5.

5.2.2 The EIS¹⁰, outlines the long-term traffic, transport and access plan for the Western Sydney Airport, and indicates that the planned rail connection will not be available until 2031. The primary reason for this is that the demand for transport will not be cost effective until the Western Sydney Airport is operating at a certain capacity. This reasoning assumes that passengers will use the new rail infrastructure solely to access the airport, and does not account for the number of passengers who will use the rail link to journey to work, education, recreation, or other destinations that facilitate social inclusion and wellbeing.

Recommendation 5:

Prioritise the early construction and operation of the South West Rail Link in Western Sydney.

¹⁰ Chapter 33 of volume 3 of the EIS.

6. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 6.1.1 Housing affordability is a growing issue in Western Sydney. Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs more than 30 per cent of the gross household income of very low to moderate income households.¹¹
- 6.1.2 In 2013, between 0.6 per cent and 5.2 per cent of properties in Western Sydney¹² were affordable for purchase for low income households;¹³ between 0 per cent and 4.7 per cent of properties in South West Sydney¹⁴ were affordable for purchase for low income households;¹⁵ and between 1.1 per cent and 2.7 per cent of properties in West Central Sydney¹⁶ were affordable for purchase for low income households.¹⁷ These low figures are now significantly reduced since the announcement in 2014 of the Western Sydney Airport, where suburbs around Badgerys Creek increased in value by almost 24 per cent.¹⁸

¹¹ <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/about-affordable-housing/why-do-we-need-to-be-concerned-about-housing-affordability>. 2015. *Why do we need to be concerned about housing affordability?*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/about-affordable-housing/why-do-we-need-to-be-concerned-about-housing-affordability>.

¹² Western Sydney is defined as the Local Government Areas of the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith.

¹³ <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/about-affordable-housing/why-do-we-need-to-be-concerned-about-housing-affordability>. 2015. *Housing Snapshot- West Sydney Sub Region*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/for-planners-of-affordable-housing/housing-snapshots/housing-snapshot-west-sydney-sub-region>.

¹⁴ South West Sydney is defined as the Local Government Areas of Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool and Wollondilly.

¹⁵ <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/for-planners-of-affordable-housing/housing-snapshots/housing-market-snapshot-south-west-sydney-sub-region>. 2015. *Housing Snapshot- South West Sydney Sub Region*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/for-planners-of-affordable-housing/housing-snapshots/housing-market-snapshot-south-west-sydney-sub-region>.

¹⁶ Central West Sydney is defined as the Local Government Areas of Auburn, Bankstown, The Hills, Blacktown, Holroyd and Parramatta.

¹⁷ <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/for-planners-of-affordable-housing/housing-snapshots/housing-market-snapshot-west-central-sydney-sub-region>. 2015. *Housing Snapshot- West Central Sydney Sub Region*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/centre-for-affordable-housing/for-planners-of-affordable-housing/housing-snapshots/housing-market-snapshot-west-central-sydney-sub-region>.

¹⁸ Appendix P2, 59 of the EIS.

6.1.3 The EIS documents the concerns raised by stakeholders during consultation around the impact of the airport on housing affordability. However the EIS has not responded to these concerns including the impact rising house prices have on affordability in the region. Nor has it included mitigation or management strategies.

Recommendation 6:

Engage with relevant housing associations in Western Sydney and provide an analysis on the impact of rising house prices for affordable housing in Western Sydney, and outline mitigation and management strategies to reduce the negative impacts.

6.2.1 It is estimated that the Western Sydney airport will contribute to an additional 17,800 people living in Western Sydney by 2031. The EIS has planned for this population increase through the development of a new residential precinct near the Western Sydney Airport.

6.2.2 Chapter 23, Volume 2 of the EIS anticipates that young people attracted to employment opportunities are most likely to reside in the new residential development. However the EIS has not indicated what measures will be implemented to ensure that adequate housing size and affordability will be available to this population group.

6.2.3 Housing availability and affordability is an existing issue in Western Sydney¹⁹. The EIS has not indicated planning measures that ensure that other population groups already residing in Western Sydney including families, students, migrants, the aging population and people with a disability will be accommodated for in the residential development.

Recommendation 7:

Collaborate with relevant State and Local government departments to ensure that new residential developments near the Western Sydney Airport include a diversity of housing types that are affordable to low and middle income groups.

¹⁹ Andrew Haylen (2014) "House prices, ownership and affordability: Trends in New South Wales" (Briefing Paper No 1/2014) NSW Parliamentary Research Service.