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Western Sydney Rail Needs: Feedback
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study: Discussion Paper. The Sydney Business Chamber is a division of the NSW Business Chamber and represents Sydney's leading corporations as well as organisations from the government and not-for-profit sectors. On behalf of members, the Chamber advocates for Sydney to be a competitive and sustainable global city. The Chamber strives to identify, develop and promote the major issues that contribute to economic activity and growth in Australia's global city, Sydney. This is achieved on behalf of business by representation and collaboration with governments at the local, state and federal level.

Western Sydney Airport Connectivity

In 2015, the Sydney Business Chamber commissioned Dr John Kasarda to prepare a report on the potential for an aerotropolis in Western Sydney¹. An aerotropolis is a new urban form where cities grow around airports, connecting workers, suppliers, executives, and goods to the global marketplace. Dr Kasarda found that given the right policy and planning settings, an aerotropolis in Western Sydney could develop and provide the region with lasting economic opportunities.

Dr Kasarda put forward a number of recommendations to improve the prospects of the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) and contribute to a more successful Western Sydney aerotropolis. Dr Kasarda found that while WSA must have fast connections to Parramatta and other metropolitan nodes of Western Sydney, it must also have fast connections to the Sydney CBD. This will increase the potential passenger catchment area of WSA thereby enabling it to grow, properly service Sydney's aviation needs, and attract private sector investment into the aerotropolis. Based on extensive analysis of airport case studies from across the globe, Dr Kasarda found that WSA must be within a 45 minute travel time from the Sydney CBD, Parramatta and other urban centres in the greater Sydney region.

¹ Kasarda, John (2015) [A Western Sydney Aerotropolis: Maximising the benefits of Badgerys Creek](#)

Given the geographic location of WSA, a high speed connection to Parramatta would enable WSA to be connected to the Sydney CBD within this timeframe. Therefore the Chamber recommends that further analysis is undertaken of *Option 5: Direct Rail Express Service between WSA and Parramatta*.

The Chamber also recommends the continuing development of the proposal to construct *Option 1: WSA to the South West Rail Link*. In the early stages of WSA's operation, the connection between the new Leppington station and WSA would be the most cost effective way to achieve "day one" rail connection. We understand that the Federal Government will look to ensure that station boxes are built underneath the terminal complex for a future rail link. As these plans are already afoot, the net additional cost of connecting WSA to Leppington is minimised.

In addition to the connection to Leppington, connections between WSA and other areas in Western Sydney would also improve north-south connectivity and provide stimulus for growth. Therefore the Chamber also recommends that further analysis is undertaken of *Option 6: A north-south link: Macarthur-WSA-St Marys-Schofields*. St Marys, in particular, would benefit from becoming an interchange between the Western Line and a new north-south line connecting to WSA. South West Sydney, which is experiencing strong population growth in both Campbelltown and Camden Local Government Areas but relatively weak employment growth, would also benefit from increasing connectivity to the airport from these centres.

The connectivity provided by Option 1 and Option 6 would ensure that workers from largely residential neighbourhoods across Western Sydney could access the significant employment opportunities expected from WSA as well as help improve productivity and access to employment more generally across the region.

Other connections may be beneficial in the longer term but the Chamber believes the priorities for rail connectivity for WSA are covered in Options 1, 5 and 6. WSA and the surrounding commercial precinct require connectivity to the major CBDs as well as to Western Sydney's growing workforce.

Western Sydney and Eastern Sydney Connectivity

For Sydney to become a thriving, successful and truly polycentric city there must be viable public transport connections between the major CBDs. In particular, there must be an efficient public transport connection between the Parramatta CBD and the Sydney CBD. Demand for east-west public transport connections will continue to increase even with the significant initiatives underway to grow employment opportunities in Western Sydney.

As outlined in Figure 10 of the Scoping Study, there is already significant overcrowding on the Western Line which is the only existing rail link between the Sydney CBD, Parramatta, Penrith and the Blue Mountains.² The Scoping Study states that city-bound peak hour demand for this train line is forecast to increase by 50 per cent between 2015 and 2051. While there are initiatives underway to both build more capacity and improve the efficiency of the network, this is a clear problem going forward for Sydney's public transport network and requires urgent attention.

The Chamber therefore supports the undertaking of further analysis of *Option A: a new western metro-style service* between Sydney and Parramatta/Westmead as it has the potential to provide much-needed additional capacity in public transport links between the Parramatta and Sydney CBDs.

In addition, a new fast connection between Sydney and Parramatta/Westmead could reduce the commuting time between the two CBDs. A reduction in commuting time may lead to an increase in demand for commercial offices in Parramatta because of significant cost advantages over Sydney CBD land, thereby generating more jobs in Western Sydney.

As well as the need to transport a growing number of commuters and other passengers between Western Sydney and the Sydney CBD, there is also a need to connect existing and new urban developments in between the two CBDs. A new western metro-style service would provide public transport access to these areas that currently lack adequate transport connections. Given Parramatta has been identified as the Central City by the Greater Sydney Commission, it is important that large urban densities can access the Parramatta city centre within a relatively short time frame.

For example, the planned transformation of the Bays Precinct into a bustling innovation hub will require new public transport connections to the Sydney CBD and the Parramatta CBDs to attract workers and foster collaboration between businesses. A western metro service could provide access to this precinct, although further studies would need to identify the location of these additional stops.

In addition, a new western metro service could also support large Western Sydney precincts like Sydney Olympic Park by providing greater rail accessibility. Sydney Olympic Park has suffered from a lack of direct connectivity to the main Western Line and to the Sydney CBD. The loop train line from Lidcombe has been particularly ineffective in ensuring large numbers of employees, residents and students at the site are able to access other parts of Sydney within a reasonable amount of time. The Commonwealth Bank, for example, spent close to \$1 million a year operating its own private bus service for employees to access their offices in Sydney Olympic Park prior to their

² Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (2016) *Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study: Discussion Paper*

decision to relocate offices to the Sydney CBD. The proposed redevelopment of Sydney Olympic Park will see a significant increase in residential development as well as the addition of thousands of more jobs in the precinct, therefore providing an even stronger case for a new metro service.

A western metro service between Sydney and Parramatta/Westmead would also allow the significant costs to upgrade and renovate the existing Western Line to be deferred. These deferred costs would be in the order of \$10 billion or so, approaching the cost of building the new western metro. In addition, it also has the capacity to integrate with other Sydney Metro lines that are currently under development in the Sydney rail network.

Option E: New higher speed tunnel linking Parramatta and the Sydney CBD would provide a fast connection between the two CBDs which would provide some significant benefits. However, it is likely to be more costly. Rail infrastructure such as the requirement for a tunnel to be built between Sydney and Parramatta would involve large public sector investment. Obtaining and/or allocating the funding for such a major investment can be challenging and as such can be an impediment to its construction. A higher speed link would also not provide as much access to locations along the route, and significant consideration of how a high-speed route into Sydney would integrate with the rest of the network infrastructure would need to occur.

Other high-speed rail proposals

While outside the scope of this paper, the Chamber is aware of a number of high speed rail proposals that are currently being developed by the private sector aiming to link Sydney with regional NSW and Melbourne. Several of these proposals have plans to connect Western Sydney with the Sydney CBD. The Chamber recommends that consideration of the options outlined in this paper occurs with regard to the potential new high-speed rail link proposals being put forward.

Please contact Larissa Cassidy via Larissa.Cassidy@nswbc.com.au or on 02 9458 7359 if you would like to discuss this submission.

Yours sincerely,



David Borger
Western Sydney Director