

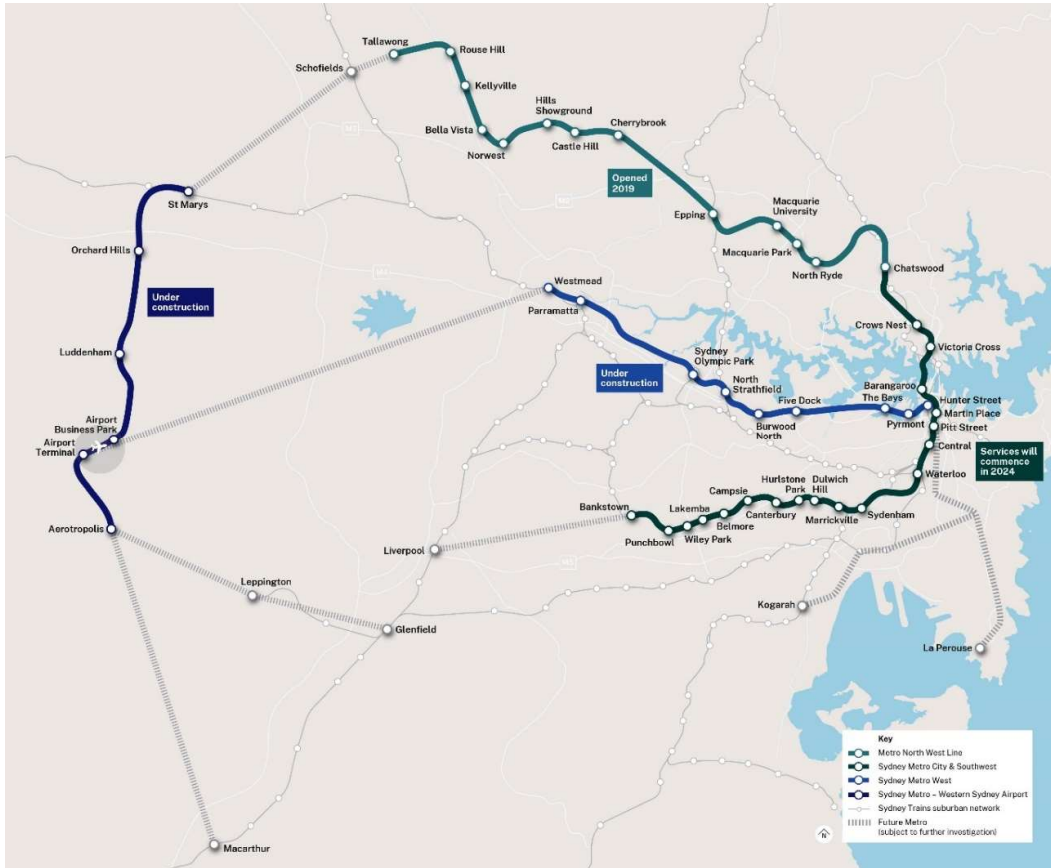
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

INQUIRY INTO CRITICAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTING THE WESTERN SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND WESTERN SYDNEY AEROTROPOLIS.

Supplementary question: Ms Alison Dench

Question on Notice:

North-south connection by rail. How will extending the train line from Leppington to the Airport, Schofields to Tallawong on the metro, Tallawong to St Marys and the North South rail line connection to Macarthur ensure equity?



Ref: <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/>

Extending the rail infrastructure in Western Sydney, including from Leppington to Western Sydney Airport (WSA), Schofields to Tallawong on the metro, Tallawong to St Marys and the North South rail line connection to Macarthur is crucial for promoting equity and improving residents' quality of life. It is more than 'build it and they will come'; build it now because people are already here. These rail extensions are not merely infrastructural projects but catalysts for equitable development in Western Sydney.

These expansions will significantly enhance accessibility to essential services and opportunities, addressing longstanding disparities in transport access across the region.

Immediate action to prioritise these extensions is essential. The current public transport network in Sydney heavily focuses on the CBD, leaving Western Sydney with inadequate connectivity between its growing centres. This deficiency forces many residents into car

dependency, exacerbating socio-economic divides as costs like fuel and tolls rise¹. However, this shift will only be feasible if public transport is made as available, frequent, and convenient as it is in the Eastern Harbour City. It is essential to acknowledge that inadequate transport accessibility remains a significant barrier to social inclusion and equitable access to opportunity in Western Sydney.

Studies reveal stark discrepancies in access to jobs, education, healthcare, and social support between different suburbs of Sydney^{2,3}, underscoring a stark divide between the haves and have-nots. Mapping of inequality reveals that some suburbs in Greater Sydney enjoy up to 10 times greater access to jobs, education, healthcare, and social support compared to the most disadvantaged areas⁴ such as St Marys. By extending the metro lines and integrating St Marys into the broader rail network, we can alleviate these disparities and foster economic growth.⁵

Investing in public transport infrastructure also supports economic stimulus efforts in Western Sydney, connecting residents to major employment hubs such as the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and the Sydney CBD. As the region's population rapidly expands, these expansions are critical for accommodating growth sustainably and improving regional connectivity.

Insufficient connectivity and public transport infrastructure in Western Sydney limit the ability of highly skilled, qualified, and culturally diverse workers to access suitable job opportunities and resources effectively^{6,7}.

There is a noticeable imbalance in infrastructure spending, with a predominant focus on motorways and roads over essential investments in heavy and light rail, footpaths, shared pathways, and cycle lanes. Moreover, reducing reliance on cars through enhanced public transport options not only alleviates congestion and reduces environmental impact but also enhances social inclusion by providing more accessible and reliable transportation for all residents⁸. This skewed approach towards car-centric infrastructure disproportionately benefits affluent areas⁹, exacerbating socio-economic divides within the Western Sydney region¹⁰.

A concentration of low-income households in outer-urban areas, coupled with poor public transport infrastructure, means that people least able to afford private transport are also living

¹ <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/content/dam/digital/images/centre-for-western-sydney/WesternSydneyProgressandProspects.pdf>

² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-11-11/study-reveals-sydneys-public-transport-blackspots/4365242>

³ ianhong(Cecilia) Xia, Joshua Nesbitt, Rebekah Daley, Arfanara Najnin, Todd Litman, Surya Prasad Tiwari, A multi-dimensional view of transport-related social exclusion: A comparative study of Greater Perth and Sydney, Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, Volume 94, 2016, Pages 205-221, ISSN 0965-8564, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2016.09.009>.

⁴ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/inequality-map-reveals-surprising-dividing-lines-of-sydney-s-spatial-wealth-20211216-p59i15.html>

⁵ <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/content/dam/digital/images/centre-for-western-sydney/WesternSydneyProgressandProspects.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/content/dam/digital/images/centre-for-western-sydney/CfWS-Untapped-Talent-Oct-22-FINAL.pdf>

⁷ https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/content/dam/digital/images/centre-for-western-sydney/Unlimited_Potential.pdf

⁸ Stanley J.K, Hensher D.A., Stanley J.R 2022 Place-based disadvantage, social exclusion and the value of mobility, Transportation Research Part A: Policy & Practice, Vol 160 June 2022 pgs 11-133 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2022.04.005>

⁹ https://mckellinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/McKell_Super-Funding-Infrastructure.pdf

¹⁰ Greater Cities Commission. <https://greatercities.au/pulse-of-greater-sydney-2020/pi-2-30-minute-city>

in the areas with the most inadequate public transport services¹¹. Investing in smaller public transport projects in transport-disadvantaged, urban-fringe suburbs can yield tangible socio-economic benefits, including lower crime rates, increased employment, improved health outcomes, and enhanced social inclusion. It is crucial to integrate such benefits into the cost-benefit analyses of public transport projects^{12 13} to ensure a fairer distribution of resources.

These rail extensions are pivotal for reducing inequality in Western Sydney by improving access to education, employment, and essential services. They will support healthier communities, economic efficiency, and overall regional development. Let's build upon what's already here to ensure equitable distribution of resources, meeting the needs of all who are with us now.

The implementation of new public transport infrastructure and the connection of rail infrastructure, such as extending the train line from Leppington to the Airport, Schofield to Tallawong on the metro, Tallawong to St Marys, and the North South rail line connection to Macarthur is imperative to bridge existing vulnerability gaps and promote more equitable access to opportunities across the Western Sydney region. Continued investment and strategic planning in these projects are essential to realising the full potential of Western Sydney as a thriving metropolitan area.

For further details on the impact and necessity of these infrastructure projects, I invite you to review my detailed submission to the Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts, September 2023, Inquiry into and report on the current and future public transport needs for Western Sydney.

In conclusion, these expansions are essential to address existing inequalities in the region.

These initiatives are pivotal and summarised for the following reasons:

1. St Marys serves as **an important metropolitan transport interchange** and is slated to undergo revitalisation, becoming a strategic centre. The extension of the rail lines will integrate St Marys into the broader transport network, stimulating economic growth and improving accessibility for Western Sydney residents.
2. The extension of the rail lines **supports major economic stimulus** efforts in Western Sydney, fostering future employment growth by providing efficient transport links to employment hubs like the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and the Sydney CBD.
3. With Western Sydney currently home to 2 million people and undergoing rapid growth, expanded public transport options are essential to **support the existing population and accommodate future growth** sustainably. It is more than 'build it and they will come'; build it now because people are already here.
4. Enhancing rail connections across Greater Western Sydney **improves overall regional connectivity**, facilitating easier movement of people between schools, communities, hospitals, and businesses.

¹¹ https://aifs.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/rs4_2.pdf

¹² <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-03/SMWSA%20Evaluation%20Summary.pdf>

¹³ Alison Ziller & Peter Phibbs (2003) Integrating social impacts into cost benefit analysis: a participative method: case study: the NSW area assistance scheme, Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal, 21:2, 141-146, DOI: 10.3152/147154603781766365

5. Currently, a significant portion of residents (74%) rely on cars for commuting, leading to congestion and environmental impact. The new rail connections will **reduce road congestion, lower travel times, and promote a healthier environment**.
6. Residents will gain **improved access to educational opportunities, employment centres, and essential services**, thereby enhancing social inclusion and reducing disparities in access.
7. The extensions, particularly from St Marys to Tallawong, are **critical for residents in socioeconomically challenged suburbs**, providing access to high-value jobs and educational hubs previously inaccessible without efficient public transport. Access to safe public transport is a social determinant of health^{14 15 16}. St Marys/North St Marys are in the bottom 5-10 percent of most disadvantaged suburbs¹⁷. Additionally, the link will establish a fast public transport connection for businesses to the Western Sydney International Airport, Aerotropolis and Sydney CBD. Areas with high historic disadvantage correlate with lower infrastructure provision^{18 19}.
8. Completing the missing links in the metro network of Western Sydney will **significantly enhance city shaping efforts**, ensuring comprehensive connectivity across the region and supporting planned growth initiatives.
9. Addressing the inequities in transport access is **crucial for improving public health outcomes and reducing social exclusion**. Accessible public transport promotes physical activity, reduces stress, and lowers the economic burden on households.
10. By investing in fast rail connections, Western Sydney can achieve synergistic growth of interconnected centres, **fostering economic efficiency** through enhanced labour markets and shared resources.

If further information or clarification is required, please contact me on 0408651923 or at allydench@gmail.com

Regards



Ally Dench

30 June 2024

¹⁴ https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44749/9789241502580_eng.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/social-determinants-of-health>

¹⁶ Brown, V., Barr, A., Scheurer, J. et al. Better transport accessibility, better health: a health economic impact assessment study for Melbourne, Australia. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act* 16, 89 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-019-0853-y>

¹⁷ <https://atlas.id.com.au/penrith/seifa-index>

¹⁸ https://mckellinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/McKell_Super-Funding-Infrastructure.pdf

¹⁹ Hurni A., Transport and social exclusion in Western Sydney -

https://australasiantransportresearchforum.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2005_Hurni.pdf