

Online questionnaire report: Inquiry into public transport needs in Western Sydney

As part of its inquiry into public transport needs in Western Sydney, Portfolio Committee 6, Transport and the Arts, launched an online questionnaire to help enable public participation in an efficient and accessible way.

The questionnaire was not intended as a statistically valid, random survey. Like the submission process, respondents self-selected in choosing to participate. This means that respondents were not a representative sample of the New South Wales population, but rather interested members of the public who volunteered their time to have a say. It should be noted that some participants reside outside of New South Wales.

The questionnaire was complementary to and did not replace the usual submission process. The submission portal was also available to individuals and organisations who wished to provide a more detailed response to the inquiry's terms of reference. In this regard, some respondents may have completed the questionnaire and also made a submission.

Questions

The questionnaire comprised 12 questions. This included background information about the respondents including their contact details, and the capacity in which they responded to the questionnaire.

A mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions sought the views of respondents on:

- which type of public transport they use and what type of public transport is available to them where they live
- how often they use public transport and their overall satisfaction with public transport services in Western Sydney
- if they use or access public transport services in Western Sydney on weekends, weekdays or both
- their primary purpose for using public transport such as work, study or recreational purposes.

The full list of questions is at Appendix 1.

Responses to questions

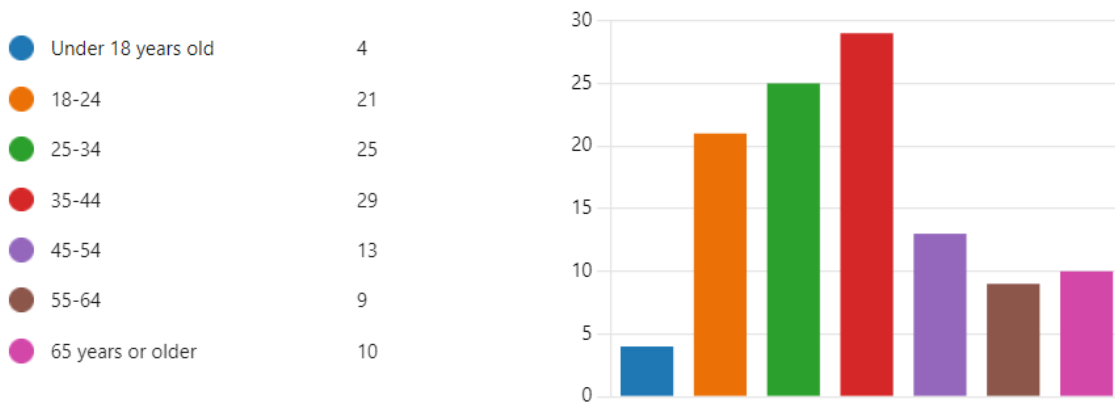
The questionnaire was open from 16 August 2023 to 18 September 2023 and received a total of 111 responses.

A sample of answers and summaries of responses are provided for each question below. The samples have been selected to represent the various viewpoints expressed in the responses.

Background

The majority of respondents were aged over 25 with the highest rate of respondents in the age bracket of 35-44. Only four responses were made by people under the age of 18 to this questionnaire.

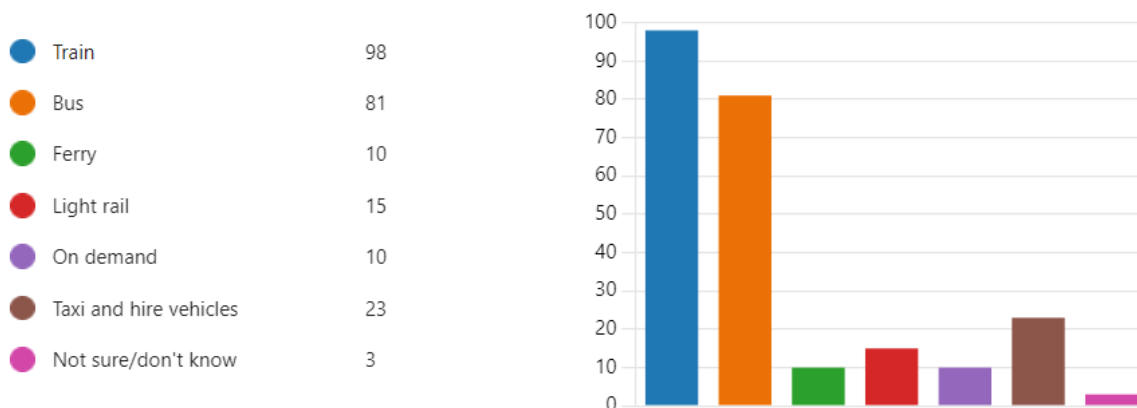
Q4 What is your age?



Which type of public transport do you use and is available where you live?

Most respondents indicated that they utilise train services in Western Sydney (97 responses). Bus services (80 responses) represented the second highest response for public transport services. The least used public transport service is ferry services and on demand services (both with 10 responses) from the questionnaire.

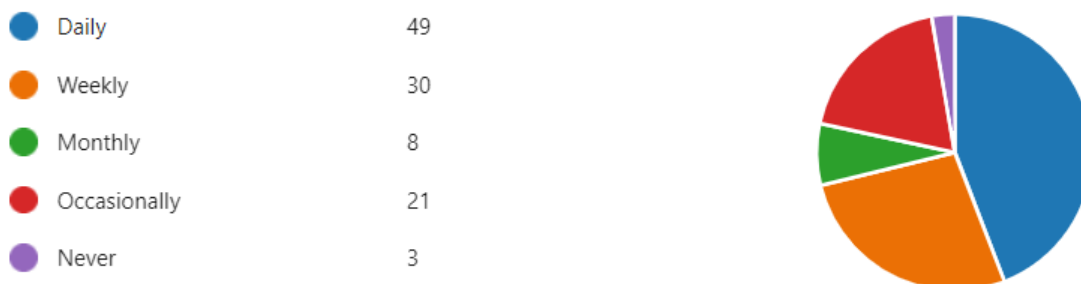
Q5 Which type of public transport do you use and is available where you live?



How often do you currently use, or access public transport services in Western Sydney?

Most respondents who answered this question indicated they use or access public transport services daily. However, some respondents indicated that they use or access public transport services weekly (30 responses at 44 per cent). Only three respondents (3 per cent) indicated that they never use or access public transport services in Western Sydney.

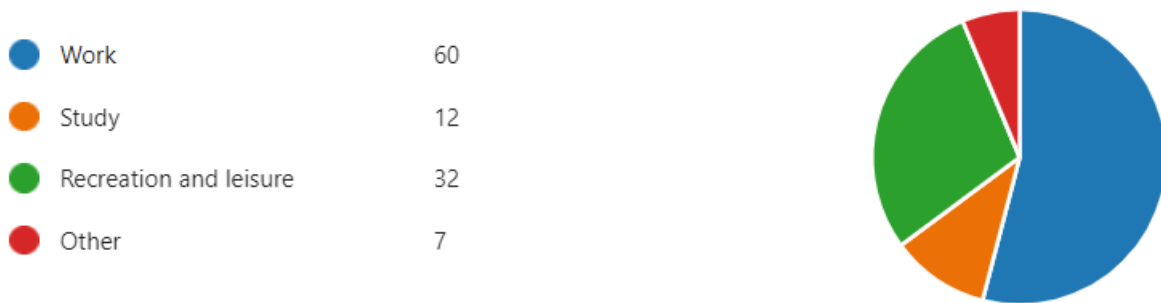
Q6 How often do you currently use, or access public transport services in Western Sydney?



What is your primary purpose for using public transport services in Western Sydney?

Most respondents indicated that they use public transport services in Western Sydney for the purposes of a work commute (60 responses at 54 per cent). The use of public transport for recreation and leisure purposes (32 responses at 29 per cent) was second highest.

Q8 What is your primary purpose for using public transport services in Western Sydney?



In general how satisfied are you with the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Western Sydney?

A majority of respondents to this multiple-choice question were either dissatisfied (51 responses at 46 per cent) or very dissatisfied (19 responses at 17 per cent) with the availability of public transport in Western Sydney (63 per cent combined). 25 respondents (23 per cent) were neutral in their opinion of the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Western Sydney.

Q10 In general, how satisfied are you with the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Western Sydney?



Please explain the reason(s) for your answer to question 10 (satisfaction levels)

An observed theme from the responses received (71 respondents) was that the availability of public transport services in Western Sydney was lacking with 51 respondents answering that they are 'dissatisfied', while 20 respondents are 'very dissatisfied' with the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Western Sydney. Other free text responses to this question were varied in response to a dissatisfaction with having to connect to rail services via bus services and comments that bus routes are too long, unreliable, late, or too infrequent. A selection of answers to this question regarding train and bus services is provided below:

- "The buses come though Willmot so infrequently and often the buses are diverted elsewhere. This community is not prioritised and public transport is unreliable."
- "Bus routes are too long, impacting on the reliability of buses, especially to and from major train stations. My closest Metro station does not have a bus line or shuttle bus that can get me between home and the Metro station. I need to change my travel patterns in order to save money on commuting. Weekend services are not sufficient for efficient travel. Trackwork often impacts travel on my train line."
- "A lack of heavy rail within Western Sydney makes it not very efficient to travel without a car. Buses are too slow and bus routes are too windy and inefficient."
- "Lack of express trains to CBD from Liverpool. The T5 line needs to have 8 carriage trains during peak hour. More buses (in frequency) and increase in location of bus stops, I walk 10mins to a bus stop after/before a 30min bus journey."
- "There needs to be more bus stops to be able to walk to. I drive to the train station as the buses aren't frequent enough and it's a 20min walk to my closest bus stops. A 10-minute walk would be better. The bus also would take longer and add to my already long commute to the city for work."
- "Better coverage is needed so that short trips and journeys I don't need to complete by car. I should be able to use active transportation alongside public transportation to do a majority of my day-to-day errands."

Some comments on the train network are provided below:

- "Areas on the train network are reasonable, but frequencies and speed can be low. Major destinations like Liverpool and Parramatta should have trains more often off-peak and on weekends. Destinations off the rail network are almost always very poorly connected - and the land use in much of Western Sydney is less clustered along rail corridors compared to the rest of the Metro area. Bus services are exceptionally poor and circuitous which means driving is the only choice. The poor bus connections also mean that even though a train may be a reasonable option, if the last 2-3km of the trip (using a connecting bus) is too inefficient the whole journey needs to be taken by car."
- "The distance to the western Sydney stations is too big for most western Sydney residents, the train network coverage is poor. The new western Sydney Metro only will have 3 stations in western Sydney (all next to existing stations) which is appalling".

- "Lack of express trains to CBD from Liverpool. The T5 line needs to have 8 carriage trains during peak hour. More buses (in frequency) and increase in location of bus stops, I walk 10mins to a bus stop after/before a 30min bus journey."

Conclusion

The online questionnaire has been a valuable tool to efficiently gather the views of interested stakeholders and members of the public on the issues raised in the terms of reference. The information gathered through the questionnaire will inform committee members and will be reflected in the inquiry report. The committee may also use the responses to support its findings and conclusions.

Appendix 1: List of questions

1. Name
2. Email address
3. Postcode
4. What is your age?
5. Which type of public transport do you use and is available where you live? (Please select all that apply)
 - a. Train
 - b. Bus
 - c. Ferry
 - d. Light rail
 - e. On demand
 - f. Taxi and hire vehicles.
 - g. Not sure/don't know
6. How often do you currently use, or access, public transport services in Western Sydney?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Occasionally
 - e. Never
7. When do you use, or access, public transport services in Western Sydney?
 - a. Weekdays only
 - b. Weekends only
 - c. Weekdays and weekends
8. What is your primary purpose for using public transport services in Western Sydney? (Please select one answer below)
 - a. Work
 - b. Study
 - c. Recreation and leisure
 - d. Other
9. If you do not use public transport in Western Sydney, why not? (Please select all that apply)
 - a. I drive my own private vehicle
 - b. Affordability of fares
 - c. Location of routes and services (i.e. are they located too far?)
 - d. Does not run on the dates and times that I need.
 - e. Service reliability
 - f. Accessibility
 - g. Safety
 - h. I walk/ride
 - i. Other

10. In general, how satisfied are you with the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Western Sydney?
 - a. Very satisfied
 - b. Satisfied
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Dissatisfied
 - e. Very dissatisfied
11. Please explain your answer to question 10.
12. Do you have any additional views on the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Western Sydney?