

Submission  
No 3

## INQUIRY INTO WESTERN SYDNEY SCIENCE PARK AND AEROTROPOLIS DEVELOPMENTS

**Organisation:** NSW Plumbing Trades Employees Union and Plumbing Industry  
Climate Action Centre

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31 July 2024

The Secretariat  
Public Accounts and Works Committee  
NSW Legislative Council

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Dear Secretariat

### **Inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments**

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Public Accounts and Works Committee's Inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments.

When the former Government announced the proposed Aerotropolis Development and the adjacent Western Sydney Science Park (2022), Industry was strongly supportive. We note that for a range of reasons, progressing the development has been challenging, but we are encouraged by the Minns Government's moves to re-organise the project oversight arrangements with a view to accelerating project progress.

The rapidly growing population of Western Sydney and the residents of New South Wales more broadly, need the infrastructure, housing and job opportunities the development will deliver. Under the previous Government, the projects, which are amongst the largest infrastructure and building projects in Australia, were beset by slow decision making. We want to see these vital projects get moving, which is why we strongly support the moves by the Minns Government to overhaul the project oversight arrangements which we are confident will help put an end to years of costly obstruction and frustrating delays.

We think these developments have significant merit and should be progressed. The Aerotropolis Development and the adjacent Western Sydney Science Park are important developments for the community and economy of Greater Western Sydney, the heart of one of the most heavily populated, geographically expansive and culturally diverse regions in Australia. The developments will provide additional housing (upwards of 10,000 homes), employment (forecast by the NSW Government to be 100,000 plus) and public amenity and infrastructure to the region. The Aerotropolis Development is expected to generate thousands of jobs across various sectors, from aviation to logistics, green hydrogen, water recycling and technology.





With the Western Sydney Airport scheduled to open in 2026, the region will become a major freight, logistics and industrial hub. The project aims to foster innovation, research and development, attracting businesses and educational institutions which we think has real potential to bring skills, jobs and opportunity to the region.

The development plans emphasize sustainability, green spaces, and efficient resource use, which we also strongly support. Constructing such a significant multi-use precinct from the ground up also provides an important opportunity to utilise and incorporate leading edge innovations in building design, as well as water and energy efficiency.

We support the integrated, end to end nature of the planned \$5B Sydney Science Park and think there is value in bringing together research, education and residential and commercial development. This includes a proposal to incorporate a major wastewater facility to be operated by Sydney Water. The hub is expected to produce 1.2 million litres of recycled water each day – enough for around 10,000 people for toilet flushing, clothes washing, watering gardens and public open spaces. Over time, capacity is expected to grow to around 2.4 million litres a day. Water is our most precious resource and we strongly support projects which use innovation and new technology to create new ways of using and sharing water across the community. A water efficiency project of this scale could act as a blueprint for the continued large-scale development of recycled water.

The plans for the Western Sydney Science Park incorporate a Western Sydney Hydrogen Hub. The hub plans to leverage the Sydney Water wastewater treatment. The proximity of this treatment plant to the mooted hydrogen hub could support producing renewable hydrogen and green gas from the waste material.

The idea is that the Western Sydney Hydrogen Hub will be used as a “testing ground” for researchers, educators, industry leaders and government for new and emerging hydrogen technologies.

The Industry of which we are a key part, is a very strong supporter of water efficiency, including re-cycling and we think green hydrogen will have a significant role to play in the NSW energy mix going forward. We think the Aerotropolis and Science Park Developments provide an opportunity to research, develop and importantly incorporate, new innovations in both water and energy into the built environment and we strongly support this aspect of the proposals.

The proposed developments are complex building projects, involving the integration of multiple elements, systems, and components. It is vitally important that the various buildings and construction elements within the planned mixed-use precincts are constructed safely, and to a level which makes them compliant with relevant building codes and standards and which protects consumers. This is also relevant when it comes to the various complex services and systems which move water, energy, gas and hot and cold air around those buildings. If the environmental benefits of the proposed developments are to be realised in terms of water and energy efficiency, the systems must be designed and installed correctly, need to integrate with the other systems in a building and need to be properly serviced and maintained.



This requires a skilled workforce, trained and competent in the contemporary systems and techniques in heating and cooling technology, solar heat pump systems, water capture, storage and recycling, and how to work safely with hydrogen or biogas. Obtaining and maintaining current skills, which enable practitioners to utilise the latest systems safely, requires current, and contemporary training, for both new and existing practitioners. Industry, through the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre and with the support of the NSW Government is already delivering this type of high end, sophisticated Industry training (which is training not delivered by the TAFE sector), through our facilities at Glenwood. In areas like medical gas training, hydrogen and fire protection, Industry is uniquely equipped to deliver and with additional funding support, we could increase delivery to meet the demand arising from projects like the Aerotropolis and Science Park Developments.

A key consideration, in the context of how best to deliver the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Developments (or any major project) is quality and compliance. As highlighted in the Shergold Weir Report (2018) and subsequent inquiries and reviews, the construction sector (in NSW and other jurisdictions) has been characterised in recent years by unacceptable rates of non-compliance and failure, leading to some very unsatisfactory consumer outcomes.

How successful or otherwise the proposed developments ultimately are, will depend to a large extent on the quality of the construction which, we argue, is directly linked to the level of regulatory oversight and enforcement. Quality is linked back to enforcement and the notion that Industry participants are aware that there is a probability that if they are doing the wrong thing they will be caught and that will be met with a commensurate deterrent depending on the risks involved.

Thank you once more for the opportunity to contribute to the Public Accounts and Works Committee's Inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis Developments. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our views further with the Committee or provide more information via the Secretariat as appropriate.

Yours sincerely

**Theo Samartzopoulos**  
**NSW State Secretary**