

Submission
No 7

INQUIRY INTO WESTERN SYDNEY SCIENCE PARK AND AEROTROPOLIS DEVELOPMENTS

Organisation: Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue

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Inquiry into the Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis developments

Submission by the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue

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Executive Summary

Greater Western Sydney's (GWS) population is growing rapidly. To support the current and future population and economy, this growth urgently needs to be matched by a significant increase to the number and diversity of jobs and homes.

For this reason, the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue (the Dialogue) has been a strong supporter of the Sydney Science Park since its inception in 2015. The Sydney Science Park, along with the broader Aerotropolis and Bradfield City Centre precinct, represents an opportunity to create jobs, stimulate innovation, broaden educational opportunities, and increase housing in the region.

These developments will deliver another urgent need for the region: sustainable, future-resilient urban development.

About the Dialogue

The Dialogue is a regional advocate and think tank dedicated to advancing the interests of Greater Western Sydney. It facilitates collaboration between government, business, and community leaders to address the region's challenges and opportunities.

The Dialogue promotes sustainable development, infrastructure investment, and policy innovation to enhance the quality of life for GWS's residents. Through research, events, and strategic partnerships, it aims to shape a prosperous future for the region.

Key points

Housing

Major developments in the Aerotropolis, such as Bradfield and Sydney Science Park are expected to provide a significant number of new homes and will benefit from continued improvements to transport infrastructure in the region. According to the NSW Government's housing targets, Greater Western Sydney needs to build 150,000 new homes over the next five years – 82 residences per day.¹ Greater Sydney is amid

¹ Analysis conducted from: 2024, NSW Government, [NSW Government Housing Targets by LGA](#)

a well-documented housing crisis. We don't have enough homes and the homes we do have are too expensive and lacking diversity.

A significant number of these homes will need to be built in GWS – a region that is expected to grow by a third over the next 20 years, with some local government areas (LGAs) looking at up to 83% increases. In comparison, Greater Sydney's entire population is projected to increase by 23%, with the non-Western Sydney LGAs absorbing only a quarter of this.²

Education

A growing population also needs to be supported by a robust skills pipeline. The Dialogue is supportive of the work that is planned to occur at Bradfield and Sydney Science Park, that is aimed to promote opportunities to grow STEM education.

Improving STEM opportunities in GWS is particularly important for gender equity in the region. The Dialogue recently found that less than 1 in 5 STEM workers, and only 11% of engineering qualification holders in Greater Western Sydney, are female.³ Hands-on experience in the region is pivotal in breaking down gender stereotypes and boosting female participation in STEM.

Maximising the opportunities of Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport

The location of the Sydney Metro – WSA stop in the Science Park will work to multiply the benefits gained from this substantial investment. Rapid connection of people into and out of the precinct will catalyse jobs creation, improve job opportunities for its future residents, and support innovation through connecting the Science Park into Bradfield City and the Aerotropolis.

Urban resilience

Developments in GWS desperately need to start implementing ways to improve environmental sustainability and urban resilience, in comparison to the status quo. Climate change is going to continue to reshape the way that we live in our cities, and within Greater Sydney, this will be particularly impactful for GWS.

Key developments such as Bradfield and Sydney Science Park are an important step towards improving the way that GWS does urban design. The precincts will utilise urban greening and innovative water use and conservation strategies to move GWS towards a more sustainable future.

² Analysis conducted from: 2022, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, [NSW Common Planning Assumption Projections](#)

³ Analysis conducted from: 2021, ABS Census

Recent years have highlighted the region's vulnerability to flooding and bushfires. Heat is also a quieter, yet arguably more dangerous element of climate change which will increasingly impact on the region into the future. Heat influences health outcomes, causes the more deaths than other natural disasters, and causes vulnerabilities for critical infrastructure.

In the context of heat, GWS faces a deceptively uneven playing field when compared to the rest of Sydney. While eastern Sydney, the Central Coast, and the Illawarra all reap the benefits of coastal breezes, Western Sydney is regularly the unfortunate recipient of warm westerly winds from central Australia. Over the 2019-20 summer, Penrith was recorded as being the hottest place on Earth, with temperatures reaching 48.9C.

Geographical features combined with declining rates of tree canopy coverage across most LGAs, the proliferation of new developments incorporating copious amounts of hard, reflective surfaces and dark coloured amenity, such as asphalt roads, the urban heat island effect is in rampant action throughout our region and plays a major role in the extreme temperatures experienced in Western Sydney.