



Submission to the Independent Public Inquiry Sydney's Long Term Public Transport Plan



Social Exclusion: the Transport Challenge in Western Sydney



September 2009

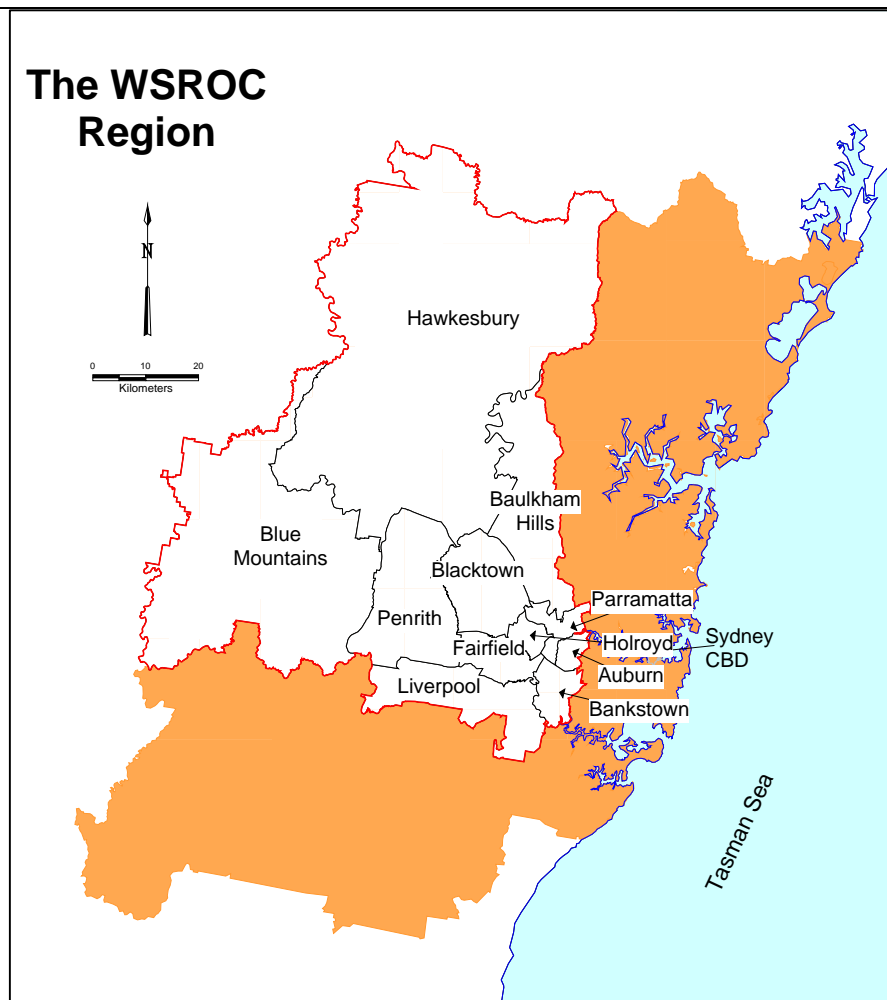
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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Greater Western Sydney (GWS), contains fourteen local government areas and houses approximately 1.8 million (42%) of the Sydney metropolitan population. The GWS region produces more than \$80 billion in economic output annually, making it Australia's third largest economy (after Sydney CBD and Melbourne). It is therefore one of Australia's most important urban regions.

It is proposed that GWS will accommodate over half of the population growth of NSW over the next 25 years - approximately 600,000 people. Much of this growth is to be accommodated in the North-West and South-West Growth Centres. The planning for these Growth Centres has been undertaken on the basis that there will be significant investment in rail and other infrastructure to support the very large population growth involved. Many families are now questioning the true economics of 'cheap' housing on the urban fringe in light of increasing transport costs and the length of the daily commute and, without adequate and significantly enhanced public transport infrastructure and services, it will be increasingly difficult to persuade families to move into the new growth areas being developed at Sydney's North-West and South-West margins.

Submissions prepared by WSROC over the past five years, have demonstrated exceptional levels of car dependency; location disadvantage due to the inadequate provision of physical and social infrastructure (including public transport); increased levels of mortgage stress and default; and problems associated with the ageing of the population. These factors have contributed to increasing social exclusion within the region.

An environmental issue that WSROC has highlighted over many years is the poor air quality in the Sydney basin which is adding to an unacceptable increase in the incidence of many illnesses, threatening the region's sustainability and the health and well-being of its population. This air quality issue, in part caused by the geographic nature of the Sydney basin, is also in large part a function of the inadequacy of public transport and the associated very high levels of private car dependence, that jointly apply throughout the region.

For too long planning in NSW has been a fragmented, ad-hoc process undertaken by a range of government and non-government agencies often operating in complete isolation from each other. As a result many transport plans have lacked a strategic or long-term focus, have incorporated conflicting priorities and are often ambivalent in terms of specific commitments and undertakings. Plan-making has become largely marginalised from the Government's budget-setting process and has been "captured" by the State Treasury and some large agencies such as the RTA. This has been at a time when successive State and Federal Governments have become increasingly reluctant to invest in urban infrastructure, and there have been few deliverable results in either infrastructure investment or sustainability.

In Sydney there is an inequitable distribution of public transport services across the GMR. This inequity is not a simple east/west divide, but the fact that a larger proportion of disadvantaged groups in Western Sydney are at risk of transport related social exclusion (Hurni, 2006). There is sufficient evidence to show that the inequitable distribution of public transport services across urban areas has a disproportionately adverse affect on lower income households. In the outer areas of Western Sydney where public transport is less frequent and car dependency greater, lower income households have reduced access to employment and other services as well as having to bear an increased burden of transport costs.

The region's disadvantage is now being further exacerbated by the NSW November 2008 mini-budget, which involved the withdrawal of a number of very important commitments to the provision of critical transport infrastructure – infrastructure that provided the fundamental underpinning of the **Metropolitan** and **Sub-regional plans**, the **NSW State Plan** and the **Urban Transport Statement's** objectives for GWS. WSROC has consistently called upon the State Government to prioritise its commitments to Western Sydney and protect them; particularly its repeated commitments to public transport infrastructure in the region.

In the run-up to the 2007 election, the NSW Government made almost 150 specific commitments to the GWS region. In particular there was an explicit commitment made prior to the election to provide rail infrastructure in Western Sydney and specifically to the construction of the South-West and North-West Rail links. The Government further raised community expectations in March 2008, by reiterating its commitment to the South-West Rail link and replacement of the North-West Rail Link with a North-West Metro.

While much of the debate in Western Sydney has highlighted the need for the North-West and South-West Rail Links other areas such as the Blue Mountains LGA have a corresponding dependency upon good public transport. The demographics and the socio-economic profile of the mountains communities, particularly in the mid to upper mountains, increases public transport dependency. The good rail infrastructure in the Blue Mountains has in the past and continues to suffer from poor investment, reduction in services and staffing levels. The Blue Mountains Integrated Transport forum has identified priorities for improvements in service, pricing and infrastructure (for bus and rail services submitted to IPART Reviews).

Decades of under-investment, particularly in respect of public transport provision, has left the region struggling to adequately cater for the needs of its residents. Two major studies released in 2008/09 entitled: ***Socially Sustainable Urban Renewal*** (UNSW, 2008) and ***North-West and West-Central Sydney Employment Strategies*** (UWS, 2009), in which WSROC was a joint partner, have demonstrated with stark clarity that the region has not developed its economic base sufficiently over the past decade and will struggle to generate new jobs and dwellings to meet government targets and community needs.

For these reasons WSROC has been calling for a greater strategic and integrated focus on issues of urban sustainability and function. WSROC has also called for effective consultation with local communities in relation to the nature and priority of the infrastructure that is required to meet the current and future needs of the region. It is WSROC's view that at this critical time in our region's history and development, no other area of public investment has the same potential to benefit so many different aspects of urban living as investment in soundly based, appropriately prioritised and properly integrated public transport infrastructure and systems.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. WSROC welcomes the establishment of the Independent Public Inquiry established to create a Long Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney and its aim to inform the newly created NSW Transport and Infrastructure Department. An appropriate overarching authority, representing local, State and Federal interests, is urgently required to oversee the evaluation, prioritisation and integrated delivery of transport systems and infrastructure for Sydney;

2. A prioritised and integrated transport network is needed for Sydney to drive a sustainable, liveable and viable future, at a time of increased pressure from climate change, growing demand for transport resources and reduced oil reserves. Planning for this network must operate and deliver outcomes over a long term period;

3. Any transport 'blueprint' for Sydney as a matter of urgency must consider and resolve the following matters of great relevance to transport in Western Sydney:

- **Reinstatement of the South-West Rail Link as planned and the North-West Rail link. This should include the possibility that the North-West Rail Link could be constructed as a CityRail line between Epping and Rouse Hill, with an extension to the Richmond Line at Vineyard.**
- **Commencement of construction of the North-West Rail Link to the Richmond Line. One option is for the North-West Rail Link to be started as a 'spur line' from the Richmond Line at Vineyard to Rouse Hill, with construction then to proceed from Rouse Hill and Epping. This would at least establish a rail service to the Rouse Hill Town Centre.**
- **A commitment to and early construction of a public transport link between Parramatta and Epping to connect the Northern and Western Lines.**

4. Very careful consideration must be given to the maintenance and development of Sydney's overall heavy rail network. Great care must be taken to ensure that any 'metro' projects undertaken to enhance this existing system are not in fact prejudicial to its future function and viability.

In relation to the above, it should be noted that planning for both the North-West and South-West rail alignments is well advanced and the environmental assessments have also been completed. This means that work could start on these projects almost immediately. If both the North-West and South-West rail links were constructed as CityRail extensions, the Government could then explore options involving the private sector to construct metro or light rail lines in the region, including between the CBD and Epping and between Epping and Parramatta.

CONCLUSION

Community consultations undertaken in the Western Sydney region for many years have pointed to poor accessibility and transport difficulties being experienced by residents (Randolph, Pang and Hall, 2001). There is a need to increase the accessibility for all residents of the region to facilities, opportunities and services located both within and outside its boundaries. Upgrading of infrastructure is urgently required for commercial, private and public transport at an equitable cost to the established community and to ensure the adequate provision of services for new development.

A number of research projects have pointed to the issue that the socio-economic impacts of higher fuel prices are likely to be unevenly distributed across Australian cities and that it will be the most socially disadvantaged outer suburban locations where residents will be most vulnerable. It is essential that this uneven distribution of impacts is acknowledged as being a critical consideration for the future social and economic sustainability of our cities. The increasing high cost of fuel points to the need to change the pattern and mix of existing lifestyles, not just because of the adverse environmental impact of the reliance on fossil fuels, but because of the poverty and poor quality of life experienced by some individuals. National policies are needed to ensure that new development is located in areas that are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, thereby reducing reliance on the private car.

A number of recent academic research projects have highlighted the issues associated with the growing mobility and decreasing accessibility of Greater Western Sydney (GWS) and have considered the distributional effects that rising fuel costs are having on the region. These research projects have shown how 'liveability' is being endangered by threats to the environmental quality, social well-being and economic viability of the region.

In a study *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Always Do Better* (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) Professor Wilkinson concludes that inequality is the root of all of society's problems, from violent crime to teenage pregnancy and will not be solved simply by providing more money but by a more equitable distribution of resources.

WSROC has been lobbying on regional transport issues for many years. Successive State and Federal governments have failed to adequately address the public transport needs of Western Sydney's growing population.

The over-reliance on the car has heralded the replacement of 'walking cities', in which almost everyone frequently undertook exercise to a moderate degree, and created car-dependent city forms. Coupled with this, technological changes, such as automation in factories, a large increase in sedentary occupations, development of spectator sports and other forms of passive entertainment and decreased garden size have led to a substantial reduction in physical exercise and an obesity epidemic. As exercise has diminished, the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs has increased and more people are exposed to dust and fumes and chemicals in water and food. Today cities tend to amplify social isolation and disengagement from communities, contributing to the depression that may also accompany old age. Cities also can contain nodes of violence, criminality and drug dependence among the poorer, jobless and socially marginalised sub-populations. Both the level of social cohesion and the level of material assets and equity can influence the population's health overall.

The core position argued in this submission is that the resolution of Sydney's transport and infrastructure challenges needs to be undertaken on a prioritised and integrated basis. WSROC believes that such an approach is essential, and would lead to outcomes that would be in the best interests of all of Sydney, including but not limited to Western Sydney. WSROC further believes that such an approach would stimulate the very vital economic activities that rely on the development and maintenance of effective transport systems. However, if transport issues continue to be approached in isolation, as has so often been the case in the past, then Western Sydney's transport challenge will become even greater and the existing levels of socio-economic disadvantage and inequity in the region will further increase.

Sydney is Australia's pre-eminent global city and it must be able to operate efficiently and competitively, and in an equitable and sustainable manner. But as the 2006 *Moving On* report, jointly authored by the Rail, Bus and Tram Union and the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures, stated:

"An unreliable and run-down transport system threatens Sydney's position as the financial capital of Australia, and gateway to Asia and yet successive governments (State and Commonwealth) have failed to deliver solutions."

1. INTRODUCTION

On 22nd August 2009 the Sydney Morning Herald instituted an independent inquiry into Sydney's long term public transport needs. For some considerable time WSROC has been calling for the establishment of an integrated transport authority and the development of an integrated land use/transport plan for Sydney and Western Sydney. The three reference documents including the ***Discussion Paper: A Thirty Year Public Transport Plan for Sydney*** by Dr Gary Glazebrook 2009, the ***Metropolitan Strategy, 2005*** and the ***Long-Term Strategic Plan for Rail*** by Ron Christie 2001, provide important reference works.

Other valuable recently released strategic documents that help to inform the discussion include ***Fixing the Network: Better Transport for Sydney Background Paper and Discussion Paper***, Rail Bus and Tram Union June 2009 and ***Connecting with Buses: Reducing Transport Disadvantage by Supporting Bus Services in Western Sydney***, Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) position paper, August 2009.

Terms of reference

1. The Independent Public Inquiry will create a Long Term Public Transport Plan for Sydney after receiving public submissions. The plan is designed to assist both the public and future governments to make informed decisions about priorities for transport investment. The plan will cover the following topics:

- i. The expansion of public transport services and infrastructure, as well as cycle commuting infrastructure, over a 30-year planning horizon, taking into account existing transport accessibility problems and integration with future land use changes.
- ii. The most appropriate governance arrangements to guarantee the plan's longevity to remove the negative impact of single-term party politics and to optimise investments.
- iii. Key environmental sustainability issues.
- iv. Key social and economic issues.
- v. Proposals for short term and long term funding.
- vi. The cost-effectiveness of solutions, taking into account short term financial costs and benefits, and longer term environmental, congestion and other external costs and land use and accessibility benefits.

This submission draws upon a number of research projects highlighting the issues associated with the growing mobility and decreasing accessibility of Greater Western Sydney (GWS) and considers the distributional effects that rising fuel costs are having on the region. These projects have shown how 'liveability' is being endangered by threats to the environmental quality, social well-being and economic viability of GWS. It discusses the population growth proposed for the region over the next 20 years and highlights existing areas of socio-economic disadvantage. It looks at the way Federal and State Government transport policies are resulting in often unintended consequences from a regional perspective.

It examines policy options and proposes recommendations to minimise energy consumption and the adverse environmental, economic, social and health impacts of motorised travel and the need to reduce the reliance on the motor car in the region. Finally it discusses the options presented in the ***Thirty Year Public Transport Plan for Sydney*** draft discussion paper produced by Dr Gary Glazebrook in August 2009.

2. BACKGROUND

Greater Western Sydney (comprising the WSROC and MACROC regions) contains fourteen local government areas (LGAs) representing cities and shires which account for over 42% of the Sydney metropolitan population and a large area of the metropolitan fringe. It is one of Australia's most important urban regions.

The population is about 1.8 million people or 1 in 11 Australians. In 2006 GWS accounted for 43.4% of the population of metropolitan Sydney and 27.3% of the population of NSW. It is proposed (Department of Planning 2005) that Western Sydney accommodate over half of the population growth in NSW over the next 25 years - approximately 600,000 people. This compares with regions such as the Hunter and the Illawarra which will grow by an additional 100,000 people over this time.

Western Sydney is not homogeneous and in some of the larger local government areas census data averages hide pockets of severe socio-economic disadvantage (Randolph and Holloway, 2003, 2004). Many

of the 'middle ring' suburbs in the region are now the locations of some of the most disadvantaged communities in Australia. These areas are extensive and include parts of Auburn, Bankstown, Parramatta, Fairfield, Blacktown, Penrith and Liverpool. Many LGAs in the region are also experiencing continued growth pressures whilst still dealing with backlogs and the legacy of under-investment in infrastructure provision, particularly in relation to public transport.

2.1 Metropolitan Planning

Places have certain characteristics (such as the availability of healthy foods, health-affirming services and community norms) that influence healthy behaviour. Areas with high concentrations of multiple socio-economic disadvantages start to have a negative impact on the physical environment, which can result in a poverty of experience and a sense of loss and social connectedness. In areas that are socially and economically disadvantaged therefore health disadvantage is also exacerbated.

The built environment impacts people's senses, emotions, their opportunities to participate in physical activity and community and general well-being. How these places are created and shaped will affect the degree of access to and the way in which people use spaces.

Our cities have grown rapidly but without the foresight or incentive to consider the long-term impacts on human well-being and health. Urbanisation also reflects the basic human instincts orientated towards social existence and the sharing of experiences. The human habitat has been modified by car dependence and urbanisation, the form and microclimate of our cities has now been altered and communities are now experiencing mass consumerism, the social anomalies of inequalities, changing demographics and environmental degradation.

In planning for the Western Sydney region there is a need to consider the impact of social structure, place and time on people's health-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. It is important to note that Western Sydney is still a disadvantaged place. Research undertaken by the University of Western Sydney's Urban Frontiers Program ***A New Vision for Western Sydney – Options for 21st Century Governance***, April 2002 stressed the following:

"Decades of under-investment of policy and fiscal resources in Western Sydney by successive State and Federal Governments have left many of the region's cultural, social and environmental needs unmet. The legacy of this 'undernourished' development includes mounting social and environmental problems, including hardening pockets of poverty and social exclusion, a dwindling and fraying public sphere and ever-increasing ecological stress"

The report also pointed to *"newly forming pockets of disadvantage in older suburbs outside public housing estates"*. The authors noted that a lack of access to life enhancing opportunities (hospitals, parks, good schools and public transport) was resulting in location disadvantage that *"may severely diminish the ability of relatively affluent households to make use of and enjoy their income"*.

The authors mapped the census-based Index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage at the local collector district (CD) scale. This showed that disadvantage was widely associated with CDs in the middle and outer suburbs of Sydney, especially to the West and South-West. It was also stressed that 'severe disadvantage' was not the sole preserve of the larger public housing estates. Large tracts of Western Sydney standing out as locations of severe disadvantage having very low proportions of public housing.

Some suburbs have certain economic and social characteristics that may be called 'multiple deprivations'. While the characteristics are not necessarily interdependent or causally related they tend to congregate in specific urban environments.

Studies of established urban areas of cities worldwide have furnished ample evidence that residents' 'state of well-being' is affected both by their immediate surroundings (living conditions in their own home) **and** the quality of the physical and social environment they share with others. These studies have shown that it is the social environment – activities and relationships – that are every bit as important to people as the character and condition of the buildings, streetscape and open space. Much of the satisfaction and dissatisfaction with a place is associated with the changes that have taken place over time.

In 2002 the World Bank noted:

"Inability to access jobs and services is an important element of the social exclusion which defines urban poverty. Accessibility is important not only for its role in facilitating regular and stable income

earning employment, but also as a part of the social capital which maintains the social relations forming the safety net of poor people in many societies.

The urban poor face a complex trade-off between residential location, travel distance and travel mode, in an attempt to minimise the social exclusion associated with low earning potential."

Socio-economic disadvantage has many dimensions and is rarely the result of one single factor. The lack of an integrated approach to solving complex urban problems contributes to socio-economic disadvantage and poverty in the region.

The dispersed, low density nature of many Western Sydney communities means that many older residents are isolated from basic community services. This situation is going to get worse as the population ages, people can no longer drive and access to basic human services, particularly public transport, is poor.

Places with high concentrations of multiple socio-economic disadvantages start to have a negative impact on the physical environment which can result in a poverty of experience and a sense of loss and social connectedness. In areas that are socially and economically disadvantaged therefore health disadvantage is also exacerbated.

2.2 Urban Densification

All the major city plans in Australia seek to achieve higher urban densities to ensure the built environment performs better in terms of 'triple bottom line' outcomes. High density living, intensification of uses and focusing growth of homes and jobs in suburban Transit-Orientated Development (TODs) are considered important driving principles in current land use planning. The re-tooling of our cities will require a huge investment in new transportation infrastructure and substantial rebuilding of the urban landscape and major changes in the way we move around our cities.

However, research (Randolph and Troy, 2007) indicates that moving people and jobs closer together in denser centres does not guarantee a net reduction in overall inter-urban movement. Engineering a city in this way does not necessarily lead to more sustainable outcomes and could be socially regressive. High density buildings do not always perform in a more sustainable way than lower densities.

While some town centres have good transport links, in practice most of the jobs available to the residents of the West-Central sub-region are either located in local suburbs or dispersed across Western Sydney. Some may travel into the Sydney CBD, but the vast majority does not. Most are simply crowding onto already congested suburban roads. There is therefore a huge infrastructure deficit that this region has suffered that needs fixing, even before a higher density population is accommodated.

2.3 Urban Transport Needs

The provision of economically efficient urban systems, where the time and energy required to move people and goods is minimised, contributes to the development of a more productive region. In contrast an urban form that produces congestion pressures, delays, capacity constraints, higher energy costs and other inefficiencies can substantially erode the economic advantages of undertaking business activities. European and American examples have shown that the land use changes associated with the development of rapid transit systems can increase economic capacity, while at the same time lessening the environmental impact in the transport sector.

In 2000-2001 338 million tonnes of goods and commodities were moved into, through, or within Sydney at annual growth rate of 7.4%. Most (86%) of this freight is moved by road. Rail also plays a key role in the land transport of bulk and heavy products and accounts for 20% of containers to and from Port Botany. As industrial areas expand in Greater Western Sydney the east-west transport task is expected to grow rapidly.

Moving more freight movement onto the rail system, and the huge potential this affords in freeing highway capacity (and multiple environmental, safety and economic benefits) should not be ignored in the development of an integrated transport plan for Sydney. A number of studies including the **Central West Transport Needs Study**, the impacts from the Clarence Colliery and removal of the rail subsidy for fuel and the Mount Victoria to Lithgow upgrade, all point to a future increase in freight vehicles.

Transport systems (modes, networks and service levels) are internationally recognised as being key determinants of sustainability and well-being in the community. Vehicle emissions affect air quality and greenhouse gas concentrations. Whether people are prepared to walk and/or cycle is strongly influenced by

how safe they feel doing so, which is determined by vehicle congestion, speed and road design. Commuting affects stress levels and available time spent with family and recreation. Public transport modes and service levels affect all of those things.

Sydney is a major international city and must compete on the world stage as Australia's pre-eminent global city. This means that it must be able to operate efficiently and competitively as well as in a sustainable and equitable manner. In turn, the success of Western Sydney is critical to the economic success of Sydney and through it the nation. Greater Western Sydney is Australia's third largest regional economy, yet the region is suffering from increasing growth pressures as its population increases and economic activity expands.

WSROC is firmly of the view that future airport needs should be addressed as part of a comprehensive process that considers all of Australia's economic and transport needs. The new Department of Infrastructure Australia has been conducting an audit of the nation's transport, energy, communications and water infrastructure in order to produce an Infrastructure Priority List to guide future public and private investment decisions. Such an initiative is fully supported.

Aviation issues do not exist in isolation from other transport and environmental issues and have a major impact on the community in many ways as noted in this submission. WSROC is of the view that the success of a national aviation policy should be considered in the context of this audit, taking into account a prioritised and integrated approach to the planning and implementation of all the issues involved. WSROC is firmly of the view that future airport needs should be addressed as part of a comprehensive process that considers all of Australia's economic and transport needs.

2.4 Key Workers

Overseas experience highlights the problems cities face when poorer people are no longer able to live there. For example during the 1970's London Transport became aware that, due to a lack of affordable housing the public transport services (buses, trains and the London Underground system) were all grinding to a halt due to a lack of service workers to run the systems.

In the UK, when Gordon Brown was Chancellor of the Exchequer he commissioned some research on the economic impacts on the UK if they switched to using the Euro. What this research showed was that, again due to housing affordability issues, the UK would be severely economically disadvantaged compared to the rest of Europe if it continued to be unable to ensure that essential workers could afford to live in the major cities. The lever that made UK politicians address the affordability issue was the loss of key workers.

In a keynote paper, presented to the NCOSS/WSCF/UWS/WSROC **Getting There** forum in October 2005, Dr Karen Lucas from the Transport Studies Group at the University of Westminster and advisor to the Blair Government on social exclusion, highlighted how seriously the UK Government are now taking this issue.

She spoke about how the Government identified social exclusion as:

"A combination of linked problems such as unemployment, low skills, poor housing, family breakdown, high crime rates that lead people or places to be excluded from the mainstream."

She highlighted the role of transport in creating or exacerbating social exclusion, with particular target groups affected. Yet transport had failed to be included as a policy area in the UK Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, despite being identified as a significant problem in a number of reports.

In 2001 a Social Exclusion Unit Study for the UK Prime Minister identified the extent of the problem and its implications for other areas of welfare policy delivery. It identified two areas of costs as follows:

- **Costs for individuals and communities**
 - Cutting people off from services that others take for granted;
 - Leading to poor health, learning and employment outcomes; and
 - Can lead to crime, anti-social behaviour and loss of community cohesion.
- **Cost for the State**
 - Increases welfare benefits, national health, education and social services expenditure; and
 - Makes it harder to deliver key Government welfare policies.

International studies, particularly those from the UK, point to a strong evidence base that a lack of suitable and affordable public transport can be a significant barrier to participation in work and education and access

to health services, shopping and social, cultural and recreational activities for socially disadvantaged people. In 2003 the Social Exclusion Unit in a report to the Government, entitled ***Making the Connections***, focused particularly on access to those opportunities that have the most impact on life chances, such as work, learning and healthcare.

The UK's Social Exclusion Unit defines social exclusion as:

"The cumulative and reinforcing effect on people or areas which experience a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, low skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime rates, poor health and family dysfunction."

It has also been described as occurring where people are prevented or restricted from participating fully in society, or in the production or consumption of goods and services, from political engagement and from social interaction.

In Western Sydney people have to travel more to facilitate their daily activities than those living in other parts of Sydney. The community is highly car dependent and lacks access to local facilities and services. People's lives and working patterns are becoming increasingly complex and it is recognised that access to public transport and other essential human services and facilities is essential.

The more that poorer people are forced to live away from the centre of cities and move to the urban fringe - away from the places which contain the necessary facilities and services to support their lifestyles - the greater the pressure is placed on the environment. Population expansion impacts adversely on air and water quality and puts the region's natural environment under considerable pressure. Not least because Sydney's \$1 billion agricultural industries, which supply much of the region's fresh produce, are now under threat.

2.5 The Role of Equality in Health and Sustainability Outcomes

On 2nd September 2009, at a public seminar hosted by the UWS Urban Research Centre and the Sydney West Area Health Service, a leading health epidemiologist Professor Richard Wilkinson addressed the role of relative equality in health and sustainability outcomes. The Professor was the co-author of the World Health Organisation's publication: ***The Social Determinants of Health - The Solid Facts***.

Prof. Wilkinson spoke on his research which shows that health is related to income differences ***within*** rich societies but not to those ***between*** them. His study ***The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Always Do Better*** (Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, Penguin 2009) concludes that inequality is the root of all of society's problems, from violent crime to teenage pregnancy.

Income Gap League Table

According to the findings the richest fifth of the UK population have an income 7.2 times greater than the poorest fifth and the gap is only slightly less in Australia. This places Australia fifth in the developed world in terms of income inequality, exceeded only by Singapore (1), USA (2), Portugal (3) and the UK (4). At the lowest end of the inequality gap were Japan (23), Finland (22), Norway (21), Sweden (20), Denmark (19) and Belgium (18). The report argues that the wealth of nations has little bearing on a great list of social issues, but in almost every case there is a link with inequality. Unequal societies have more prisoners, more mental illness and more illiteracy; often many times more.

Economic Divides, Social Wounds

The study shows the correlation between less equality and more social problems is very high. Based on 10 indicators of social sickness including: homicide, infant mortality and lack of trust; (counting each as equally important) it would appear the more unequal countries have more problems. For example Britain had the second highest rate of young girls giving birth, after the US – higher than the rest of Europe.

The Widening Gap

The research shows that inequality was compressed during the 1974-1979 British Labour Government, but rose alarmingly under the Thatcher years and by 2006 it was close to a record high. The widening of the income gap since the 1980s has been the sharpest in the developed world. This is born out by findings of the ABS Census in 2006 which showed increased polarisation by income in Sydney. The richest LGA (Ku-ring-gai) had average household incomes 2.8 times those of the poorest (Fairfield) in 2006, compared to 2.6 in 2001.

Middle Class the Losers

While it is hardly news that being poor is associated with disadvantage, according to the research the affluent also miss out. Even those from the most highly educated families are more literate in the more equal countries. At every level of health and social problems (demonstrated by an index of health and social problems) - child well-being, levels of trust, prevalence of mental illness, drug use, life expectancy, infant mortality rates, adult obesity rates, educational scores, homicide rates, rates of imprisonment and parental education and more - the ranking order of 'income inequality' countries is preserved, with the more equal countries doing better.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 Location Disadvantage

The **National Housing Strategy** (1992, page 76) noted the issue of location disadvantage as follows:

"People without private transport, especially where public transport is not readily available are likely to be disadvantaged. In particular older people, young people and members of a car-owning household who cannot use the car, are more likely to have problems and/or longer travel times to services and jobs."

In 1997 Ian Burnley argued:

"To the extent that people move to outer suburbia to obtain affordable housing, such pricing trends may be socially inequitable unless strong policies to relocate employment and to develop public transport are pursued in tandem."

3.2 Rising Oil Prices

A number of commentators have noted the strong and rapid rise in the international price of oil. The ABS in 2005 reported the cost of 'automotive fuel' rose approximately 10% during the year to June 2005 and the monthly average cost for Sydney petrol rose 40% during the 21 months to September 2005. There are currently no indications that there will be a corresponding decline in fuel prices in the short term. In fact there was a sudden increase in oil prices in 2007/08 and rising concerns about global warming which resulted in a significant rise in public transport demand; highlighting the need for a more sustainable transport system for Sydney. A recent CSIRO report predicted petrol could cost \$8/litre by 2018.

The **NSW Greenhouse Plan (2005)** reported that in the last 30 years the total number of Australian cars grew three times faster than the population. In the last decade in Sydney the average VKT per vehicle has grown more than twice as fast as the population. It was also noted that there has been little improvement in the last ten years in the average fuel efficiency of vehicles and the limited gains that have been achieved are being undermined by the increasing demand for more cars.

Although opinions vary, a number of analysts suggest that global oil production will peak within the next 20 years (Sprott and Solunac 2005, Mushalik 2009). Others predict that 2005 may have been the peak year for global oil production - highlighting declining production coupled with increasing demand from China (with an increase of car sales of 15% in 2005) and India (where car sales increased by 20% in the same period).

Some commentators have noted the potential adverse scenarios that the growing gap between peak oil demand and supply will have on cities that are dependent on roads and private vehicles for urban mobility (Newman 1991). They argue that the impacts will be much greater than simply increased fuel costs but could extend into every aspect of urban economic and social life. Newman and Kenworthy (1999) have pointed to the low density nature of Australian cities contributing to poor public transport services. Others such as Mees (2000) have argued that high quality, integrated services would increase public transport patronage.

The **Metropolitan Strategy** (Department of Planning 2005) proposed to develop substantial release areas as well as significantly increasing densities. WSROC has consistently argued that both urban expansion and increased densities **must** be coupled with the provision of high quality integrated services.

3.3 Oil Vulnerability

A research paper issued by the Urban Research Program, Griffith University entitled ***Oil Vulnerability in the Australian City*** (Jago Dodson and Neil Sipe) December 2005, assessed the resilience or vulnerability of urban communities to increased fuel prices and how the socio-economic impacts will spread across different localities. Their research highlighted the fact that the middle and outer suburbs of Western Sydney are the most vulnerable to the socio-economic impact of oil price rises.

In further research, based on the 2006 Census findings, the same authors pointed to the spread of the crisis creeping inwards from the urban fringes. They noted

“...a highly regressive pattern in which the impacts of higher fuel costs and increased interest rates fall on those with least capacity to absorb these impacts. Worse, the deficits in urban infrastructure and services meant the more vulnerable households had less ability to adapt to higher fuel costs by taking public transport.”

Research by the University of Western Sydney ***Transport and Social Disadvantage in Western Sydney***, (Anne Hurni, UWS, 2006) shows that transport disadvantaged collector districts cover over half (53.8%) of the Sydney urban area. Just over a third (34.4%) of the Sydney urban region live in these areas (1.2 million people) and 58.2% of the people living in transport disadvantaged areas were located in Western Sydney - some 700,000 people. The report identifies older people and people with a disability as among some of the groups most at risk in Western Sydney.

In Sydney there is an inequitable distribution of public transport services across the GMR. This inequity is not a simple east/west divide, but the fact that a larger proportion of disadvantaged groups in Western Sydney are at risk of transport related social exclusion (Hurni, 2006).

There is sufficient evidence to show that the inequitable distribution of public transport services across urban areas has a disproportionately adverse affect on lower income households. In the outer areas of Western Sydney, where public transport is less frequent and car dependency greater, lower income households have reduced access to employment and other services as well as having to bear an increased burden of transport costs.

3.4 Community Stress

Western Sydney is often considered to be an area of affordable housing compared to the rest of Sydney. However, this does not mean that the housing is necessarily cheap for the people who live there.

Housing affordability is a key economic consideration and must be viewed in the context of reasonable housing costs in relation to the income of those living and seeking to move there. Hidden inequalities stemming from differences in the physical and social infrastructure provided also affect affordability. Poor public transport provision, limited employment opportunities and scarce community services and facilities are all factors that erode even further the 'real' affordability of housing in the outer suburbs.

Over-reliance on cars has separated functions and established single interest precincts, changing social patterns and the way neighbourhoods and town centres operate. Active and engaging meeting places are lacking (WSROC, 2005). There is increasing evidence of 'community stress' (transport stress due to commuting times, costs and lack of public transport options, coupled with housing stress). The risk of greater socio-economic polarization is increasing.

In 2001 it was estimated that 68,000 of the population of the GWS region were in housing stress (39,000 were in private rental accommodation and 29,000 mortgagees), homelessness was high and waiting times for Department of Housing accommodation long (Randolph and Holloway, 2003). The older suburbs appeared to be less affordable than other parts of the region. While these areas had lower prices and rents than elsewhere, they also housed the bulk of Sydney's low income households.

An ***ABS Household Expenditure Survey, 2003-2004*** highlighted that transport costs are the third largest items in household budgets after housing and food; consuming on average 14.8% of the proportion of household income in Sydney. In Western Sydney the high levels of car ownership, necessitated by poor public transport provision, coupled with the dispersion of employment opportunities and facilities and services could well contribute further to transport stress.

Between 2001-2006 all Sydney LGAs (with the exception of Ku-rin-gai) saw a significant increase in mortgage payments with the suburbs located south of the harbour typically paying a greater proportion of their income on housing costs.

For many in Western Sydney there are now more opportunities and more choice. But this is not universally shared. The shift of provision of services from the public to the private sector is also exacerbating inequality.

3.5 Infrastructure Provision and Employment Development

The costs of mobility have a direct impact on the ability of households to earn an income. The problems will only escalate as Sydney's population is expected to increase by an average of almost 42,000 people per year until 2020. (It should also be noted that this figure has recently been revised upwards as the result of the findings of the 2006 census).

Although there is greater recognition of transport issues and the projected level of growth in the Metropolitan Strategy, current funding strategies are likely to result in a 'business as usual' approach to infrastructure provision. The State Government had previously committed to a major new North-West to South-West rail line and the provision of strategic bus corridors, but the allocation of funding has proved insufficient to address years of under-investment, particularly in urban regions such as Greater Western Sydney.

Compared with the rest of Sydney, employment in information-based services, such as finance, insurance, property and business services is significantly underdeveloped in the region. By 2001, there were below average proportions of these jobs in 12 out of 13 LGAs in Greater Western Sydney. Sydney's fastest growing employment is now occurring in the banking, finance and business service (BFBS) sectors but these remain very highly concentrated in Sydney's extended CBD and lower north shore.

Only 17% of BFBS jobs are located in Greater Western Sydney (compared with its 51% of Sydney's total manufacturing employment). The region thus lags well behind inner parts of Sydney in one of the most dynamic components of the metropolitan labour market. Parramatta LGA contains the principal concentration of employment in BFBS sectors and still stands out as Sydney's second CBD. The Hills LGA hosts the only other significant locations of BFBS jobs in Greater Western Sydney. In addition, Auburn LGA has a significant concentration of specialist business services (including security), reflecting its role as an important metropolitan control centre for distribution.

In Western Sydney 60% of all origin-destination trip activity is cross-regional and the proportion is increasing. Yet the rail system is focused upon delivering people to the CBD and is only responsible for 5% of all passenger journeys in Sydney and 10% of the passenger kms travelled. WSROC is of the view that improving cross-regional journeys is likely to deliver a far bigger social return per dollar invested than simply improving access to the CBD. This points to the importance of integrating transport and strategic land use planning.

While jobs drive economic growth, transport and housing are necessary to support the growth. Western Sydney is where population growth is concentrated, where transport journeys are longest, where transport costs are highest (accentuated by recent oil price rises) and where the need to plan is greatest. It is important to reverse the mindset that 'the technology fixes the problem' to a 'horses for courses' approach. There is plenty of overseas evidence that people will switch transport modes when the systems are integrated seamlessly together.

A recent research report commissioned by WSROC and led by a consortium from the Urban Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney, entitled **North-West and West-Central Sydney Employment Strategies** has shown that, while population is a key growth driver in Western Sydney, it will not be enough to generate sufficient new jobs to meet government targets and there will be a shortfall of almost 250,000 full time jobs by 2031.

The study found that there is currently an imbalance in the mix of jobs in the region. Impediments to growth include inefficient industry clusters, transport bottlenecks, high rates of car dependency, skills shortages, inadequate infrastructure, cost pressures on households and ineffective governance.

Substantial 're-engineering' of Western Sydney is required to meet economic and employment targets, including reassessing the jobs locations, major changes to the ways workers travel to work and ongoing efforts to raise labour force participation. The study recommended several major infrastructure projects be approved, including new rail links, improved arterial roads, enhanced infrastructure services to new

employment areas and building stronger links between business and higher education to encourage innovation.

Access to employment will be critical for Western Sydney's growing population and it is essential that, on sustainability and equity grounds alone, the growth in travel demand is provided by public transport rather than reliance on private vehicle use. Rail access from Parramatta to Chatswood through Epping would have connected major employment areas and, in the longer term, could have formed part of a north-south high speed corridor.

The findings of the employment study also stressed that the provision of quality infrastructure is a major input in securing a satisfactory level of expanded employment opportunities in the sub-regions. Yet transport infrastructure in particular has suffered from chronic under-investment with significant congestion and high rates of car dependency as noted above.

The study highlighted the importance of the following infrastructure projects for the region:

Public Transport

- the South-West Rail Link
- the North-West Rail Link or Metro
- the West Metro
- the Epping to Parramatta rail link
- a major north-south Western Sydney rail link
- a major improvement in public transport operations that service the sub-regions in general.

Road Transport

- the M4 East extension
- improvements to the arterial roads
- actions to enhance freight movements and transfers.

Employment Lands

- enhanced infrastructure services to new employment lands and the timely provision of public transport services.

3.6 Unemployment

While significant improvements have been achieved, unemployment remains a significant social problem in the region, but is more geographically concentrated than is often realised. In 2001 high unemployment rates in Greater Western Sydney remained a *highly localised* phenomenon, clustered in suburbs such as Auburn and Granville in the region's inner LGAs and in Cabramatta-Fairfield, Bonnyrigg, parts of Liverpool (Miller), some suburbs of Campbelltown and the western suburbs of Blacktown LGA.

The **North-West and West-Central Sydney Employment Strategies 2009** report noted that, while unemployment has fallen across Western Sydney over the last decade, the region still records Sydney's (and Australia's) highest rates of unemployment. The report also noted the complex patterns in male and female unemployment rates and male and female labour force participation across Western Sydney. Unemployment and low labour force participation are still persisting in a localised manner and appear to be resistant to labour force stimulus generated by periods of national economic growth.

While the national unemployment rate at the end of last year was 4.2%, in the December 2008 quarter unemployment in Sydney's outer south-west region, covering Fairfield, through Liverpool to Campbelltown, reached an alarming 7.5%. In the older industrial belt of West-Central Sydney, unemployment reached 6.7% and in the North-West sub-region it topped 6.3%. These rates are worse than for any other metropolitan region in Australia, except for the eastern and northern suburbs of Adelaide which are suffering a near terminal decline in manufacturing jobs.

The parts of Western Sydney where unemployment is rising are also areas with low labour force participation rates i.e. there are fewer jobs per household in these regions than occur elsewhere. Put differently, a job lost in a household in these areas is likely to have a much greater impact on the dollars available for the household to spend.

These findings have significant policy implications for the region. Employment participation rates for hard to place groups are improved, not just by expanding the demand for labour, but also critically by improving this

group's access to social infrastructure (including public transport) and by upgrading skills, qualifications and job experiences.

Clearly, regional growth of employment opportunities alone is not addressing the problems of labour market access experienced by many residents in particular localities of the region. What is required is an intra-regional public transport network of corridors and services to provide intra-regional access and movement. Establishment of this network would provide greater access to facilities and services in the region, reduce reliance on motor vehicles, increase use of public transport, improve air quality, reduce motor vehicle accidents, promote an efficient and balanced transport system and provide the backbone for concentration of employment and population growth.

3.7 Ageing of the Population

The debate about the impact of the ageing population has begun. Currently the spotlight has been on the economic impacts of a large retired workforce, the provision of health and social services to an older population and the spatial impacts of substantial immigration of retirees. Yet the policy implications of decreased mobility and increased social isolation, coupled with increased housing and transport stress, still need to be addressed by all spheres of government.

Independent mobility is especially critical to the health and mental well-being of an older population. Affordable, adequate transport options are essential for accessing community services, especially medical services, shopping and maintaining social linkages. But in parts of Western Sydney the current urban form and service provision is ensuring that the ageing population is completely car dependent and will be left stranded when they can no longer drive. The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) released a paper in 2005 ***Age-friendly built environment: Opportunities for local government*** outlining the six strategies for designing age-friendly built environments; this included improving the mobility options for seniors.

3.8 Accessibility and Mobility

At the time of the 2006 census in Sydney as a whole people aged 60 or more years constituted 17.1% of the population - a slightly larger segment of the population than children under 17 years of age (16.9%). In the WSROC region at that time the proportion of children under 17 was 19.5% which was a drop from 19.9% in 2001. The proportion of the elderly in the population is set to increase further over the next 20 years as the population ages.

Poor public transport and poorly maintained transport infrastructure has been identified as some of the impediments to encouraging more people and particularly the elderly to use public transport and reduce their dependence on the private car. Giving up driving a car is often a cause of great concern to many people. There needs to be greater dialogue between health promotion professionals, transport planners and older people themselves to gain a fuller understanding of the issues involved.

For public transport to be most beneficial for well-being it must provide more than just a service between two points, taking into account the capabilities of the people using it, how safe they feel and how much autonomy they allow those using the services to practice.

While accessibility arguments have tended to focus on consideration of life maintenance issues (access to food, clothing and medical care etc.) little has been said about higher order needs such as social interaction, contributions towards community life, recreation, cultural and religious participation.

Preserving mobility can provide a number of benefits:

- The travel itself;
- The psychological benefits of 'getting out and about';
- The exercise;
- Involvement in the local community; and
- The security of knowing that you can make a trip if it is required.

There is a substantial variation in the ability or activity of older people and hence 'activity' and 'ability' may be better indications of mobility than simply focussing on age itself. Nevertheless ageing does raise a number of issues:

- Reduced vision;
- Increased reaction times;
- Reduced ability to take on multiple tasks;
- Reduced physical strength, flexibility and dexterity; and
- Greater fragility and vulnerability to injury.

A lack of good transport options can result in more social exclusion - hence the move towards accessibility planning in the UK.

While a lot of emphasis has been given by transport planners to moving vehicles, little thought has been given to the barriers to walking such as poor crossings (time and distance), not enough seats and shelter, problems with steps and pavements. Other issues include city centre bus stops not being located close to shops and markets, changes to bus routes that cause confusion, unreliability of services and poor interchanges where connections are delayed.

Residents of Western Sydney have for many years suffered from poor accessibility and transport difficulties. There is a need to increase the accessibility for all residents of the region to facilities, opportunities and services located both within and outside its boundaries. Upgrading of infrastructure is urgently required for commercial, private and public transport at an equitable cost to the new community and to ensure the adequate provision of services for new development.

3.9 Sustainability Issues

In December 2004, in response to a **Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper**, WSROC noted that, despite the Sustainability Commissioner Professor Peter Newman's positive assessment of the plans for Sydney's North-West and South-West Growth Centres, serious questions remain regarding the Metropolitan Strategy's overall sustainability. The Professor stated that with these two release areas, the metropolitan region is reaching the limits to its sustainability.

Given that the plans for these two Growth Centres were underpinned at that time by a significant commitment to transport infrastructure, which has now been withdrawn, a review of the Metropolitan Strategy and the associated sub-regional plans, the State Plan and the State Infrastructure Strategy is urgently needed.

While the 30-year window for the Metropolitan Strategy is stretching the ability to predict needs and demands even further into the future, some consideration must be given to what happens after this period. There is a finite capacity of the Cumberland Plain to accommodate growth within acceptable social, economic and environmental parameters; even when improvements to technology are factored in. A real attempt should be made to identify what are the sustainable limits to growth.

The North-West rail option, along with the South-West railway and the CBD link was the backbone of the NSW Metropolitan Strategy. In the Inner North and North-West Sydney sub-regional strategies, which cover the WSROC and NSROC regions, the North-West rail option was the first and largest infrastructure commitment. Councils had only agreed to housing and employment targets on the promise of the provision of infrastructure to support this growth.

RECOMMENDATION

Future iterations of the State Plan, the Metropolitan Strategy, the Sub-regional plans and the State Infrastructure Strategy and any future public transport 'blueprint' for the GMR must address the concerns raised by the Sustainability Commissioner in 2004 that the metropolitan region is reaching the limits to its sustainability.

3.10 Climate Change

Motor vehicles are responsible for approximately 14% of carbon emissions in Australia. WSROC believes that a considerable reduction in overall greenhouse emissions can be achieved by changes in the type of ground transport infrastructure used. The replacement of private vehicle use with more greenhouse efficient transport systems, including rail and increased provision of other forms of public transport, can contribute to a significant reduction in the overall per capita greenhouse emissions associated with high levels of car dependency.

The case of air quality in the Sydney basin is an issue that WSROC has raised for many years, serving to illustrate the very important issue of air quality more generally. Sydney is a large, sprawling city, with a very high dependence on private vehicle use. It is also a city located within a classical 'pollution basin', where air pollutants from transport and other sources tend to be trapped by prevailing geographic and meteorological conditions.

Of great concern is the fact that levels of air pollution are greater in Western, South-Western and North-Western Sydney than in other parts of the basin. Elevated levels of air pollution are known to cause unacceptable increases in the incidence of many illnesses, including respiratory diseases, coronary cancer and other very serious conditions.

The city experiences regular exceedance of established air quality goals, largely as a consequence of its high and increasing dependence on private road transport; coupled with the natural tendency of the Sydney basin to 'trap' and retain air pollution. The reality is that great care will need to be taken during any further development in, or impacting upon Western Sydney, to ensure that air pollution does not in fact become a limiting factor of future growth and development of the region.

The **Western Sydney Regional State of the Environment Report 2000** (section 3.2.4) noted that:

"Transport was recognised in the community workshops as a major pressure on social and environmental sustainability. Exhaust gases add to air pollution and increase global warming levels. Costs of transport are regarded as high in terms of time and money."

Many urban areas in Western Sydney are hampered by inadequate arterial road systems which result in traffic intrusion into existing residential areas, coupled with grossly deficient public transport provision. A 'Catch 22' situation exists whereby public transport provision was not increased as the result of high car ownership and car ownership will not decrease until public transport is improved.

In addition to a lack of access to health and welfare services and facilities, a far greater effort is needed to travel to work, shopping opportunities, recreation and social facilities in the region compared to other part of Sydney.

In addressing the community's mobility needs, planning and subdivision design have placed increasing emphasis and prominence on the needs of motorised vehicles and road networks rather than pedestrians or cyclists. The steady increase in standards of road design may have actually disadvantaged many in the community by directing attention away from mobility requirements. Despite the high use of the motor car for a large percentage of householder's transportation there are still many people who use walking, cycling and public transport as their main means of moving about.

People's expectations of and attitudes to various transport systems play a significant part, as do cost, efficiency and availability of public and private transport and safe and convenient pedestrian movement systems. However, clearly everyone benefits when regularly used community services including schools, health and recreation services are located in a way that is accessible to residents from a variety of pedestrian and transport routes.

3.11 GWS Urban Development Health Impact Assessment 2007

The **GWS Urban Development HIA** was a research and partnership project managed by WSROC with the support of the Area Health Services, NSW Health and UNSW. The project aimed to develop knowledge and expertise to improve planning of urban growth and management for the ultimate benefit of the health and well-being of the region's residents.

The project involved an analysis of urban planning for Greater Western Sydney in the light of research, from Sydney itself and similar regions, on the links between the urban environment, service and infrastructure provision and the effects of these parameters on health and well-being. 'Health and well-being' were broadly defined and included such issues as isolation, stress, work/family balance, as well as the incidence of disease and illness.

Scoping of the project identified a limited number of 'urban dimensions' (these being transport and accessibility, urban form and nature, employment and social infrastructure) and 'health determinants' (these being air, water, and climate, access to services and fresh food, social capital and connectedness, physical activity, safety and injury and noise). The Final Report **Health Impact Assessment of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy (2005) in relation to Greater Western Sydney** was released in October 2007. The

GWS HIA identified key aspects of the built and natural environment of Western Sydney which most affect the health and well-being of the population.

3.12 An Agenda for Sustainability and Well-Being for Western Sydney

WSROC prepared a draft ***Agenda for Sustainability and Well-being in Western Sydney*** for its 2008 Regional Conference ***Sydney – the other city: building a sustainable Western Sydney by 2030***. The Agenda was developed from the outcomes of the GWS HIA project and other policy documents, particularly ***FutureWest: GWS regional planning and management framework*** (WSROC 2005).

The Agenda identified seven key issues for the region in achieving sustainable development and the well-being of the population including:

- Urban Form and Nature;
- Transport;
- Economic Development;
- Healthy Regional Food Production;
- Social and Cultural Infrastructure;
- Resource Limits and City Containment; and
- Equity.

Overall the Agenda proposes to change the way regional centres, infrastructure and localities are designed and managed. It seeks to widen the focus of sustainability from individual behavioural change (such as reducing household energy and water use) important as this is, to developing strategies for structural change in places. This involves making environments more livable; building a mix of housing types and tenure in each local area; improving public transport infrastructure and service levels; preserving a level of self-sufficiency in locally produced fresh food; building in opportunities for every day physical activity through safe and appealing design of neighbourhoods; and so on.

The Agenda argues that social, environmental, cultural and economic issues need to be considered together in an ecological way. How the 'human ecological systems' interact with the 'natural ecological systems' will determine the region's sustainability and the health and well-being of its population.

4. TRANSPORT DISADVANTAGE IN WESTERN SYDNEY

4.1 Poor Public Transport

Community consultations undertaken in the Western Sydney region for many years have pointed to poor accessibility and transport difficulties being experienced by residents. There is a need to increase the accessibility for all residents of the region to facilities, opportunities and services located both within and outside its boundaries.

Western Sydney has always suffered from poor access to public transport, which has had a long history of operational and patronage problems. The rail network in Western Sydney has not been significantly expanded since the 1930s when the region's population was less than a fifth of what it is today. The result is that urban expansion is pushing residential growth further and further away from the existing rail network, increasing dependence on private cars and buses. Yet there has been little integration between the rail and private bus networks. The use of local buses as feeders to the higher capacity rail systems has been underdeveloped and, in many instances, is no longer relevant to people's transport needs.

In the North-West sub-region in 2006 only 5.4% of the population travelled to work by train and 1.6% by bus and 67.2% travelled by car either as a driver or a passenger. Also only 0.4% cycled to work and 2% walked.

Travel between the outer suburbs is very difficult and results in high car dependence for cross suburban trips. Western Sydney's economy and the welfare of the community stand to lose if new approaches to deal with Sydney's transport problems are not adopted. Following the Unsworth Review the State Government initiated a number of transport reforms, including consolidation of private bus contract areas, harmonization of private and public transport services, development of an integrated network of bus corridors (but with only 17 out of the proposed 43 bus corridors delivered over the past four years) and announcements of major new rail proposals (now cancelled – see below), but these will require substantially increased funding and a higher level of ongoing government commitment.

The State government has been overseeing the planning for the strategic bus corridors and local operators take responsibility for detailed planning for local routes. Unfortunately the consultation process has been heavily criticized for its lack of involvement with local government and communities. The levels of service proposed for Western Sydney fall well below the world's best practice in comparable cities. (See **Connecting with Buses**, Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) Position Paper August 2009).

This study has found that there are big gaps that inhibit the bus system in Western Sydney preventing it from operating as a fully integrated network. It highlights concerns with both the frequency and cost of travel. Far from providing a system with buses running at 10 minute intervals - thus eliminating the need for timetables - it identifies services on strategic corridors which finish at 7pm, come every 30 minutes in peak hour, every hour at other weekday times, every two hours at the weekend and finishing at 5pm on a Saturday.

The separate tickets required for trains and buses is also making public transport prohibitively expensive for low income residents, due to having to pay a flag fall and a variable cost depending on distance.

Community transport providers are struggling to meet existing demand and are not properly resourced to meet their existing goals. Community transport should be considered as part of an integrated public transport system, not just an add on.

Despite its efforts local government is failing to meet its obligations under the Commonwealth Government's **Accessible Transport Standards**. Funding is required to construct footpaths and bus shelters and purchase new, locally manufactured accessible buses. Traffic management is needed to provide more priority for buses, the construction of accessible footpaths and the provision of signage along access paths, plus the facilitation of community input into planning and travel behaviour change programs.

School buses are exempt from the **Accessible Public Transport Standards** and many are up to 25 years old. In addition to being an unattractive form of transport they are also more polluting and require more maintenance.

A major target of the Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney is to ensure that more people travel by public transport. In order to achieve this target research worldwide has pointed to the need for public transport to have the following qualities:

- Convenience (particularly in respect of travel time and frequency);
- Safety and security (particularly for vulnerable groups such as women travelling at night, the elderly and the infirm);
- Comfort; and
- Cost.

However, the number one factor influencing mode choice - travel time (coupled with frequency) - has not been properly addressed by bus routes and timetables in the past. WSROC is of the view that travel time should be a key focus of the Bus Review.

It is of considerable concern that the consultation process failed to use the review to encourage more people to use public transport. As such, lines on maps that indicate the location of bus routes along particular streets, with no indication of what is considered to be the 'peak' and 'off-peak' periods, no frequency guide for the T-Ways and other services, no indication of when the services start and finish and whether or not they operate at weekends or in holiday periods, or the anticipated length of journey time, make it difficult for the community to make an informed response to the questionnaire.

It is reported that the implementation of new bus routes, while providing more direct services, has impacted badly on many who are solely dependent on the service. There is a need to better identify those who have been disadvantaged by the new strategic corridors and to tailor the transport options to ensure that communities can continue to access local health, education and community services and facilities.

Bus Network Review Consultations across Western Sydney have been mostly attended by older people and those with mobility restrictions. While the Ministry is focused on the creation of the strategic corridors and more effective commuter services, the interests of local people are more concerned with the local and secondary routes. This has led to frustration and distrust of the process. A more effective consultation strategy must be set in place to address these concerns.

The public consultations have also highlighted the need to incorporate planning for complementary local transport nodes, community transport, taxis and hire car services into the Bus Network Review process, as recommended in the Unsworth Review.

The **Public Transport Information and Priority System (PTIS)** is years behind schedule. Also a **Metropolitan Parking Strategy** has been discussed for at least a decade and a half, but has not been developed. Ownership, planning and funding for transport interchanges is confused and ambiguous. Integrated ticketing is still not available.

Monitoring and reporting on the provision of bus services is poor and the indicators used are said to be based on operational requirements rather than passenger needs.

Hopefully the creation of the new 'super' Department of Transport and Infrastructure will start to address many of the current system's failures.

Inadequate transport planning and funding, coupled with a lack of investment has seen Sydney fall behind other Australian and world cities in terms of its public transport performance. This is starting to reflect on its claims for 'global city' status. Over the last 10 years public transport patronage has grown by 30-40% in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, but only 5% in Sydney.

4.2 Road Dominance

As Western Sydney's population had grown dramatically the provision of hospitals, universities, social services and public transport infrastructure to support the families pouring in has been inconsistent, with backlogs in many areas.

However, roads were provided much more consistently as the region's population increased. Over 120 km of motorway have been constructed since the 1970s, much of it financed by the private sector and funded through tolls, while only 14 km of rail line has been provided and the number of services diminished. Although the construction of a motorway network was appropriate to support freight and commercial traffic, the failure to provide a complementary public transport network means that traffic on these motorways is reaching capacity much more quickly and they are playing a much less effective role in supporting the regional economy.

4.3 Long Distance Freight and Passenger Transport Issues

Greater Western Sydney is a major destination region for freight and a major source region for freight destined for internal markets, for the rest of Sydney, for destinations around Australia and for export. There is currently a conflict between managing road-based freight transport and the increasing use of the private car.

WSROC is of the view that long distance country rail should be factored into freight improvement and that the importance of long distance passenger rail journeys should not be overlooked.

Also all Governments should be encouraged to follow the example of Victoria and reduce the demand for air travel for medium distances such as Sydney to Goulburn and Canberra etc. as a means of reducing car and air travel and thereby transport fuel demand.

4.4 Travel Patterns

In December 2008 the NSW Transport Data Centre (TDC) released a report **Employment and Commuting in Sydney's Centres, 1996-2006** detailing employment and commuting statistics for Sydney's 33 largest employment centres, based on the Metropolitan Strategy centres hierarchy. The report shows strong regional variations. Eastern Sydney has the majority of employment (containing 20 centres compared with 13 in Western Sydney) and over 230,000 people are employed in the CBD alone (representing 12% of Sydney SD's total employment).

Table 1 Sydney Employment by Region Summary 2006 based on TDC data

Region/location	Number of jobs	% of centres	% of region in centres	% of total employment
<i>Eastern Sydney</i>				
Sydney CBD	230,049	32.2%	20.3%	12.0%
Others centres	333,538	46.7%	29.4%	17.4%
<i>Centres total</i>	<i>563,587</i>	<i>78.9%</i>	<i>49.7%</i>	<i>29.4%</i>
Not in centres	571,142		50.3%	29.8%
Total jobs	1,134,729		100.0%	59.1%
<i>Western Sydney</i>				
Parramatta	34,234	4.8%	5.7%	1.8%
Other centres	116,675	16.3%	19.6%	6.1%
<i>Centres total</i>	<i>595,972</i>	<i>21.1%</i>	<i>25.3%</i>	<i>7.9%</i>
Not in centres	445,063		74.7%	23.2%
Total jobs	595,972		100.0%	31.1%
<i>Sydney SD</i>				
Sydney jobs in centres total	714,496	100.0%	41.3%	
Not in centres total				90.2%
Sydney centres total	1,016,205			9.8%
No location total	1,730,701			
Total Sydney SD	188,419			100.0%
	1,923,900			

In Western Sydney the story is very different. Employment is much more dispersed - only just over a quarter of the regions centre-based jobs are in TDC-defined centres and no one centre dominates. Parramatta, with just over 34,000 jobs is Western Sydney's biggest employment centre but accounts for less than 6% of the region's employment, with 19.6% of the region's jobs located in other centres.

4.5 Sydney's Transport Challenge

Over many years urban release has been taking place on a massive scale in Western Sydney. The land was cheap due to poor accessibility and a lack of services and facilities. Low-income families moving into the area had no choice but to rely on the car, as there were few public transport services and even basic facilities were either dispersed or available only in distant centres. The need for a second car (or a third) is now firmly entrenched in the minds of the population, with the result that high levels of car ownership are exacerbating income deprivation in many areas. To bring about any change will require a massive alteration to a lifestyle that has developed out of necessity.

In summary, Australian cities and in particular the fringes of these cities are highly car and oil dependent. In Western Sydney the private motor car is used for the vast majority of trips - 76% for work and 71% for all trip purposes. While Sydney's annual total vehicle VKT increased on average 2.3% each year from 1991 onwards, the patterns were geographically uneven – with a 23% increase in outer and south-west Sydney compared with a 10% decline in inner and eastern Sydney.

In 2001 travel times by public transport for non-work purposes varied across Greater Western Sydney LGAs, with times of up to 10 and 20 minutes greater than the Sydney average. Average travel times for commuting trips by both car and public transport for Greater Western Sydney residents were generally longer than for the rest of the Sydney SD. Car commuting trips in the morning peak are up to 17 minutes longer in many areas.

Successive media reports in 2008 highlighted the increasing congestion on Sydney's arterial road system. Traffic speeds of 31 km/hr on the M2 Motorway/Lane Cove Tunnel and the Gore Hill Expressway in 2007-2008 were down from 38 km/hr in the previous year. A drop from 40km/hr on the M5/Eastern Distributor to 24 km/hr also occurred. Travel times on Victoria Road were down from 29 km/hr five years ago to 23 km/hr.

Journey times on Windsor Road now take 10 minutes longer in the morning peak than they did twelve months ago. At the same time tolls are continually being increased for residents in the North-West.

About 17 million trips are made through the Lane Cove Tunnel each year (70,000 a day in November 2008) but a Metro would have carried three times this number. While substituting the proposed NW Metro with 113 more buses (which would carry 9,000 people) they would still have to contend with the traffic congestion.

In 2004 8,800 trucks used Pennant Hills Road each weekday, half of which were six, eight or nine axle trucks carrying 40 gross tonnes or more. Average peak travel speeds were 25 km/hr but were often as low as 14/km/hr. All these statistics cast doubt on the assertion that more motorways are the solution to Sydney's transport problem.

Serious Rail Capacity Constraints: There is a lack of capacity in the Sydney rail system, particularly in the CBD, with resulting bottlenecks. The system is rapidly approaching gridlock. Over the past thirty years there has been only incremental investment in infrastructure. For many years numerous transport strategies have been investigated and planned but with no integration between them. An adequate Integrated Land/use Transport Plan and a Transport Co-ordination Authority for Sydney are well overdue.

As the result of the cancellation of past commitments there is even greater uncertainty and an urgent need for review of a number of the NSW Government's strategic documents, including the **Metropolitan Strategy**, the **State Plan** and the **NSW Infrastructure Strategy**.

The problems on the Western Railway line, which was to be eased by the Rail Clearways Project and the expansion of Sydney's rail system, will continue to have lengthy and onerous travel times, high cost, not just in monetary terms but also travel time, a lack of bus/train combinations and low frequency. The line also has poor access for people with a disability.

Construction of rail infrastructure, particularly the North-West and South-West rail links, would have greatly improved access to key employment destinations for Western Sydney workers including the Norwest Business Park and Macquarie Park. It would also have assisted in the growth of other new centres at Rouse Hill and Leppington.

Without this investment, the current pattern of dispersed employment will continue. This in turn will make it much harder to develop the 'critical mass' required to drive the growth in higher order and specialist jobs within key centres, which is essential to Western Sydney's future employment and economic development.

Questions have also arisen as to whether the Government target to get 30% of freight onto rail could actually be met. The Southern Sydney Freight line will link Macarthur to Chullora and a new dedicated freight line from Strathfield to Newcastle would have helped to ease congestion in freight and passenger services, allowing an extra 100-150 passenger train movements a day through Sydney's north and the central coast. To date no Federal funding has been allocated for this project.

With the Federal government's commitment through Infrastructure Australia to fund, or co-fund major new infrastructure projects there was an opportunity to fix Sydney's major transport problems which appears to have been squandered. There is no doubt that the funding of new transport infrastructure is expensive. Extensive economic appraisal needs to be given to a complete review of the range of transport alternatives available. This may reveal a solution that can deliver the greatest amount of accessibility per dollar of government expenditure on transport, both on land and in the air.

4.6 Issues for North-West Sydney

As previously indicated the North-West sector suffers from severe deficiencies in public transport provision. Projects completed since the early 1990s to date include:

- M2 Motorway
- M2 bus lanes
- Bus Transitways from Rouse Hill to Parramatta and Blacktown to Parklea
- Windsor/Old Windsor Road upgrade
- Electrification of the Richmond Line
- Duplication of sections of the Richmond Line (underway but part deferred)
- M7 Motorway
- Bus priority measures

However, there are several critical infrastructure projects which have previously been identified and/or committed to by the State Government but have had this commitment withdrawn. These include:

- North-West Rail Link (later N-W Metro) to Rouse Hill with a potential extension to the Richmond Line at Vineyard
- Bus Transitway from Parklea to Castle Hill. This section was dropped from the final

- section of the proposed T-WAY that was to have run from Blacktown to Castle Hill via Parklea
- Strategic bus corridors and cross-regional bus services
- West-facing ramps on the M2 at Windsor Road and widening parts of the M2 to three lanes.

Of these the North-West Rail Link or North-West Metro is by far the most significant.

The North-West Sub-region has the lowest proportion of trips made by public transport of any Sydney sub-region. In 2006 there were 39,693 people who caught public transport to work (train, bus, or ferry) in North-West Sydney, compared to 243,093 who drove in private vehicles (car-as-driver, car-as-passenger, motorbike or truck). This represented 11.4% of the sub-region's population using public transport, while 69.9% used a private vehicle, compared to 13.6% and 68.6% in the WSROC region and 18.0% and 60.6% respectively in Sydney SD.

On 7th January 2009 the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 released its report on the **Transport Needs of Sydney's North-West Sector**. The report and its nine recommendations were considered by the NSW Government which delivered its response in June 2009.

In line with its continuing advocacy on this issue WSROC prepared a submission and was represented at the Inquiry held on 7th November 2008. The Committee's report made numerous references to the WSROC submission and the evidence presented to the Inquiry, including a call for an adequate Integrated Land/Use Transport Plan and a Transport Co-ordination Authority for Sydney, both of which were well overdue.

The cross-party Committee was of the view that the North-West Sector has suffered significantly from a lack of public transport infrastructure. Amongst other recommendations the committee concluded that the State Government should:

- Commit to the funding of the North-West Rail link;
- Prepare a submission for the North-West Rail link to be included in the National Infrastructure Priority List;
- Prepare an Integrated Transport Plan for the sub-region;
- Establish an Integrated Transport Planning Authority; and
- Establish a panel of transport experts to develop and Integrated Transport Strategic Plan for Sydney.

The committee was highly critical of the failure of the NSW Government to address the lack of public transport infrastructure to service the well-documented needs of North-West Sydney over the past decade and the continuing cycle of commitments followed by broken promises. It concluded that the lack of adequate public transport provision in this area has resulted in an unsustainable reliance on private vehicle use and ever-increasing tolls, impacting upon businesses, social and family life. It also noted that, should the project fail to attract Federal funding, the NSW Government must re-prioritise its funding plans and provide rail infrastructure in the North-West.

The Committee also stressed the following:

"The strategic transport planning for the North-West Sector and the Sydney region needs overhauling. Future infrastructure for bus, rail and road needs to be planned for in an integrated manner that envisages and accommodates the need to move from one mode to another within transport corridors as needs and demand changes. To this end the Committee has recommended that an Integrated Transport Planning Authority be established."

The Committee also recommended that a panel of transport experts be established to develop a draft long-term integrated transport strategic plan for the Sydney region, to be used by the new Authority. As a first step it recommended that this panel should develop an integrated transport plan for the North-West which could be used as a blueprint for wider implementation across the Sydney region.

While the NSW Government has responded by establishing a new 'super' Transport and Infrastructure Department and drawing together a panel of six transport experts to develop a new transport 'blueprint' for the Sydney region, it is unfortunate that the plan is yet to be developed and a decision has already been made to construct the Rozelle Metro; soaking up much-needed funds for an integrated solution and ignoring the transport plight suffered by the residents of North-West, West-Central and South-West Sydney, which will only be exacerbated in decades to come.

In addition, and despite WSROC's requests, Western Sydney has no representation on the committee, yet is still expected to accommodate the bulk of Sydney's population and employment growth in the absence of any supporting infrastructure.

4.7 Issues for South-West Sydney

Construction of the South-West Rail Link should also be given priority over the construction of an expensive Sydney CBD metro line. The development of a major train stabling and maintenance centre at Leppington, as originally proposed, would have provided much-needed local employment and act as a catalyst for rail related industries as well as assisting in the provision of frequent train services. This link would provide vast improvements to Sydney's transport system, benefitting greater numbers of people than the proposed CBD Metro, located in an area already benefitting from a reasonable level of service.

South-West Sydney also suffers from very poor public transport access. The level and quality of public transport provision falls well short of the provision in most inner Sydney suburbs. The level of service provided by government buses is far superior to those provided by the private bus operators. Consequently only 11% of Liverpool residents use public transport to access employment compared to the Sydney metropolitan average of 18%. The expansion of the State Government bus network would help to improve public transport services in the outer suburbs which have limited transport choice and contain the lowest income households.

As the result of a lack of transport options the residents of South-West Sydney have a high proportion of households with two or more vehicles. In the sub-region 56.1% of households had two or more cars and 66.8% travelled to work by car (either as a driver or a passenger) compared to 53% in the metropolitan area as a whole. A high number of low income households in South-West Sydney are paying a disproportionate amount of their income on meeting transport needs, which is adding to the socio-economic disadvantage already suffered in these areas. Also 60% of the Liverpool population work outside their local government area, travelling to jobs dispersed across the Greater Western Sydney region.

Older people and those with a disability experience the most difficulty in accessing public transport. (It should be noted that 5% of people in Liverpool receive the disability support pension compared with 3% for the Sydney metropolitan area as a whole).

South-West Sydney has the youngest population of the three Western Sydney sub-regions or Sydney as a whole, with 24.5% of the population aged 0-14 compared with 22.3% in WSROC and 19.5% in Sydney SD. Young people have very limited access to private vehicles and most live in release areas deficient in public transport provision. Clearly the residents of South-West Sydney are the most in need of transport support with little capacity to meet increased costs, yet they are the least able to carry the cost burdens of private transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSROC recommends that to improve the level of service offered to South-West Sydney the NSW Government should:

- **Construct the South-West Rail Link;**
- **Prepare an Integrated Transport Plan that addresses the issues for the sub-regions;**
- **Provide more State funding for cycle ways, including along major transport corridors and for local bike paths;**
- **Reinstate more frequent Cumberland line services to Parramatta and beyond;**
- **Permit the use of the Hoxton Park Road Transitway by local buses; and**
- **Encourage denser development around centres and along corridors to support the provision of more frequent and viable public transport.**

4.8 The November 2008 NSW Mini-Budget

Unfortunately, as the result of the November 2008 NSW Mini-budget, a substantial proportion of the proposed transport infrastructure needed to support the objectives of the Metropolitan Strategy and sub-regional population, housing and employment growth strategies, has now been deferred or cancelled altogether. Major program cuts were \$12 billion for the North-West Metro, \$1.4 billion for the South-West Rail link and \$200 million for the Vineyard to Schofields rail line. This represented a very significant diversion of funds away from Western Sydney, whereas \$1.8 billion was allocated for a Sydney CBD Metro system. This is of particular concern for GWS, which is being targeted to accommodate over 600,000 people over the next 25 years.

The Epping to Chatswood rail link, originally due to open in 2008, opened at the end of February 2009 in the form of a shuttle service. It is planned to be incorporated into the Sydney rail network at the end of the year. It was intended to be an important component of the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Project, ultimately linking to the North-West Rail Link, but the latter has now been cancelled. The link was originally planned to form part of the proposed Parramatta to Chatswood Rail Line, but the Parramatta to Epping component has been indefinitely deferred.

A further area of considerable concern was that of the \$150 million allocated for the purchase of 300 new buses "to offset the scrapping of the North-West Metro Rail line" only 100 of these buses have been allocated to the North-West sub-region. Not only does this herald a return to an emphasis on road transport in favour over other forms of public transport, but also reflects the NSW Government's failure to grasp the enormity of the transport problems facing this sub-region of Sydney.

4.9 High Speed Rail Options

In December 2008 the Federal Government released an Aviation Green Paper. While the arguments presented in the Green Paper were based on the premise that a second Sydney airport is required, WSROC is of the view that further consideration should be given to an examination of a number of alternative options that may provide sufficient airport capacity to cater for longer term demands. Such options include the enhancement of existing airport facilities coupled with capacity relief through the introduction of high speed rail.

WSROC has consistently expressed its opposition to the construction of a new airport anywhere in the Sydney basin. While WSROC does not have a preferred location it has been calling for further examination of the expansion of existing airports (such as Canberra or Newcastle) or the development of a new airport (such as Goulburn), coupled with extensive investment in land based transport links and, in particular new rail infrastructure.

WSROC is firmly of the view that future airport needs should be addressed as part of a comprehensive process that considers all of Australia's economic and transport needs.

The new Department of Infrastructure Australia has been conducting an audit of the nation's transport, energy, communications and water infrastructure in order to produce an Infrastructure Priority List to guide future public and private investment decisions. Such an initiative is fully supported.

Aviation issues do not exist in isolation from other transport and environmental issues and have a major impact on the community in many ways. WSROC is of the view that the success of a national aviation policy should be considered in the context of this audit, taking into account a prioritised and integrated approach to the planning and implementation of all the issues involved. WSROC is firmly of the view that future airport needs should be addressed as part of a comprehensive process that considers all of Australia's economic and transport needs.

While the Federal Government's involvement has been in freight rail and road systems which provide intra and inter-city connectivity at local, State and national levels, both WSROC and the Western Sydney Alliance have consistently argued that the Commonwealth needs to have a much more strategic and co-ordinated focus with an emphasis on supporting public transport.

It is critical that the role of all the existing airports in the Hunter/Sydney/Canberra region are taken into account in this process, including the future of Bankstown airport and the Richmond RAAF base; together with a review of the existing and prospective ground infrastructure that surrounds and connects them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Federal Government should:

- **Work with the State and Local Government to re-examine potential locations for a future second Sydney airport outside the Sydney basin;**
- **Develop and implement a jointly agreed and politically bipartisan land transport plan for Sydney and surrounding regions, including an examination of the appropriate rail technologies such as high speed trains linked to longer-term opportunities for decentralization.**

5. CURRENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROPOSALS FOR SYDNEY

5.1 The North-West, South-West and CBD Rail Links

WSROC strongly supported the construction of a rail link between the main Northern Railway and Rouse Hill with a further extension to Vineyard. The North-West Rail Link (NWRL), together with a new CBD crossing and the South-West Rail Link (SWRL) had the potential to provide a much needed enhancement of Sydney's passenger rail infrastructure, particularly with construction of the whole line.

When the proposed North-West Rail Link was replaced with an announcement of a North-West Metro WSROC highlighted a range of potential issues that needed to be addressed. These concerned the viability of the project, the travel time forecasts, issues with the design of interchanges, the need for parking and bus integration, implications for the existing CityRail network and the importance of constructing the whole of the proposed metro system to overcome the worsening condition of the CityRail network and the increasing congestion on the roads of Western Sydney.

In November 2008 the NSW Government cancelled the North-West Metro and the Vineyards extension (replacing them with 100 new buses) and sought Federal Government funding for a CBD/Rozelle Metro. The first *Building the Nation* funding cycle allocated \$92M to research and commence land acquisition for West Metro. No funding was provided for a North Strathfield to Hornsby Freight rail or the CBD Metro. The North-West and South-West rail extensions were not considered. Hence no Sydney projects will be substantially commenced for a further two years.

5.2 Light Rail Solutions

The City of Sydney Council is currently seeking the development of a light rail loop around the city on the surface. This proposal is comparatively inexpensive and is intended to enhance the amenity and pedestrian activity within the CBD. People in the Inner West have been lobbying for an extension to the existing light rail to Dulwich Hill. This has the potential to link to Rozelle using some existing infrastructure and public land, would have much lower capital and running costs and would appear to be appropriate to serve the short distances involved.

It has been noted that State Transit Authority (STA) buses only handle around half of the passenger numbers moved by the trams that were removed from Sydney Streets in the 1950s. The city is now overwhelmed by buses, reducing its amenity through pollution and noise. The sheer volume of buses takes up large amounts at key locations such as Circular Quay and Wynyard and there is clearly a case for replacing many of these buses with light rail and metros.

Cities around the world are pedestrianising their city centres, improving air quality, increasing commercial viability and bringing people back into city centres.

The Glazebrook Plan proposes a light rail network based on Parramatta, starting with conversion of the Carlingford Line to Light Rail and extension into Parramatta CBD, plus a link south to Bankstown using part of the Clyde to Rosehill branch (shared with freight traffic).

5.3 Metro Solutions

WSROC is of the view that a CBD Metro should be focused on the areas between Parramatta, Macquarie Park the CBD and Bankstown – areas of higher density, short distances and where existing road congestion is very high. This could help relieve the crowded inner city roads of buses and extensions could be made in the future into the East, South-East and the Northern Beaches.

In comparison to the Western Sydney region, the CBD has a combination of Government bus services, a Cityrail loop, a free loop bus, a light rail service, ferries and the monorail. Rozelle has frequent STA bus services along Victoria Road as well as services through Rozelle and into Balmain. There are ferries to the CBD and many people are within walking distance of the light rail system (which could be easily extended). Also access to the CityRail network from Rozelle links the area to the city or Petersham. Given the shortfall in public transport provision that the GWS region has had to endure for decades, it is difficult to comprehend why there is an imperative to start the Sydney Metro on a route between the CBD to Rozelle.

Reports that the Rozelle Metro would use up some of the underground capacity of tunnels earmarked for future CityRail expansion and would preclude the use of a second harbour crossing for expansion to the

North and North-West, if true, would severely impact on the residents of Western Sydney, North Sydney and the Northern Beaches. Very careful consideration must be given to the maintenance and development of Sydney's overall heavy rail network, and great care should be taken to ensure that any 'metro' projects undertaken to enhance this existing system are not in fact prejudicial to its future function and viability.

Transport experts such as Dr Gary Glazebrook from UTS have criticized the proposed Rozelle Metro on the basis that, due to the extensive tunneling required, the 7km line will cost almost \$700M per kilometre to construct compared to the \$200M per kilometre cost of the Epping/Chatswood line.

WSROC has also noted the following issues which would need to be addressed in relation to a North-West Metro solution:

Viability: Overall concerns regarding the Government's ability to deliver the project have been exacerbated by the complexity of the N-W Metro proposal, which combines significant use of new technologies - driverless trains, fast travel times and long-distance underground lines, etc.

The project's complexity along with its extension from Epping to the CBD would be a much more expensive project than the previous NWRL proposal, which has also led some experts to question its financial viability. This also has implications for fare levels on the Metro, especially if private sector investment is involved. These concerns have naturally been heightened by the Government's recent deferral of the NW Metro as part of the November 2008 mini-budget to cut costs.

Construction: Whilst much of the planning of the North-West Metro has been completed for the Rouse Hill to Epping section, the same cannot be said for the Epping to CBD corridor, where extensive geotechnical work and planning of stations etc will have to be conducted. Clearly the 2015 deadline for completion of the Hills Centre to Epping section is no longer viable and neither is the commitment to meet a completion date of 2017 for the Epping to CBD section.

WSROC's preferred position has always been that the line should be extended from Rouse Hill to an interchange on the Richmond Line. WSROC has already raised the issue of train stabling and supports the Hills Shire Council's position that this should be located towards Vineyard rather than in Bella Vista. It is also important that the option to construct the Parramatta to Epping link, as a Metro or CityRail line or a Light Rail system be preserved.

Operation: A number of transport experts have questioned the proposed travel times for the Metro, claiming that they did not include station dwell times. The Minister for Transport has however reaffirmed that dwell times were included in the extensive modelling of the proposed travel times.

As indicated above, the combination of driverless trains, fast travel times and long-distance underground lines would raise a number of operational complexities. For example, the length of the tunnel would require extensive evacuation facilities and the ability to operate the system in sections whilst maintenance work is carried out on other parts of the line. Driverless operation and potential private sector management would require extensive reviews of existing safety and regulatory regimes, a point that WSROC made in its submission to the review of the CityRail regulatory framework.

It is also essential that both an integrated fare and ticketing system are in place, covering the Metro and the existing CityRail, bus and ferry networks, by the time any Metro opens.

Interchanges: The Government's previous decision to construct the NW Metro as a stand-alone line raised a number of significant other issues. In the short term at least it may have lead to under-utilisation of the CityRail Epping to Chatswood link which was going to be fed by the previous NWRL proposal, as well as the existing Main North line.

By far the biggest planning issue however was the design of the Epping interchange. Significant numbers of commuters may have chosen to change trains at Epping from the NW Metro to the CityRail Epping to Chatswood link, to access Macquarie University as well as jobs at Macquarie Park, Chatswood and the lower North Shore. Macquarie Park in particular is forecast to continue growing as a significant employment destination for commuters from the North-West.

A related issue which needed more attention was the potential for interchanges *from* the CityRail lines (particularly the Main North line) *to* the NW Metro to take advantage of the latter's faster travelling times to the CBD. In other words, Epping Station may have had to cater for a large volume of commuter interchanges

in both directions in both the morning and evening peaks. The volume of interchanges may also have been further increased in future if the Epping to Parramatta link were ever to be constructed.

All these interchanges would also be complicated by the differing frequencies of service on the NW Metro and the CityRail lines. The former would operate at frequencies of 20 to 30 trains an hour – the latter about four to eight trains an hour.

To provide the CBD Metro with sufficient patronage it is proposed to terminate trains at Central Station, forcing many of the passengers using the western and south-western services, who currently travel directly to Town Hall and Wynyard without changing, to transfer to the CBD metro at Central to access CBD destinations.

Limited Seating: While the metro trains are each proposed to carry 965 passengers they would only contain 360 seats compared with 900 on a double-deck millennium train or 600 as proposed in the Glazebrook 30 Year Plan. If the CBD metro were ever to be extended to Parramatta the majority of passengers would have to stand all the way to the CBD, which would hardly be compensated for by a travel time saving of only two minutes.

Parking and bus integration: Parking capacities at stations between Epping and Rouse Hill were already a concern to WSROC under the previous NWRL proposal and obviously would have to be reviewed in light of the shorter travel times and much higher frequency – and therefore potentially much higher popularity – of a NW Metro.

It is understood that the Government does not plan at this stage to provide parking at stations from Epping to the CBD. Parking has not been provided at stations on many metro systems overseas, but this was because most of these metros were built as tram replacements with 'walk-up' catchments to stations with 800 to 1,000 metre spacing.

By contrast the average station spacing on the NW Metro line would be over two kilometres, even in the Epping to CBD section. This would require provision of feeder bus services to these stations to avoid 'feral' parking on streets surrounding the stations. This problem could have been exacerbated by car commuters from further out seeking to park at these stations to avoid congestion within five kilometres of the CBD.

Implications for the existing CityRail network: The NW Metro and the proposal to construct additional metros have implications for the existing CityRail network. One of the objectives of the Government's previous Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program (MREP), which was largely superseded by the metro proposals, was to relieve existing congestion on the existing CityRail network, particularly on the western line and across the Harbour Bridge.

The NW Metro alone would not achieve the same level of direct benefit, although it could have had some positive outcomes. It is likely it could have provided some relief by reducing the number of commuters travelling from the North-West to Parramatta and Blacktown to use western line CityRail services; similarly, the link from Epping may have taken some commuters off the Main North and Epping to Chatswood links.

More substantial relief would only come with construction of the proposed Western Metro from the CBD to Parramatta and ultimately its extension across the harbour. The proposed South-East Metro and suggestions that the northern extension of the Western Metro be linked to the northern beaches would obviously extend the system's coverage but would not relieve the existing CityRail network.

WSROC is of the view that the proposed Rozelle Metro is the wrong priority. It is focused on an area of Sydney that is already well served by public transport and leaves Western Sydney, South-Western Sydney and particularly North-Western Sydney with a completely inadequate service. Yet these areas are expected to accommodate the bulk of the population growth over the next 25 years, and are already suffering from decades of inadequate infrastructure provision as noted above. It is also of considerable concern that the Infrastructure SEPP does not show the alignment of the NWRL to be preserved.

Moreover the proposed Rozelle Metro is a very expensive solution to provide a mere 7km service and is a very inefficient use of the limited infrastructure budget. With five harbour crossings and deep tunnels the cost/benefit ratio is poor compared with other projects. At best the resources being poured into the project will delay the development of rail-based projects in areas of desperate need for decades. Also little thought appears to have been given to the imminent congestion that will occur when one hundred more buses converge at Wynyard Station with buses coming from the North and the North-West.

The Rozelle Metro would provide no relief for the M2 buses in or out of the city – a journey that is very lengthy – and will only add to road and amenity problems in the Rozelle/Gladesville area (particularly with the arrival of a major bus/rail interchange). It will also slow the trip and create transfer difficulties at Epping for North-West commuters seeking to access the rapidly developing Macquarie Park employment area.

5.5 Key Features of the Dr Gary Glazebrook Plan

WSROC believes that many of the concerns with previous transport strategies and in particular the Government's Metro proposals have been addressed in the **Thirty Year Public Transport Plan for Sydney** draft discussion paper. Key elements include:

- Upgrades to the **Heavy Rail System** to allow a 50% increase in capacity
- A **Metro** network for more capacity, frequency and speed on key corridors;
- **Light Rail** networks serving secondary corridors to the CBD and Parramatta; and
- **Bus-Based Ring Routes** for increased cross-regional travel.

Parramatta to Epping Link

WSROC concurs with the discussion paper's assertion that the proposed rail or metro link between Parramatta to Epping is a crucial connection needed to link people in Western and South-Western Sydney with the important job concentrations in the Macquarie-Chatswood-St Leonards area, while also connecting the skilled labourforce in the north shore with Parramatta, Sydney's second CBD and the tertiary education opportunities at Macquarie University and the UWS Campus at Rydalmere.

Integration and Access

The Glazebrook Plan is to be commended for its objective for the overall system to be operated as a single, seamless system with:

- Integrated fares and ticketing;
- Well designed interchanges; and
- Integrated timetabling and real-time passenger information.

The need to expand the strategic networks is also supported with enhancement of local bus services and the release of more buses for local services as metros and light rail systems come on line. The proposal to develop 1,000 car park and ride places per annum over 30 years at strategic locations is also welcomed.

6. BEST PRACTICE INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

6.1 Rail as an Alternative to Aviation

In Europe there has been substantial investment in rail infrastructure which has had a marked impact on the demand for air travel. For example, Spain now has 10,000 kilometres of high speed rail track and 90% of its population living less than 50 kilometres from a bullet train. Nowadays the notion that heavy rail systems only work where there are high population densities has been questioned.

Spanish airlines experienced a 0.5% fall in domestic load factor (down to 69.2%) following a 13% slashing of capacity in the last 3 months of 2007. There was a reduction of 205 air flights between Madrid and Barcelona at that time. The drop in air travel was around 25% in 2008. The airlines are now focussing their flights on passengers wanting to fly beyond key hubs.

The first high speed train connection in Spain was built between Madrid and Seville and opened in 1992. The Madrid to Malaga line opened in December 2007 and Madrid to Barcelona in February 2008. The high speed trains travel with speeds up to 300 kilometres per hour and the 660 km trip between Madrid and Barcelona takes 2 hours 30 minutes or less. Punctuality is given a high priority and, if the trains are more than 5 minutes late, passengers receive a complete fare refund. AVE trains have videos and music players and seating that can be swivelled to face the direction of travel.

Other positive comments have included the preference for more space, greater comfort than experienced in planes, faster check-in times and arrival and departure from city centres. A further advantage is that, unlike airports, stations can be built underground and there is the potential to develop the air rights above stations to help fund the cost of provision of the infrastructure.

British Airways in 2008 also reported a 6% fall in passengers since November 2007. In Europe it has been found that trains are ideal for journeys up to 3 hours in length, with planes catering for the longer journeys.

Congestion charging has resulted in a 15% reduction of traffic in central London and much improved accessibility for bus, taxi and foot travel, leading to much higher amenity and a more efficient city. In the UK stringent loading/unloading traffic regulations also confine such activities to out-of-peak hours, freeing up more road space and better traffic flow.

There has been a trend back to public transport around the world. Cities such as Singapore and Hong Kong have been working to long term transport plans over decades and have been building integrated and well-designed networks.

Bus service planning needs to be more ambitious. In Vancouver it has been proved that with the right mix of supporting policies even low density suburbs can have frequent services running eighteen hours a day.

7. COMMENTS ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

7.1 The optimization and integration of existing public transport operations (including ferry, bus, light rail and heavy rail).

The public transport system in Sydney is under growing pressure and faces significant challenges, including population growth and ageing, climate change, increasing oil prices and unacceptable inequities in the provision of services and facilities. It currently operates as a fragmented transport system with a complex division of funding responsibilities and performance accountabilities between different agencies. It is ill-equipped to respond to the challenges outlined above.

It is essential that Sydney has a well planned public transport system to maximize benefits and minimize costs. What is needed is a robust, widely supported, long-term, properly financed plan, not a series of one off 'white elephant' projects that absorb the available funds, but do not deliver widespread, equitable benefits.

It is also crucial that the existing public transport infrastructure is fully utilized (particularly the heavy and light rail systems) and that measures are taken to expand bus, ferry and taxi utilization and to encourage walking and cycling.

Planning is a key task, but the infrastructure has to be delivered for it to have any value. An appropriate funding mechanism must be established to finance the plan. Secondly, the plan must be sensibly staged and further scope for expansion built into the process. Thirdly, the body overseeing the process should have representation from all political parties as well as key stakeholder groups, in order to de-politicise the planning process, ensure a multi-modal approach and appropriate community consultation and participation.

7.2 The expansion of public transport services and infrastructure, as well as cycle commuting infrastructure, over a 30-year planning horizon, taking into account existing transport accessibility problems and integration with future land use changes.

The urban form of Western Sydney is characterized by large areas of single land use, particularly the 'dormitory suburbs' and large industrial or business estates, linked by roads and a limited number of rail lines. This structure discourages local community development and entrenches the use of private vehicles to the detriment of the liveability of the local environment, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

The building of a more sustainable transport system for Sydney requires the provision of significant new infrastructure. The transport challenge is twofold - shifting people from their cars to more sustainable transport modes, while reducing the amount of travelling that people are currently required to do. Improving public transport involves a combination of new within-region and between-region transport infrastructure and increased services levels and amenity. Increased 'active transport' (walking, cycling etc.) requires more facilities and safer travel environments for those modes. Land use and infrastructure decisions clearly affect those strategies.

Motor vehicle injury and fatalities, while generally decreasing, are still disproportionately high in Western Sydney compared to other parts of the city. Reducing vehicle speed and vehicle kilometres travelled, along with improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities are key strategies for the region, in light of the high car use and relative lack of investment in pedestrian and cycling safety and amenity.

In August 2009 the NSW Government released two reports presenting the results of studies undertaken as part of the **PCAL NSW Bike Plan**, which was announced in 2008. WSROC believes promoting cycling to NSW public transport offers the opportunity to increase the catchment of public transport services.

Bicycle use in NSW is low compared to other Australian States and Territories and, particularly in relation to journeys to work, the reported use of cycling in conjunction with public transport modes is very low. At the time of the 2006 Census trips combining bicycle and public transport in NSW accounted for only 0.06% of commuter trips.

The provision of secure and convenient bicycle parking is a critical component of a multi-modal public transport interchange and the study identified gaps in the understanding and provision of such facilities that need to be addressed. The provision of bicycle parking spaces at interchanges did not match observed patterns of bicycle parking demand, particularly at the busiest stations.

There is clearly potential for increasing cycling and public transport use in NSW and extending the catchment of public transport interchanges by targeting multi-modal trips to public transport interchanges.

7.3 The most appropriate governance arrangements to guarantee the plan's longevity to remove the negative impact of single-term party politics and to optimise investments.

WSROC supports the Rail Tram and Bus Union's call for a well-planned and legislated system in NSW and a systematic approach to the sustainability of Sydney. It also sees value in further investigation of other financial models including betterment capture, the issue of municipal bonds, joint funding arrangements between the State and Commonwealth Governments (such as the Building Better Cities Funds) and a more structured approach to urban and regional revitalization projects such as the Integrated Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in America.

7.4 Key environmental sustainability issues.

The **NSW State Plan** notes that in NSW per capita greenhouse gas emissions are around 23 tonnes each year. Recent studies have affirmed the links between development patterns, transportation, emissions and energy (***Driving and the Built Environment: The Effects of Compact Development on Motorised Travel, Energy Use and CO2 Emissions*** – The US Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Science, September 2009). These findings reflect similar results from research undertaken in Australia in recent years.

The **NSW Greenhouse Plan (2005)** reported that in the last 30 years the total number of Australian cars grew three times faster than the population. In the last decade in Sydney the average VKT per vehicle has grown more than twice as fast as the population. It was also noted that there had been little improvement in the previous ten years in the average fuel efficiency of vehicles and the limited gains that had been achieved were being undermined by the increasing demand for more cars.

Motor cars have been identified as the main source of pollution in Western Sydney that determines air quality on a day-to-day basis. While Sydney's annual VKT increased on average 2.3% each year from 1991 onwards, the patterns were geographically uneven - with a 23% increase in outer and south-west Sydney compared with a 10% decline in inner and eastern Sydney.

The most significant greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). Emissions primarily come from energy generation activities resulting from burning of fossil fuels, agriculture, vehicles, leaking seals on equipment and domestic solid fuel heaters and various industrial activities. Transport activity in 2006 was reported as contributing approximately 14% of greenhouse emissions in NSW (source: SEDA website) but is growing in significance faster than contributors from other sectors.

The vast majority of Western Sydney residents have no option but to use private vehicle transport. There has been ever-increasing investment in roads and an inadequate public transport system. Because the transportation sector accounts for a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions and 70% of our oil use, a way has to be found to reduce the amount people are forced to drive each day, especially in the light of high forecast population growth.

While demand for more 'smart growth' development is growing, government regulations, government spending and transportation policies still favour sprawling, car dependent development. Changing those policies should play a role in addressing climate and energy issues.

Bringing about such a change would also have an array of important side benefits. More compact, mixed use development should reduce some infrastructure costs, increase the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of public transport and expand housing choice in areas currently lacking a mix of house types. Other benefits include reduced conversion of agricultural and environmentally fragile areas for urban uses and greater opportunities for physical activity by facilitating the use of non-motorised modes of travel such as walking or cycling.

Air travel has a large impact on Sydney's environmental footprint and contributes to global warming. All Governments should be encouraged to follow the example of Victoria and seek to reduce the demand for air travel for medium distances such as Sydney and Goulburn, Canberra etc. as a means of reducing car and rail travel and thereby transport fuel demand through the development of improved country and inter-city rail services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The State and Federal Governments should recognize that the natural environment and the liveability of cities, which have come to be considered as two separate issues, are inextricably linked. This must be recognized so that personal and public decisions are not removed from their effects on natural support systems.**
- **Air pollution should be acknowledged by all levels of Government as being one of the most important environmental problems in Western Sydney and photochemical smog and fine particle haze (brown haze) are the pollutants of most concern.**
- **Western Sydney is particularly susceptible to poor air quality and continued and increased investment is needed by State and Federal Governments to offset private vehicle use which is a major contributor to this poor air quality.**
- **An overriding objective of planning decisions by all levels of Government should be to reduce the need for residents to travel to access facilities and services.**
- **Public transport should be improved significantly in Western Sydney by a seamless integration of transport modes, increasing the frequency of services, integrating ticketing and fares, improving interchange between public transport modes and improving information.**

7.5 Key social and economic issues

Growing mobility and decreasing accessibility are threats to the environmental quality, social well-being and the economic viability of Western Sydney. A significant increase in traffic flows and a dramatic shift in modes of transport, away from walking, cycling and public transport to the private car, contribute to these trends. These in turn create further associated problems including:

- **environmental problems** such as air pollution and energy consumption;
- **health problems** caused by the air pollution and noise pollution resulting from road traffic, overweight and obesity as the result of the lack of physical exercise;
- **social problems** including isolation from necessary services, changing social patterns and a deterioration in the level of public transport provision;
- **transport problems** including congestion, increased danger for cyclists and pedestrians, infrastructure barriers and an increasing take up of urban land by transport related activities; and
- **economic problems** including inefficiency engendered by congestion, social, economic and environmental costs.

Achieving sustainable urban accessibility therefore requires the development of sustainability goals and indicators, target setting and monitoring, along with policies aimed at improving accessibility and not simply movement. Reconciliation of accessibility, economic development and environmental objectives should therefore be one of the **primary** objectives for Western Sydney's transport policy.

More people are now surviving to older age and 'degenerative diseases (e.g. coronary heart disease, diabetes and cancer) are starting to increase in importance. Living in the modern city may bring out latent illnesses (e.g. lung cancer and arteriosclerotic heart disease) which show a high urban prevalence and pneumonia since tuberculosis rates have been found to be higher in the city and lower in the suburbs.

The inability of many people with disabilities to access services and facilities has been a recurring theme in consultations held in Western Sydney over the years. Access means different things to different people, depending on their type of disability. International conventions and Commonwealth and State laws clearly reflect that equality of access is a basic human right. For people with a disability however, even the slightest obstacle can provide an insurmountable barrier. The quality of life of these residents depends on their ability to access a range of services and facilities.

Australians are now among the most overweight in the world. In 1971 less than one quarter of children walked to school, in 2006 two thirds were driven to school.

Service frequencies are an important factor in determining whether or not people will use buses. To date, despite several years of implementation, reasonable frequencies and operation hours are not being delivered on many strategic corridors in Western Sydney.

Calculations as to the viability of bus routes have misguidedly been based on the population densities of the suburbs to be serviced. In general, the lower the density, the fewer the routes that are provided. Calculations of the 'gross' density of population by LGA are misleading, particularly in the larger outer LGAs such as the Hills Shire, with four fifths of its area comprising urban bushland. Here the density is quoted as being 4 persons per hectare, whereas the density of its 'urban' area is over 30 persons per hectare.

Cities such as Vancouver and Toronto have similar densities to Australian cities, but their services run at much higher frequencies. Also Toronto provides a 24 hour service and Vancouver's buses finish running at 2 am.

Other impediments to improving the level of service provision include calculations of distances by 'as the crow flies' rather than the actual distance that has to be walked (constrained by the urban form of an area).

WSROC is of the view that in the past Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for both the T-Ways and the proposed rail lines did not investigate sufficiently the relationship between park-and-ride facilities and the successful operation of the public transport system. Studies into the implications of restricting local parking in surrounding neighbourhoods and restriction in commuter parking opportunities need to be completed, to

determine impact on use levels. This is particularly relevant in outer suburban areas of the North-West and South-West, in areas with high car dependency, low and dispersed residential density and poor frequency of local buses.

A primary transport objective is to reduce congestion on major arterials and in major centres and provide alternative public transport choices. Achieving this goal can be enhanced by providing an effective strategy of commuter parking and must take precedence over potentially marginal improvements in local service bus patronage; particularly where there is limited probability that this will occur in low density outer metropolitan areas.

An approach which assumes restriction of parking will force people onto local feeder buses and interchange at stations has not been demonstrated to have positive impacts in those EISs. These assumptions must be either justified in outer suburban areas or cease to be a guiding principle for transport planners.

7.6 Proposals for short term and long term funding

There is an urgent need for action to address Western Sydney's need for new strategic rail links to car dependent suburbs served by inadequate bus services. Two key projects in the short term should be construction of the first stage of the North-West Rail Link and the South-West Rail Link – both of which are 'shovel ready'. A further priority should be the construction of a public transport link between Parramatta and Epping. This would add badly needed east-west capacity to the existing rail network while at the same time serving rapidly growing employment areas.

EcoTransit Sydney have estimated that the combined costs of these three projects would be \$4.26 billion and would gain immediate and strong patronage compared to a 7km CBD Metro costing \$5.3 billion that would have very limited patronage unless a further \$8 billion were to be spent on the West Metro.

Additional rail capacity is needed through Sydney CBD and this should be commenced by 2015. The relative merits of a new harbour tunnel, or the claiming back for rail of the two eastern lanes of the Harbour Bridge originally used for trams (or the provision of both solutions) should be fully explored and the detailed plans and engineering reports that exist made available for public scrutiny.

Any remaining funds should be used to examine the potential for extension of the light rail network to help free up the CBD buses for improved services elsewhere in Sydney and for enhancements to the CityRail system.

In the longer term the potential for conversion of some of the existing CityRail lines to metro operation and the staged construction of metro lines to the Eastern Suburbs and the Northern Beaches could be considered, but only in the context of a fully integrated land use/transport plan for Sydney.

Transport solutions from other parts of Australia such as the Transperth model (electric rail on freeways for all toll ways, funded by superannuation funds and surface metros on arterial roads funded by State and Federal Governments) also appear to have significant cost benefit advantages which should not be ignored.

7.7 The cost-effectiveness of solutions, taking into account short term financial costs and benefits, and longer term environmental, congestion and other external costs and land use and accessibility benefits.

The Sydney Morning Herald commissioned the Centre for International Economics to prepare ***Sydney's Transport Infrastructure –the real economics*** in 2005. This study predicted a congestion cost increase of almost 40% from \$12 billion to \$17 billion a year by 2020 and a 30% increase in accident costs, road subsidy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, valued at \$4.75 billion growing to \$6.1 billion per annum. Subsidising so-called 'free parking' may be a substantial cost to the economy. The costs are hidden in the price of other goods and services hence no one can pay less for parking by using less of it.

The need to rationalise car parking in Sydney has been recognized for at least sixteen years and yet a Metropolitan Parking Policy is yet to be delivered. In 1993 in a discussion paper prepared prior to the release of the Integrated Transport Policy noted:

'There has been a tendency to attempt to satisfy demand for all-day off-street parking in commercial centres..... The effect of this is to make car use for journey to work and other trips more attractive at the expense of public transport use.'

The IPART **Review of CityRail Fares 2009-2012** Final Report, December 2008 noted that:

"There are very good reasons for subsidizing public transport in general. In particular, external benefits are enjoyed by the community overall and by road users in particular, from the operation of public transport.

There is considerable evidence that private cars impose substantial externality costs on the community in the form of environmental pollution, congestion and other such impacts. Therefore, by substituting for private cars, public transport creates an externality benefit associated with the avoidance of externality costs through having fewer trips made by private cars. In addition, there are general community benefits from having a public transport system which contributes to the mobility of individuals and which helps meet the community's urban planning strategies".

Benefits also include:

- Increased social inclusion;
- Improved access to education and health facilities and services opportunities;
- Fewer motor vehicle injuries and fatalities and health threatening illnesses;
- More active transport;
- Less pollution; and
- Less land needed for car parking and so forth.

The Eddington Transport Study **The Case for Action (2002)** presented to the UK Government provided advice on the long-term links between transport and the UK's economic productivity, growth and stability. It demonstrated that the UK's transport networks are crucial enablers of sustained productivity and competitiveness and noted that a reduction in travel times through new investment and better performance would have telling economic impacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Planning for public transport should be driven by community needs rather than a desire to keep costs down. The external benefits from the provision of public transport are potentially substantial as more people benefit other than just the bus or train user.**
- **WSROC is of the view that the value of social inclusion externalities of public transport needs to be undertaken to properly articulate the reasons why public transport services should be subsidised and an appropriate fare cost structure be developed accordingly.**
- **Evidence provided by the Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) to the 2009 Commonwealth Tax Inquiry estimated that in Australia there is a \$7 billion shortfall between the value of insurances paid and the costs attributable to road crashes. WSROC believes that this \$7 billion should be treated as an externality.**
- **The Government should put money into subsidizing public transport to support social inclusion, integrated land use strategies and reduced road trauma.**

- **Opportunities exist to use existing funding more effectively through redirecting State Transit Community Service Obligations for other purposes.**
- **WSROC is of the view that a co-operative review of parking regulations in major centres should be undertaken to discourage all-day commuter parking and encourage public transport use.**

Notwithstanding the above, in Western Sydney with its high car dependency and limited access to public transport services, there is a need to estimate the impacts of parking management strategies on different people across the region and set out how a transition to a more restricted parking policy can be developed and encouraged.

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