

Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact Statement

Based on the review of the exhibited Environmental Impact Assessment documents (the EIS), Council is supportive of the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport project and more broadly, the Government's investment in public transport capacity to fundamentally improve connectivity in Western Sydney and unlock Penrith's potential.

Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport (SMWSA) is a transformational project with the potential to deliver Council's long-held vision of a 30-minute city; stimulating growth in housing and employment, improving access to local jobs, health and education opportunities and a better work-life balance for residents.

Three of the six stations in this project are within Penrith's local government area. As a result, Council has a particular interest in ensuring the SMWSA project delivers not only a superior transport and connectivity outcome, but also superior public domain and social outcomes.

While broadly supportive of the project, Council would like to raise a few issues and concerns with the EIS, as explained in this submission.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ALTERNATIVES

To align land use planning and infrastructure as the basis for the growth of Penrith, a Structure Plan has been developed by Council to guide investment and development within and along the North South Rail corridor, particularly where new rail stations could be located. The Structure Plan in Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement identified a station at Penrith's health and education precinct to support growth and change within this area including increased housing diversity, growing investment and business activity, and creating great places for communities.

Council is disappointed that the EIS assessment did not identify a station at The Quarter as a preferred station precinct for development as part of the SMWSA project. The EIS states that a station at Western Sydney University would perform poorly against the 'sustainable and deliverable solution' objective and would have considerable construction, program and interface impacts and risk.

Council would welcome the business case to be made public to understand the evaluated performance of the shortlisted station precincts.

Without a station to support growth and change in The Quarter and strengthen the potential of the health and education precinct, the SMWSA project should consider opportunities to extend station catchments through network integration and enhanced transport services linking the project to The Quarter.

Recommendations:

- That the business case be made public to understand the evaluated performance of the shortlisted station precincts.
- That the SMWSA project extends the station catchments to the health and education precinct through transport network integration, supplementary transport services, and a potential interchange hub in The Quarter.

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STATION AND PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT

The EIS states that Sydney Metro is considering potential opportunities for precinct development immediately surrounding the proposed metro stations at St Marys and Orchard Hills, including consideration of the use of residual land. Opportunities for potential future development around these metro stations would be considered as part of future precinct planning and/or master planning activities in consideration of the area's future strategic vision and would be subject to separate planning approval processes.

Council recognises the role of Government in considering future precinct development but notes that local strategic planning as well as the development and application process should be carried out by Penrith Council. This will ensure that the precinct development is planned and assessed in the same manner as other developments in the LGA resulting in consistent application of the Penrith's planning processes and planning controls.

The EIS indicates that the design of the SMWSA project, including stations and surrounding precincts, is being developed in parallel with the preparation of the EIS. Prior to project approval, design development will continue after the exhibition of the EIS in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Council would appreciate a role in the Design Advisory Panel (prior to project approval) and a Design Review Panel (once project approval is obtained) for SMWSA.

Recommendations:

- That Penrith Council will progress and lead future station precinct development in collaborative partnership with Government.
- That Council is considered to be represented in the Design Panels for SMWSA.

ST MARYS METRO STATION

The EIS proposes that an above-ground pedestrian connection to the existing St Marys Station would be provided for access between the metro and heavy rail stations (via escalators, stairs and lifts) and would also provide a connection to a new public plaza north of the existing T1 Western Line.

Considering that fast and convenient interchanging is one of the customer outcomes of the NSW Future Transport Strategy, Council's concerns are that such a pedestrian overpass would not deliver the best possible outcome for customers interchanging between the two modes. To enable customers to transfer easily and safely between different services, the convenience of interchanging would be better facilitated through an underground pedestrian connection.

Council supports the retention of the existing pedestrian overpass at the train station. However, to improve walking and cycling access around the interchange, and in particular between the town centre and North St Marys, Council recommends considering an upgrade of the existing overpass making it accessible and convenient for cyclists to cross the train tracks.

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Council does not support the temporary removal of car parking on Nariel Street, Carinya Avenue, West Lane, Belar Street and Phillip Street to facilitate the relocation of the temporary bus interchange. The EIS indicates that Sydney Metro is also investigating an off-street option on the Station Street at-grade car park for the temporary relocation of the bus interchange. This option would avoid further impact on the parking around Nariel Street and Council recommends that Sydney Metro proceed with planning for the temporary bus interchange on the Station Street car park in consultation with Council.

The EIS indicates that about 435 car parking spaces will be impacted within the St Marys precinct and the road network immediately surrounding the station during the construction period. This includes about 310 off-street parking spaces and 125 on-street parking spaces, comprising both restricted and unrestricted spaces.

Apart from the addition of two parking levels on the multi-deck commuter car park on Harris Street (subject to separate approval), no additional car parking spaces are proposed to replace some of the affected parking spaces. To ensure appropriate car parking provisions after the completion of the metro station, Council recommends that Sydney Metro will work with Council on a suitable parking strategy for the precinct.

Recommendations:

- That the design for St Marys metro / train interchange is adjusted to include an underground pedestrian connection between the metro and train station.
- That the existing pedestrian overpass at the train station is upgraded to make it accessible and convenient for cyclists to cross the train tracks.
- That Sydney Metro will plan for the temporary bus interchange to be located on the Station Street car park, in consultation with Council.
- That Sydney Metro work with Council on a suitable parking strategy for the St Marys precinct and the area surrounding the station.

ORCHARD HILLS METRO STATION

The EIS states that one of the station drivers for the Orchard Hills Station is to consider opportunities to extend station catchment through transport integration establishing an interchange hub to serve catchment to the west (including Glenmore Park). Council recommends to also consider extending the station catchment to the east to provide connectivity to St Clair and Erskine Park.

The EIS proposes new park-and-ride facilities, including up to 500 spaces located to the south of Lansdowne Road. Council supports a park-and-ride facility as part of the station precinct but is concerned that the proposed location would attract additional traffic through the future town centre and would be less suitable for future expansion.

Considering the station's proximity to the M4 and the growing demand for commuter car parking in Penrith, as well as comparable commuter parking capacity currently provided at Kellyville or Bella Vista metro stations, a location on the land that

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Sydney Metro is acquiring north of the station would be more suitable. This would allow easy access from the motorway and opportunity for future expansion.

The SMWSA project should also consider supporting access to the future station precinct from the Blue Mountains through the provision of west facing ramps at the Kent Road/M4 interchange.

Recommendations:

- That opportunities to extend the station catchment to the east (including St Clair) are considered.
- That the proposed park-and-ride facilities will be located close to the M4 interchange to avoid attracting additional traffic through the future town centre and support potential increase in parking capacity.
- That the project includes the provision of west facing ramps at the Kent Road/M4 interchange to allow access from the Blue Mountains.
- That Sydney Metro work with Council on a suitable access and parking strategy for the Orchard Hills precinct and the area surrounding the station.

STABLING AND MAINTENANCE FACILITY

The EIS indicates that opportunities to provide vegetation screening of the stabling and maintenance facility (from sensitive receivers such as Luddenham Road and the surrounding rural areas within the viewshed) would be investigated during design development.

Council recommends protecting and including existing vegetation within the proposed maintenance facility site as much as possible. Particularly given the large footprint of the site and without East-West openings or relief from concrete cover, will significantly contribute to heat island effect for future residents of the area and disrupt habitat connectivity.

In general, the project should consider establishing (re)vegetation and landscape buffers ahead of or during construction for an embellished green grid to mitigate impacts, particularly in rural areas.

Recommendations:

- That the design of the proposed stabling and maintenance facility will protect and include existing vegetation within the site as much as possible.
- That (re)vegetation and landscape buffers are established ahead of, or during construction of the metro line, for an embellished green grid to mitigate impacts, particularly in rural areas.

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LUDDENHAM ROAD STATION

The EIS identifies upgrades to Luddenham Road with new intersections to the precinct, new pedestrian crossings and new public plaza adjacent to proposed station entrance. Although it appears that road widening is not proposed as part of the SMWSA project, the Draft Special Infrastructure Contribution for Western Sydney Aerotropolis indicates that wider precinct development would require “Luddenham Road Upgrade”.

Recommendation:

- That widening of Luddenham Road is considered to be delivered as part of the SMWSA project.

CONSTRUCTION

Sydney Metro has developed a Workforce Development and Industry Participation Plan including an Aboriginal Participation Plan which includes objectives to support jobs and skills for a more diverse and inclusive workforce and supply chain. Council would welcome all efforts being made to offer opportunities to local workers and suppliers.

Recommendation:

- That the Workforce Development and Industry Participation Plan and Aboriginal Participation Plan should include objectives to support local workers and suppliers.

TRANSPORT

The EIS assessment of intersection performance within the transport study area during the peak hours for the future years 2026 and 2036 show that several intersections are forecast to operate at a lower Level of Service in a scenario with the SMWSA project compared to a scenario without the project. This includes the intersections of Queen Street/Great Western Highway/Mamre Road, Glossop Street/Forrester Road, Glossop Street/Great Western Highway and Mamre Road/Luddenham Road, forecast to operate at or above capacity in a scenario with the metro project. The EIS states that forecast growth in background traffic is likely to result in significant delays and queuing at these intersections, exacerbated by the addition of traffic forecast to be generated by the project.

Considering the aforementioned assessment, Council does not concur with the EIS' conclusion that the SMWSA project is not forecast to cause significant impacts to the study area road network compared to a scenario without the project. The statement that the combined effects of the provision of the metro service, increases in the number of bus services and enhancements to the walking and cycling

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facilities are likely to reduce car dependency and minimise the impacts to the study area road network, is not supported by evidence. Nor does the EIS identify specific mitigation measures or infrastructure upgrades to minimise the impacts of traffic generated by the project.

Council requires all developers undertaking a major project in the Penrith LGA, including Sydney Metro, to identify any mitigation measures or infrastructure upgrades to minimise the impacts of the project on the road network following the completion of the project. It is crucial that the mitigation measures be identified and implemented as part of the SMWSA project prior to the commencement of metro operations.

The EIS acknowledges that the minimal provision of construction worker parking proposed to be provided at construction sites may not meet the demand based on construction workforce. The EIS indicates that a parking management plan would be developed, prior to start of construction, to manage construction worker parking and minimise the impacts on the surrounding road environment. However, Council will need further guarantees that construction worker parking will not impact on available public on-street and off-street car parking in the area around the construction sites.

Recommendations:

- That Sydney Metro identify any mitigation measures or infrastructure upgrades to minimise the impacts of SMWSA on the road network following the completion of the project. These upgrades must be identified and implemented as part of the project prior to the commencement of metro operations.
- That the parking management plan will meet Council's expectation that construction worker parking will not impact on available public on-street and off-street car parking in the area around the construction sites.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

The EIS concludes that management of construction noise and vibration would be in accordance with the Sydney Metro Construction Noise and Vibration Standard, which provides standard mitigation measures and additional mitigation measures for certain noise and vibration impact levels. Site specific mitigation measures have also been identified to reduce noise and vibration impacts during construction, including the potential use of acoustic sheds, subject to further investigation during construction planning and design development.

Council expects that acoustic sheds are used at construction sites to limit noise impacts on neighboring businesses and residents.

Recommendation:

- That the use of acoustic sheds is considered a standard mitigation measure rather than optional.

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ONGOING CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Council appreciates the commitment in the EIS that Sydney Metro will continue to work with stakeholders and the community to ensure they are informed about the project and have opportunities to provide feedback.

Council welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with Sydney Metro on further design development, construction planning and delivery of the SMWSA project; and with Transport for NSW on broader transport integration and supporting infrastructure upgrades.