

# Chapter 2

## Strategic need and justification

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## 2 Strategic need and justification

**This chapter provides an overview of the strategic need and justification for Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport (the project). The chapter outlines the strategic context for the project, provides an overview of relevant State, regional and district planning frameworks relevant to the project, describes why the project is needed and outlines the key benefits.**

### 2.1 Strategic context

#### 2.1.1 The challenges of a growing Western Parkland City

The *Greater Sydney Region Plan* (Greater Sydney Commission, 2018a) sets the vision and strategy for Greater Sydney to become a global metropolis of three unique and connected cities; the Eastern Harbour City, the Central River City and the Western Parkland City.

The Western Parkland City is centred on Western Sydney International and the Aerotropolis and includes the established centres of Liverpool, Greater Penrith and Campbelltown-Macarthur, which together form a metropolitan cluster (refer to Figure 2-1). The population of the Western Parkland City is projected to grow from 740,000 people in 2016 to 1.1 million people by 2036, and to more than 1.5 million people by 2056 (Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2020a). The city will include expansive industrial and urban services lands to the north and east of Western Sydney International.

A partnership agreement called the *Western Sydney City Deal* (NSW Government, 2018) was created in 2018 between the Australian and NSW Governments and eight Western Sydney local councils. The deal seeks to provide an extra 184,500 new homes and 200,000 new jobs for the Western Sydney region to support its growth.

Currently the public transport network in Western Sydney does not provide equitable access to employment opportunities and there are limited job opportunities within a 30-minute commute by public transport. This may result in a higher level of car use, have economic growth implications for the region and undermine liveability outcomes for residents.

Integrated transport and land use planning is key to planning for the Western Parkland City. Over the next 20 years, the Western Parkland City is expected to transform, driven by the development of the Aerotropolis, Western Sydney International, and the accessibility provided by the project, creating the opportunity to establish a new Western Economic Corridor. The Western Economic Corridor refers to a north-south corridor through the Western Parkland City with the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International at its heart and a world-class transport network that supports population growth (Greater Sydney Commission, 2018a).

Improved access to employment and economic activities, goods and services, education and health facilities, and recreational areas, is part of the vision for delivering a 30-minute city. By integrating land use, transport and infrastructure across the three cities, most people in Sydney will have the opportunity of 30-minute access to jobs, schools, businesses and services, including residents of Western Sydney, who would have a choice as to where they want to work. Critical in achieving these outcomes is a well-connected city with efficient transport options and interchanges.

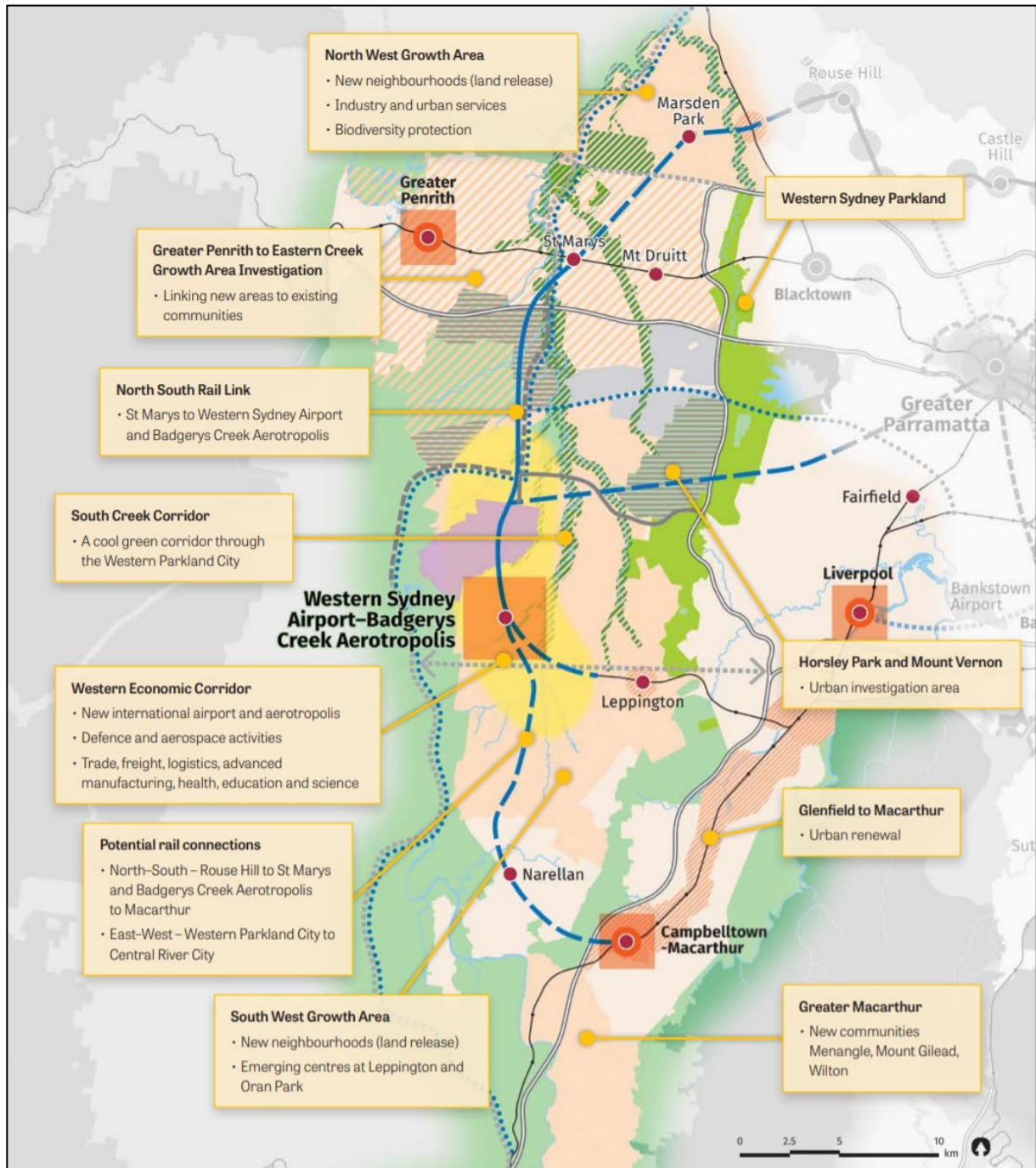


Figure 2-1 Western Parkland City (Greater Sydney Commission, 2018a)

### 2.1.2 Development of Western Sydney International and the Aerotropolis

The operation of Stage 1 of Western Sydney International is planned to commence in 2026 and will comprise a single runway, a terminal and other relevant facilities, to accommodate around 10 million passengers annually as well as air freight traffic. A passenger rail corridor has been identified and protected on the airport site, as well as stations at the airport business park and airport terminal. The Australian and NSW Governments have a shared objective to connect rail to Western Sydney International when the airport opens for passenger services.

Over the coming decades, the Aerotropolis will become a thriving economic hub for the emerging Western Parkland City, delivering new jobs, homes, infrastructure and services for people in the region. By harnessing the opportunities generated by Sydney's first 24/7 international airport, the Aerotropolis will attract new and emerging industries such as advanced manufacturing, aerospace and defence, high-tech freight and logistics, and agribusiness. Not only will the Aerotropolis create more jobs in Western Sydney, but a greater diversity of jobs, meaning fewer residents will need to commute out of the area for work.

In addition to the economic and liveability needs of the Western Parkland City and the challenges faced by a growing city, a further priority is the provision of transport infrastructure to allow for improved access within the Western Parkland City, including to the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International. The project would support the delivery of the Aerotropolis as a primary centre for Greater Sydney, accelerating its growth and safeguarding the long term success of the three cities vision.

The Western Sydney Airport Plan identified that rail services would need to be provided at the airport at the right time to benefit passengers and employees using the airport, and also the broader Western Parkland City (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016a). The availability of passenger rail services in the early years of airport operation would be important to support the long-term growth and capacity of the airport and its influence on economic development across the region. The ability of the airport to attract customers would also be influenced by transport connectivity.

Western Sydney International will play a major role in expanding the aviation capacity of Greater Sydney. Once Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport reaches capacity, expected to occur around the 2040s, Western Sydney International will accommodate further growth in aviation demand in Greater Sydney. When this occurs, future rail links towards Parramatta and the Sydney Central Business District will become important.

Furthermore, the development of the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International will require access to a large workforce, making accessibility for workers a priority. In the early years of operation, the majority of airport workers and passengers are forecast to come from Western Sydney, so it will be important to connect Western Sydney International to surrounding growth areas and metropolitan clusters.

The Australian and NSW Governments are also delivering significant upgrades and expansions of major roads (such as the future M12 Motorway) to accommodate the anticipated growth through the *Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan* (WSIP). The WSIP provides improved road transport capacity ahead of future traffic demand, as planned residential and employment development comes online in the Western Sydney growth areas and the Aerotropolis.

While the traffic and transport assessment for Stage 1 of Western Sydney International predicted these road improvements would adequately meet road traffic needs (Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, 2016), the Australian Government recognised that rail could provide a benefit to passengers and employees using the airport, as well as the broader Western Sydney region. In particular, the project would provide the transport infrastructure that would be essential to connecting future urban development around the proposed stations and beyond.

Accessibility to the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International is therefore important for driving future economic development, which is key to achieving the vision for the Western Parkland City.

## 2.2 State and regional planning framework

The following section sets out a summary of relevant State and regional planning policies and indicates how the project aligns with these. The policy framework applicable to the project is illustrated in Figure 2-2. The figure outlines the land use planning framework, transport infrastructure planning and policy framework, and demonstrates how these are interdependent.

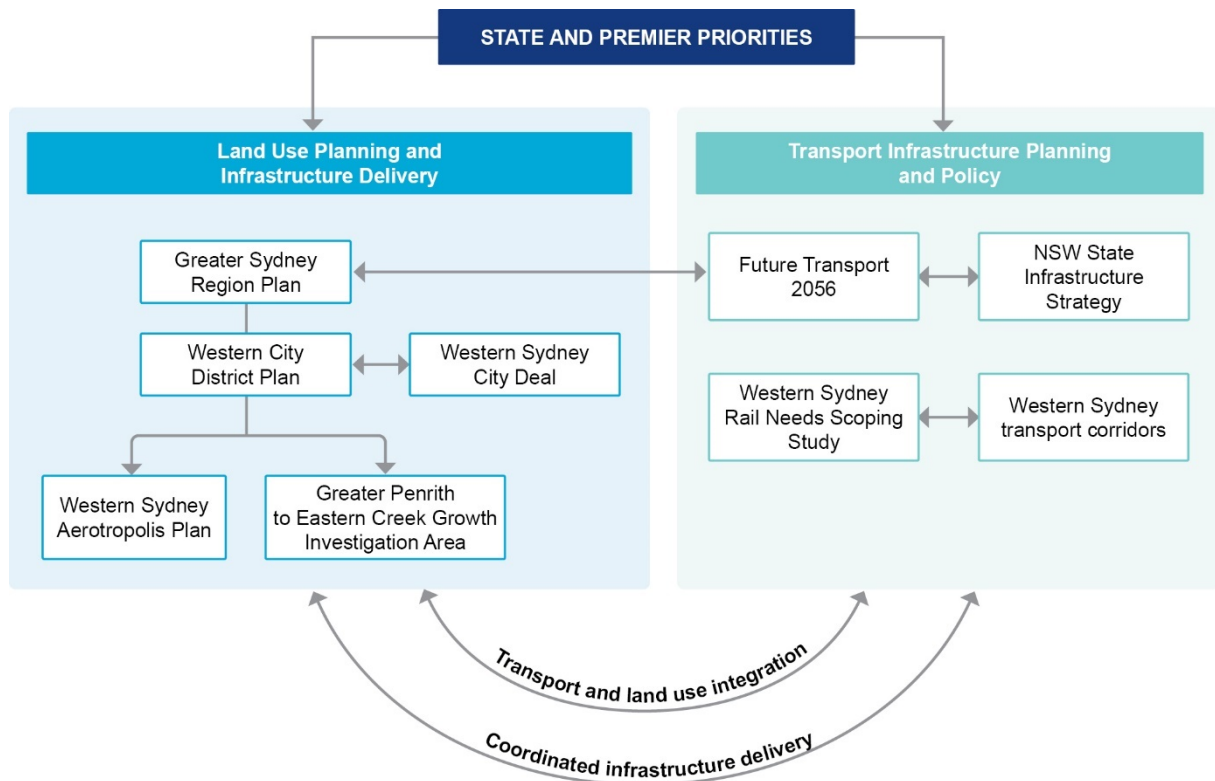


Figure 2-2 Policy framework for the project

### 2.2.1 State and Premier's Priorities

In September 2015 the NSW Premier released 30 State priorities, including 12 Premier's Priorities, for 2015-2019. An update to the Premier's Priorities was provided in 2019 with an aim to keep the economy strong, create jobs, deliver world-class services, protect the vulnerable and ensure that all NSW citizens and communities share in the State's success. The Premier's Priorities set the overarching framework for land use planning and transport infrastructure planning and policy in NSW.

Key priorities relevant to the project include achieving 'well connected communities with quality local environments' and maintaining a 'strong economy' through creating jobs.

Over the next 15 years, NSW will require new infrastructure to be built that will support 40 per cent more train trips, 30 per cent more car trips and 31 per cent more households (NSW Government, 2015). Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport is a key project in this infrastructure build which would help cater for increased trips in the Western Parkland City.

The project would also contribute to economic growth by:

- improving access to jobs
- reducing the need for private car travel (and associated congestion impacts) for future residents and workers in the Western Parkland City through provision of a high quality public transport alternative
- helping move people between key centres more reliably and efficiently
- enabling housing and employment growth for the creation of a Western Economic Corridor.



### Alignment with the project

The project would be consistent with the intent of the priorities related to creating jobs and delivering infrastructure and the Government's policy of providing well-connected communities with quality local environments.

#### 2.2.2 Greater Sydney Region Plan

The Greater Sydney Region Plan, also referred to as *A Metropolis of Three Cities*, is built on a vision of three cities where most residents live within 30-minutes of their jobs, education, health facilities and services, and great places. Sydney is Australia's global city and will experience significant population and employment growth in the coming decades. The plan identifies that by 2056, Greater Sydney is envisaged to transform into a metropolis of three cities (see Figure 2-3):

- the Western Parkland City
- the Central River City
- the Eastern Harbour City.

Having three cities, each with supporting metropolitan and strategic centres, would put workers closer to knowledge-intensive jobs, city-scale infrastructure and services, entertainment and cultural facilities. As described in the plan, the population of Greater Sydney is projected to grow to eight million people over the next 40 years, with almost half of that population residing west of Parramatta. Rebalancing economic and social opportunities across Greater Sydney will leverage that growth and deliver the benefits more equally and equitably.

The plan recognises opportunities to respond to large-scale urban growth and development and the emergence of new cities, such as the Western Parkland City. The plan also identifies the opportunity to enhance the Western Parkland City's economic growth through future development in the existing metropolitan clusters of Greater Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown-Macarthur as well as in emerging centres such as Leppington and St Marys. The plan includes the project as a key component in rebalancing opportunity across Sydney and in supporting the establishment of the Western Economic Corridor, with this being integral to developing more jobs and a diversity of jobs in the Western Parkland City.

For the first time in NSW, State policies for transport, land use and infrastructure have been co-developed across the relevant agencies with the goal of ensuring full coordination and integration of implementation and funding. The plan has been developed alongside *Future Transport 2056* (discussed further in Section 2.2.3) and the NSW *State Infrastructure Strategy* (discussed further in Section 2.2.4). The plan also sets out a series of objectives for implementation based around improvements to:

- infrastructure and collaboration
- liveability
- productivity
- sustainability.

While the objectives are broad and apply across the three-cities, there are a number that are especially relevant to the project. These include:

- Objective 6: Services and infrastructure meet communities' changing needs
- Objective 7: Communities are healthy, resilient and socially connected
- Objective 12: Great places that bring people together
- Objective 14: A Metropolis of Three Cities – integrated land use and transport creates walkable and 30-minute cities
- Objective 15: The Eastern, Greater Parramatta and the Olympic Peninsula and Western Economic Corridors are better connected and more competitive

- Objective 20: Western Sydney Airport and the Aerotropolis are economic catalysts for the Western Parkland City
- Objective 26: A cool and green parkland city in the South Creek corridor
- Objective 33: A low-carbon city contributes to net-zero emissions by 2050 and mitigates climate change.

The objectives have been rolled down into a series of planning priorities in the various District Plans that flow from the Greater Sydney Region Plan, including the *Western City District Plan* (Greater Sydney Commission, 2018b). The implementation of the planning priorities and how these relate to the project are discussed in Section 2.3.1.

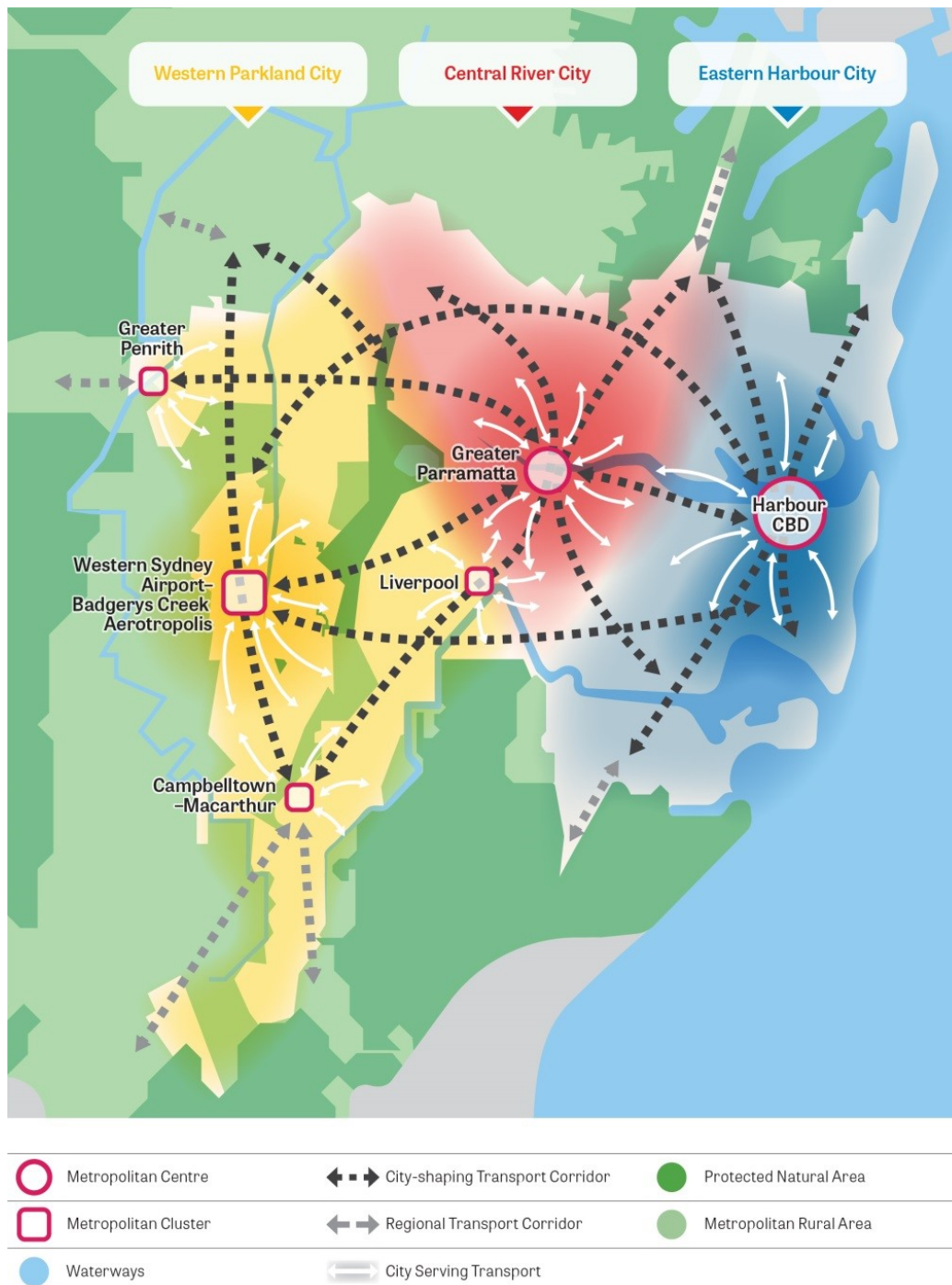


Figure 2-3 Greater Sydney Commission's vision for a Metropolis of Three Cities (Greater Sydney Commission, 2019)



### Alignment with the project

The project provides an opportunity for mass transit to shape the development of Sydney. The project would unlock and support the vision for a liveable, productive and sustainable Greater Sydney by creating opportunities for high-amenity precincts around stations, providing the significant mass transit amenity required to attract businesses, workers and residents to relocate to the new Western Parkland City, ensuring sustainable scalability to safeguard long-term growth. Further detail on how the project would achieve this includes:

- infrastructure delivery and collaboration – the project would provide one of the first key pieces of major infrastructure to support an emerging Western Parkland City and would also play a major role in optimising delivery and reducing costs of supplementary infrastructure necessary to support rapid growth
- liveability – the project would improve liveability outcomes in the Western Parkland City and Greater Sydney by catalysing development around metro stations, unlocking additional dwelling supply, supporting growth of jobs, improving local access and fostering socially-connected communities
- productivity – the project would significantly improve productivity for the Western Parkland City and Greater Sydney by creating additional jobs growth at the Aerotropolis. This would help connect workers with jobs and services and establish a diverse job pool
- sustainability - the project would improve the long-term sustainability outcomes for the Western Parkland City and Greater Sydney by introducing a new sustainable transport mode and moving travel choice away from private vehicles, contributing to green infrastructure and showcasing sustainable design and construction and cater for long term growth.

### 2.2.3 Future Transport 2056

*Future Transport 2056* (Transport for NSW, 2018b) is a 40-year strategy to support growth and the NSW economy, focusing on customer needs and the technological, economic and social changes ahead. *Future Transport 2056* has investment priorities for Greater Sydney that will be guided by the vision of a metropolis of three cities as outlined in the *Greater Sydney Region Plan*.

The strategy is based on six transport customer outcomes including:

- customer focus – convenient and responsive to customer needs
- successful places – sustaining and enhancing the liveability of our places
- a strong economy – connecting people and places in a growing city
- safety and performance – safely, efficiently and reliably moving people and goods
- accessible services – accessible for all customers
- sustainability – makes the best use of available resources and assets.

The three cities vision for Sydney will require a sustained and staged investment program to protect transport corridors and then develop a connected and integrated transport network serving and linking the three cities. These multi-modal transport investments will provide improved connectivity, more flexible public transport, congestion management and urban renewal outcomes, improving capacity on existing road and rail corridors, and supporting renewal and walkability by drawing traffic away from centres.

For the Western Parkland City, the strategy identifies the need for a north–south rail link through the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International. This is required to shape sustainable urban form and grow jobs in the longer term, and to support 30-minute access to centres by public and active transport. The project is identified as a committed initiative in the zero-to-10-year horizon, which is indicative of the level of priority to realise the government’s vision for the Western Parkland City (see Figure 2-4 (numbered item 20)).



**Figure 2-4 Greater Sydney committed transport initiatives (Transport for NSW, 2018)**

The strategy is also supported by the *Greater Sydney Services and Infrastructure Plan* (Transport for NSW, 2018c) which includes a number of initiatives for delivery or investigation in the short to medium term. The plan details how transport networks will need to expand to provide improved access to each metropolitan centre, including the metropolitan cluster of centres in the Western Parkland City. These networks will be progressively developed through a range of infrastructure investments that will make key improvements to the city-shaping and road networks as well as upgrade local roads, walking and bicycle paths. The project is identified in the plan as a committed key infrastructure initiative. The plan discusses the joint Australian and NSW government funding for the project to ensure there is a rail connection in time for the planned opening of Western Sydney International.

Possible future north–south rail connections between St Marys and Schofields/Tallawong in Rouse Hill and the Aerotropolis to Campbelltown-Macarthur are identified for investigation in the next 10 years. Other relevant initiatives identified for the Western Parkland City include the WSIP and Western Sydney Growth Roads Program.

### Alignment with the project

The objectives of the project align with the *Future Transport 2056* target outcomes. The project is identified as a committed project in the zero-to-10-year horizon.

#### 2.2.4 NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038

The *NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018–2038* (Infrastructure NSW, 2018) sets out the NSW Government’s infrastructure vision for the State, across all sectors. The strategy, combined with the *Greater Sydney Region Plan* and *Future Transport 2056*, brings together infrastructure investment and land use planning for cities and regions. The strategy focuses on achieving sustainable growth in NSW by aligning investment in infrastructure with the way communities grow. The strategy recognises that investing in infrastructure integrated with land use planning will yield the greatest value in terms of maximum economic and social benefits.

For the Western Parkland City, the strategy identifies the following focus areas:

- provide a north–south mass transit connection, for example, the T1 Western Line to Western Sydney International
- prioritise intercity road connections to support access and provide a north–south mass transit connection
- provide a freight network to support a growing city
- provide health, education and social infrastructure to support population growth
- facilitate high-quality digital connectivity infrastructure as part of all developments
- protect and enhance the South Creek catchment.

#### **Alignment with the project**

The project would provide a north–south mass transit connection for the Western Parkland City that would save future investment costs associated with retrofitting mass transit into a developed Western Parkland City and reduce costs for supporting infrastructure (such as utilities, schools and hospitals) by promoting a more compact urban form centred around the mass transit corridor.

Along with providing access, the project would provide a structural framework for prioritising and optimising investment across the full range of population-serving infrastructure required for growth including health, education and social infrastructure.

#### **2.2.5 Other NSW policies**

##### **Better Placed**

*Better Placed* (Government Architect of NSW, 2017a) is the integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW. The policy provides guidance for State government to achieve good design as both a process and outcome.

Better Placed sets seven design objectives which define the key considerations of a built environment as being ‘healthy, responsive, integrated, equitable, and resilient.’ Sydney Metro’s own objectives for design are aligned with those established in *Better Placed* (as discussed in Section 7.1.3 of Chapter 7 (Project description – operation)).

*Better Placed – Design Guide for Heritage - Implementing the Better Placed policy for heritage buildings, sites, and precincts* (Government Architect of NSW, 2019a) provides advice to guide a broad range of design work in heritage places in NSW. One of the principles of the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport Design Guidelines (see Appendix E) is to ensure elements and items of heritage significance are appropriately managed, respected, opportunities prioritised for heritage values to contribute to the celebration of local identity and place.

##### **Movement and Place**

The Government Architect of NSW and Transport for NSW are collaboratively developing the *Movement and Place Framework* (Government Architect of NSW, 2019b) to provide a cohesive approach to balancing the movement of people and goods with the amenity and quality of places, contributing to the attractiveness, sustainability and success of our cities and towns.

The Movement and Place Framework seeks to ensure infrastructure complements and enhances the function, rather than merely dictate the form, of the place. It reflects a shift towards place-based planning and greater place and movement integration in strategic planning by enhancing strategic transport links to support economic growth.

Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport provides opportunities to integrate station precincts with existing and proposed transport networks.

## Local Character and Place Guideline

The *Local Character and Place Guideline* (Department of Planning and Environment, 2019) aims to support a stronger consideration of local character regardless of the nature of change that is planned for an area. The project would design station precincts to reflect local character and context, integrate within their settings, and provide attractive space and streetscapes.

## Sydney Green Grid

As part of the Greater Sydney Region and District Plans, the *Sydney Green Grid* (Office of the Government Architect, 2017b) provides a spatial framework to underpin *Greener Places*, the draft green infrastructure policy (Office of the Government Architect, 2017c). The Sydney Green Grid proposes the creation and consolidation of a 'network of high quality green areas that connect town centres, public transport networks and major residential areas,' enhancing open space throughout Greater Sydney.

Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport provides opportunities for the stations and surrounding public domain to connect into or enhance the Sydney Green Grid.

## Greener Places

The NSW Government's draft green infrastructure policy *Greener Places: Establishing an urban green infrastructure policy for New South Wales* (Government Architect of NSW, 2017b) builds on the Sydney Green Grid to guide the design, planning and delivery of green infrastructure across NSW. Green infrastructure refers to the network of open spaces, natural and semi-natural systems including parks, rivers, bushland and private gardens which support quality of life in urban environments. Greener Places identifies the NSW Government's infrastructure and urban renewal projects as an opportunity for the delivery of quality green infrastructure.

## Designing with Country

The Government Architect NSW is working with recognised Aboriginal knowledge holders, built environment experts and community to develop a set of Cultural Design Principles. In March 2020 the Government Architect NSW published the *Designing with Country* discussion paper (Government Architect of NSW, 2020) which encourages all stakeholders to consider how Aboriginal cultural connections to Country are responded to when designing and planning new projects.

## Alignment with the project

The design of the project would consider placemaking, movement, green infrastructure and culture and heritage with metro stations and facilities in accordance with the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport Design Guidelines (see Appendix E). The project also offers opportunities to improve connection to Country and connectivity with open spaces, parklands, waterways and active transport routes. Opportunities to integrate station precincts with existing and proposed road, public transport, walking and cycling networks would also be an important consideration in design.

## 2.3 Strategic land use planning framework for the Western Parkland City

### 2.3.1 Western City District Plan

The Western City District Plan sets the vision and strategy for the Western Parkland City to have efficient and easier access to jobs and a range of housing and activities consistent with the overarching *Greater Sydney Region Plan*.

Infrastructure, businesses and knowledge-intensive jobs would be brought together through the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International, which are envisaged as the heart of the Western Parkland City. Liverpool, Greater Penrith and Campbelltown-Macarthur are metropolitan clusters, strengthened through strong relationships, collaboration and reinforcement from the Aerotropolis.

The vision for the Western Parkland City is based on a 30-minute city, where people live within 30-minutes of their jobs, education, health facilities, services and social and community spaces. The Western Parkland City will require a range of housing, public transport, schools, hospitals and community facilities to assist in realising this vision.

It is anticipated that a Western Economic Corridor, focused on the Aerotropolis, Western Sydney International and the metropolitan clusters, would attract globally-significant industries. By being more self-contained and providing more local jobs and services for residents of the district, the Western Parkland City would support the 30-minute city vision outlined in the *Greater Sydney Region Plan* and *Future Transport 2056*. As discussed in Section 2.1.1, to deliver on this vision for the Western Parkland City, current challenges around alternative transport modes, accessibility and connectivity need to be addressed.

One of the objectives identified in the *Greater Sydney Region Plan* is the revitalisation of the South Creek corridor (objective 26). South Creek and its tributaries can form the basis for cool, green and attractive urban communities by retaining more water in the landscape and integrating waterways in the design of new neighbourhoods that also support the health and management of waterways. Infrastructure NSW, in collaboration with the Greater Sydney Commission, is leading a whole-of-government initiative for the South Creek corridor. The vision is that the South Creek corridor is the central element of the urban design and water management of the Western Parkland City, and it would support healthy, liveable and sustainable communities.

#### **Alignment with the project**

The project would form the mass transit ‘spine’ of the Western Parkland City, which would be critical in realising the 30-minute city vision, improving access to jobs and housing, and supporting economic growth.

The design of the project would also consider placemaking, movement and green infrastructure design principles and how these can best be realised, including supporting the South Creek urban design principles.

### **2.3.2 Western Sydney City Deal**

The concept of City Deals was announced in the *Smart Cities Plan* (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2016), which focuses on leveraging Australian Government investments in infrastructure to ensure that projects prioritise broader economic objectives, maximise investment reach by facilitating alternative financing models and increase overall infrastructure investment levels.

The *Western Sydney City Deal* is a partnership between the Australian Government, NSW Government and eight Western Sydney local councils to:

- provide funding and policy support for the generation of economic growth
- deliver jobs and housing
- reduce travel times
- improve environmental outcomes.

The eight local councils involved in the *Western Sydney City Deal* (in conjunction with Blacktown City Council) are; Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, Fairfield City Council, Hawkesbury City Council, Liverpool City Council, Penrith City Council, Wollondilly Shire Council.

The Western Sydney City Deal provides a collaborative platform to develop the Western Parkland City and become one of the most connected places in Australia. The Western Sydney City Deal is intended to complement land use decisions over the next 20 years and will focus on local job opportunities, connectivity and liveability. A shared objective between the Australian and NSW Governments is having rail connected to Western Sydney International when the airport opens for passenger services.

With connections to the existing Sydney Trains suburban rail network and the Aerotropolis, the project is a key step towards achieving a vision for 30-minute city connections in the Western Parkland City. As part of the Western Sydney City Deal, the NSW Government will also establish rapid bus services from the metropolitan centres of Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown to Western Sydney International before its planned opening, and to the Aerotropolis.



### Alignment with the project

The project is a significant initiative outlined in the *Western Sydney City Deal*. It would provide a mass transit link to connect a range of identified initiatives and opportunities, including delivering on the shared objective of connecting rail to the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International in time for the planned opening of the airport.

#### 2.3.3 Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan

The Western Sydney Aerotropolis (formerly part of the Western Sydney Priority Growth Area), encompasses some 11,200 hectares of land roughly bounded by the Warragamba to Prospect Water Supply Pipelines to the north, Kemps Creek to the east, Bringelly Road to the south and The Northern Road to the west.

The *Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan* (NSW Government, 2020) was prepared to guide land use planning and development in this area and around Western Sydney International. The Plan builds on and ultimately replaces the *Stage 1 Western Sydney Aerotropolis Land Use Infrastructure and Implementation Plan* (LUIIP), which was released in August 2018 (Department of Planning and Environment, 2018) and the *Draft Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan* released in December 2019. The *Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan* has been informed by community and stakeholder feedback received on the *Draft Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan* that was exhibited from December 2019 – March 2020 and the LUIIP in late 2018.

The *Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan* presents the vision and planning framework for the Aerotropolis as Australia's next global gateway, built around Western Sydney International, becoming an 'inviting place to live, work and invest' and being situated within a 'cool, green and connected' Western Parkland City.

The *Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan* sets out an approach to precinct planning that will optimise investment in major infrastructure and create the impetus for early activation of the Aerotropolis. This includes the establishment of 10 precincts, six of which are being released for planning as an initial phase, with the remaining precincts being released when required (see Figure 2-5). The project would traverse the Northern Gateway and Aerotropolis Core precincts, located north and south of Western Sydney International, respectively.

### Alignment with the project

The project would be the primary rail link connecting the Northern Gateway, Western Sydney International and Aerotropolis precincts, enabling people to access commercial, passenger and freight precincts and providing for the essential airport operations to occur. The project, together with other transport modes, would also connect Liverpool, Penrith and Campbelltown with the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International, improving the connectivity to these locations. This will be achieved through the establishment of new stations which will support the surrounding precincts and act as transport nodes to support the economic and urban growth of the area.

#### 2.3.4 Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area

The Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area covers a large area from north of Warragamba to Prospect Water Supply Pipelines to south of Marsden Park and provides the opportunity to integrate land use and transport planning at a suitable scale. Growth in appropriate locations can contribute to a connected, vibrant Western Parkland City with more homes, jobs, services and open space.

The first stage of a North South Rail Line from St Marys to Western Sydney Airport and Badgerys Creek, intersecting with the existing heavy rail corridor, was identified to create opportunities for renewal and revitalisation.

The Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area will build on the existing assets and the opportunities created by the broader Western Economic Corridor. The Growth Investigation Area includes the activity nodes of the Penrith strategic centre, the Greater Penrith health and education precinct and the centres of St Marys, Mount Druitt and Rooty Hill. New land release areas will also be considered in the Penrith local government area, including around Orchard Hills. It is significant to the project due to its linkages to the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International. The project would

leverage opportunities afforded by connectivity to these growing economic hubs by providing a new transit hub for the revitalisation of older residential areas.

### Alignment with the project

The project is important to support the Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area and would create opportunities for connectivity, renewal and revitalisation with the introduction of stations and precincts that provide a new transport link for the area. Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport is also identified as a catalyst for realising the vision of the Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek region, which will be a place for new business, housing choice, education and research.

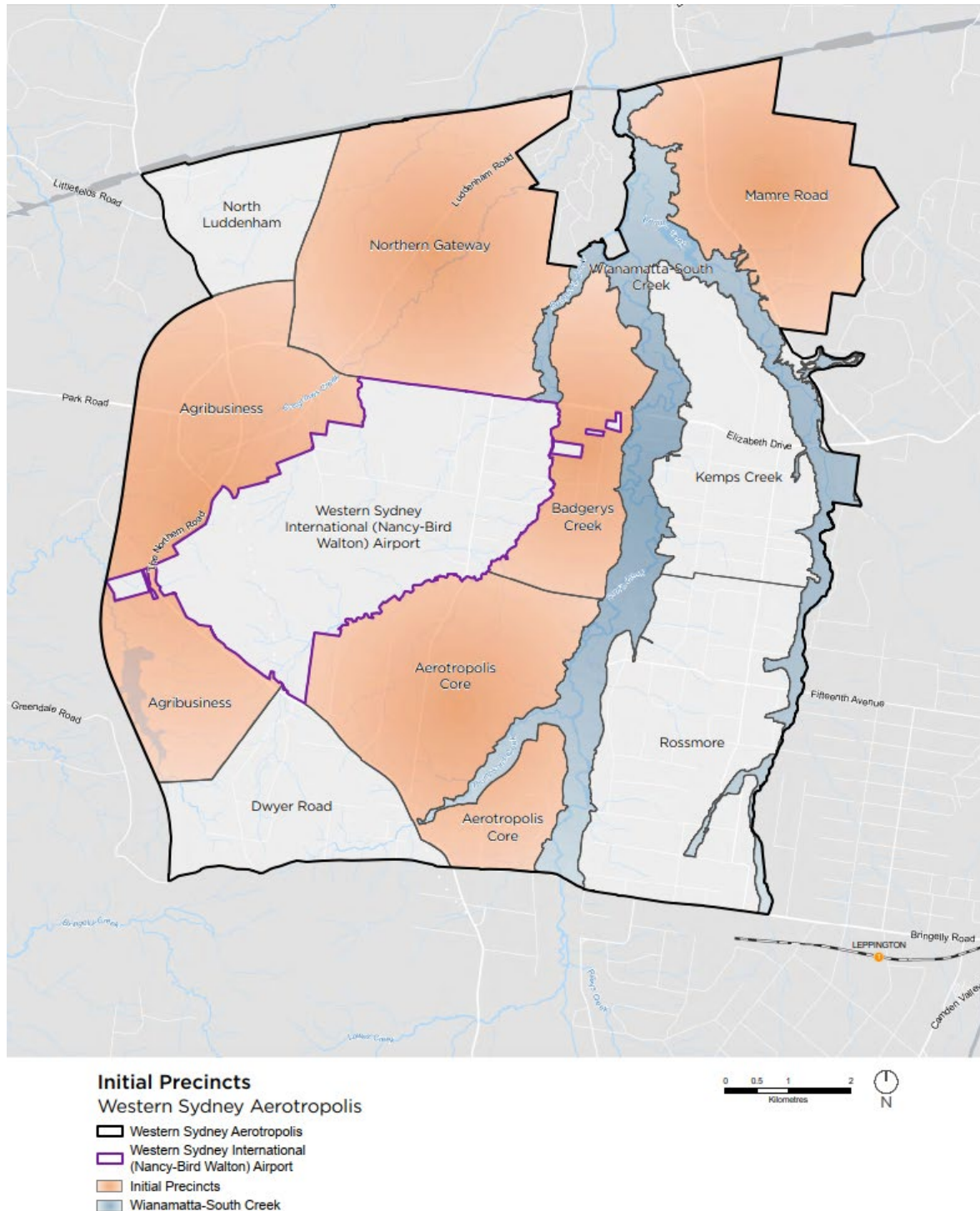


Figure 2-5 Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan precincts (NSW Government, 2020)

### 2.3.5 Local strategic planning statements

#### Penrith

The purpose of the *Penrith Local Strategic Planning Statement: Planning for a brighter future* (Penrith City Council, 2020) (Penrith LSPS) is to outline Penrith's economic, social and environmental land use needs over the next 20 years. The Penrith LSPS identifies the strategic planning work (studies and strategies) needed to help inform a review of planning controls and to manage future change and growth in Penrith.

The Penrith LSPS is informed by both State and local government plans and policies. In the *Greater Sydney Region Plan*, Greater Penrith is identified as a 'metropolitan cluster' in the Western Parkland City, to provide jobs, homes and services for a growing community. The Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area is also identified for its potential to capitalise on significant transport and infrastructure investment.

The Penrith LSPS identifies the North South Rail Line corridor (within which the project is generally proposed) as establishing a significant economic corridor, both east–west and north–south, and connecting the North West and South West Growth Centres in Western Sydney, as well as Western Sydney International and the Aerotropolis, the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury.

#### Alignment with the project:

The project is identified as new city-shaping infrastructure that would provide opportunities for jobs and create better transport connections and networks that would move people around the Penrith local government area and to other parts of Greater Sydney more easily and quickly.

#### Liverpool

The *Liverpool Local Strategic Planning Statement: Connected Liverpool 2040* (Liverpool City Council, 2020) (Liverpool LSPS) sets out Liverpool City Council's strategic planning vision for the next 20 years and identifies planning priorities across the areas of connectivity, productivity, liveability and sustainability.

The Liverpool LSPS is informed by the *Greater Sydney Region Plan* and Western City District Plan. Liverpool is identified as one of the metropolitan clusters and is one of Australia's fastest growing local government areas. The Liverpool LSPS has also been informed by Council's Community Strategic Plan – *Our Home, Liverpool 2027*. Sixteen planning priorities have been identified for Liverpool.

Transport connectivity is a critical element of Council's vision for a connected Liverpool. The top transport priority is faster public transport services to Liverpool and other major centres. While Liverpool is known for its strong road transport links, including proximity to the M5 and M7 motorways, Council continues to advocate for better public transport connectivity. This will be particularly important for the success of Liverpool's burgeoning health and education-focused Innovation Precinct (based around Liverpool Hospital), Western Sydney International and the Aerotropolis, and to help in the management of road congestion.

#### Alignment with the project

The Liverpool LSPS shows that the planning priorities relevant to the project are related to transport improvement initiatives such as the Fifteenth Avenue Smart Transit Corridor, which are proposed to interface with Western Sydney International.

## 2.4 Strategic transport planning framework for the Western Parkland City

### 2.4.1 Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study

The Australian and NSW Governments commenced a joint Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study in 2015 to determine the long-term need, timing and service options for passenger rail to service the Western Parkland City and connect to Western Sydney International. The study provides a blueprint for expanding and enhancing rail services across Western Sydney, including connectivity to Western Sydney International, over the coming decades.

The study was informed by extensive engagement with the community, industry and key stakeholders through various mechanisms including a community feedback survey, written submissions, an industry forum and a stakeholder reference group.

The study identified metro rail as the preferred rail product, since it would deliver strong customer, land use and transport network outcomes. This is documented in the *Western Sydney Rail Needs Scoping Study Outcomes Report* (Australian Government and Transport for NSW, 2018).

Key components of the recommended network include:

- a North South Rail Line corridor between Schofields and Macarthur, via Western Sydney International and the Aerotropolis
- potential future extensions between Schofields and Tallawong in Rouse Hill
- an East West Rail Link to connect Greater Sydney's 'three cities', providing rail connectivity between the Western Parkland City, the Central River City and the Eastern Harbour City
- rail links that could support the growth of Western Sydney and support access to Western Sydney International through additional rail connections (including a South West Rail Link Extension)
- network upgrades and extensions across the existing rail network to increase public transport capacity between Western Sydney and Greater Sydney.

This recommended network for the future success of the Western Parkland City included the potential future link between Schofields and Macarthur as the connection to deliver the most city-shaping potential for the Western Parkland City. There would also be the potential for future extension from Schofields to Tallawong in Rouse Hill.

### **Alignment with the project**

The project is the first stage of the recommended North South Rail Line corridor between St Marys and the Aerotropolis.

#### **2.4.2 Western Sydney Corridors identification**

NSW Government planning for the long-term transport needs of Western Sydney is guiding the identification and protection of corridors of land that can be used to deliver transport infrastructure when needed in the future. These corridors have been identified under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Infrastructure Corridors) 2020*.

The corridors identified were:

- North South Rail Line
- South West Rail Link Extension
- Western Sydney Freight Line.

The North South Rail Line and South West Rail Link Extension corridors were identified as being critical to the development of Western Sydney as part of the Western Sydney Corridors identification. The aim of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Infrastructure Corridors) 2020 is to protect these two rail corridors in Western Sydney for future rail infrastructure for passenger train services.

The corridors were selected following a comprehensive process that involved community consultation, exploration of multiple alignments and the input of technical experts. The North South Rail Line corridor identified in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Infrastructure Corridors) 2020 covers part of the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport alignment and runs south from Orchard Hills, through to the Western Sydney International, Aerotropolis and Macarthur.

With these corridors being protected, planning authorities will ensure that land use and transport planning processes around the corridors are integrated and coordinated.

It is noted that Section 10 of the *Draft North South Rail Line and South West Rail Link Extension Corridors Strategic Environmental Assessment* (Transport for NSW, 2018a) included a commitment for future proposals to build and operate a rail line in the corridor to be subject to comprehensive environmental assessment in accordance with the EP&A Act and outlined the environmental matters to be assessed. This Environmental Impact Statement is the comprehensive environmental assessment required for the delivery of a rail line between St Marys and Aerotropolis generally within the North South Rail Line corridor and includes an assessment of all identified environmental matters.

### **Alignment with the project**

The project is consistent with, and the first stage of, a North South Rail Line. The rationale for this is discussed in detail in Chapter 6 (Project development and alternatives).

## **2.5 Why the project is needed**

Various State, regional and local policies and plans identify the need for an integrated transport solution that can respond to the needs of a growing Western Parkland City and that can support this growth in a sustainable manner to enhance the liveability and productivity of the area.

The project would be a key component in delivering an integrated transport system for the Western Parkland City. The new metro railway would become the city's transport spine, linking residential areas with the Aerotropolis, other job hubs and the nationally significant Western Sydney International.

The project is therefore needed to:

- service a growing population in the Western Parkland City
- provide rail access to Western Sydney International and the Aerotropolis
- connect with the existing Sydney Trains suburban rail network at St Marys, providing a link to the Central River and Eastern Harbour cities
- open access to jobs and increase potential for jobs growth in the Western Economic Corridor (including the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International) and in the Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area
- facilitate the movement of workers and airline passengers westwards, helping to rebalance demand and supply across Greater Sydney
- support and shape the sustainable growth of the Western Parkland City by optimising land use around station precincts
- create opportunities for precinct planning that would improve liveability in and around station precincts
- support access to urban renewal and new land release areas including the Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis precincts.

## **2.6 Key benefits of the project**

The timing of the project is important as it would inform long-term land use planning and provide certainty to local councils on developments in their area, which can be built around available transport infrastructure.

The new metro railway would be a city-shaping project which would help optimise land use and development, creating precincts and places with a high level of accessibility to jobs and services. A fast, safe and easy metro rail service would deliver better access to more employment opportunities, health and education services and leisure activities across the Western Parkland City and Greater Sydney.



In summary, the project would:

- provide the initial spine of a transport network to service the Western Parkland City, providing a reliable, efficient public transport option for existing and future residents, customers and employees of the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International and associated businesses in Western Sydney
- support the successful development of Western Sydney International as a nationally significant economic driver
- provide a sustainable, low carbon travel mode that would reduce private vehicle use and road congestion and improve accessibility to air travel for people living in Western Sydney
- unlock economic development and employment generation activity around St Marys, the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International
- provide opportunities for placemaking at the stations, such as public domain improvements, and act as a catalyst for future development in the station precincts
- provide a structural framework for the development of future transport, education, health and social infrastructure in the region around a mass transit corridor.

## 2.7 Summary

Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport would be a city-shaping mass transit investment that would unlock and accelerate delivery of the vision for a new Western Parkland City, centred on the economic anchors of the Aerotropolis, Western Sydney International and the amenity of the South Creek green spine. It would provide an essential transport link to the existing Sydney Trains suburban rail network, certainty and structure for early public and private investment, and act as a catalyst for high-amenity centres, precincts and recreation areas. These factors all work as major attractors for significant resident and industry growth across the Western Parkland City.

The project would establish the first stage of a public transport system that would underpin Greater Sydney's growth and prosperity for generations to come. It would do this by:

- providing a fast, frequent mass transit link from the Aerotropolis and Western Sydney International to the existing Sydney Trains suburban rail network at St Marys – this would be a critical early connection to establish and maintain city-wide business-to-business connections, to provide high-quality worker access to a local job pool and to draw airport passengers westwards. This would ultimately safeguard economic success and the rebalance of Greater Sydney
- connecting metropolitan clusters – through linking the Greater Penrith to Eastern Creek Growth Investigation Area, the Western Economic Corridor, St Marys and the Greater Penrith, Liverpool and Campbelltown-Macarthur metropolitan clusters
- providing the foundations for an expanded 30-minute Western Parkland City – by connecting people to jobs, education, goods and services across an evolving hierarchy of metropolitan, strategic and local centres and delivering an expanded integrated transport network alongside the metro service.