



Action for Public Transport (N.S.W.) Inc.

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Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport

WHO WE ARE

Action for Public Transport (NSW) Inc. ("APTNSW") is a transport advocacy group active in Sydney since 1974. We promote the interests of beneficiaries of public transport - passengers and the wider community alike.

APTNSW generally supports the project subject to the reservations set out below.

Station provision and spacing:

In addition to providing access to the Airport and Aerotropolis, the line is explicitly planned to serve a development corridor, both residential and employment, and more stations should be provided for this. The current provision for only two stations means that these stations would be at a very high level in the hierarchy of centres. Most residents would need connecting buses or car parks to complete their journeys. A strategy with closer stations and urban centres would enable more people to live within walking distance of a station.

At a minimum, additional station locations should be identified and planned for (including station boxes within tunnels) before construction begins.

APTNSW recommends planning for many more railway lines and stations in the outer western suburbs. According to one of the short videos on sydneymetro.wsa.com, the proposed metro is to be the spine of an area housing 3.7 million people. In reality, more track and far more stations would be needed for that. Comparisons with overseas cities make the point clear. For instance, the Staten Island Railway (NYC) serves a population of under 500 thousand with 22.5 km of track and 21 stations. Again, the Buenos Aires Underground has 7 lines, 56.7 km of track and 104 stations serving a population of less than 3 million. Why can't western Sydney keep up with a Third World city?

Connectivity and comfort:

For most passengers (to work or the airport), travel on this line will be part of a longer journey. Building the line as an integral part of the existing suburban rail network would improve these longer journeys in terms of both comfort (seat availability) and connectivity.

APT believes the passenger rail link from St Marys to the WSA should therefore be built generally as planned but running crewed trains like the T lines. Our reasons are:

- Links to the existing / future metro at Tallawong, Westmead and Macarthur, while shown as potential, would be many years away. The metro line would be operationally isolated during this time.
- Connectivity of the new line with the existing suburban rail network would be poorer if it is constructed as a metro line. All passengers would need to change at T1 St Marys from the outset and eventually also at T2/T5 Leppington. This would be inconvenient for all journeys, especially for airport travellers with luggage.
- The lower proportion of seats and higher ratio of doors for a metro are more suited to inner urban lines serving higher-density areas, than this line, which will serve a new urban area, (essentially greenfields development). This would remain the case even if the number of stations was increased as suggested above.

Integration with suburban system:

By contrast, building the WSA line as part of the suburban rail system would connect it from the outset with the existing rail system at both St Marys and (with relatively short extension) at Leppington. There would be no change-of-train problem, probably with steps up and down, for passengers in transit between Mascot and the new airport or taking the direct route to central Sydney.

With modern signalling, train frequencies could be as high as for a metro.

Similarly there is scope to improve acceleration, hence travel times, of trains built for existing suburban rail.

An integrated line would require a larger structure gauge for double-deck trains, compatible with the wider suburban network. It could however utilise some single-deck cars, if needed to handle large luggage volumes, as well as double-deck cars. The overall number of seats would still be greater than metro trains could provide.

St Marys could still become an easy-to-use two-level interchange for passengers using the Western line to travel to the new airport or the Aerotropolis.

Future extensions to the north would still be possible, by means of a connection with the T1 Richmond line (rather than with the North West Metro).

High speed rail Sydney - Canberra - Melbourne:

We believe that linking the new airport to both Canberra and Melbourne by a fast rail connection would be of great benefit, not least because it would contribute significantly to carbon emission reduction. Provision should be made in the airport structure plan for such a link, as a longer-term option.

Jim Donovan
Secretary
Action for Public Transport (NSW) Inc.