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Proposal for Sydney Metro West and “Westmead Grand Central”

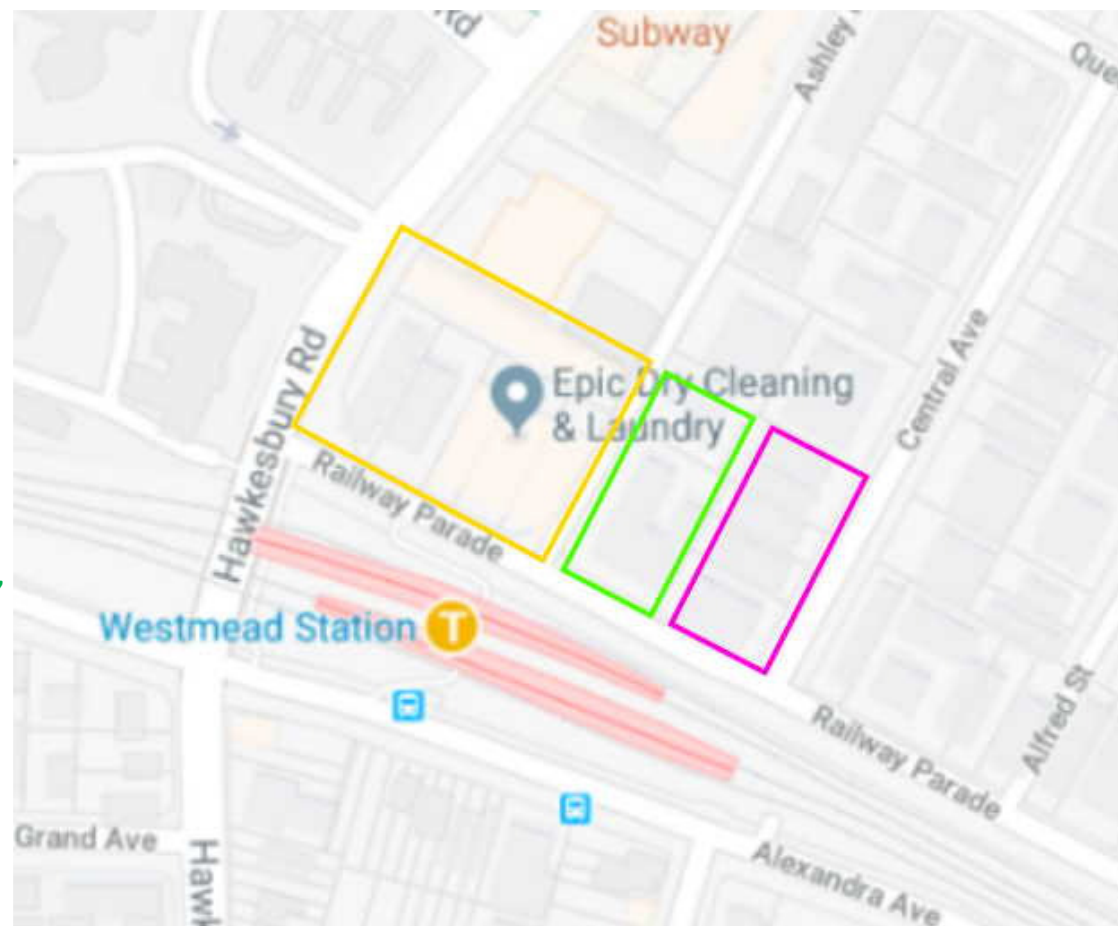
A generational opportunity for an iconic building
containing a transport interchange and shopping centre
to redefine and revitalise Westmead

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12 June, 2020

What this proposal is about

This proposal advocates an integrated transport interchange, which I have dubbed “Westmead Grand Central”, at the Westmead Central site (immediately to the north of Westmead Railway Station). This would:

- be an **iconic building at the gateway of Westmead** which would redefine and revitalise Westmead.
- **integrate T1/T5 line trains, metro trains, Parramatta Light Rail trams, and buses.** The metro station and the PLR tram terminus would be within the main Westmead Grand Central building. An overpass would connect the main building to Westmead Railway Station, and a tunnel would connect to buses on Darcy Road.
- **support the health and education** super precinct and residents of the neighbourhood.
- include a **shopping centre and car parking**, with scope to include **significant public space**: food courts, restaurants, recreation, community facilities, courtyards, children’s play spaces, rooftop gardens, health and education spaces, office space, and possibly a hotel and/or apartments.
- **minimise dislocation** of existing residents and **minimise disruption** to hospitals and businesses.
- **facilitate further extension** to the west without disruption to hospitals.



Background: Westmead now and over the next 25 years

- Westmead is divided by the T1/T5 railway line into two discreet areas:
 - Westmead (North) (in City of Parramatta LGA). This is the **health and education area** according to ***Westmead as a Planned Precinct*** announced in November 2017 by the Department of Planning and Environment.
 - Westmead (South) (in Cumberland LGA). This is the **residential area** according to ***Westmead as a Planned Precinct*** announced in November 2017 by the Department of Planning and Environment.
- The ***Westmead Central metro station location*** advocated by this proposal is in Westmead (North).
- Westmead (North) is ***Australia's largest health and education precinct*** – often referred to as the “health and education super precinct” – and one of the ***top ten*** such precincts in the world.
- Premier Gladys Berejiklian has spoken of the “Government’s vision for a world-class health and education precinct ... - ***fully integrated with ... Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro West***” [my emphasis]. Anything less than ***full integration*** is unacceptable. Anything which does not optimally serve the health and education precinct is unacceptable.
- According to the Department of Health’s Westmead Redevelopment Project, the precinct will have “up to 50,000 knowledge jobs by 2036”, and “the number of students will expand to more than 10,000”.
- In 2020:
 - the ***Westmead hospital extension*** will stimulate many thousands of jobs, patients and visitors;
 - the expanded ***Mayflower retirement village*** will accommodate several hundred new residents;
 - and ***Highline apartment towers*** will add over 2,500 residents.
- Westmead is experiencing ***explosive growth***.

Background: The retail vision for Westmead

- ***The Greater Sydney Commission's GPOP Vision*** states that “Westmead will have the vital services required for everyday life — childcare, hairdressers, florists, cafes, and so on. ... with great places to meet”.
- ***Deloitte's 2016 report into Westmead*** advocated that there should be “New retail opportunities to encourage visitors, residents and workers to look at [Westmead] as a one-stop shop”, and that it should “Provide the full range of personal shopping services”.
- ***The Westmead Alliance*** stated that “there is no point providing ... housing ... and then requiring ... residents to travel to shop”, that “The ***Westmead precinct currently has very limited retail*** to support the significant number of staff and visitors”, and that “Significant retail space will be required to support the projected growth of the precinct” [my emphasis].
- The ***Westmead Grand Central*** integrated development is a building which can accommodate:
 - restaurants, cafes and other food and beverage outlets
 - shops such as a pharmacy, a bank, a post office, a newsagency, a hair dresser, a florist, a book shop, an entertainment shop, basic clothing and footwear shops, a major supermarket and an Indian supermarket.
 - services such as a gym, a dry cleaner and laundry, alterations and tailoring services, childcare facilities, and a dentist.
 - recreational and social venues such as bars/taverns for adults; and for minors, possibly pool table rooms and table tennis rooms, a cinema, an escape room, and other such opportunities.

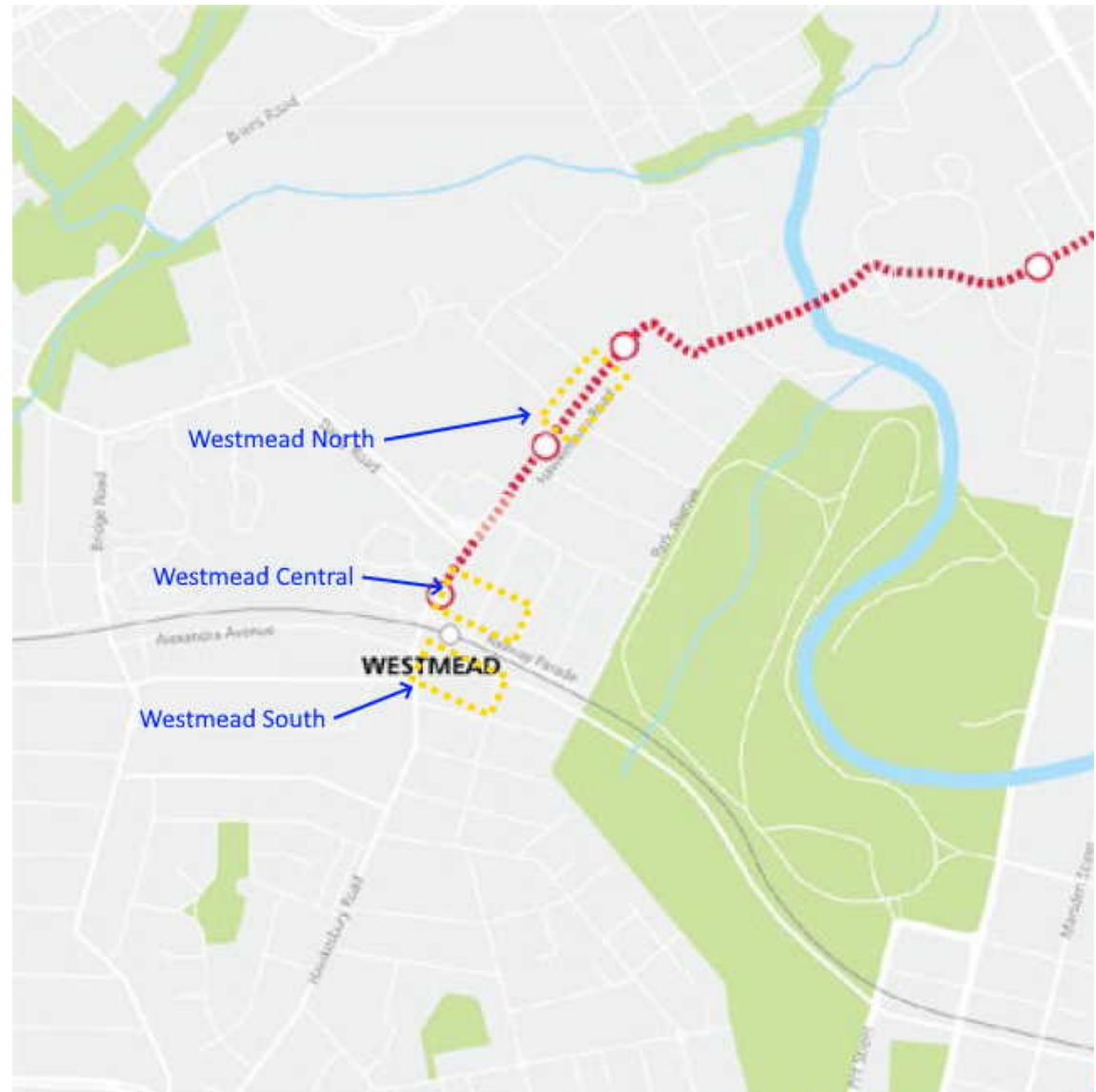
Westmead metro station location options

Westmead North: This was rejected in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Westmead Central: Despite being the best option in almost every respect, this was not even considered in the Environmental Impact Statement. (There was not a single mention of it.)

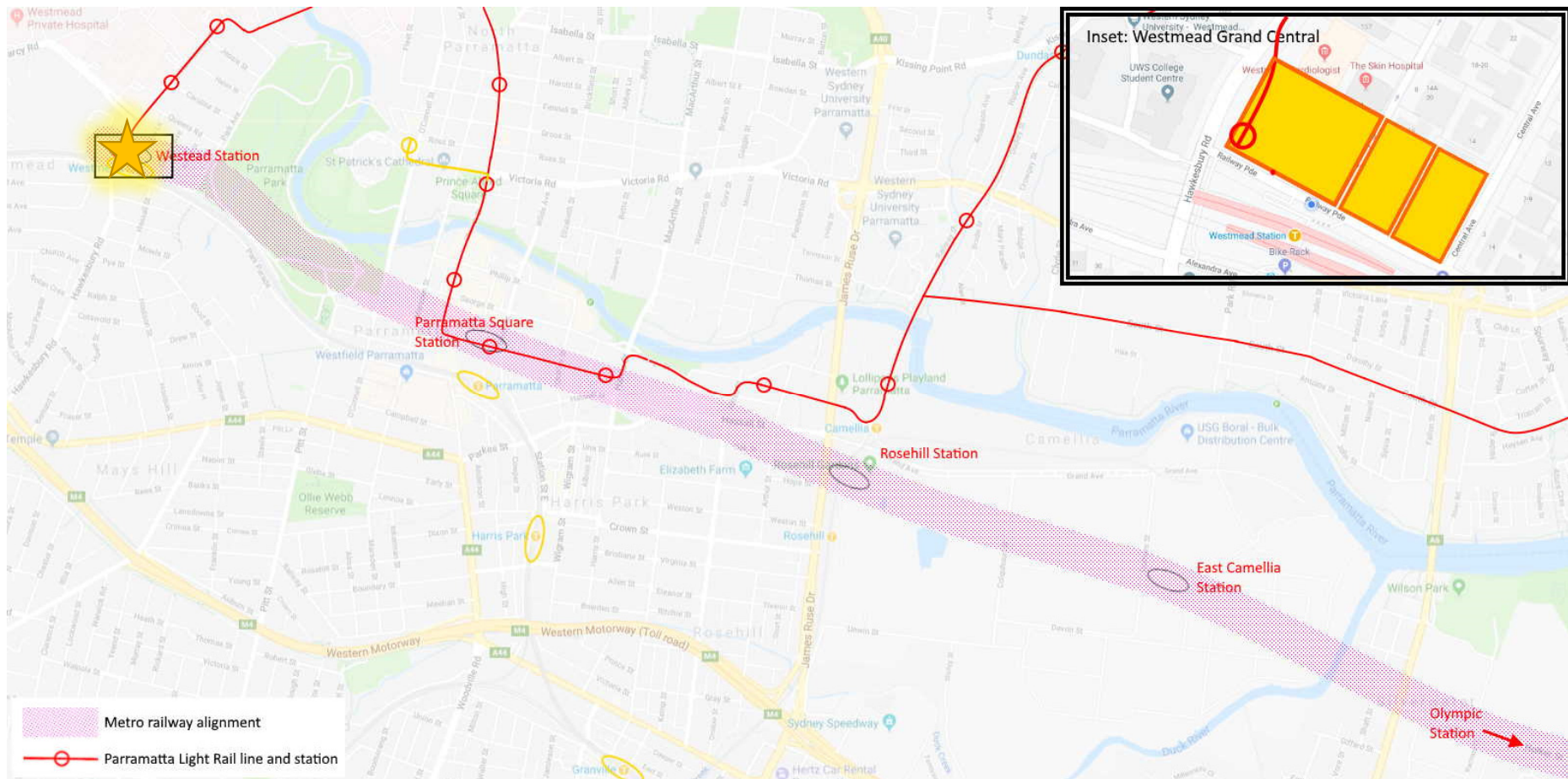
Westmead South: This was the preferred option in the Environmental Impact Statement.

This figure is a modification of Figure 3-1 in the Environmental Impact Statement (see "Chapter 3 - Sydney Metro West development and alternatives", p3-4).



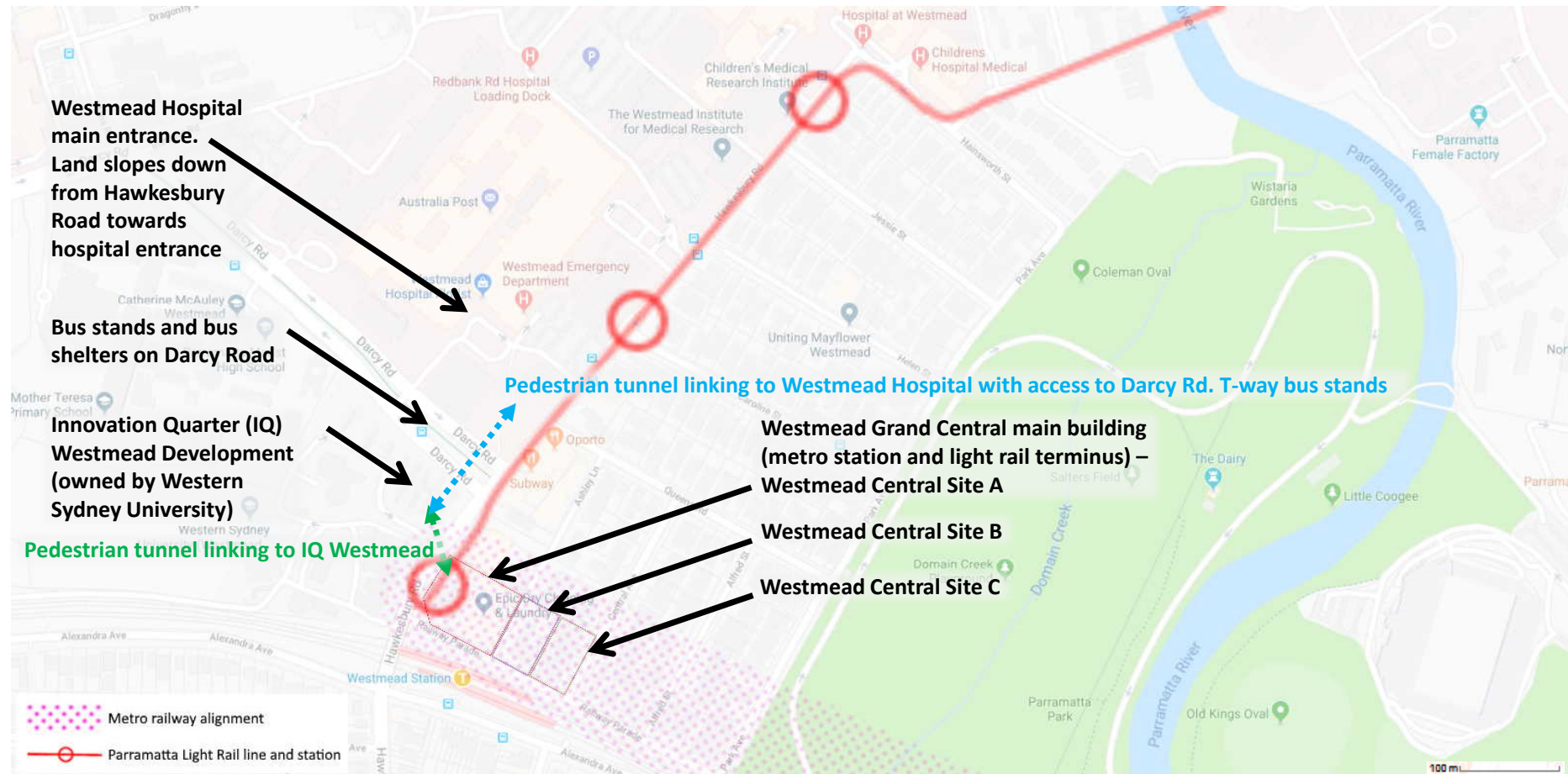
Westmead metro station and the “Westmead Grand Central” interchange

- **“Westmead Grand Central”** is a the integrated transport interchange at the Westmead Central location linking heavy rail trains, metro trains, Parramatta Light Rail trams and buses (on Darcy Rd.) supporting the health and education super precinct and residents of the neighbourhood. Westmead Grand Central would also incorporate a shopping centre and public space.
- **Westmead health and education facilities and other businesses/services** concentrated along the Hawkesbury Rd. “spine” of the precinct would be well served by Westmead Grand Central and by the complementary Parramatta Light Rail line.
- **The station precinct is the focus** of high density residences, businesses, hospitals, research facilities and educational facilities.



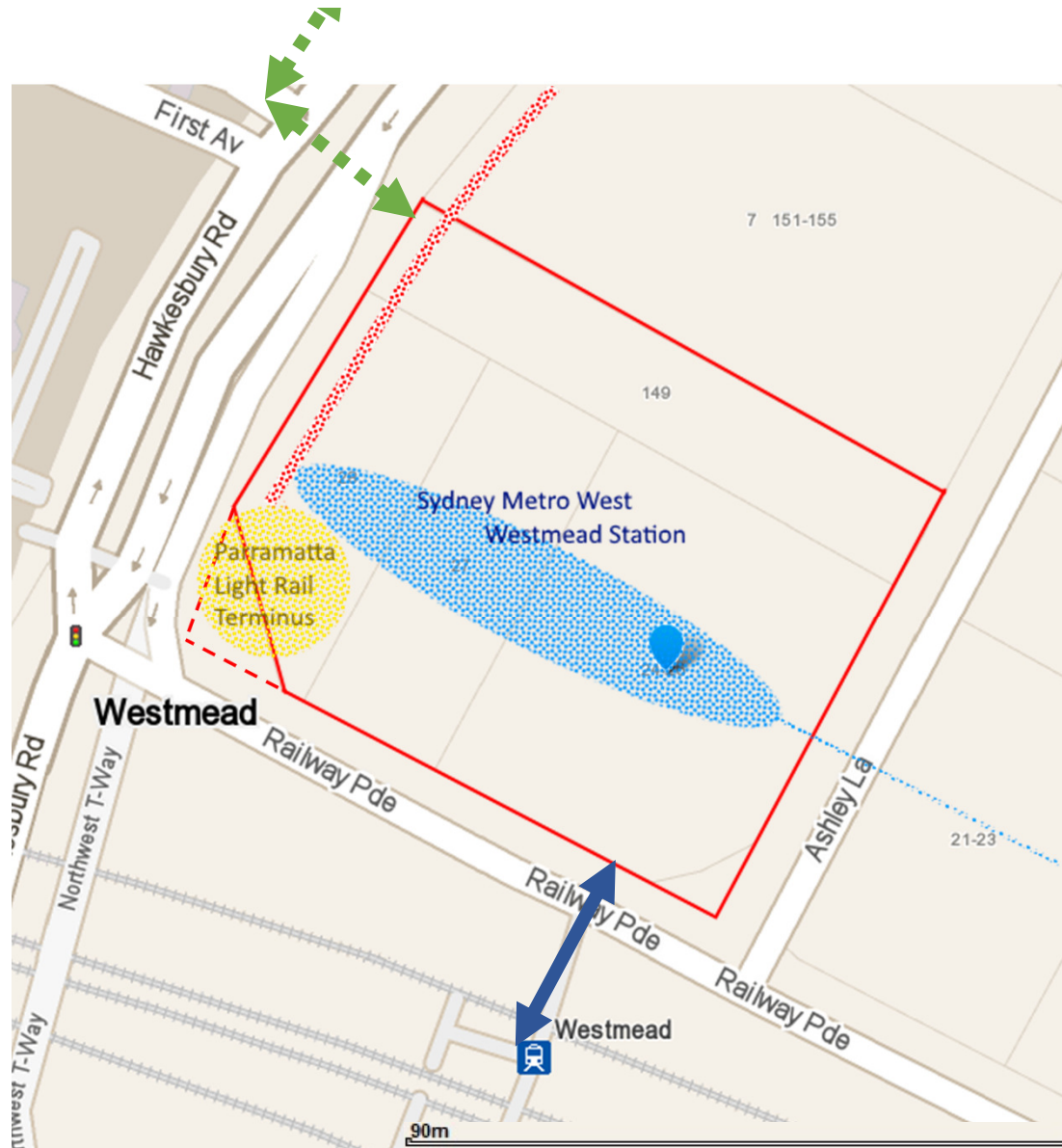
Focus on Westmead – Westmead Grand Central

- **“Westmead Grand Central”**, apart from a transport interchange, could also contain a shopping centre and public space. The main Westmead Central site (Site A) comprises 2 standing buildings. 45% of the site is owned by Transport for NSW (and demolished).
- **Tight, seamless integration with the Parramatta Light Rail tram terminus** which is fully contained within, or at least immediately adjacent to, the Westmead Grand Central main building. Within just a few steps, escalators would lead down to the metro station.
- **Integration with Darcy Rd. bus stands and Westmead Hospital** via a pedestrian tunnel under Hawkesbury Rd. and Darcy Rd.
- **Integration with heavy rail** via a pedestrian overpass over Railway Pde. Linking to Westmead Railway Station.



“Westmead Grand Central” – a generational opportunity

A single iconic building at the gateway of Westmead which integrates a metro station and a light rail station



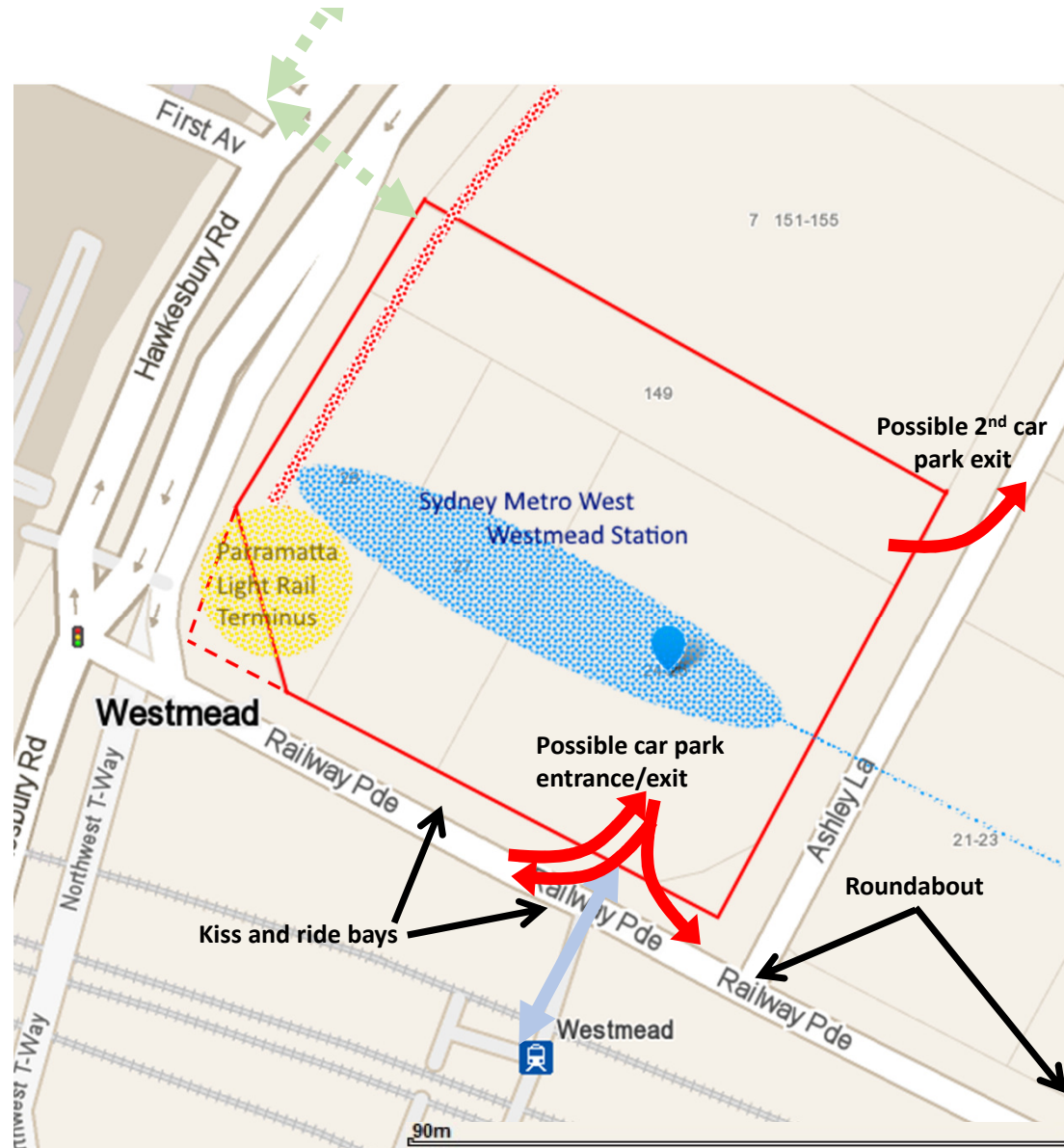
Tight, seamless integration would be achieved between heavy rail (T1/T5 Lines), metro rail, light rail and bus services.

This would enable **quick, easy, convenient and safe transfer** between trams, metro trains, suburban trains and buses without the need to cross any roads, and sheltered from sun and rain, extending all the way from Westmead Hospital to as far away as Westmead Railway Station.

Convenient shopping for commuters at the origin, middle (when transferring) or destination of their journeys, as well as for local residents.

“Westmead Grand Central” – a generational opportunity

Opportunity to provide car parking in an area where car parking is currently a major problem



Parking is a massive problem in Westmead, and it will get worse. There is a high demand for parking spaces at this particular location.

Parking would mainly be for shoppers, but commuter parking should also be considered.

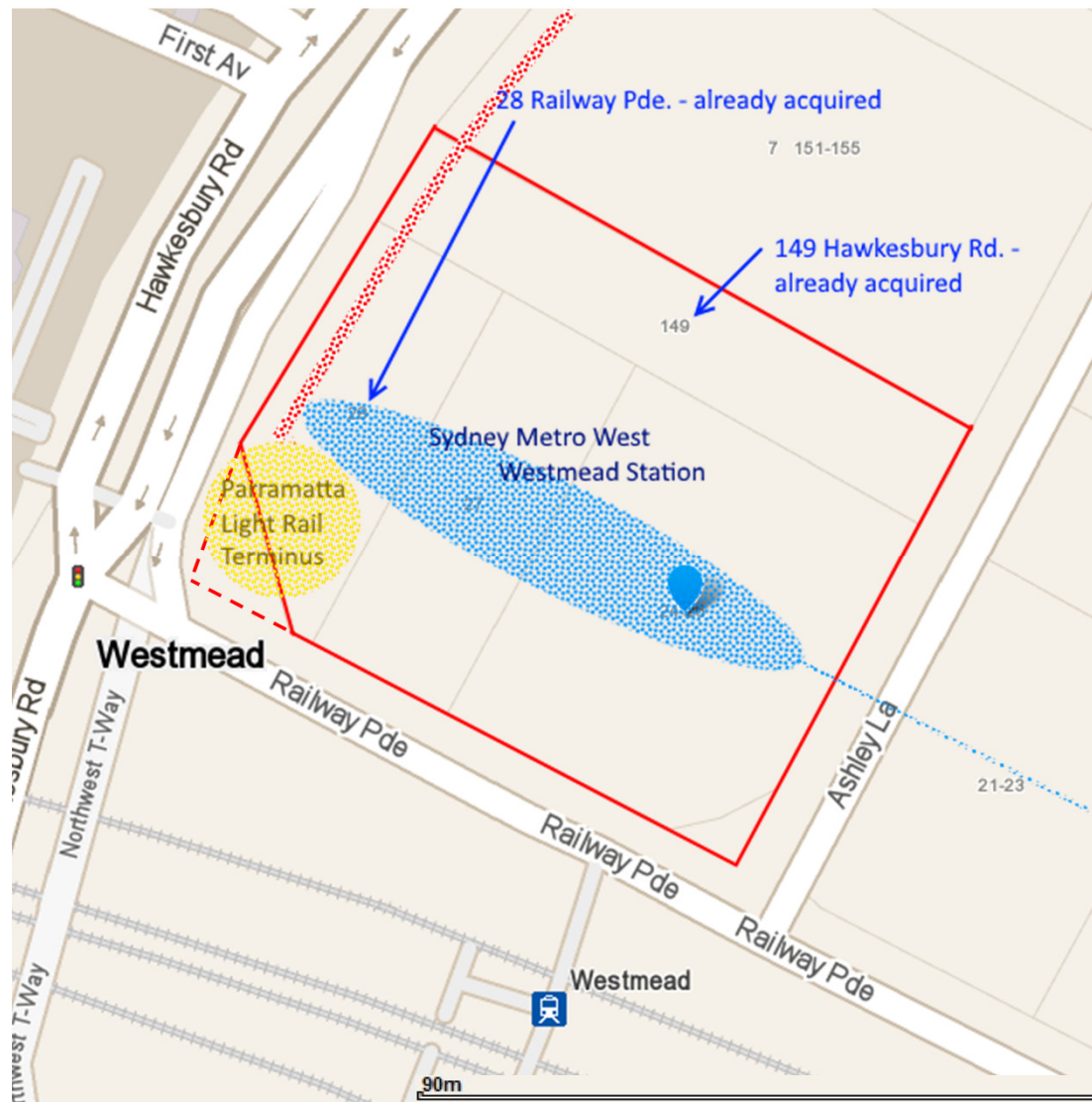
Each level of parking provided in Westmead Grand Central might accommodate over a hundred spaces.

A car park entrance on Railway Parade enables north- and south-bound traffic on Hawkesbury Road to enter while avoiding impacts to tram operation.

A roundabout on Railway Parade (e.g., at Ashley Lane or at Central Avenue) would allow for safer kiss and ride manoeuvres on both sides of Railway Parade.

“Westmead Grand Central” – a generational opportunity

Properties already acquired for Parramatta Light Rail – 45% acquired, remainder proposed to be acquired



About 45% of the “Westmead Grand Central” site (site A) has **already been compulsorily acquired** by Parramatta Light Rail, and all structures have been fully demolished.

Current plans are for no. 28 Railway Parade to be the Parramatta Light Rail tram terminus, and for part of no. 149 Hawkesbury Road to be a substation for Parramatta Light Rail.

“Westmead Grand Central” – a generational opportunity

24-26 Railway Parade and 27 Railway Parade should be immediately compulsorily acquired by Sydney Metro



“Westmead Grand Central” can be developed as a single integrated structure – *an iconic building at the gateway of Westmead.*

Demolition of all properties will provide a convenient “blank slate” for excavation and construction.

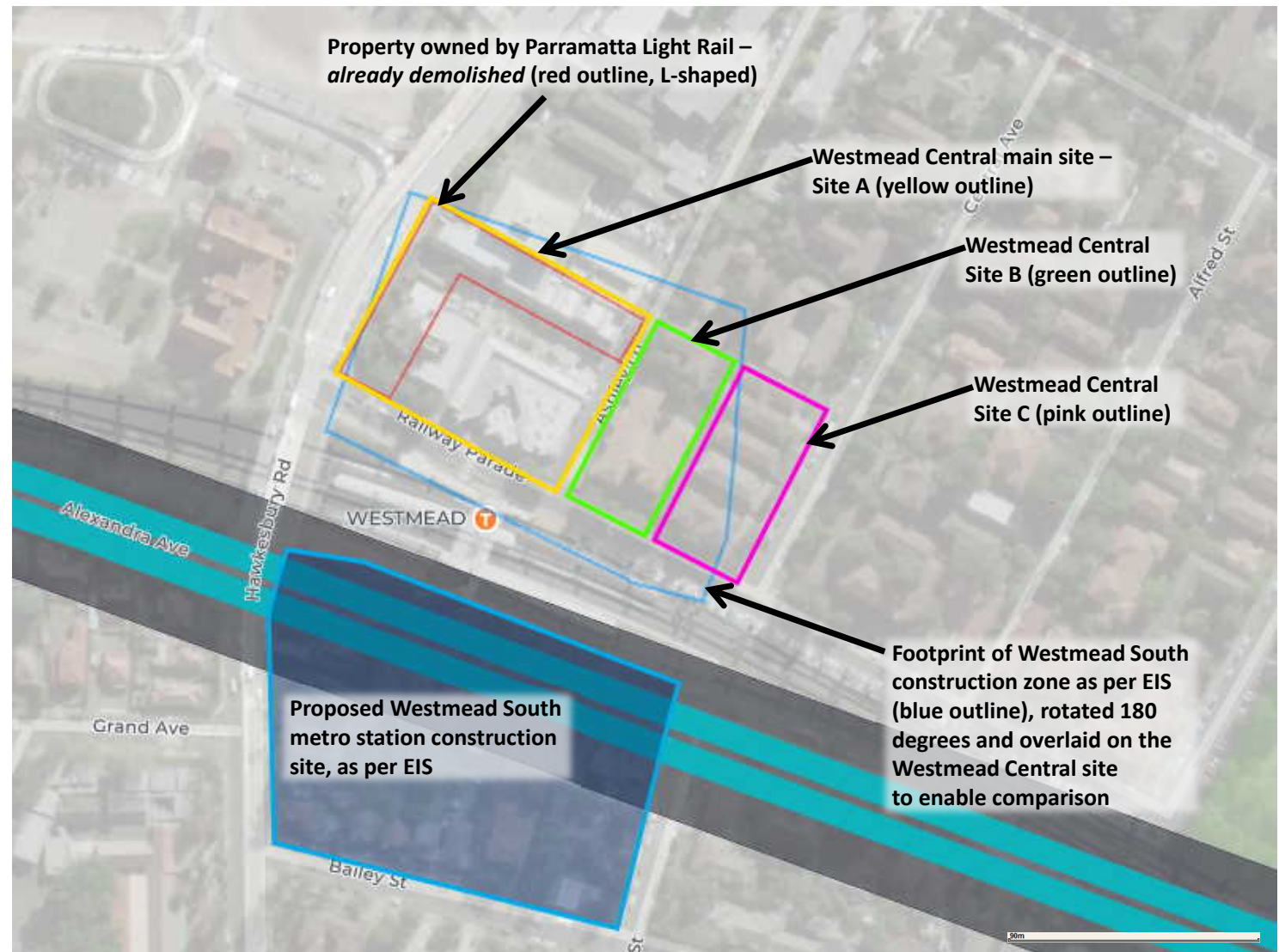
Dislocation of residents will be minimised. (There are 4 apartments in 27 Railway Parade.)

Disruption to hospitals, universities and other health and research facilities will be minimised. (Far enough away to avoid noise, dust, vibration and electromagnetic fields.)

“Westmead Grand Central” – a generational opportunity

If a larger site is required or desired, Site A can be augmented by Site B, and optionally also by Site C.

The background of this image is copied from the Environmental Impact Statement.



“Westmead Grand Central” – a generational opportunity

New iconic building

Gateway to Westmead

Fully realise this site's potential

Fully integrated transport interchange

Shopping centre

Significant public space



Mixed use: retail, food courts, restaurants, recreation, community facilities, courtyards and public spaces, children's play spaces, rooftop gardens, health and education spaces, office space, and possibly a hotel and/or apartments.

Interchange includes:

- **Metro** station
- **Light rail** station
- **Railway:** overpass to Westmead T1/T5 Station
- **Buses:** pedestrian tunnel linking to the "Innovation Quarter Westmead", bus stands on Darcy Rd. and Westmead Hospital

There is no need to cross any roads when transferring from any one public transport mode to any other mode.

“Westmead Grand Central” – a generational opportunity

New iconic building

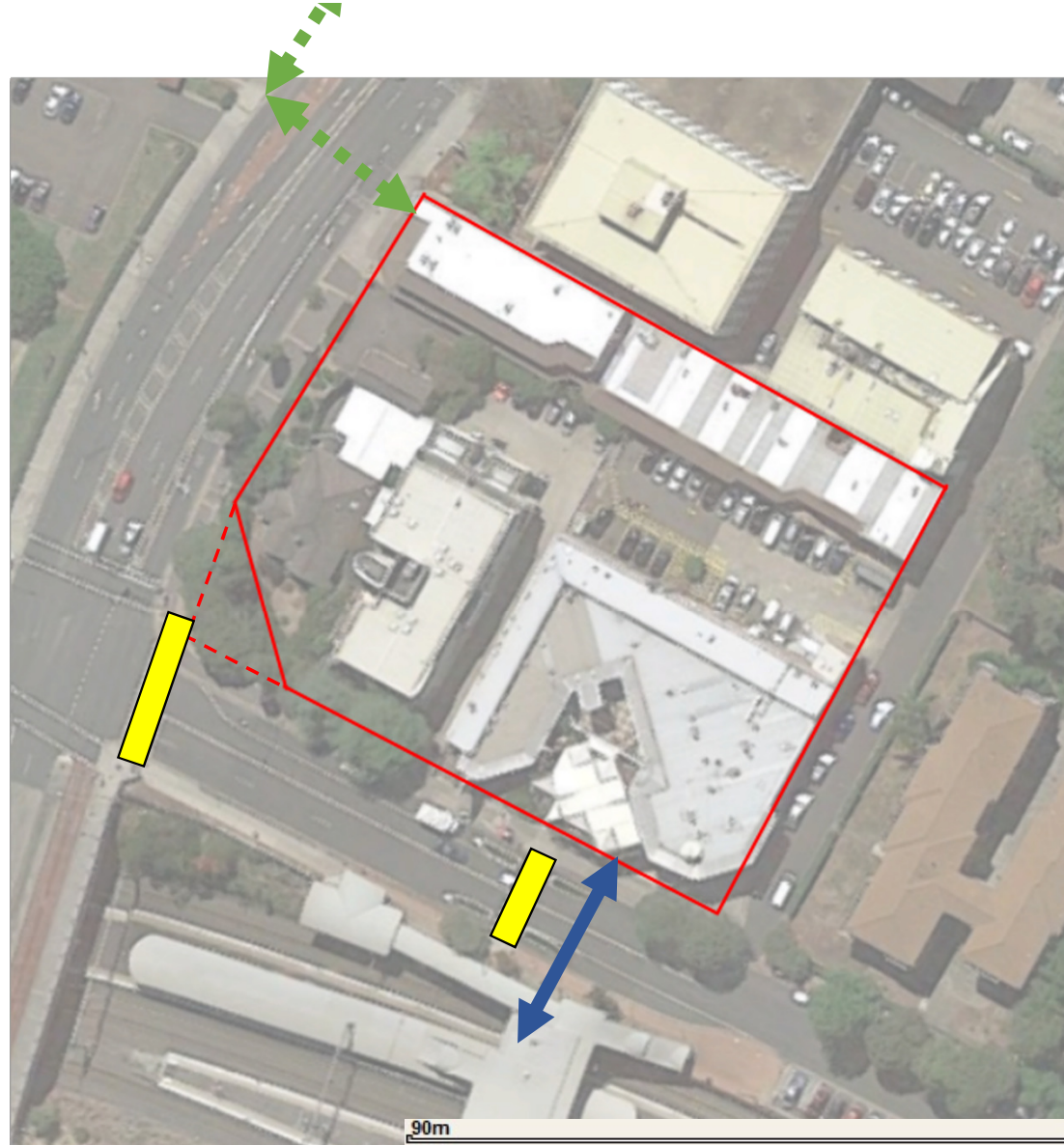
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Westmead Grand Central

The picture below shows *very roughly* what the Westmead Grand Central building (Site A) might look like when standing on the station side of Railway Parade (almost opposite Ashley Lane). (The image is not to scale.)

LEGEND:

- Solid black lines:** Street level tier – 1 level at the Hawkesbury Rd. end, 2 levels at the Ashley Lane end. The top of this tier is horizontal.
- Dotted black lines:** Upper tiers.
- Orange lines:** Underside of the pedestrian overpass connecting Westmead Grand Central to Westmead Railway Station.
- Blue lines:** Possible location of entrance to car park.



Westmead metro station – immediately to the north or immediately to the south of Westmead Railway Station?

The options for a metro station adjacent to Westmead Railway Station are (1) the “Westmead Central” location (immediately to the north of the station), or (2) the “Westmead South” location (immediately to the south).

I strongly advocate the “Westmead Central” location – immediately to the north of Westmead Railway Station.

Benefits of the Westmead Central location include:

- **tight integration** can be achieved with the Parramatta Light Rail line terminating at Westmead, with the potential to locate the light rail station and the metro station within a single iconic building containing a transport interchange and shopping centre (which I have dubbed “Westmead Grand Central”).
- 45% of the main site proposed for “Westmead Grand Central” has **already been compulsorily acquired and demolished**. The site provides a convenient “blank slate” for excavation/construction.
- as the site is mostly non-residential, **dislocation of residents** (whose properties might otherwise be compulsorily acquired and demolished), and disruption to nearby residents (whose peace and amenity would be impacted by construction and by “business as usual” operation once commissioned) would be **minimised**.
- this location is more **convenient for Westmead’s workforce, customers and visitors**, being closer to most work places (almost all of which are north of the T1/T5 line). Commuters could shop conveniently at “Westmead Grand Central”, whether transferring between transport modes, or beginning or ending their journey.
- A station on the north side is consistent with the **Westmead as a Planned Precinct** announced in Nov. 2017 by the Dept of Planning and Environment (DP&E). This defines two distinct areas: **the health and education area north of the rail line** (Parramatta LGA) and the **residential area south of the rail line** (Cumberland LGA).

Westmead metro station – impacts of “Westmead Central” location versus the “Westmead south” location

Impact of the “Westmead Central” location (immediately to the north of the railway station)

- **Demolition:** *Site A – 2 buildings*, mostly commercial tenants. The remainder of the site is demolished and owned by the State government. *Sites B & C – between 2 and 6 apartment blocks*.
- **Construction:** *Site A* – Potential impacts on adjoining health and medical facilities. This has already been addressed to some extent, as demolition and some excavation has already occurred beside these buildings. *Sites B and C* – potential impacts on 2 adjoining residential buildings.
- **After completion:** *Site A* – No anticipated adverse impacts on adjoining buildings. *Sites B and C* – potential visual and amenity impacts on adjoining residential buildings (though these impacts might be *positive*, resulting in improved visual and noise outcomes and increased amenity).

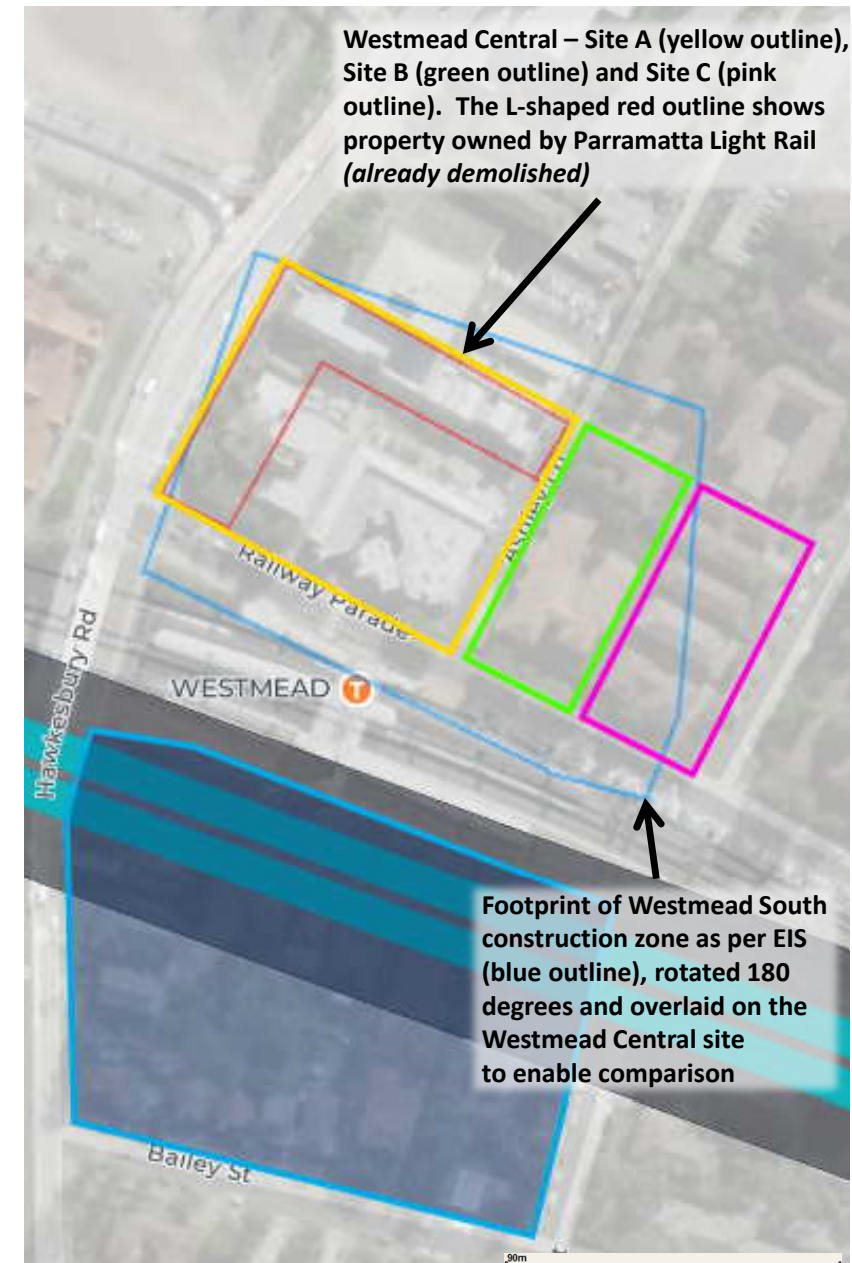
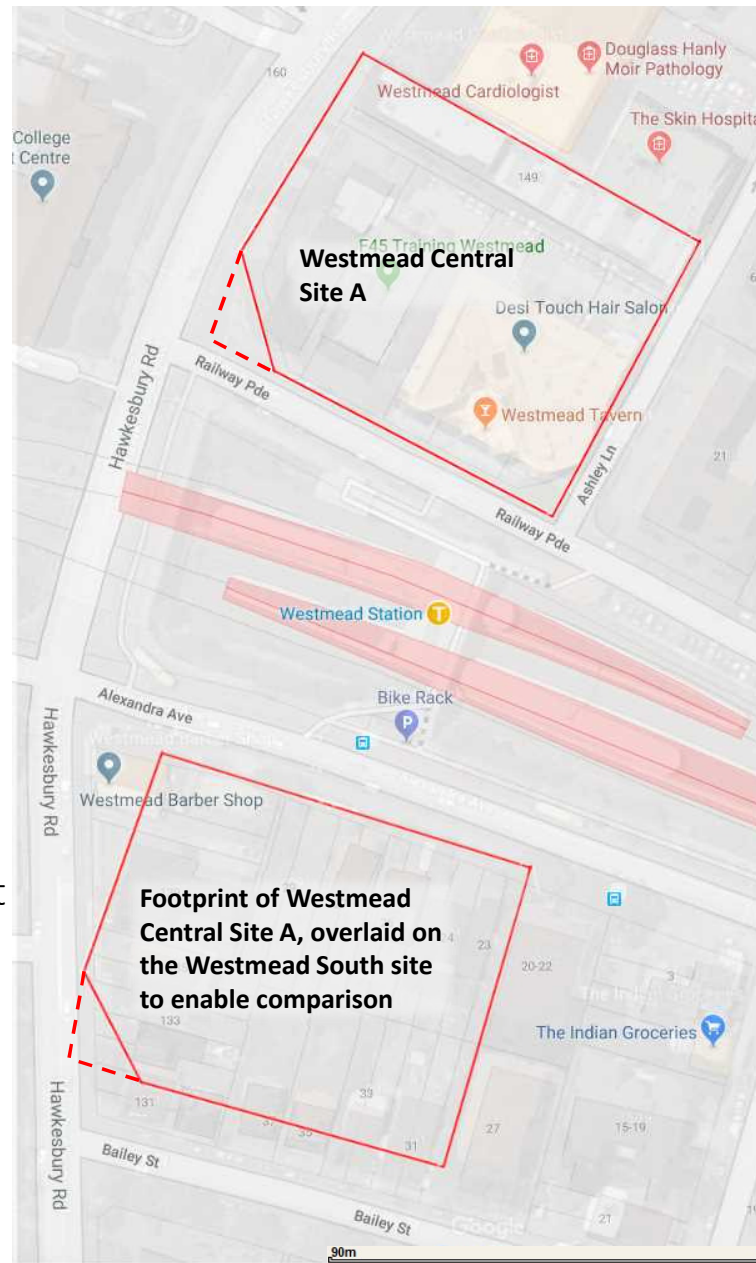
Impact on the “Westmead South” location (immediately to the south of the railway station)

- **Demolition:** **18 buildings**; at least 13 of which are residential (houses or apartment blocks) and 2 of which are commercial.
- **Construction:** Impacts are discussed in the EIS.
- **After completion:** This depends on (yet to be determined) land use for the final site, which is surrounded by Hawkesbury Road and the reconfigured Alexandra Avenue.

Westmead metro station – illustration of impact of Westmead Central versus Westmead South

The diagram on the left shows Westmead Central Site A, and (to enable comparison) the same footprint overlaid on the south side.

The diagram on the right shows Westmead Central Sites A, B and C, the EIS site, and (to enable comparison) the EIS site overlaid on the north side.

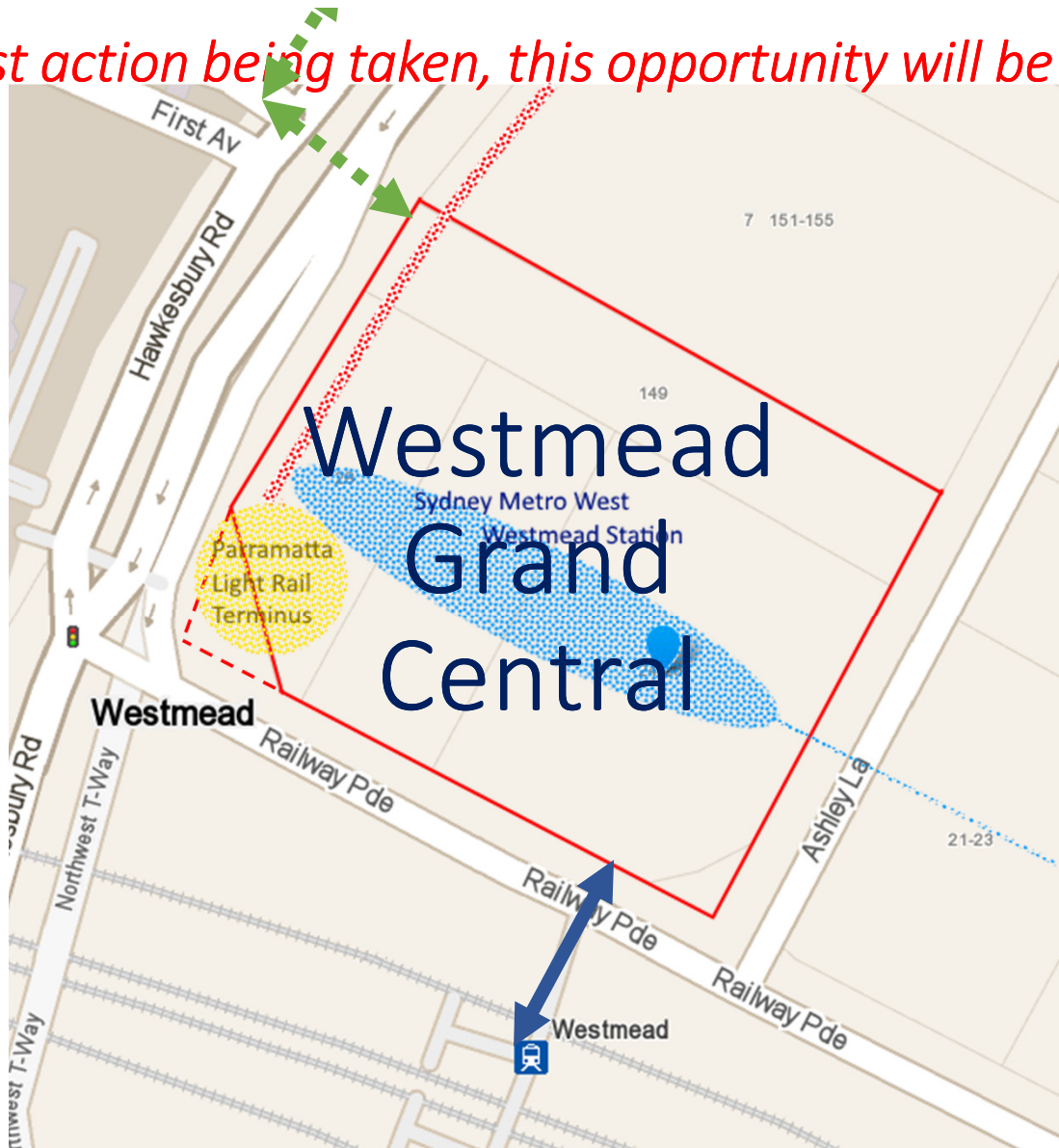


Without fast action being taken, this opportunity will be lost forever.

A generational opportunity never to be repeated!

Westmead would be redefined and revitalised by an iconic building at the gateway of Westmead.

First building most passengers will see in Westmead.



An integrated transport interchange, shopping centre and significant public space.

The window of opportunity for a truly significant development is only briefly open.

Westmead Grand Central will be a landmark development.