

A 2nd Sydney Airport vs High Speed Rail for Greater Sydney

A 10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney (FROGS) publication



KEY OUTCOMES:

- >> In the long term, we will need both a second Sydney airport and High-Speed Rail (HSR).
- >> We must confirm Badgerys Creek as the site for Sydney's second airport and plan and reserve corridors for transport to serve that airport; and
- >> Plan and reserve corridors for an east coast High Speed Rail with priority to Sydney- Newcastle and Sydney-Canberra.

The right timing of infrastructure investment will depend on the actual rate of population and demand growth and the scoping of cost-effective, economically viable and affordable projects.



10,000 Friends of
Greater Sydney™



WHY THE DICHOTOMY?

The argument about whether we have a new second airport or high speed rail is misplaced because the real issue is the kind of Sydney we seek to create in the future.

Rail and air transport connections into Sydney are interrelated, but also related to other modes within Sydney, because it is a comprehensive system with connections and feedback loops. We now have a Metro Strategy and a related Transport Master Plan, and to complete these the integrated plan needs to include air transport and HSR. It also needs to recognise city, State and national objectives and not contribute to a competition between different levels of government.

Sydney airport has significant capacity constraints, but whether the solution is a new airport or fast rail or a mixture of both, it will not occur in the short term. While we need short term solutions to address immediate needs at Kingsford Smith Airport, more significantly, we need long term ones to give certainty to Sydney's future. Crucially, we must reserve space and corridors for its future needs and factor these future plans into what we do now.

Both Bringelly and Wilton are under consideration as potential sites for a second airport. They both fit the economic need to serve western Sydney residents and businesses and could create much-needed jobs in this region, but what are the relative environmental and social consequences, and economic costs?

The HSR can be linked to airports at Newcastle and Canberra. These links would reduce the reliance on road travel for journeys between Sydney and these centres and support regional development. A link to Newcastle via the Central Coast, which seems to be the best first option, could establish these centres as more viable commuting centres for Sydney. This could support continued growth of Greater Sydney, but with lesser impacts on metropolitan traffic congestion than a pure infill development strategy. But the viability of such links will depend on the right scoping, timing and integration with the existing rail network.

WHY THE DICHOTOMY - WE WILL NEED BOTH

WHY THE NEED?

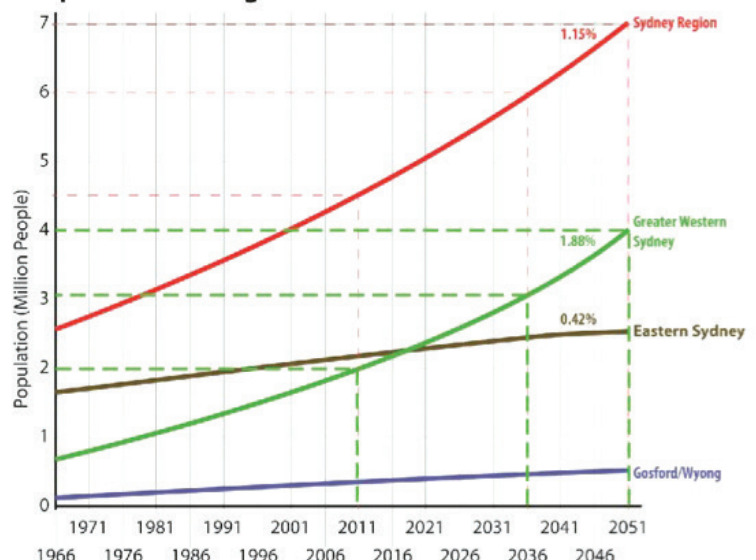
The Airport

Max Moore-Wilton has said Mascot - with upgrades - can accommodate air traffic for the next 20 years. To operate in a satisfactory manner over that time, transport access to the airport must be improved - starting now.

We could rely on larger planes, on closer headways, on removal of the night curfew and squeeze another few years out of this airport. We could also look at another runway.

But what are the consequences for Sydney's future? The population spread of Sydney will change dramatically by mid-century, with four million living west of Parramatta and two-and-a-half million east. Is it sound planning to service that four million west of Parramatta with an single airport on the coast, which is largely remote from them?

Population Change 1966 - 2051



The joint study on aviation capacity by leading professionals addressed these issues and indicated that "From around 2030, an additional airport will be needed to supplement the capacity of Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport."

¹Joint Study on Aviation Capacity in the Sydney Region. To Australian and NSW Governments, Messrs M. Murdak, S Haddad, L Wieling, Ms J. Westacott, Dr W Mundy and Mr C Brown, March 2012

The report indicated that the existing airport at Mascot will come under stress by 2020 but can be eased for an extra few years by optimising its use with investment in the airport's road and rail connections, and by increasing runway capacity by lifting the movement cap from 80 to 85 movements per hour.

The report further recommends that existing airports in the Sydney region be protected and optimised with key actions:

- "Develop a joint strategy to accommodate growth in aviation demand for the Hunter and Central Coast Regions;
- ensure that Canberra Airport is protected from encroaching noise-sensitive urban development incompatible with expansion of the airport over time into a significant domestic and international aviation centre for both passenger and freight services for south-eastern Australia;

- use the Master Plan process to resolve a strategy to allow Bankstown Airport to accommodate RPT operations by smaller turbo-prop RPT aircraft, including in particular regional services, as slots for additional services become unavailable at Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport; and
- initiate action to progressively open RAAF Base Richmond to a level of civil traffic using the existing east-west runway alignment."

² *The Case for Badgerys Creek. Bob Meyer, 19 December 2012.*

The report also notes that "these actions will assist in meeting some future demand, however to meet long term demand, there is a need to act now to select a site for a new supplementary airport, capable of accommodating another full service airport for the Sydney region in the long term, and commence planning for its operation while monitoring aviation growth to ensure operations commence at the appropriate time."

But – "There is a need to act quickly to finalise a decision on a site for a supplementary airport and secure it, even if an airport may not need to operate at the site in the short term. Further delay will rule out the remaining potential sites." The report also highlights the loss to economic growth to Australia of \$59.5 billion by 2060 if no second Sydney airport is built.

Also, in regards to an airport site, the report found that Badgerys Creek "remains the best site for an additional major RPT airport. It is located close to growing markets in the western regions of Sydney and close to road and rail transport links. In turn, it would provide the vitally important employment and economic opportunities for the growing western Sydney community and will be a significant catalyst to expedite the much needed supply of housing. The site has been protected from encroaching development and given that the Commonwealth owns the land it would be less costly and disruptive to the community as a development site than other options."; and

"The Steering Committee is conscious of commitments and statements indicating that governments no longer see the site as suitable for airport development. The decision is one for

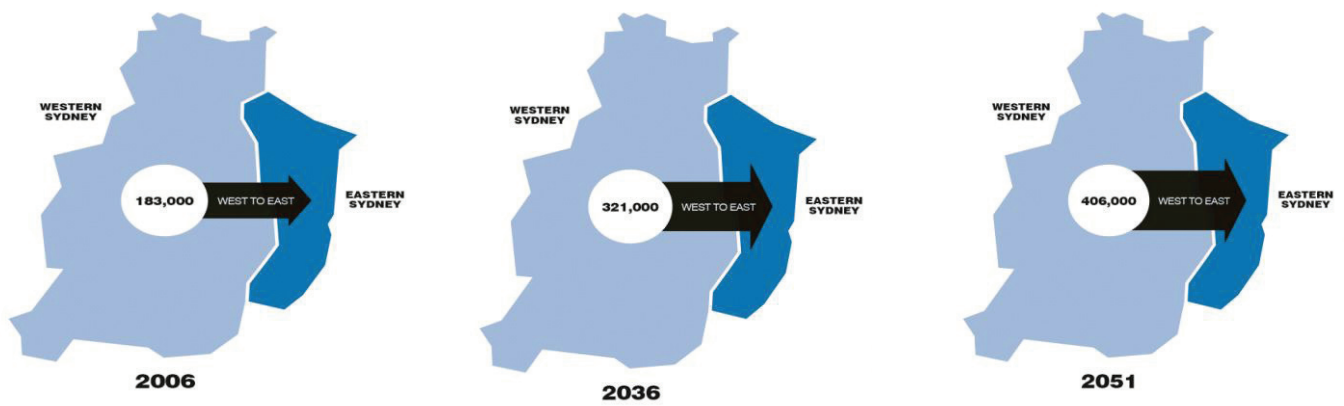
governments, but a decision is required now to confirm whether or not an airport will be built at Badgerys Creek."

The June 2013 preliminary draft of the Sydney Airport Master Plan 2033 by the Sydney Airport Corporation proposes initial actions to enhance performance of the airport in terms of capacity and passenger access thereto to meet demand until 2033.

A Badgerys Creek airport would provide a valuable service to support business growth in Western Sydney. It could also 28,000 direct jobs in the west and a further 22,000 in the region. Bob Meyer in his paper 'The Case for Badgerys Creek' highlights these employment benefits:

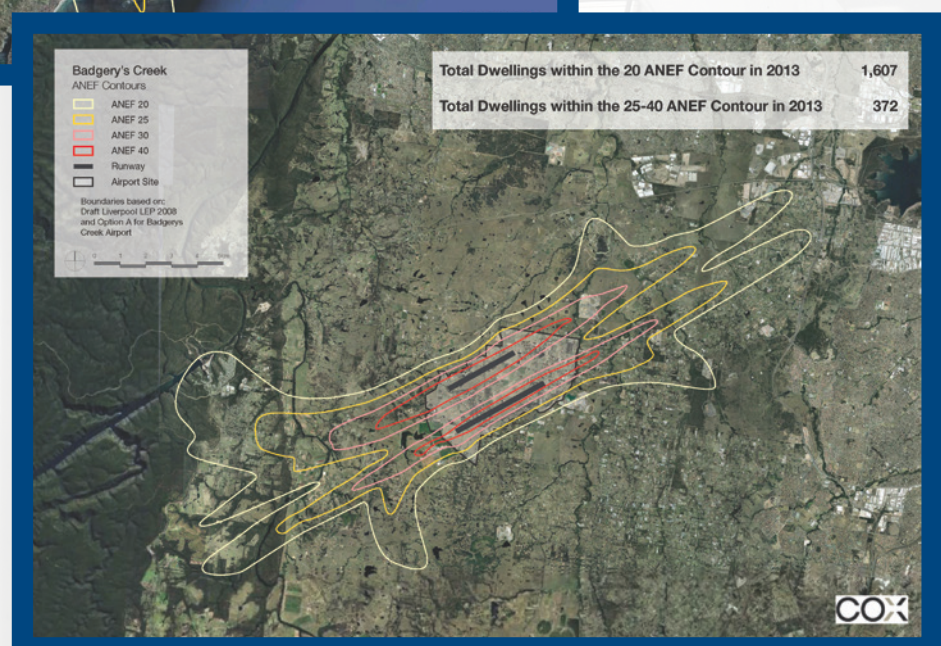
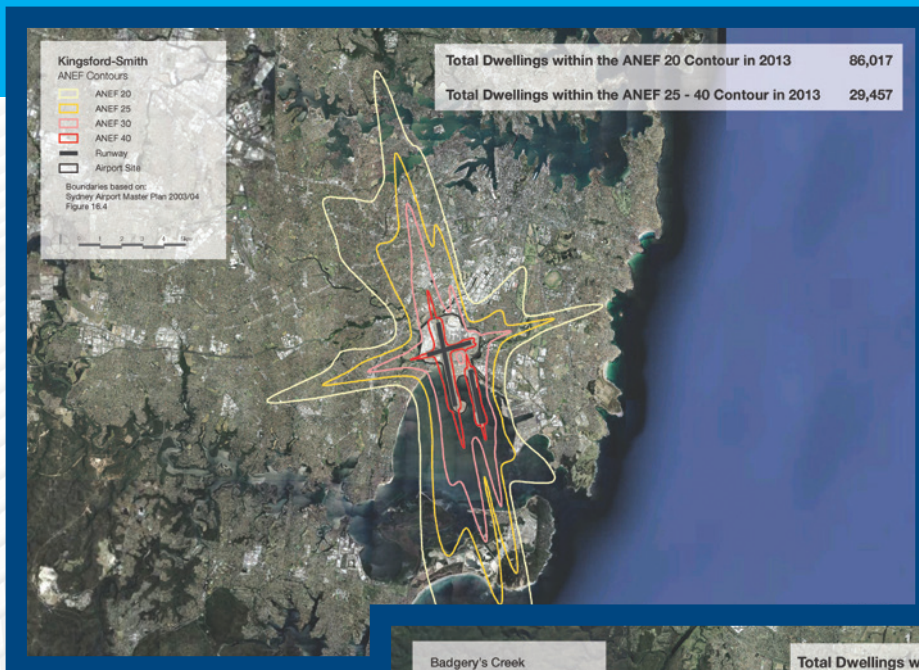
"Western Sydney is now Australia's third largest urban region. At current growth rates, its population will grow from a current 2 million people to 3 million in 2036 and 4 million in 2051, larger than Melbourne today. An urban region of this size deserves an airport. In 2051, Sydney's population will reach 7 million, the same as Greater London in 2001. London had 4 airports at the time and is now looking for a site for its fifth.

There is currently a considerable job deficit in Western Sydney which will get dramatically larger if no action is taken. In 2006, there was a shortfall of 183,000 jobs. By 2036 this is expected to increase to 321,000 and without action, 406,000 jobs by 2051. This situation is unsustainable as it would manifest itself in more than double today's road congestion and overcrowding of public transport. The only available catalyst to help alleviate this massive job shortfall in Western Sydney, is an airport at Badgerys Creek."



Shortfall of jobs in Western Sydney.

Meyer's report also places the noise impact in perspective showing the small number of residents impacted by a Badgerys Creek airport. "Several opponents of Badgerys Creek as the site of Sydney's second airport, claim that councils have allowed too many residential developments in the Badgerys Creek flight path since the site was purchased by the Commonwealth. This is misinformation as Commonwealth and State laws have forbidden residential development in the flight path. Furthermore, compared with say Sydney Airport's impact on dwellings in its flight paths, Badgerys Creek's effect will only be a fraction of that currently on Kingsford Smith's catchment." Noise maps show Badgerys Creek would subject just 328 properties to higher noise levels (ANEF 25-40), a mere 1% of those currently affected at this level by Kingsford-Smith:





High Speed Rail

Some politicians and planners have suggested that Australia simply does not have the population to support a High-Speed Rail (HSR) link. But this overlooks Australia's comparatively high urbanisation, and particularly the concentration of population in Sydney and Melbourne, which supports the third busiest air corridor in the world over a distance comparable to that served by HSR overseas.

At speeds of 350 km/hr or even greater, HSR travel times could be less than three hours between Sydney and Melbourne. A reliable service that avoids airport access and check-in delays could compete with aviation, provide significant productivity benefits to business travelers and relieve aviation capacity pressures. From Sydney to Newcastle, HSR could reduce travel times to less than 40 minutes, and from Sydney to Canberra, to less than an hour.

HSR could transform the way Australians move between its major cities. But it could also service the intervening regions, opening the opportunity for Australia to develop new regional centres and new cities, which would take congestion pressures off the major capitals. HSR as part of an integrated transport network would directly address and contribute to solving some of the toughest public policy challenges we face today in looking to our future – reducing population concentrations, traffic congestion and pollution in our major cities, supporting freight movement to and from those cities, and enhancing housing affordability by providing more viable land for housing and spreading population growth across revitalised regions.

The High Speed Rail Study Phase 2 Report commissioned by the Federal Government has indicated that an east coast HSR linking Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne is feasible but would cost of the order of \$114 billion and would not be complete until 2053-2058. Staging would be necessary with Sydney-Newcastle and Sydney-Canberra achievable from 2030 onwards.

The 10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney response to the Phase 2 Report has indicated that the soundness and viability of the HSR must be fully addressed for

the concept to be accepted and planned as a future investment. This should embrace:

- Specifically defined objectives for the project;
- Technology being developed for HSR;
- Integration with the City and its transport system – as Parramatta will be the future centre of Sydney's population, it is a logical terminal for HSR if connected to Sydney CBD by a new fast rail service. This CBD-Parramatta link would serve broader metropolitan transport and planning objectives and would be viable in its own right, but would also enable subsequent HSR lines to connect into Sydney with much reduced tunnelling costs; and
- Stage investment as sections become economically sound and financially viable. For example, initial investment (after the CBD-Parramatta fast rail) would be in the sections from Sydney to Newcastle then Sydney to Canberra, justified by their contribution to supporting Sydney's continued sustainable growth. These initial stages and previous investment in trains and supporting infrastructure would then enable remaining links to jump the necessary economic and financial hurdles.

When you consider Australia's expected population by mid-century, it is clear that we must rethink the way we approach the planning of our country and the land use spread and transportation system that will serve it. In this context, HSR must be viewed as part of the solution to population spread and transport pressures on our cities. This major project alone would increase the attractiveness of living beyond our largest cities and act as the catalyst to change population concentrations and revitalise our regions.

An east coast HSR must be viewed as a long-term project – even longer than the need for a second Sydney Airport. But to secure its future we must plan, reserve and protect the corridors for it now.

³ *High Speed Rail Study, Phase 2 Report. AECOM, Grimshaw, KPMG, SKM, ACIL Tasman, Booz & Co and Hyder, April 2013*

⁴ *Response to HSR Study Stage 2 Report. 10,000 Friends of Greater Sydney, 22 May 2013.*

LONG TERM SCENARIOS TO GUIDE ACTIONS TODAY

20 years timeframe – With airport improvements and local transport improvements above mentioned, we can accommodate demand and support economic growth until 2030.

Jump to 40 year timeframe – Sydney is a city of seven million people and Newcastle has about one million. We have two major cities within 150 kms of each other, two of the largest cities in Australia, each with major airport needs.

Effective transport to serve the interactivity between these cities can only be provided by HSR. This will grow Newcastle and ease growth on Sydney. A HSR link as the major passenger carrier will also ease loading on the existing rail track enabling it to give priority to freight. A major airport at Newcastle can serve intrastate air travel north of Newcastle.

Similar forward planning can be applied to Sydney-Campbelltown/Wollongong-Canberra.

But a complete east coast HSR is much further away in time, and until then, travel from Sydney to Melbourne via HSR to Canberra and then plane, or similarly to Brisbane via Newcastle, will struggle to compete with a direct flight

from Sydney. Yet air traffic will outstrip the capacity of Kingsford-Smith by 2030 – so we also need more airport capacity. And since Sydney has moved west with four million west of Parramatta and two-and-a-half million east, and we already have an airport in the east, we need the new airport capacity in the west to serve the 4 million. Fortunately we have reserved space at Badgerys Creek and corridors for transport to it.

Planning now for 20+ Years

Sydney's economic growth over the last decade has been supported by planning decisions made many decades prior. Reservation of the M7 corridor is an example. Equally Sydney is also learning the cost of failing to reserve corridors for growth – which has increased the need for expensive tunnelling and ultimately deferred investment in new growth-supporting infrastructure.

With continued growth creating ever-greater constraints, Sydney more than ever needs a new long-term plan to guide and preserve the corridors that will support its future growth.

On the basis of the above scenarios, plausible planning timeframes for airports and HSR could be as follows:

0-20 years	Airport and local transport improvements to support KSA CBD-Parramatta fast rail to support existing travel patterns and Parramatta employment growth
20-40 years	HSR to Newcastle and Canberra Badgerys Creek airport
40+ years	Full east coast HSR

The actions required now are to re-commit to the Badgerys Creek Airport site, reserve the transport corridors to serve it, and plan and reserve corridors for future fast rail and HSR links to Parramatta, Newcastle, Canberra and beyond.

Planning for these long-term investments now can preserve Sydney's capacity for long-term growth and can guide both public and private investment over the coming 20 years.

Given Sydney's vital economic role, Australia's future depends on it.



10,000 Friends of
Greater Sydney™

www.10000friends.org.au

76 Minnamurra Rd Northbridge 2063

Phone: 02 99582625

Email: frogs10k@bigpond.com