

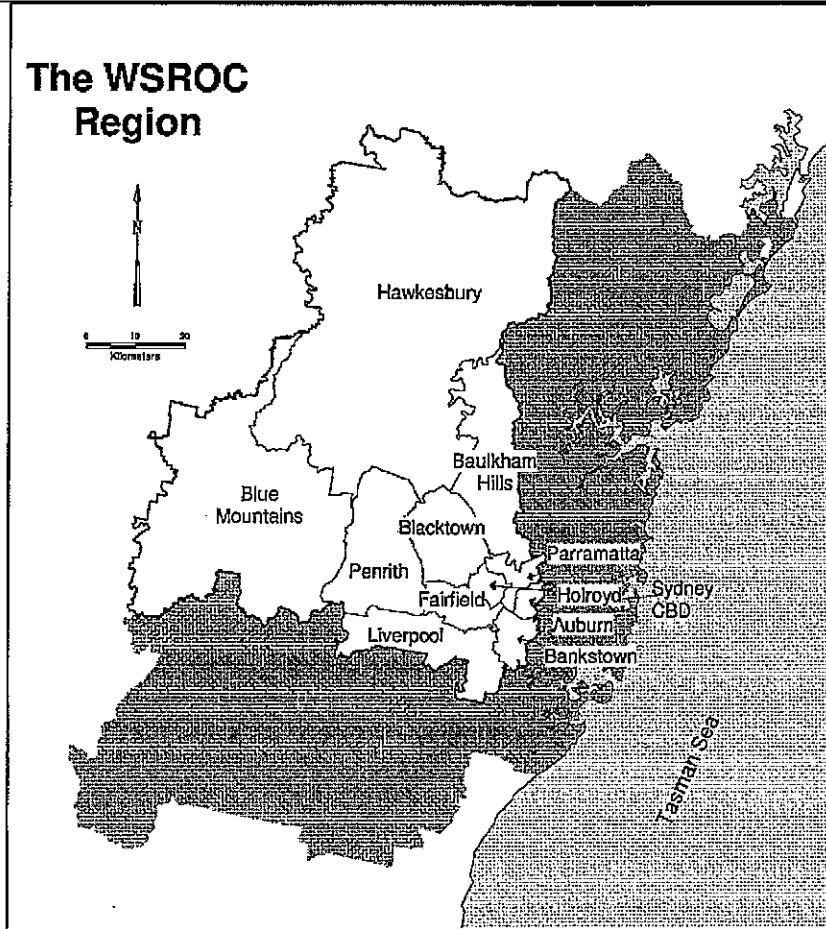
WSROC LIMITED

**Response to the National
Aviation Policy Green
Paper**

February 2009



Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils Ltd
Level 1, WSROC House, 49 Campbell Street
PO Box 63, Blacktown, NSW 2148
Tel (02) 9671 4333 Fax (02) 9621 7741
Email admin@wsroc.com.au www.wsroc.com.au
ABN 16 053 399 983



Auburn
Bankstown
Baulkham Hills
Blacktown

Blue Mountains
Fairfield
Hawkesbury
Holroyd

Liverpool
Parramatta
Penrith

Copyright © 2009 WSROC Ltd
ISBN 1 86271 0198

Disclaimer

Any representation, statement, opinion or advice, expressed or implied in this publication is made in good faith but on the basis that WSROC Ltd and its member Councils are not liable (whether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking or not taking (as the case may be) action in respect of any representation, statement or advice referred to here.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
1 INTRODUCTION.....	2
2 BADGERYS CREEK AIRPORT	3
3 FUTURE AVIATION DEMAND FOR THE SYDNEY REGION	4
5 NATIONAL TRANSPORT NEEDS	7
6 INVESTMENT IN RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE.....	10
7 AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN.....	11
8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	12
APPENDIX A THE TRANSPORT BALANCE	A-1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 2nd 2008 the Australian Government released an Aviation Green Paper which describes the initiatives and policy settings the Government is proposing to enable a prosperous aviation industry; one that delivers the highest standard of safety and security, competitive aviation markets and services, investment in infrastructure and environmental responsibility.

For ten years WSROC, in conjunction with the Western Sydney Alliance, has been highlighting the importance of transport and related issues to the future of Western Sydney and have opposed the proposal to develop a second Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek.

The organisation therefore welcomes the acknowledgement presented in the Green Paper that *'the construction of an airport at Badgerys Creek is no longer an option.*

Notwithstanding this assurance WSROC has prepared this response, taking into account all relevant considerations.

Over the last decade WSROC and the Western Sydney Alliance have prepared numerous submissions and briefing papers to Ministers and Shadow Ministers on the issue of a second airport for Sydney (copies of some of the most recent reports are included with this submission). The position of the two organisations has remained unchanged. This response seeks to provide an update on the information provided in the previous submissions, an overview of the worsening transport situation in Sydney and some overseas examples of how other developed countries have dealt with transport issues.

The calls for submissions on the National Aviation Policy Green Paper comes at a time when there is considerable concern as to the capacity of the NSW Government to deliver on the infrastructure needed to cope with its projected growth over the next 25 years.

WSROC is also of the view that any consideration of aviation issues should also take into account issues associated with the defence paper and the national tourism strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSROC is of the view that the Federal Government should:

- **As a matter of priority set in train a processes to formally abandon Badgerys Creek as a future airport site, and to determine the best and most sustainable future use of the site;**
- **Work with the State and Local Government to re-examine potential locations for a future second Sydney airport outside the Sydney basin;**
- **Develop and implement a jointly agreed and politically bipartisan land transport plan for Sydney and surrounding regions, including an examination of the appropriate rail technologies such as high speed trains linked to longer-term opportunities for decentralisation;**
- **Ensure that the general aviation character of Bankstown Airport is retained;**
- **Clarify the future Defence use of the RAAF Base in Richmond and inform the National Aviation Policy White Paper; and**
- **Ensure that all large-scale commercial developments on all airport land are subject to appropriate Local Council planning approval.**

1 INTRODUCTION

THE AVIATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

WSROC welcomes the release of the Australian Government's Aviation Green Paper as an important step in the development of Australia's first comprehensive aviation strategic plan.

The Green Paper describes the initiatives and policy settings the government is proposing to ensure a prosperous aviation industry that delivers:

- The highest standards of safety and security;
- Competitive aviation markets and services;
- Investment in infrastructure; and
- Environmental responsibility.

Based on the comments received in submissions to the Green Paper, the Government is proposing to finalise the White Paper, addressing each of the key short, medium and long term challenges identified. The Aviation White Paper is due to be completed in the latter half of 2009.

Following its response to the issues paper *Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement* in April 2008 WSROC has been invited to make a submission to the Green Paper.

THE AVIATION CHALLENGE

The Asia Pacific Region is predicted to be the largest and fastest growing aviation market in the world, outstripping the United States and Europe. Notwithstanding this the aviation industry is facing enormous challenges. Volatile oil prices, a slowing world economy, falling revenue, rising fuels costs and increasing pressures due to environmental considerations such as global warming and climate change, all point to the need for a major review of the way we plan for, not just aviation needs, but for our transportation systems as a whole.

THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

For too long transport plans have been developed in a simplistic response to a specific issue. What WSROC believes is needed is a much more thorough analysis of the problems with solutions then developed that address all of the issues involved. An opportunity exists to solve many of these problems through an integrated approach. In the organisation's view, getting the solution right requires a comprehensive review of all the issues and challenges involved, and careful consideration of all the various transport options and alternatives available.

Sydney is Australia's pre-eminent global city and it must be able to operate efficiently and competitively, and in an equitable and sustainable manner. But as the 2006 *"Moving On"* report, jointly authored by the Rail, Bus and Tram Union and the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures, stated:

"An unreliable and run-down transport system threatens Sydney's position as the financial capital of Australia, and gateway to Asia and yet successive governments (State and Commonwealth) have failed to deliver solutions."

Both WSROC and the Western Sydney Alliance have been making the point for many years that the solution to Sydney's aviation needs can only be achieved through a much more integrated approach to transport and land use needs and not through attempts to view individual elements of the transport system on an isolated and ad hoc basis.

The Eddington Transport Study "*The Case for Action (2006)*" presented to the UK Government provided advice on the long-term links between transport and the UK's economic productivity, growth and stability. It demonstrated that the UK's transport networks are crucial enablers of sustained productivity and competitiveness and noted that a reduction in travel times through new investment and better performance would have telling economic impacts.

THIS SUBMISSION

This submission presents the considered regional response of WSROC. It presents some background discussion of the need for Australia to develop a national aviation policy drawn from research developed and articulated in conjunction with the Western Sydney Alliance, its constituent councils and community groups over the past decade.

It should be noted that while the submission draws upon and attempts to complement the views of individual organisations and individual member Councils their submissions should naturally be read and considered in their own right.

2 BADGERYS CREEK AIRPORT

BACKGROUND

Opposition to an airport at Badgerys Creek has been based on very serious concerns regarding the negative environmental impacts of an airport at that location. The issue caused significant public debate during the EIS process in the late 1990s.

A decision on the Badgerys Creek Airport issue was deferred in December 2000 as a joint result of overwhelming public opposition and faltering political and bureaucratic commitment. The matter was to have been the subject of a further review of Sydney's future airport needs in 2005. This review did not take place.

Despite a succession of claims by both major political parties that an airport will never be built at Badgerys Creek, the site is still formally reserved for future airport use. This reservation has had a major impact on planning of the region by State and Local Governments (as evidenced by the land use strategies for the Metropolitan Strategy, the sub-regional strategies and the structure plans for the Growth Centres) as well as affecting the lives of local residents whose land is constrained by restrictive planning controls that will remain in place until the airport reservation, still applicable to the site, is formally relinquished.

THE NEED FOR CERTAINTY

WSROC holds the view therefore that, given the uncertainty surrounding the future use of the Badgerys Creek site, there is a pressing need to resolve this significant and increasing problem in relation to the sustainable and cohesive development of both Western Sydney and the Sydney Metropolitan region as a whole.

WSROC agrees with the underlying commitment set out in the Green Paper that the Badgerys Creek site is no longer an option for a second Sydney airport.

There is an urgent need, however, for this commitment to be translated into actual action, so that certainty can be restored to future planning for the region, and confidence re-established among the many communities involved. In particular there is a need to free up the restrictions on land placed on the residents surrounding the site.

3 FUTURE AVIATION DEMAND FOR THE SYDNEY REGION

SYDNEY AIRPORT

Sydney has a key role in the Australian economy and transport systems; with 4.25 million residents and a 25% contribution to the GDP. It contains the hub of the transport corridors and the eastern seaboard's road and rail routes. In addition to containing Australia's second largest port it contains the largest passenger and freight hub.

The efficiency of the whole of the Sydney transport system therefore critically affects the performance of the transport matrix.

With 28 million passengers in 2004-05 Sydney Airport catered for nearly half of Australia's international visitors and approximately a third of its domestic passengers. It handled nearly 500,000 tonnes of airport freight per year – representing around 50% of total Australian air cargo.

Sydney airport passenger movements are forecast to more than double to 68.3 million and airport throughput is forecast to triple to 1.3 million tonnes by 2023/24. Port Botany container throughput is forecast to double to 3 million TEU by 2021.

Recent discussions on the lifting of passport restrictions between Australia and New Zealand may have implications for flights between New Zealand, Newcastle, Coffs Harbour or Canberra and reduce the demand for flights to Sydney.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE OVERALL TRANSPORT TASK

The strong growth in population and trade through Sydney Airport and the Port will contribute significantly to the urban transport and travel task, adding to traffic congestion. In order for there to be a proper evaluation of the future aviation freight demand there needs to be a thorough understanding of the following:

- The proportion of through traffic passing through the Sydney region;
- Domestic origin-destination traffic, including inter-city and regional traffic;
- Port and Airport generated traffic; and
- Intra-metropolitan traffic which appears to constitute the bulk of Sydney's freight movements.

THE DEMAND ISSUE

The Green Paper notes that the pressure on Sydney Airport and the demand for aviation capacity in the greater Sydney region is an ongoing cause for concern. WSROC acknowledges that growth in international aviation and airfreight has major implications for national aviation policy, although the current economic downturn and the impacts of climate change (including responses such as an emissions trading scheme) and increased fuel costs are likely to slow the rate of this growth.

The latest ABS population forecasts released in September 2008 indicate that Sydney could grow by a further 1.4 Million people by 2031, rather than the 980,000 assumed in the NSW Department of Planning's Metropolitan Strategy. It is predicted that the number of Sydney households will increase from 1.62 million in 2006 to 2.35 million by 2036 - an increase of 740,000 or 46%.

This population increase will undoubtedly add to the existing pressures on public transport. Failure to adequately meet these challenges is starting to threaten Sydney's Global City status.

SECOND AIRPORT CONSIDERATIONS

While the arguments presented in the Green Paper are based on the premise that a second Sydney airport is required WSROC is of the view that further consideration should be given to an examination of a number of alternative options that may provide sufficient airport capacity to cater for longer term demands. Such options include the enhancement of existing airport facilities coupled with capacity relief through the introduction of high speed rail.

WSROC has consistently expressed its opposition to the construction of a new airport anywhere in the Sydney basin. While WSROC does not have a preferred location it has been calling for further examination of the expansion of existing airports (such as Canberra or Newcastle) or the development of a new airport (such as Goulburn), coupled with extensive investment in land based transport links and, in particular new rail infrastructure.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

AVIATION EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The aviation industry provides vitally important domestic and international connectivity for the general community, and the general economy.

In WSROC's view, the greenhouse emissions arising from the aviation industry need to be considered in two parts: firstly the emission from aircraft themselves, and secondly the emissions from associated ground transport activities.

The first question involves the type of fuel used by aircraft, and whether there is any potential to shift from the basic hydrocarbon/kerosene fuel used at present; and whether the use of larger or more efficient aircraft can contribute to a reduction in greenhouse emissions in unit terms. These questions are beyond the scope of this submission.

However, WSROC does believe that a considerable reduction in overall greenhouse emissions can be achieved by changes in the types of ground transport infrastructure used to service airports.

The correct location of new airports, and the replacement of private vehicle use with more greenhouse efficient transport systems, including rail and increased public transport, can contribute to a significant reduction in the overall per capita greenhouse emissions associated with airport activities.

Once again, WSROC believes that the best overall greenhouse outcome will be associated with the introduction of a more integrated approach to airport planning and operation and with improvements in the ground transport systems used in conjunction with airports.

URBAN AIR QUALITY ISSUES

In addition WSROC believes that the greatest potential for a reduction in overall emissions from the aviation sector in the short to medium term will come from a reassessment of the ground transport modes currently used to support and service the activities of airports.

The case of air quality in the Sydney basin is an issue that WSROC has raised for many years, serving to illustrate the very important issue of air quality more generally. Sydney is a large, sprawling city, with a very heavy dependence on private motor vehicle use. It is also a city located within a classical "pollution basin", where air pollutants from transport and other sources tend to be trapped by prevailing geographic and meteorological conditions.

Of great concern, and of particular relevance to this submission, is the fact that levels of air pollution are greater in Western and South-Western Sydney than in other parts of the basin. Elevated levels of air pollution are known to cause unacceptable increases in the incidence of many illnesses, including respiratory, coronary, cancer and other very serious conditions.

The city experiences regular exceedances of established air quality goals, largely as a consequence of the city's high and increasing dependence on private road transport, coupled with the natural tendency of the Sydney basin to "trap" and retain air pollution.

Air and road transport activity associated with any new major airport within the Sydney basin would result in a further unacceptable and unsustainable deterioration in air quality in Western and South-Western Sydney, in areas where significant air quality problems already exist. From an air quality perspective, these considerations confirm that the construction of a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek, or elsewhere within the Sydney basin, coupled with the significant increases in road transport generated exhaust emissions that would result from such a development, would be completely inappropriate, and unsustainable.

The Australian Government has very correctly rejected such options.

The reality is that great care will need to be taken during any future development in or impacting upon Western and South-Western Sydney, including not only airports but residential and commercial development with an undue reliance on private motor vehicle use, to ensure that air pollution levels are held within safe and acceptable limits and that air pollution does not in fact become a limiting factor on future growth and development in the region.

AIRCRAFT NOISE

Impacts

The impact of aircraft noise on surrounding communities represents a major constraint on airport operations internationally. The operation and expansion of existing airports is very significantly constrained by noise factors, and new airports developed throughout the world in recent years have been deliberately sited at arms length from the communities they serve to avoid such noise impacts.

It is WSROC's view that it will be neither reasonable nor feasible to significantly alter curfew conditions for existing airports in the Sydney region. However, the introduction of an appropriate high speed rail system would open the way for more effective integration into the regional transport network of existing curfew-free airports, and would introduce the possibility of new airport sites, if required, in areas where operating curfews would not be required.

Protection of Noise Affected Communities

The impacts of aircraft noise on communities around airports have been of vital interest to airport planning and management for many years. This issue has certainly played a major role in the consideration of the overall capacity and capability of Sydney Airport, and the second Sydney airport question more generally.

The protection of communities around existing airports has been, and is being dealt with in a number of ways, including flight path management and noise sharing schemes; best practice aircraft operation; the development and introduction of quieter aircraft; and where relevant the introduction of physical noise insulation mechanisms. WSROC is anxious to ensure that past mistakes in terms of noise impact are not repeated by imposing inappropriately sited new airports on previously unaffected communities.

In this respect, it is considered that the best way to manage and minimise the noise impact of new airport facilities is to ensure that the location of new airports is at an appropriate distance from sensitive community activities.

Aircraft Noise – Measurement

In previous submissions to the second Sydney airport environmental assessment process in the late 1990's, the Alliance was critical of the then almost total reliance on the ANEF system to forecast and explain the impacts of aircraft noise on surrounding communities.

It was, and remains, WSROC's view that more effective and realistic planning tools can and should be developed and implemented, so that noise impacts associated with the assessment of expanded or new airport facilities can be explained to potentially affected communities and individuals in a more open, transparent and understandable way.

WSROC believes that the emerging National Aviation Policy Statement should take into account the need to develop and implement the best available noise forecasting and planning systems.

WATER QUALITY ISSUES

Based on a significant volume of work undertaken over the past decade WSROC also believes that the assessment of new airport sites needs to take very careful account of water resources and energy distribution systems. These vital infrastructure elements have assumed even greater importance and relevance in recent years.

The importance of Sydney's water catchment, storage and distribution systems provides an obvious illustration of this point.

This issue of water storage and distribution infrastructure, important at the time of the original environmental assessment of the Badgerys Creek Airport proposal, has now become a matter of even greater urgency and community priority.

Any airport site that presents a major and significant additional risk to Sydney's water storage and catchment systems, or those of other cities and regions, is inappropriate.

5 NATIONAL TRANSPORT NEEDS

THE ROLE OF AVIATION

WSROC is firmly of the view that future airport needs should be addressed as part of a comprehensive process that considers all of Australia's economic and transport needs.

The new Department of Infrastructure Australia has been conducting an audit of the nation's transport, energy, communications and water infrastructure in order to produce an Infrastructure Priority List to guide future public and private investment decisions. Such an initiative is fully supported.

Aviation issues do not exist in isolation from other transport and environmental issues and have a major impact on the community in many ways as noted in this submission. WSROC is of the view that the success of a national aviation policy should be considered in the context of this audit, taking into account a prioritised and integrated approach to the planning and implementation of all the issues involved. WSROC is firmly of the view that future airport needs should be addressed as part of a comprehensive process that considers all of Australia's economic and transport needs.

THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IMPERATIVE

While the Federal Government's involvement has been in freight rail and road systems which provide intra and inter-city connectivity at local, State and national levels, both WSROC and the Alliance have consistently argued that the Commonwealth needs to have a much more strategic and co-ordinated focus with an emphasis on supporting public transport.

Australia is one of the few developed countries in the world that does not provide some funding support for urban public transport. Spain by comparison has just spent over €7 billion on building the high speed network the details of which are outlined below.

URBAN TRANSPORT NEEDS

The provision of economically efficient urban systems, where the time and energy required to move people and goods is minimised, contributes to the development of a more productive region. In contrast an urban form that produces congestion pressures, delays, capacity constraints, higher energy costs and other inefficiencies can substantially erode the economic advantages of undertaking business activities. European and American examples have shown that the land use changes associated with the development of rapid transit systems can increase economic capacity, while at the same time lessening the environmental impact in the transport sector.

In 2000-2001 338 million tonnes of goods and commodities were move into, through, or within Sydney at annual growth rate of 7.4%. Most (86%) of this freight is moved by road. Rail also plays a key role in the land transport of bulk and heavy products and accounts for 20% of containers to and from Port Botany. As industrial areas expand in Greater Western Sydney the east-west transport task is expected to grow rapidly.

EXISTING SYDNEY AIRPORTS

It is critical that the role of all the existing airports in the Hunter/Sydney/Canberra region are taken into account in this process, including the future of Bankstown airport and the Richmond RAAF base; together with a review of the existing and prospective ground infrastructure that surrounds and connects them.

Bankstown Airport Issues

Bankstown Airport is one of the largest general aviation airports in Australia and the second busiest in terms of aircraft movements. In December 2000 the Commonwealth Government announced upgrading activities at the airport for use as an overflow for Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (KSA). This announcement met with strong opposition from Bankstown Council and the community. Following protests the proposal and the plan were subsequently shelved.

WSROC supports Bankstown Council's view that the general aviation character and current aviation mix at Bankstown Airport should be maintained and that the airport should not be expanded. It also agrees with the position that an early start to the assessment of Sydney's future airport needs should avoid the consideration of Bankstown as a spill-over airport to meet any future capacity crisis at Sydney KSA.

The submission to the Inquiry prepared by Bankstown Council also supports a number of the proposals and recommendations in the Green Paper, since these echoed the recommendations in their 2008 submission namely:

- Better integration of airport planning with State and Local Government planning;
- Establishment of Planning Advisory Panels for major airports with local representation included;
- Strengthening of the Master Planning process;
- Review of the major development trigger/threshold;
- A requirement that major development in airports contribute to infrastructure upgrades and environmental mitigation; and
- The exclusion of incompatible developments such as schools, hospitals, hotels, childcare etc.

WSROC supports the position of Bankstown Council on each of these issues.

Richmond Airport Issues

Any proposal to expand or further develop existing airports within the Sydney basin will inevitably generate high levels of community concern.

Such proposals also have very significant implications for planning and development in the southern, western and northern parts of metropolitan Sydney.

Because of these concerns, and because of the less than perfect track record that the Commonwealth has established through its handling of both Sydney Airport's third runway development in the early 1990's, and more recently the Badgerys Creek Airport proposal, WSROC and the Western Sydney Alliance have both adopted a position of opposition to any further civil airport development of any significance within the Sydney basin, whether this be via new airport site or an existing civil or defence airport.

It is acknowledged however that operational changes at the civil airports of Sydney, Bankstown, and Camden and the Defence airport at Richmond and the possibility of development or expansion of those airports, may well be the subject of consideration as part of the review of future aviation policy being undertaken by the Federal Government, though not expressly stated in the National Aviation Policy Green Paper. Consideration of any such changes would need to take into account a number of factors.

To a lesser or greater extent, Sydney's existing airports are all situated in close proximity to residential areas. This reality brings with it numerous very important implications for local amenity and quality of life - particularly in respect of noise and other environmental impacts.

Protecting the rights and amenity of the communities in question is of paramount concern to local government, although this concern is balanced with an acceptance of the fact that consideration of reasonable change, involving net benefits for all stakeholders, may well form part of the current policy review process.

Some fundamental issues will need to be addressed in any such process, including:

- The need to address the requirements of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act);
- The need for compliance with NSW State and local environment and planning legislation;

The following more specific matters are also of great relevance to any consideration of airport development or expansion of existing airports in the Sydney region:

- Aviation development and noise impacts;
- Flooding, stormwater management and water sensitive urban design principles;
- Environmental impacts;
- Environmental sustainability, including climate change issues;
- Airport operational policy and regulatory framework;
- Land use zoning and development control;
- Economic development – business and employment;
- Ground transport infrastructure and systems;
- Emergency management and response;
- Impacts on existing recreational facilities; and
- Financial impacts.

The relationship between any change to current airport operations and existing transport systems and infrastructure needs to be very carefully addressed.

It is of critical importance that this consideration of ground transport issues must involve a complete assessment of sustainable transport needs, based on an integrated and prioritised approach, recognising the fact that airports cannot exist in isolation from surrounding communities and environments, and that the sustainability of airports relies inextricably on the viability and sustainability of the transport infrastructure and systems that link airports to the communities that they serve.

This issue is of vital importance in Western Sydney, given the withdrawal of previously promised, and very much needed transport infrastructure – including in particular rail infrastructure – that resulted from the November 2008 NSW Mini-budget.

RAAF Base Richmond is the only Defence airport in the Sydney region and in all discussions about a second Sydney Airport, its potential to be the second Sydney airport is constantly raised by the community and government. Likewise the Department of Defence's routine review of defence needs and resources including the concurrent Defence Policy White Paper process and the Force Disposition Reviews have fuelled speculation about the future of Richmond Defence airport.

Any view on RAAF Base Richmond in the National Aviation Policy / second Sydney airport mix must be made in consultation with the Defence Policy White Paper, and therefore the timing of both documents is critical. In terms of Western Sydney and in particular Hawkesbury Local Government Area, WSROC encourages the Federal Government to make a decision about the future defence use of RAAF Base Richmond once and for all in the Defence Policy White Paper, and then inform the National Aviation Policy White Paper, so Western Sydney can be confident on the airport's Defence future use or not. Only then should any discussion about Richmond Defence airport be commenced in terms of any contribution to the second Sydney airport additional capacity needs.

Hawkesbury City Council's view on RAAF Base Richmond acknowledges that the base is a significant contributor to the local economy and is of the view that Federal Government commercial airport policy directions should not cloud/distract from Defence Policy and its strategic and operational needs, which must include the retention of RAAF Base Richmond as a strategic Defence facility.

6 INVESTMENT IN RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

RAIL AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO AVIATION

In Europe there has been substantial investment in rail infrastructure which has had a marked impact on the demand for air travel. For example, Spain now has 10,000 kilometres of high speed rail track and 90% of its population living less than 50 kilometres from a bullet train. Nowadays the notion that heavy rail systems only work where there are high population densities has been questioned.

Spanish airlines experienced a 0.5% fall in domestic load factor (down to 69.2%) following a 13% slashing of capacity in the last 3 months of 2007. There was a reduction of 205 air flights between Madrid and Barcelona at that time. The drop in air travel was around 25% in 2008. The airlines are now focussing their flights on passengers wanting to fly beyond key hubs.

British Airways in 2008 also reported a 6% fall in passengers since November 2007. In Europe it has been found that trains are ideal for journeys up to 3 hours in length, with planes catering for the longer journeys.

The first high speed train connection in Spain was built between Madrid and Seville and opened in 1992. The Madrid to Malaga line opened in December 2007 and Madrid to Barcelona in February 2008.

The high speed trains travel with speeds up to 300 kilometres per hour and the 660 km trip between Madrid and Barcelona takes 2 hours 30 minutes or less. Punctuality is given a high priority and, if the trains are more than 5 minutes late, passengers are given a complete fare refund. AVE trains have videos and music players and seating that can be swivelled to face the direction of travel.

Other positive comments have included the preference for more space, greater comfort than experienced in planes, faster check-in times and arrival and departure from city centres. A further advantage is that, unlike airports, stations can be built underground and there is the potential to develop the air rights above stations to help fund the cost of provision of the infrastructure.

RAIL AND THE SECOND SYDNEY AIRPORT QUESTION

On February 10th 2009 Canberra Airport released its 2009 preliminary draft Master Plan, outlining its strategies for the next 20 years. It argued that a high speed train link that shuttles passengers between Canberra and Sydney in as little as 50 minutes could turn the national capital's airport into a viable second airport for Sydney.

It is claimed that the airport is better placed than any other to provide a secondary hub to Sydney Airport, which is expected to be close to capacity within the next two decades.

The draft master plan noted that, using current technologies, a high speed train could take less than 50 minutes from Sydney Central Station via Sydney Airport and then non-stop via a new rail corridor to Canberra Airport.

The prospect of a very fast train linking Sydney, Canberra and possibly Melbourne was given a further boost in December 2008 when Infrastructure Australia included it on its shortlist of projects warranting further investigation.

The cost of a Sydney-Canberra rail link was estimated in the master plan to be between \$8 billion and \$10 billion.

7 AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN

THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

WSROC and the Alliance have consistently argued over the years that the resolution of the aviation issues for the Sydney basin will only be achieved as part of a much more holistic and integrated approach to Sydney's transport and land use needs and not through attempts to view individual elements on an individual and ad hoc basis. It is disappointing therefore that neither the current Green Paper nor the previous issues paper *Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement* have adopted this more strategic approach, instead focussing upon issues confined to the aviation industry alone.

This is not to deny or undermine the validity of both these documents, but to stress that a revised and integrated and prioritised plan would greatly alter the dynamics of the planning process and could accelerate already planned projects and/or a range of additional transport projects for Sydney and beyond. One of the outcomes of such an approach may be the identification of alternative approaches that would negate the need for a second Sydney airport.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSPORT MODES

The proposed North-West, Harbour and South-West Rail links, the Parramatta to Chatswood rail links and other transport projects, described in Appendix A, would have provided badly needed enhancements of the existing heavy rail, road, freight and bus networks.

They would have provided critical infrastructure and connectivity both within the region and with other parts of Sydney. The loss of most this promised infrastructure has dealt a severe blow for the residents of Western Sydney. This adds to the imperative for discussion and consideration of new high speed rail infrastructure, providing an additional rail network for Sydney and surrounding regions that would help to resolve the problems with the existing rail and road network and be fully integrated with road and rail based transport systems.

In its previous submissions WSROC has urged for greater consideration to be given to such proposals as the Penrith/City Speedrail and the potential to expand that route northwards to the Hunter Region (serving Newcastle and the Central Coast), Southwards to the Illawarra (serving Wollongong and Kiama) and Canberra (also serving Goulburn).

One of the key advantages of such a system is that it would provide a high speed, non-road based corridor to Sydney directly through the city's fastest growing region and help to solve many of the transport issues, outlined in more detail below, and in previous submissions. It would also increase the potential for consideration of other sites for a future airport, should it still be required, completely outside of the Sydney basin. It would be competitive with road and air travel on these corridors and improve the usefulness of the existing airports in Canberra and Newcastle. It would in turn provide the potential platform for long term strategies to develop an east coast high speed rail network connecting Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

A fast rail line between Penrith and the city, with major cuts in journey times would help to ensure that the regional cities and major centres along the route would become more viable as employment centres closely connected to the CBD. It would help to provide much better accessibility to the tertiary education opportunities and higher order jobs that is needed to upskill the Western Sydney workforce. International experience shows that jobs will eventually move to where population growth is occurring and that the higher order jobs follow an educated workforce. In other words significant employment would be stimulated by the provision of adequate transport infrastructure.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Western Sydney region confronts a very serious shortage of transport infrastructure, particularly following the November 2008 mini-budget where several major and previously committed projects were cancelled. The importance of transport for Western Sydney is included in Appendix A in this submission for clarification purposes.

If the resolution of Sydney's future aviation needs is undertaken on an integrated basis, then the outcome could be favourable to Western Sydney in that it would stimulate associated ground transport development. If however, the airport and aviation issues are approached in isolation, as has so often been the case in the past, then Western Sydney's transport challenge will become even greater.

As argued elsewhere in this submission, aviation policy must be linked to other associated transport and land use considerations through an integrated, holistic and prioritised approach.

APPENDIX A
THE TRANSPORT BALANCE

THIS APPENDIX PROVIDES SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF AVIATION POLICY.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

In January 2007 the Western Sydney Alliance and WSROC presented a paper entitled *The Transport Challenge in Western Sydney* to the Shadow Minister for Transport Mr Martin Ferguson AM, MP. This background paper (see attached) presented an overview of the transport planning for Sydney being undertaken at that time.

THE NOVEMBER 2008 NSW MINI-BUDGET

Unfortunately, as the result of the November 2008 NSW Mini-budget, a substantial proportion of the proposed transport infrastructure needed to support the objectives of the Metropolitan Strategy and sub-regional population, housing and employment growth strategies, has now been deferred or cancelled altogether. Major program cuts were \$12 billion for the North-West Metro, \$1.4 billion for the South-West Rail link and \$200 million for the Vineyard to Schofields rail line. This represented a very significant diversion of funds away from Western Sydney, whereas \$1.8 billion was allocated for a Sydney CBD Metro system. This is of particular concern for Greater Western Sydney, which is being targeted to accommodate over 600,000 people over the next 25 years.

The Epping to Chatswood rail link, originally due to open in 2008 has been rescheduled to open at the end of February 2009 in the form of a shuttle service. It is planned to be incorporated into the Sydney rail network at the end of the year. It was intended to be an important component of the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Project, ultimately linking to the North-West Rail Link, but the latter has now been cancelled. The link was originally planned to form part of the proposed Parramatta to Chatswood Rail Line but the Parramatta to Epping component has been indefinitely deferred.

A further area of considerable concern was that of the \$150 million allocated for the purchase of 300 new buses 'to offset the scrapping of the North-West Metro Rail line' only 100 of these buses have been allocated to the North-West sub-region. Not only does this herald a return to an emphasis on road transport in favour over other forms of public transport but also reflects the NSW Government's failure to grasp the enormity of the transport problems facing this sub-region of Sydney.

THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF SYDNEY'S NORTH WEST SECTOR

On 7th January 2009 the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 released its report on the *Transport Needs of Sydney's North-West Sector*. The report and its nine recommendations are now with the NSW Government for consideration, with a response to the Committee required to be provided by 19th June 2009.

In line with its continuing advocacy on this issue WSROC prepared a submission and was represented at the Inquiry held on 7th November 2008. The Committee's report made numerous references to the WSROC submission and the evidence presented to the Inquiry. The Committee was of the view that the North-West Sector has suffered significantly from a lack of public transport infrastructure.

Amongst other recommendations the committee concluded that the State Government should:

- Commit to the funding of the North-West Rail link;
- Prepare a submission for the North-West Rail link to be included in the National Infrastructure Priority List;
- Prepare an Integrated Transport Plan for the sub-region;

- Establish an Integrated Transport Planning Authority; and
- Establish a panel of transport experts to develop and Integrated Transport Strategic Plan for Sydney.

The committee was highly critical of the failure of the NSW Government to address the lack of public transport infrastructure to service the well-documented needs of North-West Sydney over the past decade and the continuing cycle of commitments followed by broken promises. It concluded that this discrimination against this area has resulted in an unsustainable reliance on private vehicle use and ever-increasing tolls, impacting upon businesses, social and family life.

SYDNEY'S ROAD CONGESTION CHALLENGE

Successive media reports during 2008 have highlighted the increasing congestion on Sydney's arterial road system. Traffic speeds of 31 km/hr on the M2 Motorway/Lane Cove Tunnel and the Gore Hill Expressway in 2007-2008 were down from 38 km/hr in the previous year. A drop from 40km/hr on the M5/Eastern Distributor to 24 km/hr also occurred. Travel times on Victoria Road were down from 29 km/hr five years ago to 23 km/hr. Journey times on Windsor Road now takes 10 minutes longer in the morning peak than they did twelve months ago.

At the same time tolls have been increased with residents in the North-West having to pay \$7.10 each way (\$4.40 of that for the Lane Cove Tunnel) and over \$10 if they cross the harbour.

About 17 million trips are made through the Lane Cove Tunnel each year (70,000 a day in November 2008) but a Metro would have carried three times this number. While 113 more buses would carry 9,000 people they still have to contend with the traffic congestion.

In 2004 8,800 trucks used Pennant Hills Road each weekday, half of which were six, eight or nine axle trucks carrying 40 gross tonnes or more. Average peak travel speeds were 25 km/hr but were often as low as 14/km/hr.

All these statistics cast doubt on the assertion that more motorways are the solution to Sydney's transport problem.

SERIOUS RAIL CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS

There is a lack of capacity in the Sydney rail system, particularly in the CBD, with resulting bottlenecks. The system is rapidly approaching gridlock. Over the past thirty years there has been only incremental investment in infrastructure. For many years numerous transport strategies have been investigated and planned but with no integration between them.

An adequate integrated land/use transport plan and a Transport Co-ordination Authority for Sydney are well overdue.

As the result of the cancellation of past commitments there is even greater uncertainty and an urgent need for review of a number of the NSW Government's strategic documents, including the Metropolitan Strategy, the State Plan and the Infrastructure Strategy.

The problems on the Western Railway line which was to be eased by the Rail Clearways Project and the expansion of Sydney's rail system will continue to have lengthy and onerous travel times, high cost- not just in monetary terms but also travel time, a lack of bus/train combinations and low frequency. The line also has poor access for people with a disability.

Questions have arisen as to whether the Government target to get 30% of freight onto rail could actually be met.

The Southern Sydney Freight line will link Macarthur to Chullora and dedicated freight line from Strathfield to Newcastle would help to ease congestion in freight and passenger services, allowing an extra 100-150 passenger train movements a day through Sydney's north and the central coast. ARTC are seeking \$830 million for the project.

With the Federal government's commitment through Infrastructure Australia to fund, or co-fund major new infrastructure projects there is now an opportunity to fix Sydney's major transport problems.

There is no doubt that the funding of new transport infrastructure is expensive. Extensive economic appraisal needs to be given to a complete review of the range of transport alternatives available. This may reveal a solution that can deliver the greatest amount of accessibility per dollar of government expenditure on transport, both on land and in the air.

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

In Western Sydney 60% of all origin-destination trip activity is cross-regional and the proportion is increasing. Yet the rail system is focussed upon delivering people to the CBD and is only responsible for 5% of all passenger journeys in Sydney and 10% of the passenger kilometres travelled. WSROC is of the view that improving cross-regional journeys is likely to deliver a far bigger social return per dollar invested than simply improving access to the CBD. This points to the importance of integrating transport and strategic land use planning.

While jobs drive economic growth, transport and housing are necessary to support the growth.

Western Sydney is where population growth is concentrated, where transport journeys are longest, where transport costs are highest (accentuated by recent oil price rises) and where the need to plan is greatest. There is a need to reverse the mindset that 'the technology fixes the problem' to a 'horses for courses' approach. There is plenty of overseas evidence that people will switch modes when the systems are integrated seamlessly together.

A recent research report commissioned by WSROC and led by a consortium from the Urban Research Centre at the University of Western Sydney, entitled *North-West and West-Central Sydney Employment Strategies* has shown that, while population is a key growth driver in Western Sydney, it will not be enough to generate enough new jobs to meet government targets and there will be a shortfall of almost 250,000 full time jobs by 2031.

The study found that there is currently an imbalance in the mix of jobs in the region. Impediments to growth include inefficient industry clusters, transport bottlenecks, high rates of car dependency, skills shortages, inadequate infrastructure, cost pressures on households and ineffective governance.

Substantial 're-engineering' of Western Sydney is required to meet economic and employment targets including reassessing the jobs locations, major changes to the ways workers travel to work and ongoing efforts to raise labour force participation.

The study recommends several major infrastructure projects be approved including new rail links, improved arterial roads, enhanced infrastructure services to new employment areas and building stronger links between business and higher education to encourage innovation.

Access to employment will be critical for Western Sydney's growing population and it is essential that, on sustainability and equity grounds alone, the growth in travel demand be provided by public transport rather than reliance on private vehicle use. Rail access from Parramatta to Chatswood through Epping would have connected major employment areas and, in the longer term, could have formed part of a north-south high speed corridor.

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

In December 2004, in response to a Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper, WSROC noted that despite the Sustainability Commissioner Professor Peter Newman's positive assessment of the plans for Sydney's North-West and South-West Growth Centres, serious questions remain regarding the Metropolitan Strategy's overall sustainability. The Professor stated that with these two release areas, the metropolitan region is reaching the limits to its sustainability. Given that the plans for these two Growth Centres were underpinned at that time by a significant commitment to transport infrastructure, which has now been withdrawn, a review of the Metropolitan Strategy and the associated sub-regional plans, the State Plan and the State Infrastructure is urgently needed.

While the 30-year window for the Metropolitan Strategy is stretching the ability to predict needs and demands even further into the future, some consideration must be given to what happens after this period. There is a finite capacity of the Cumberland Plain to accommodate growth within acceptable social, economic and environmental parameters; even when improvements to technology are factored in. A real attempt should be made to identify what are the sustainable limits to growth.

As it stands the Metropolitan Strategy lacks substance and appears to be an assembly of data coupled with some generalised statements. To a large extent it reiterates existing problems rather than proposing a set of specific actions to ensure better outcomes and a numbers exercise. There was insufficient detail on elements such as the infrastructure needed to support Sydney's growth. As such it was bound to fail.

MANAGEMENT OF GROWTH AND CHANGE

What is needed is the establishment of a spatial structure as the basis of managing growth and change. This structure should respond to greater self-containment and regionalisation and promote more efficient use of regional infrastructure. The elements of this proposed spatial structure include metropolitan decentralisation of high-growth advanced service sectors, access to knowledge infrastructure and social and cultural facilities, retrofitting of an intra-regional transport network, renewal of the older regional industrial and residential core and major centres and the development of a regional employment growth corridor. This approach should be adopted within the Metropolitan Strategy.

The urban structure planning that was undertaken for the South-West Growth Centre did not take account of the need to clarify the future use of the Badgerys Creek site and appeared to have been influenced by the potential for an airport.

Long term planning for Sydney's growth after 2030 also needs to be addressed. That being so, further investigation into the reasons why previous de-centralisation initiatives were not considered to be successful is warranted; coupled with development of strategies to achieve more effective and sustainable outcomes in the future.