

# NATIONAL AVIATION POLICY: A Western Sydney Perspective



**Submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport  
Regional Development and Local Government**

Submission By:

*Western Sydney Alliance*

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## SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

The key aspects of this submission are:

**Access to Australian Destinations Outside Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth:** The introduction of an appropriately designed high speed train system is recommended. Such a system would open up access to a number of new aviation gateways, including Newcastle and Canberra in the first instance, followed by regional centres along the path of a progressively expanding east coast high speed train network.

**Integration of Airport and Rail Systems:** We believe that the answer to this challenge is for the Australian Government to require that future consideration of major new airport developments, including any second airport to meet the needs of Sydney and associated regions, takes fully into account the roles and potentials of both air and ground transport infrastructure. This will mean that airports will no longer be considered and assessed as “islands”, but rather as part of a more realistic and sustainable transport infrastructure system for Australia.

**The Second Sydney Airport and Badgerys Creek Site Issues:** In our view, the question of a site for a second Sydney airport can only be resolved if the roles of other existing airports, including Canberra and Newcastle, and the transport synergies offered by a complementary high speed rail system, are taken fully into account. We believe that the second question – that is the future use of the Badgerys Creek site – should be resolved by a joint task force comprising all levels of government, together with business and community representatives. The site represents a significant community asset, and its best future use warrants an all of government and all of community approach.

**Airports and Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The correct siting of new airports, and the replacement of private vehicle use with more greenhouse efficient transport systems, including rail and increased and improved public transport networks, can in our view contribute to a significant reduction in the overall per capita greenhouse emissions associated with airport activities.

**Other Air Pollution Issues:** Great care will need to be taken during any future development in or impacting upon Western and Southwestern 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.

**Noise and Curfew Issues:** We believe that the introduction of an appropriate high speed rail system will open the way for the more effective integration into the regional transport network of existing curfew free airports, and will introduce the possibility of new airport sites, if required, in areas where operating curfews will not be required.

**Aviation Impacts on Water & Energy Infrastructure:** 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.

**High Speed Rail:** One of the great advantages of a new high speed train system is that it will very largely overcome the need to identify or hold reserved land for a second Sydney airport within the Sydney basin, by providing time and cost effective transport links to existing airports at Canberra and Newcastle, and by introducing new airport site possibilities along the new high speed rail path.

**A Prioritised and Integrated Approach to Transport Planning:** One of the core positions that has been argued by the Alliance for many years is that the ultimate resolution of the second Sydney airport issue 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 of the transport matrix on an isolated and ad hoc basis. We believe that the emerging National Aviation Policy Statement should fully reflect this important reality.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Western Sydney Alliance comprises Mayors, Councils and community groups from a number of Western and Southwestern Sydney Councils.

The Alliance was formed eleven years ago to deal with a number of serious concerns regarding the then proposed development of a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek.

Members of the Alliance during this eleven year period have included Baulkham Hills Shire Council, Blacktown City Council, Blue Mountains City Council, Camden Council, Campbelltown City Council, Fairfield City Council, Holroyd City Council, Parramatta City Council, Penrith City Council, and Wollondilly Shire Council, together with community groups from the various local government areas involved.

The objectives of the Alliance, which have remained consistent throughout its period of operation, are summarised below:

- ❑ **Opposition** to the development of a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek; or elsewhere within the Sydney basin;
- ❑ **Opposition** to any major expansion of Bankstown Airport, including in particular opposition to the introduction of Boeing 737 (and equivalent) commercial jets;
- ❑ **Support** for the position that no significant changes to the operation of Bankstown Airport be initiated without full and appropriate consultative and environmental assessment processes;
- ❑ **Support** for the disposal by the Commonwealth of all land currently held at Badgerys Creek for airport development, and for the joint and cooperative development by all levels of government of an alternate development strategy for this land, based on sustainable outcomes of optimum value and benefit to the community;
- ❑ **Support** for the optimum management and performance of Kingsford Smith Airport, subject to the proper and reasonable management of environmental and social impacts, within existing movement cap and curfew limitations;
- ❑ **Support** for detailed studies of a regional high speed train link between Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, and an east-coast high speed train network, and associated transport infrastructure, as part of an integrated transport strategy that would overcome the need for a second major airport at Badgerys Creek or elsewhere within the Sydney basin; and
- ❑ **Support** for a call on government and opposition parties at both the Federal and State levels to adopt as policy the identification, reservation and development, should such prove to be required in the long term, of an alternate major airport site, outside the Sydney basin.

This document provides an overview of Alliance policy and position as it relates to relevant areas of national aviation policy, particularly in the context of the Australian Government's recently announced intention to develop a National Aviation Policy Statement.

## 2 THE NATIONAL AVIATION POLICY STATEMENT

### 2.1 THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The Australian Government has indicated that is committed to developing a comprehensive National Aviation Policy Statement (White Paper).

The purpose of this Policy Statement will be to provide greater certainty for the aviation industry, and to provide clear commitments for users of aviation services and communities affected by aviation activity.

In April of this year, the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Anthony Albanese, released an Issues Paper titled "Towards a National Aviation Policy Statement" as a basis for consultation and engagement, and to encourage industry and community input to assist the Australian Government's development of a National Aviation Policy Statement.

The Government has invited initial input to the policy development process from interested stakeholders, based on the Issues Paper.

The Government has also indicated that a National Aviation Policy Green Paper will be released in the latter half of 2008, and that the release of that Green Paper will provide further opportunity for stakeholder input, prior to the intended finalisation of a detailed National Aviation Policy Statement in mid-2009.

As indicated in 1 above, the Western Sydney Alliance represents a broad base of local Councils and community groups with a direct interest airport and aviation policy, particularly in relation to the important questions of additional airport capacity for Sydney, and the site for any future second Sydney airport.

This document presents an initial submission to the policy development process, based on the position carefully researched, developed and articulated by the Alliance, and its member Councils and community groups, over the past decade.

The Alliance will make a more detailed submission following the release of the Green Paper later this year.

## **2.2 THE ISSUES PAPER**

The issues paper released in April of this year is broken into five broad themes, focussing on some of the major issues facing the aviation industry, government at all levels, and stakeholders, in meeting current challenges and planning for a successful future.

The five key themes addressed in the Issues Paper are;

- Aviation Industry
- Aviation Infrastructure
- Aviation Safety
- Aviation Security
- Community Protection

The Issues Paper proposed that stakeholder submissions should be structured to focus on some of the key questions raised.

Input and suggestions were also invited on further issues not covered in the Issues Paper, but that may nevertheless be relevant to the policy development process, and therefore considered for inclusion in subsequent consultation papers.

The input provided in this submission is structured in accordance with the themes presented and questions raised in the Issues Paper.

## **2.3 THIS SUBMISSION**

All of the themes and questions raised in the Issues Paper are of significance to the broad and complex area of aviation policy.

In this submission, the Alliance has focussed on those areas of aviation policy and impact of relevance to it; to its constituent Councils and community groups; and to the Badgerys Creek Airport and second Sydney airport issues that have been, and remain, central to the policies and activities of the Alliance.

Accordingly, the specific issues addressed in this submission are as follows:

### **THE AVIATION INDUSTRY**

- ❑ the question of how access to Australian destinations outside the four major gateways of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth might be increased.

### **AVIATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ❑ the question of how can we better integrate investment airports with the funding and construction of improved road and rail links to and from our airports.
- ❑ The issue of the need for additional airport capacity for Sydney in the future; the process of identifying a suitable site; and resolution of the future use of the Badgerys Creek site, given that it is no longer supported by the Australian Government for airport use.
- ❑ The issue of how future airport needs can best be addressed, recognising the importance of airports as an element of the national economic infrastructure.
- ❑ The question of how communities around airports can best be protected from undue aircraft noise, as demand for services continues to grow.

### **CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY PROTECTION – addressing the impacts of aviation**

#### **Emissions and Climate Change**

- ❑ The question of what practical steps the aviation industry can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- ❑ The question of what measures the aviation industry should take in the short-medium term to reduce emissions

#### **Aircraft Noise**

- ❑ The question of whether the ANEF system can be improved or supplemented by other planning tools to better explain the impacts of aircraft noise
- ❑ The question of which airports in Australia need to remain curfew free, and under what conditions

#### **Other Environmental Issues**

- ❑ Specifically, the need to properly, fully and objectively assess new airport proposals in terms of potential impacts on existing social and environmental infrastructure, including in particular water and energy assets

### **OTHER KEY ISSUES**

- ❑ Development of a prioritised, integrated approach to transport planning in Australia, including airports and aviation
- ❑ The potential role of high speed rail in an integrated and sustainable future transport matrix for Australia

These matters have been briefly addressed throughout the balance of this submission.

More detailed input on these and other related issues will be provided in the Alliance's response to the Green Paper to be released for comment and input during the latter part of this year.

### 3 THE AVIATION INDUSTRY

**THE QUESTION OF HOW ACCESS TO AUSTRALIAN DESTINATIONS OUTSIDE THE FOUR MAJOR GATEWAYS OF SYDNEY, MELBOURNE, BRISBANE AND PERTH MIGHT BE INCREASED**

Since its formation in 1997, the Alliance has opposed the proposal to construct a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek.

This submission touches on some of the key reasons for this opposition, which has primarily centred on concerns regarding the negative social and environmental impacts of a major airport development situated in a geographic basin dominated increasingly by residential areas.

The Alliance therefore totally supports the Australian Government's decision, reflected in the Issues Paper, not to build a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek.

In our view the decision not to build an airport at Badgerys Creek presents very real opportunities to increase access to aviation gateways outside Sydney.

We have argued for many years, and repeated briefly in this submission, that the resolution of Sydney's future airport needs to include the provision of high speed ground transport infrastructure.

The provision of such infrastructure, in the form of a high speed train system, will open up access to a number of new aviation gateways, including Newcastle and Canberra in the first instance, followed by regional centres along the path of a progressively expanding east coast high speed train network.

This integration of transport modes is a fundamental aspect of our submission.

It is our very clear view that the resolution of future aviation and airport needs will need to rely, in significant part, on a new balance of integrated air and ground based technologies. One of the many benefits of such an approach will be to increase access to new Australian destinations, including regional destinations.

### 4 AVIATION INFRASTRUCTURE

#### 4.1 LAND USE PLANNING

**THE QUESTION OF HOW CAN WE BETTER INTEGRATE INVESTMENT AIRPORTS WITH THE FUNDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF IMPROVED ROAD AND RAIL LINKS TO AND FROM OUR AIRPORTS**

Our response to this important question follows the argument presented in 3 above.

In our view, one of the key failures of past airport planning processes, including the long running and still unresolved second Sydney airport issue, have been based on the consideration of airport developments alone, and have not fully and properly taken into account the role of associated ground transport infrastructure.

We believe that the answer to this challenge is for the Australian Government to require that future consideration of major new airport developments, including any second airport to meet the needs of Sydney and associated regions, takes fully into account the roles and potentials of both air and ground transport infrastructure.

This will mean that airports will no longer be considered and assessed as "islands", but rather as part of a more realistic and sustainable transport infrastructure system for Australia.

## 4.2 FUTURE AIRPORT NEEDS

**THE ISSUE OF THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL AIRPORT CAPACITY FOR SYDNEY IN THE FUTURE; THE PROCESS OF IDENTIFYING A SUITABLE SITE; AND RESOLUTION OF THE FUTURE USE OF THE BADGERYS CREEK SITE, NO LONGER SUPPORTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FOR AIRPORT USE**

The question of additional airport capacity for Sydney has been posed, and has failed to be resolved, for at least forty years.

During this period, the concept of building a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek emerged as a compromise, but fundamentally flawed solution. The Alliance fully supports the Australian Government's decision to reject this approach.

This decision raises two important questions – firstly the identification of an alternate site for any future second Sydney airport, and secondly the future use of the Badgerys Creek site.

In terms of the first of these questions, it is the view of the Alliance that no sustainable and workable solution can be reached by the consideration aviation issues alone.

In our view, the question of a site for a second Sydney airport can only be resolved if the roles of other existing airports, including Canberra and Newcastle, and the transport synergies offered by a complementary high speed rail system, are taken fully into account.

We believe that the second question – that is the future use of the Badgerys Creek site – should be resolved by a joint task force comprising all levels of government, together with business and community representatives. The site represents a significant community asset, and its best future use warrants an all of government and all of community approach.

**THE ISSUE OF HOW FUTURE AIRPORT NEEDS CAN BEST BE ADDRESSED, RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF AIRPORTS AS AN ELEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

We believe that this is a fundamentally important question, and that the response to it needs to be consistent with the theme of integration that is presented in this submission.

In our view, future airport needs should be addressed as part of a prioritised process that considers all of Australia's economic and transport infrastructure needs.

The Australian Government will have the opportunity to address this issue through the infrastructure planning and advisory processes currently being developed and implemented.

**THE QUESTION OF HOW COMMUNITIES AROUND AIRPORTS CAN BEST BE PROTECTED FROM UNDUE AIRCRAFT NOISE, AS DEMAND FOR SERVICES CONTINUES TO GROW**

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.

The primary interest of the Alliance has been to work 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 our view that the best way to manage and minimise the noise impact of new airport facilities is to ensure that the siting of new airports is at an appropriate distance from sensitive community activities.

## **5 CUSTOMER & COMMUNITY PROTECTION**

### **5.1 AVIATION EMISSIONS & CLIMATE CHANGE**

#### **THE QUESTION OF WHAT PRACTICAL STEPS THE AVIATION INDUSTRY CAN TAKE TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

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

In our 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 the Alliance. However, the Alliance 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 siting of new airports, and the replacement of private vehicle use with more greenhouse efficient transport systems, including rail and increased public transport, can in our view contribute to a significant reduction in the overall per capita greenhouse emissions associated with airport activities.

Once again, we believe 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.

#### **THE QUESTION OF WHAT MEASURES THE AVIATION INDUSTRY SHOULD TAKE IN THE SHORT-MEDIUM TERM TO REDUCE EMISSIONS**

Continuing from the points made above in relation to greenhouse gas emissions, the Alliance 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 the Alliance has very carefully considered over the past decade, and serves 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. Sydney, as pointed out above, 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 Southwestern 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.

Sydney already 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 Southwestern 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 Southwestern 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.

## 5.2 AIRCRAFT NOISE

### **THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE ANEF SYSTEM BE IMPROVED OR SUPPLEMENTED BY OTHER PLANNING TOOLS TO BETTER EXPLAIN THE IMPACTS OF AIRCRAFT NOISE**

In its submission 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, our 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.

The Alliance 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.

### **THE QUESTION OF WHICH AIRPORTS IN AUSTRALIA NEED TO REMAIN CURFEW FREE, AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS**

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 arm's length from the communities they serve to avoid such noise impacts.

The interest, experience and focus of the Alliance has been on airports, and prospective airports, in and around the Sydney region.

In our view, it will be neither reasonable nor feasible to significantly alter curfew conditions for existing airports in the Sydney region.

However, we believe that the introduction of an appropriate high speed rail system will open the way for the more effective integration into the regional transport network of existing curfew free airports, and will introduce the possibility of new airport sites, if required, in areas where operating curfews will not be required.

### **5.3 OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS**

**SPECIFICALLY, THE NEED TO PROPERLY, FULLY AND OBJECTIVELY ASSESS NEW AIRPORT PROPOSALS IN TERMS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON EXISTING SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND STRUCTURES, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR WATER AND ENERGY ASSETS**

The Alliance believes, based on a significant volume of work undertaken over the past decade 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.

## **6 OTHER KEY ISSUES**

### **6.1 HIGH SPEED RAIL**

**THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF HIGH SPEED RAIL IN AN INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE TRANSPORT MATRIX FOR AUSTRALIA**

The potential importance and significance of high speed rail to the consideration and development of future aviation policy is one of the underlying themes of this submission. The introduction of such a system between Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra could offer very significant advantages in terms of developing an integrated and sustainable transport matrix.

One of the key characteristics of such a system is that it would define a high speed, non-road based access corridor to Sydney directly to, and via, the city's fastest-growing region. Western Sydney would be central to such an approach, rather than ancillary.

#### **Transport Infrastructure For Sydney's New Population and Growth Centres**

Sydney's population is in the process of expanding from its current level of slightly less than five million to more than six million, and this growth will happen within the next twenty years. Much of this population growth will be accommodated in new release residential areas at the city's expanding northern, western and southern margins, and these are the areas least well served by Sydney's existing transport infrastructure, and most vulnerable to the pressures and constraints associated with the current trend towards increasing reliance, and dependence, on private motor vehicle use.

A new high speed train system in the Sydney region would provide significant benefit to these new areas of high population growth.

### **A High Performance North/South Transport Link**

Sydney's existing heavy rail network has provided the City and its residents with great service over a period of more than a century. However, that system is now showing regular sign of inherent operational limitations and constraints.

Sydney's existing heavy rail system is also radially designed, based on the once accurate assumption that the Sydney CBD was the centre of commerce and employment for the city. That assumption is no longer valid. Sydney's current and emerging transport demand patterns are north south, and interregional, rather than radially linked to the Sydney CBD. A new high speed train system would provide for these new transport demands, and would provide a major and important complement to Sydney's existing heavy rail and other transport systems in meeting these demands into the future.

### **Connections with Existing Road & Rail Based Systems**

Any future high speed train system should be based on new technology, and would provide a completely new and additional transport network for Sydney and the surrounding region. However this new system would need to be carefully and effectively linked and integrated with existing road and rail based transport systems at key points.

What is required in our view is the application of proven and innovative leading edge transport technology to provide, in concert with Sydney's existing but constrained transport infrastructure, the basis for a significantly enhanced, effective and fully integrated new transport system.

### **Beyond the Sydney Region**

A high speed train system within the Newcastle/Sydney/Wollongong/Canberra regions would have the potential to significantly improve transport amenity within that region. Given the correct choice of technology this Sydney regional system would form the basis for a much more extensive east coast high speed train network.

### **Airport Implications**

Sydney continues to wrestle with the question of long term airport capacity. One of the great advantages of a new high speed train system is that it will very largely overcome the need to hold land reserved for a second Sydney airport within the Sydney basin, by providing time and cost effective transport links to existing airports at Canberra and Newcastle, and by introducing new airport site possibilities along the new high speed rail path.

## **6.2 AN INTEGRATED APPROACH**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIORITISED, INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TRANSPORT PLANNING IN AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING AIRPORTS AND AVIATION**

One of the core positions that has been argued by the Alliance for many years is that the ultimate resolution of the second Sydney airport issue can 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 of the transport matrix on an isolated and ad hoc basis.

In this respect, the Alliance has in the past called on both the New South Wales and Federal Governments to develop and implement a jointly agreed and politically bipartisan integrated and prioritised transport plan for Sydney. In our view, a prioritised and integrated transport plan of this nature could accelerate already-planned projects and/or identify a range of additional important transport options for Sydney, Western Sydney and surrounding regions.

For some years, the Alliance has promoted the discussion and consideration of new, high speed rail infrastructure, providing an additional rail network for Sydney and surrounding regions that would complement existing transport networks, and be fully integrated with existing rail and road based transport systems.

In our view, such a network is required to provide the critical transport and accessibility Sydney requires to avoid declining even further in international competitiveness. Australian rail services compare very poorly with overseas and interstate counterparts in speed and frequency, particularly on long-distance suburban and interurban routes. We believe that such a system is essential to, and should be considered in conjunction with, the development of a sustainable National Aviation Policy.

## 7 RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER

This submission presents the views and inputs of the Alliance in relation to a number of matters identified in the Issues Paper released by the Australian Government in April 2008. The Alliance looks forward to the opportunity to present a more detailed submission in response to the Aviation Green Paper, which will be released in the latter part of this year.

## 8 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The Alliance strongly supports the process introduced by the Australian Government to develop a National Aviation Policy Statement, or White Paper, and will contribute to that process. The Alliance also acknowledges and appreciates the decision made by the Australian Government not to construct a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek.

The key aspects of this submission are:

**Access to Australian Destinations Outside Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth:** The introduction of an appropriately designed high speed train system is recommended. Such a system would open up access to a number of new aviation gateways, including Newcastle and Canberra in the first instance, followed by regional centres along the path of a progressively expanding east coast high speed train network.

**Integration of Airport and Rail Systems:** We believe that the answer to this challenge is for the Australian Government to require that future consideration of major new airport developments, including any second airport to meet the needs of Sydney and associated regions, takes fully into account the roles and potentials of both air and ground transport infrastructure. This will mean that airports will no longer be considered and assessed as “islands”, but rather as part of a more realistic and sustainable transport infrastructure system for Australia.

**The Second Sydney Airport and Badgerys Creek Site Issues:** In our view, the question of a site for a second Sydney airport can only be resolved of the roles of other existing airports, including Canberra and Newcastle, and the transport synergies offered by a complementary high speed rail system, are taken fully into account. We believe that the second question – that is the future use of the Badgerys Creek site – should be resolved by a joint task force comprising all levels of government, together with business and community representatives. The site represents a significant community asset, and its best future use warrants an all of government and all of community approach.

**Airports and Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The correct siting of new airports, and the replacement of private vehicle use with more greenhouse efficient transport systems, including rail and increased and improved public transport networks, can in our view contribute to a significant reduction in the overall per capita greenhouse emissions associated with airport activities.

**Other Air Pollution Issues:** Great care will need to be taken during any future development in or impacting upon Western and Southwestern 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.

**Noise and Curfew Issues:** We believe that the introduction of an appropriate high speed rail system will open the way for the more effective integration into the regional transport network of existing curfew free airports, and will introduce the possibility of new airport sites, if required, in areas where operating curfews will not be required.

**Aviation Impacts on Water & Energy Infrastructure:** 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.

**High Speed Rail:** One of the great advantages of a new high speed train system is that it will very largely overcome the need to identify or hold reserved land for a second Sydney airport within the Sydney basin, by providing time and cost effective transport links to existing airports at Canberra and Newcastle, and by introducing new airport site possibilities along the new high speed rail path.

**A Prioritised and Integrated Approach to Transport Planning:** One of the core positions that has been argued by the Alliance for many years is that the ultimate resolution of the second Sydney airport issue 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 of the transport matrix on an isolated and ad hoc basis. We believe that the emerging National Aviation Policy Statement should fully reflect this important reality.

**Councillor Mark Pigram**  
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**Deputy Chairman, Western Sydney Alliance**

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