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## City of Ryde supported in Metro ‘missing links’ push

The City of Ryde has joined forces with three major Sydney councils in ongoing advocacy to fast track the full length north-south Metro rail.

Blacktown, The Hills Shire and Penrith City Councils have echoed City of Ryde’s call for the State Government to prioritise the Metro ‘missing links’. Combined, the four councils serve a fast-growing population of close to 1 million in Sydney’s booming northwest and greater west corridors.

For the southern corridor, the Australian and NSW Governments have jointly committed \$100 million to complete a business case which will consider a Metro connection between Bradfield via Oran Park to Campbelltown/Macarthur, and Metro and heavy rail options for a connection between Bradfield and Leppington/Glenfield.

For the north, the NSW Government has committed \$40 million for developing a business case for a potential future Metro connection between St Marys and Tallawong.

The council collaboration follows a campaign recently launched by the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue think tank that proposes the State Government delays a potential extension of the \$25 billion Metro West line to inner-city Zetland in favour of northwest and southwest extensions by 2040.

City of Ryde CEO Wayne Rylands described the St Marys-Tallawong link – which would connect the new Western Sydney International Airport directly to the Metro Northwest line that services the vital Macquarie Park Innovation District (MPID), plus the CBDs of Sydney and North Sydney – as a “gamechanger” for Sydney.

“Council has been advocating for this extension since 2022 because it will ensure the 24/7 global city we all want,” he said.

Mr Rylands said there would not only be direct benefits for workers commuting to Ryde from western Sydney but also for the hi-tech businesses that make up the MPID innovation ecosystem which will gain access to new industrial lands around the Western Sydney Aerotropolis.

“More than 37 percent of the people who work in the Ryde LGA come from western Sydney,” he said.

“For most of those people, getting to work means an hour and a half trip on three different types of public transport, or travelling by car on expensive tollways. If the continuation of the Metro gets us all the way to the Western Sydney International Airport that commute will then be reduced to 45 minutes.

“MPID businesses which need easy access to larger facilities for manufacturing, fabrication and storage operations will be able to utilise the aerotropolis industrial lands while

maintaining their laboratories, research spaces, and corporate headquarters in MPID – perfectly located between the CBD and greater western Sydney.”

Brad Bunting, the Mayor of Blacktown City and President of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, said the completion of the St Marys-Tallawong Metro link was “essential”.

“Without it we cannot unlock the full potential of western Sydney,” Clr Bunting said.

“This vital transport link will significantly reduce commute times, ease congestion, and properly connect our residents to key employment hubs such as Macquarie Park, North Sydney, the Western Sydney International Airport and Sydney CBD.

“It will also provide businesses in all locations across Sydney with better access to skilled workers and new opportunities for growth.

“For greater Sydney, the St Marys-Tallawong Metro link project will create a more integrated, accessible, and equitable transport network, driving economic development and innovation across the region.

“Blacktown City Council strongly supports this transformative project and calls on the NSW Government to prioritise its delivery to meet the needs of our communities and economy.”

Mayor of The Hills Shire Dr Michelle Byrne said not linking the airport to booming northwest Sydney would be a missed opportunity, meaning the aerotropolis won’t be able to fulfil its potential for greater Sydney.

Western Sydney International Airport is one of the greatest infrastructure opportunities of our time, but it will be a completely missed opportunity if the Airport Metro line isn’t extended from St Mary’s to the northwest,” Mayor Byrne said.

“Moving around our city is becoming increasingly a hassle particularly as the population rapidly expands. Our roads are becoming so congested you cannot reliably predict your travel time not only during the peak, but at other times as well. The Metro on the other hand is predictable, it is reliable, and we’ve seen how popular it is.

“The Hills Shire’s population alone is set to increase by 100,000 people by 2036 and that does not count the burgeoning population in the Blacktown LGA around the traditional suburbs of Schofields, Riverstone, Vineyard, and Marsden Park. Together, our quadrant of northwest Sydney is home to talent that the aerotropolis will need to be successful.

“We need to connect the airport to our residents, our commercial centres in Rouse Hill, Norwest and Castle Hill, and beyond to Macquarie Park and the CBD. Without this connection, hundreds of thousands of residents, business owners and employees living and working in northwest Sydney will miss out on easy access into the new airport, as well as jobs and the education facilities in the southwest.”

Penrith Mayor Cllr Todd Carney – who is also the Chair of The Parks alliance of leaders from eight local government areas – said his council has advocated for some time for full length north-south rail and other enabling infrastructure to fully support the economic trajectory of western Sydney. The Parks councils include Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Penrith and Wollondilly – covering two-thirds of the greater Sydney area.

“Western Sydney is super-charged by the unprecedented investment in infrastructure, the development of new and renewed communities and economic hubs, and of course the evolution of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis,” Cllr Carney said.

“The Metro line needs to be fully connected to enable a thriving community that can access the opportunities of growth and change, and ultimately for western Sydney to fulfil its economic role in NSW and Australia.”

The Metro ‘missing links’ campaign comes as the Minns’ government’s radical Transport Oriented Development (TOD) housing plans for the MPID come into effect, potentially boosting the population in the precinct and its surrounds from a current 30,000 to over 100,000.

The City of Ryde is seeking ongoing dialogue with the State Government to ensure the TOD plans strike the right balance between the need for housing, essential infrastructure, and the employment opportunities that will continue to nurture the MPID.

“The MPID is a globally competitive innovation district, contributing \$13.6 billion annually to the NSW economy, representing more than three percent of the Greater Sydney Statistical Area’s economic output,” said City of Ryde Mayor Trenton Brown.

“It has been an Australian leader in innovation, research and development investment, education, and employment for 60 years and contains the type of industries that will drive Sydney’s economic future, adding an estimated one million jobs in the city by 2050.

“The State Government needs to make some important decisions to ensure the MPID remains the preferred destination for innovation within NSW – and that includes acknowledging the negative impacts of the TOD plan in its current format as well as the strategic merits of building the St Marys-Tallawong ‘missing link’.”

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