JOBS FOR THE WEST

Employment Proposals for Western Sydney

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A Research Report for the Jobs For Western Sydney Working Group

Key Findings

The history of Western Sydney shows that residential housing has always expanded much faster than jobs, transport and social infrastructure. Today this pattern continues, with environmental degradation added to the mix.

The most disturbing labour market outcomes are:

❖ a 'belt' of disadvantage runs from Blacktown through to Campbelltown, with local government areas like Fairfield and Cumberland enduring unemployment rates of 10%.

❖ in Blacktown, nearly 1,600 teenagers are neither studying nor employed and nearly 9,500 young adults in outer Western Sydney are neither studying nor employed.

❖ Western Sydney lost 15,000 manufacturing jobs between 2006 and 2016 and large numbers of job losses occurred on the railways

❖ important areas of jobs growth have by-passed Western Sydney. Of the 60,000 new jobs in professional, scientific and technical services which were created in Sydney between 2006 and 2016, less than 10,000 went into Western Sydney.

❖ when it comes to commuting, Western Sydney suffers from hub-and-spoke development, with all major public transport routes converging on Central Sydney. Some 9,000 workers in Penrith, and 11,000 in Campbelltown, make the daily journey into the city along these spokes.

The proposal for a Western Sydney Airport (WSA), to be located at Badgery's Creek and to operate 24 hours a day, has been promoted as a partial solution to the problem of jobs.

This report examines the employment outcomes which the proponents of the airport claim will result. It finds:

❖ contrary to the claims of a 'jobs bonanza', only 120 construction jobs, and 800 airport jobs, would be targeted to Western Sydney workers in the first stages of the project.

❖ the overall jobs claims—such as 8,700 aviation jobs by 2031—are vastly exaggerated. Comparable airports, such as Adelaide, support only 1,600 aviation jobs.

❖ proposals for an adjacent business park, and also for an aerotropolis, appear unrealistic. Close examination of these proposals, and a real world comparison with a number of other business parks in Sydney, shows that the job estimates are inflated.

This report examines a range of other employment options for Western Sydney, centred around building a high-speed rail (HSR) system between Sydney and Melbourne (and later extended to Brisbane).

These options form an integrated set of proposals which aim to:

❖ revitalise manufacturing in Western Sydney, and thus create a large number of skilled and unskilled jobs;

❖ rebuild the TAFE system in Western Sydney, providing a steady flow of high-quality skilled tradespersons for the HSR project, as well as for other industries in the region;

❖ build innovative waste recycling plants;

❖ initiate programs of environmental repair across Western Sydney;

❖ promote greater community-based banking in Western Sydney.

As well as HSR, this report proposes orbital rail for Sydney. It outlines the concept of an 'employment arc' whereby efficient local rail networks based on concentric routes— rather than the traditional hub-and-spoke pattern—would foster employment growth in a more decentralised fashion.

The HSR proposal promises enormous environmental and technological benefits for Australia. In addition, a HSR corridor from Sydney to Melbourne would foster regional development along the route. From a planning perspective, increased regional prosperity is a better outcome than more crowded cities.

When it comes to comparing high-speed rail with a second airport for Sydney, it is clear that the two are incompatible. Continued expansion of domestic air travel between Sydney and Melbourne would make any future HSR system unviable.

By contrast, HSR is compatible with a single airport, that is, Kingsford Smith Airport. Indeed, HSR between Sydney and Melbourne could divert domestic air passengers on that route from air travel to rail travel. As a result, airline capacity at Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport would be freed up, thereby allowing for the expansion of international flights.

The proposed freight role for Western Sydney Airport would also be rendered unnecessary by connecting Sydney with an inland international freight airport using HSR. In essence, high-speed rail would make the need for a second Sydney airport at Badgerys' Creek redundant.

For the full report: http://jobsforthewest.co/publications/main_report.pdf

The *Jobs for Western Sydney Working Group* is a community-based group developing a jobs strategy to meet the employment needs of Western Sydney. The Working Group is not aligned to any political or commercial interests. The employment background of the members is broad-based, spanning local government and state government, the trade union movement, universities, schools, business and the community. The expertise of the Working Group includes economics, engineering, education, sociology and planning.