

How the west was lost – the causes and consequences of under-investment in Western Sydney's infrastructure

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ABSTRACT

The post-war era saw major suburban expansion in most Australian cities. Unfortunately this was coupled with substantial under-investment in infrastructure, especially public transport.

In most cities this pattern of under-investment has been reversed over the last two decades, with Brisbane and Perth investing in rail infrastructure to deal with continued population growth. However, Sydney has failed to follow this trend, with plans for lines in Western Sydney being continuously announced and withdrawn. At the same time several rail lines serving the eastern Sydney have been constructed, a pattern set to continue with the current CBD Metro proposal. Investment in transport infrastructure in Western Sydney has largely been limited to motorways – predominantly funded by tolls – and to bus transitways.

A number of factors causing this pattern are common to many Australian cities, but several are unique to Sydney. These include the pattern of development of Sydney's infrastructure prior to the 1950s, its post-war pattern of growth, the recent and current political and economic environment and continuing resistance in some quarters to investment in public transport, especially rail infrastructure. This paper will also discuss the consequences of this disparity and the implications for the region of further inaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

The recent reversal of public transport plans for Western Sydney is another example of state government failure to deliver on infrastructure promises to the region, a pattern that has persisted for over forty years.

Whilst the post-war era was characterised by minimal investment in public transport in all Australian cities, governments in Queensland and Western Australia reversed this trend within the last two decades with substantial rail infrastructure projects to support outer suburban population growth. Now Victoria and South Australia are following suit.

In NSW, several major rail projects have been constructed since the 1970s but these have been largely confined to the eastern half of the city. The last significant rail line constructed in Western Sydney – and the only one built since the 1930s – was the extension of the East Hills line to Glenfield, completed in 1987.

Since then most rail infrastructure expenditure in Western Sydney has been directed to improving the operations of the existing system. Only two extensions have been completed but these – the Olympic Park line and Harris Park ‘Y’ Link – only marginally add to the network. The only other significant public transport infrastructure project undertaken in the region has been the completion of two bus transitways; meanwhile, over 120km of motorways has been completed.

This paper sketches the history and some of the causes of this pattern of underinvestment, as well as the significant social, economic and environmental consequences for Western Sydney (table 1 lists the key metropolitan and transport plans referred to in the following sections).

Insert table 1 here

2. THE BRADFIELD ERA

To understand why Sydney is different it is necessary to start with a brief examination of the development of the city’s transport infrastructure before the Western Sydney region as we know it today was created.¹

In 1932 Sydney's population was under 1.25 million and the city was still focussed on the harbour and coastline. Trams were the dominant form of transport with around 300 million trips made annually, well over double the number made by rail (ABS, 1933). Most of the rail system's current suburban lines had been established, facilitating urban expansion into the Cumberland Plain, but most destinations past Parramatta were still little more than rural villages (Gunn, 1989).

The inner city's layout was constrained with trams running along the narrow CBD from the ferry terminal to the main railway station. In addition the city's hills, ridges and waterways meant that tramways effectively took on the role of railways in areas in many inner suburbs (Keenan, 1979). These constraints had resulted in major CBD tram congestion by the early 1900s.

There was also pressure to build a harbour crossing and modernise the rail network. This culminated in the government adopting John Bradfield's plans for a major infrastructure investment program involving railway electrification and construction of an underground CBD railway, the harbour bridge and up to five new suburban rail lines (Raxworthy, 1989). By 1932 the core elements were in place. Although most of the proposals for Bradfield's other railways (with the exception of the East Hills Line) were subsequently scrapped, it can be argued that the Sydney had reached a peak in terms of public transport coverage relative to population. In the words of Spearritt, 'public transport made suburban Sydney possible' (2000).

In creating the city railway, Bradfield chose to use a heavy rail solution over alternative, cheaper underground tram proposals (Raxworthy, 1989, Lee, 2003). This had the advantage of integrating the suburban rail network and linking it to the CBD, thus removing the need to change mode. It also provided considerable infrastructure capacity which was enough to sustain the city's demand for public transport for over 20 years.

However, Bradfield's approach was very expensive and based on optimistic assumptions about population and patronage growth that did not foresee the impact of the depression (Spearritt, 2000). The expense involved also contributed to later decisions to cancel the other lines, with the result that when trams were removed there was no heavy rail alternative and no additional rail paths into the city to support future network expansion. This led to the problem of CBD tram congestion being reproduced in both the road and rail system decades later.

3. THE 1940S TO THE 1970S – THE RISE OF THE CAR CULTURE

Sydney's first real metropolitan plan, the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme (CCPS) was released in 1948. It proposed a compact urban area and identified areas for residential, industrial and other activities. Western Sydney was still regarded as being mainly rural and protected from development by the green belt, though new circumferential rail lines were also proposed just inside the green belt (Winston, 1957). However, the CCPS lacked control over the priorities of key government departments (Ashton and Freestone, 2006). The proposed rail initiatives were abandoned in the mid-1950s and the CCPS itself was ultimately abandoned in 1962.

The 1968 Sydney Region Outline Plan (SROP) explicitly supported urban expansion beyond the green belt into Western Sydney. However, the proposals for additional rail lines contained in the subsequent Sydney Area Transportation Study (SATS,) released in 1974, largely met a similar fate to those proposed in the CCPS. The exceptions were the Eastern Suburbs Railway, completed in 1979 and the only Western Sydney proposal built in this era, the East Hills to Glenfield extension, completed in 1987.

Some of the factors in the failure of the other SATS transport proposals, such as the inability to lock planning processes and infrastructure provision into the budget cycle, echoed those which undermined the CCPS (Powell, 2003) and were to remain enduring themes in Sydney transport planning. Governments throughout Australia were under pressure at the time to replace trams with 'modern' buses and to build roads rather than railways (Lee, 2003) as car growth exploded. In NSW for example, car registrations increased by 130% from 1950 to 1960 and by 120% in the next decade (Table 2).

Insert table 2 here

Most tram systems were closed and a number of suburban railway branch lines in all mainland capitals also abandoned. Rail closures in Western Sydney were comparatively minor, but the failure to extend the network meant that the successive waves of post-war population growth in the region were moving well beyond the parameters established by the 1930s rail system.

4. 1980 TO 2000 – LINES IN THE EAST

In the 1980s social and economic climate change started to accelerate, challenging the strong technocratic and spatial approach of the earlier plans (McGuirk 2005). The rise of neo-liberalist economics also eroded confidence in strategic planning, reaffirming the retreat from government engagement in infrastructure provision (Wilmoth, 2003).

This can be seen in the next major strategies. *Sydney into its Third Century*, released in 1988, contained little in the way of public transport infrastructure commitments, apart from the Harris Park 'Y' link which opened in 1996 (Toon and Falk, 2003). The 1995 *Cities for the 21st Century* and the *Integrated Transport Strategy* (ITS) also contained only vague unfunded proposals for strategic transport corridors (Toon and Falk, 2003).

However, Sydney's successful bid for the 2000 Olympics was predicated on the provision of the Olympic Park rail line, which opened in 1998. This was the last new rail line in Western Sydney, but was of little real benefit to the region. The Olympics was also a major driver for the Airport Rail Link, another line in eastern Sydney. This did provide some indirect capacity benefits to Western Sydney, but was undercut both by a flawed and expensive PPP arrangement and construction of the competing M5 East freeway.

The next suite of planning and transport documents, *Shaping our Cities and Action for Transport 2010*, was released only three years after the 1995 strategies. The latter document contained a comprehensive set of transport strategies including proposals for a motorway orbital, seven bus-only transitways and eight major rail projects (NSW Department of Transport 1998). These included the Parramatta to Chatswood and Epping to Castle Hill rail links. However, whilst the orbital and two transitways were constructed, the only section of the eight rail proposals completed was the Epping to Chatswood Rail Link which opened in 2009 (Kerr, 2003).

By the early 2000s Western Sydney had experienced four cycles of being promised rail infrastructure followed by a failure to deliver. Apart from the under-performing bus transitways, Western Sydney's residential and economic growth was being supported entirely by the expansion of the road network.

This contrasted to transport policies emerging interstate. In Perth the incoming Labor government reopened the Fremantle line in 1983, electrified the system and constructed a new line to Perth's outer northern suburbs. This was so successful that planning

commenced for a line to Perth's outer southern suburbs, which opened in 2008. In Queensland the rail system was also electrified and the Gold Coast Railway completed in 1998. The Queensland government has also invested heavily in urban busways, including one serving outer suburbs to the southeast.

5. 2000-2009 – STILL PLANNING BUT FAILING TO DELIVER

In 2005 the *City of Cities* Metropolitan Strategy, which is still notionally the current planning document, was released. It forecast population growth of 600,000 people in Western Sydney and 315,000 dwellings by 2031. Approximately 170,000 dwellings were originally planned in the North West and South West Growth Centres and further development was planned for other Greenfield sites and in established areas around major centres and corridors (NSW Department of Planning 2005).

A number of regional cities were nominated as major employment centres and transport hubs, three of which were located in Western Sydney, where around new 250,000 jobs were planned. The strategy contained a number of new or revised public transport initiatives, including a strategic bus corridors network which involved selected bus lanes on existing roads, effectively replacing the bus transitways plan.

The rail proposals were packaged as the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program (MREP) including the South West and North West Rail Links, the Epping to Chatswood Rail Link (then under construction) and the Harbour Rail Link. These were to be integrated as a single line, providing increased capacity in the CBD (NSW Department of Transport, 2006). The MREP had obviously been influenced by the release of a report by the previous Co-ordinator General of Rail, Ron Christie, who had nominated critical infrastructure needed to support the rail network until 2050 (Christie, 2001). In addition a rail clearways program was announced to increase reliability and capacity.

Whilst the transport proposals were released separately to the Metropolitan Strategy, the latter contained a strong emphasis on integrating strategic and transport planning, resource management and infrastructure delivery through the creation of a mega-department, DIPNR (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources). This was overseen by planning minister Craig Knowles who announced that there would be substantial developer contributions to underpin the comprehensive infrastructure package.

Through integrating planning, funding and infrastructure delivery, Knowles intended to end the cycle of over-promise and under-delivery in Western Sydney, making his intentions very clear at a forum prior to the release of the strategy:

The announcement last Thursday [regarding the growth centres] was less about land releases in the north west and south west centres and more about things like a new funding mechanism to directly link infrastructure and services to the release of the land; an ironclad guarantee that the money is up front and present and an infrastructure plan that rolls out as the populations move in rather than playing the catch up game that we have seen in the past. (Knowles, 2004 pp. 6-7)

The strategy was criticised for being too didactic in its choice of targets and lack of detailed research on housing, social equity or economic development (Bunker, 2007), though the infrastructure commitments attracted wide support. However, key components of the *City of Cities* strategy started to unravel less than a year later with Knowles' departure in 2005.

Almost immediately the process began of dismantling the super department Knowles had established and returning planning powers to the relevant departments that had been threatened by its creation. The government also came under pressure from the property development industry, which blamed the sluggish housing market in new release areas on high infrastructure levies. In response these levies were cut, thus compromising the infrastructure funding strategy developed by Knowles.

Despite this the 2006 transport plans were strongly reaffirmed by the government in the run-up to the 2007 state election (NSW Government, 2007) but were subsequently dumped in early 2008. The Premier, Morris Iemma, announced that the North West Rail Link would be replaced by a North West Metro. This would involve a driverless, high-speed, high-frequency line, isolated from the current system and extending from the CBD to Rouse Hill (Iemma 2008). Future metro lines were also foreshadowed, whilst the South West Rail Link was retained as a conventional rail project.

The government made no secret of the fact that the proposed metros would be built and run on a tender basis completely separately to the existing CityRail network. The North West Metro plan was heavily criticised and in turn lasted less than a year. After the collapse of the government's bid to privatise the electricity network which led to Iemma's resignation, the new Premier Nathan Rees, citing funding constraints, announced that the North West Metro

was to be replaced in turn by a much shorter inner-city metro running from Central to Rozelle (Besser, 2008).

It appears that the latest version of the metro is almost entirely aimed at dealing with capacity issues in the CBD and providing a future link to the proposed West Metro from Central to Parramatta (Sydney Metro Authority 2009). Media reports initially suggested that passengers would be forced to change from suburban trains at Central, though this has subsequently been denied by the government (Besser 2009).

In the South West, all work apart from an upgrade of Glenfield Station has been postponed indefinitely. All outstanding works under the rail clearways program have also been cancelled, cut back or deferred. Instead of a new rail line, north west Sydney is to get around 100 new buses (Ralston and Rose, 2008). Once again, the government of the day replaced promised projects in Western Sydney with infrastructure located in the inner city.

Both metro projects were submitted for funding by Infrastructure Australia, but the State Government received only \$91 million for preconstruction work on the West Metro. The contrast between NSW and all the other mainland states was becoming deeper. Victoria, South Australia and Queensland made successful bids prioritising outer suburban rail projects, integrated with and extending their current networks (Table 3). In doing so they had taken note of Infrastructure Australia's careful comments on the issue of metros:

The strategic policy choice facing Australian governments is whether, and under what circumstances, new urban rail systems should adopt such technologies. However, a move towards these technologies raises many issues. To avoid a repetition of the rail gauge problem from the nineteenth century, decisions on these matters need to be made with national input and intergovernmental collaboration. The network that exists today represents more than 40 years of consistent long term planning and investment. An equivalent national commitment to such planning and investment is required in Australia if new technologies are to be applied to the public transport sector (Infrastructure Australia, 2008, p. 46)

Insert table 3 here

The pattern of over-promise and under-delivery to Western Sydney has been repeated twice again in less than four years and to date the government has neither provided a strategic

context for its new plans nor explained the implications for the Metropolitan Strategy, especially in Western Sydney.

As a result in the last seventy-five years, only two dedicated bus corridors, one nine kilometre rail extension and two other small extensions of limited utility have been constructed in Western Sydney, a period in which the region has grown to become Australia's third largest economy with a population of 1.8 million people (WSROC, 2007). Meanwhile three major rail extensions and a light rail line have been completed in the eastern part of the city. As a result the public transport system has become even less relevant to an increasing proportion of the city's population.

6. WHY IS SYDNEY SO DIFFERENT?

As outlined above, until the late 1970s policies of underinvestment and disinvestment in public transport infrastructure in Sydney were broadly similar to those that prevailed in transport planning in all state capitals. Around 1980 these policies began to diverge, with Sydney continuing to build rail lines in the eastern half of the city whilst in other capital cities transport strategies started to prioritise network expansion into outer suburbs. Sydney was also distinctive in that successive governments constantly promised to extend the rail network into the outer suburbs but also constantly failed to deliver on these promises.

It is tempting to blame this outcome on the 'usual suspects' – for example, the influence of existing rail users, the road lobby, the expense of constructing infrastructure in Sydney, cost overruns and a lack of political will. Some of these are relevant and have either already been discussed or will be raised later in this section. However it is also important to recognise some of the more structural reasons.

As outlined earlier, a core reason for divergence is Sydney's particularly hilly and bisected topography, combined with the infrastructure decisions made in the 1920s and 30s. These constraints on access to the CBD also meant there was a degree of catch-up in the early post-war rail projects.

Sydney's topographic constraints have had another impact. ABS estimates of the population centres of Australia's capital cities provide a demonstration of how evenly the population within each city's statistical division (SD) has spread relative to their physical geography and features such as CBD location. The 2008 estimates (ABS 2009) show that Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth have spread relatively uniformly, their population centres remaining

close (within 3km) to their CBDs,. Melbourne's population centre has moved east of the CBD, reflecting the post-war growth of Melbourne's eastern suburbs; more recently this movement has been arrested because of recent growth to the west and the centre is now in Glen Iris, 10 km east of the CBD (Millar and Tomazin, 2002).

In contrast, Sydney's population centre is in Ermington, in Sydney's west near Parramatta, over 15km from the CBD. This reflects the CBD's coastal and harbour location: the city's growth and the desire for suburban living has forced the city's expansion westwards, a process which accelerated from the 1950s onwards.

The ABS population centres estimates have to be used with some degree of caution, especially as residential development in some cities has spread into neighbouring SDs (this applies particularly to South East Queensland). However, the distance between Sydney's CBD, which remains the city's centre of social-political power and the focus for its public transport networks and the city's 'real' population centre in Sydney's west indicates both the extent and consistency with which the city's population base has shifted.

It also underscores how little this shift has been considered in expanding Sydney's rail network. Table 4 shows the number of railway stations constructed since 1970 or due to be completed by 2010 in mainland Australian capital cities by their distance from the CBD. Melbourne has had the least expansion, with only new three stations built (all on the city loop). Adelaide has had only four stations constructed, but three of these were built in the outer suburbs. Eleven of Brisbane's 13 new stations are over 25km from the CBD, as are eight of Perth's 21 new stations. In Sydney only two new stations out of 15 were constructed more than 25km from the CBD, whereas nine were built in the inner city. Hurni (2006) notes that a total of only 58 stations, or 19% of the CityRail network, are located in Western Sydney.

Insert table 4 here

As was also noted earlier, the advent of neo-liberal economic attitudes opposed to government infrastructure investment impacted on planning in all Australian state jurisdictions. Harris (2007) claims that the impact of these attitudes seems to be generally much stronger in Anglophone countries compared to European ones, with the former having much more 'residual' public housing and transport sectors than the latter, which retain a stronger corporatist system-building approach in these areas.

Harris notes that the antipathy towards government intervention which is more common in Anglophone countries results in a freeway-based *laissez faire* approach to suburban development which actually discourages nodal concentrations to avoid congestion. The alternative 'cluster and connect' model supported by planners which concentrates development at public transport nodes is favoured in most European countries.

Harris describes how the freeway-based model has become an 'urban growth machine', 'modifying the landscape and generating capital gains on land' and in turn inducing more traffic for the next round of growth (p. 33). Of course there are other factors which prevail in some Anglophone countries such as America and Australia which are not necessarily related to models of governance, including strong population growth resulting from immigration, relatively cheap fuel and greater land availability. These however are much more likely to be conducive to a *laissez faire* dispersed model rather than a cluster approach.

In itself, this analysis does not explain why rail infrastructure has been provided to outer suburban areas of some cities such as Brisbane and Perth and not in others such as Melbourne and Sydney or why NSW governments have developed a consistent pattern of promising and then failing to deliver rail lines in Western Sydney. However Sydney more than any other Australian city can be viewed as operating in two distinct sections. Eastern Sydney, with its historic investment in transport and other infrastructure, is much more akin to Harris's cluster and connect model.

Even though the inner-suburban clusters have joined up and cars are now the dominant mode, the density of well-established public transport services means that eastern Sydney has the highest level of public transport use in Australia and it is still important to 'fix' destination activities such as employment at transport nodes to avoid congestion. This results in 'lumpy' development which makes the capture by governments of increased land values near to stations through development levies and other mechanisms feasible and desirable.

In Western Sydney the situation is more akin to the urban growth machine described by Harris. As he puts it:

Under a freeway monoculture, the private real estate sector will literally enjoy more room to manoeuvre. The state's claim on the land will grow lighter still if the freeway builders are given first claim on future fuel tax and vehicle registration under a 'user pays' rationale. (p. 19)

Attempts to capture the resulting increased land value are harder to achieve. The total land area required for dispersed suburban development is much larger, increasing the number of stakeholders but resulting in the gains on individual lots becoming smaller, making it easier for developers to pressure governments into reducing contribution rates. Even where governments attempt to introduce a cluster and connect approach around public transport nodes, there is less incentive for the private sector to locate employment in these nodes – especially as the region’s dominant motorway transport mode encourages dispersal and can be paid for by users through tolls and other mechanisms.

This becomes a self-reinforcing mechanism in the manner described by Harris, leading to strikingly inconsistent public policy approaches to the two halves of the city. On the one hand, the railway system is sufficiently entrenched in the eastern half and has successfully resisted attempts to cut back services (apart from major cuts to off-peak and weekend services introduced in 2005). Indeed, recent patronage increases have forced the government to address the constraint issues of the current network, particularly in the CBD.

Whilst the concern over CBD capacity is understandable, the most recent policy responses perpetuate and reinforce the east-west divide. Strategies such as the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program recognised the need eventually to provide additional infrastructure in the CBD, but they approached this issue by building from the outside in rather than the other way around. The replacement metro ‘solution’ is very expensive and reverts to the previous approach of building the CBD capacity first. As with the Parramatta – Chatswood Rail Link and the Melbourne City Loop, there is no guarantee that the outer suburban extensions will ever be built. As Dodson and Sipe (2008) note:

Such infrastructure may perversely perpetuate the oil vulnerability of Australia’s outer suburban regions, at great cost. First, such schemes will largely direct new investment to central and middle suburban areas, yet these are the zones that are already well served by high quality public transport infrastructure – as reflected in the high use of these services by residents.....
Second, the scale of finance that these schemes would require is extraordinary. (p. 39)

Dodson and Sipe’s second point also raises an issue identified by Gatenby (2009) – the much higher cost of rail projects in Sydney compared to other states, only part of which can be accounted for through differences in geography or topography. Gatenby contends that

the high estimates generated in developing Sydney rail projects either become self-perpetuating if they are approved or skew cost-benefit analyses with the result that they are deferred in favour of motorways.

This is obviously bad news for the other half of the city, Western Sydney. Despite successive governments announcing that successive versions of their public transport infrastructure plans recognise the urgent needs of Western Sydney and that the proposals are this time 'fully funded', cost estimate overruns, competing priorities or the state of NSW finances have been cited as major factors in most of the subsequent cancellations.

For example, in adopting its latest CBD metro plan, the government also cancelled or deferred indefinitely on budgetary grounds virtually all rail infrastructure projects in Western Sydney, including a number of rail clearways projects. Meanwhile, motorway construction has continued unabated. As well as entrenching motorways as the region's dominant mode (with an increased but largely residual role for buses), this means firstly, that there will be little new public transport infrastructure to underpin the metropolitan strategy's centres-based approach to developing employment in the region and secondly, that the motorway network will disperse employment further away from existing and planned centres.

7. CONSEQUENCES FOR THE WEST

The consequences of the differential policy approaches between eastern and Western Sydney are borne out in the inter-regional disparities shown by a wide range of social, environmental and economic indicators. These include the analysis of oil and mortgage vulnerability conducted by Dodson and Sipe (2008) which found the most vulnerable suburbs to be concentrated in Sydney's west. Hurni (2006) used a conservative measure of public transport accessibility (i.e., access to medium frequency bus or rail service within 800m) to identify areas of transport disadvantage in Sydney. This indicated that over 58% of Sydney's population, 700,000 people, are located in transport disadvantaged communities in Western Sydney.

What have perhaps been less widely discussed are the economic and employment implications. The NSW Transport Data Centre has released 2006 employment and commuting statistics for Sydney's 33 largest employment centres, based in part on the Metropolitan Strategy centres hierarchy. This showed that 37% of the Sydney workforce was located in these centres (Transport Data Centre, 2008). However, table 5 shows the variation between Western Sydney and the rest of Sydney in terms of centres employment

based on the same data. This indicates that only 25% of Western Sydney employment was located in a designated centre, compared to nearly 50% in the rest of Sydney. Not only is employment more dispersed, but the same report suggests that Western Sydney employment centres average only half the metropolitan-wide figure for journeys to work by public transport. In some centres such as Eastern Creek, Huntingwood/Arndell Park and Norwest Business Park, public transport use averages less than four per cent.

Insert table 5 here

Employment dispersal does not equal economic diversification. A University of Western Sydney report (O'Neill et al, 2009) on the development of employment strategies for the north west and west central sub-regions confirmed that the region's labour market has not diversified sufficiently, especially in relation to higher-skilled occupational categories². It also found that the local availability of jobs actually declined slightly relative to population growth between 2001 and 2006. The report summary observed that:

As the report demonstrates, infrastructure is crucial to the development of efficient, desirable urban structures and to the development of employment spaces that have the territorial competencies for successful business operation. A rejuvenated, committed approach to infrastructure provision in Western Sydney is paramount. Its absence will have severe social, economic and environmental consequences (p. 6).

8. CONCLUSION

Western Sydney's situation can be summed up a simple snapshot of the resulting lack of inter-regional equity. Not including the Olympic Rail Link, which is of little utility to the region, new public transport infrastructure investment in Western Sydney over the past decade or so has involved two bus-based projects totalling less than \$1 billion. Meanwhile, around \$3 billion has been spent in eastern Sydney on two major rail projects, the Airport and the Epping to Chatswood Rail Links, whilst the cost estimate for the CBD Metro has already blown out to \$5.3 billion (Clennell and Besser, 2009). This means if the latter is completed, over eight times more funds will have been allocated in less than 20 years to public transport infrastructure in eastern Sydney relative to Western Sydney, which has 40% of Sydney's population.

The outcome for Western Sydney is far from clear. The latest transport policy reversal has left a vacuum, with the government yet to articulate its priorities for Western Sydney infrastructure and what, if any, transport infrastructure will be provided. In the absence of substantial investment, the region's patterns of disadvantage are likely to be further entrenched as Western Sydney continues to grow and any attempts to consolidate employment and mature the regional economy through the Metropolitan Strategy will be undermined.

The hardest things to assess are the impacts on the Western Sydney community's attitudes to government and expectations regarding future infrastructure provision. It is likely however that both have been considerably devalued by decades of promises which have been consistent only in the failure of successive governments to honour them.

9. TABLES

Table 1: Summary of NSW Government planning and transport strategies relating to public transport, 1948-2009

(from Muhammad and Low, modified and updated by the author)

No.	Year	Plan or Strategy (period covered)	Prepared by
1	1948	County of Cumberland Plan (1948—80)*	Cumberland County Council
2a	1968	Sydney Region Outline Plan (1970-2000)	NSW State Planning Authority
2b	1974	Sydney Area Transportation Study (1974-2000)	Public Transport Commission of NSW
3	1988	Metropolitan Strategy/Sydney into its Third Century (1986-2011)	NSW Department of Environment and Planning
4a	1995	Integrated Transport Strategy	NSW Department of Transport
4b	1995	Sydney's Future - Cities for the 21st Century (1994-2021)	NSW Department of Planning
5a	1998	Shaping our Cities/Shaping Western Sydney (1999-2016)	NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
5b	1998	Action for Transport 2010 (1998-2010)	NSW Department of Transport
6	2001	PlanFirst	Planning NSW
7a	2005	City of Cities – A Plan for Sydney's Future (2006-31)	NSW Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR)
7b	2005	Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program (2006-31)	NSW Department of Transport
8	2008	NW Metro (2009-17)	NSW Department of Transport
9	2008	CBD and West Metros (2009-15?)	NSW Department of Transport

Table 2: Car registrations 1930 to 1980

(source: ABS)

Year	No.	% Inc.
1930	169,495	
1940	210,808	24%
1950	272,985	29%
1960	628,072	130%
1970	1,383,978	120%
1980*	1,906,600	38%

* Motor vehicle census, Sept 1979

Table 3: Public Transport projects funded in the 2009 Federal Budget

(source: 2009 Federal Budget papers)

Project	Amount
Regional Rail Express (Vic)	\$3,225,000,000
Gold Coast light rail (Qld)	\$365,000,000
Gawler rail line modernisation (SA)	\$294,000,000
Noarlunga to Seaford rail extension (SA)	\$291,000,000
Northbridge rail link (the Hub) (WA)	\$236,000,000
West Metro — preconstruction work (NSW)	\$91,000,000
O-Bahn track extension (SA)	\$61,000,000
East West Rail Tunnel — preconstruction work (Vic)	\$40,000,000
Brisbane Inner City Rail feasibility study (Qld)	\$20,000,000
Total	\$4,623,000,000

Table 4: Railway stations* constructed 1970 to 2010 in mainland Australian capital cities, by distance from the CBD

(sources: State Government websites, Google Maps, Wikipedia)

City	0-15km	15-25km	25+km	Total
Adelaide	0	1	3	4
Brisbane	0	2	11	13
Melbourne	3	0	0	3
Perth	8	5	8	21
Sydney	9	4	2	15
Total:	20	12	24	56

* does not include relocated stations

Table 5: Jobs in employment centres in Western Sydney and rest of Sydney, 2006

(source: derived from Transport Data Centre statistics based on the 2006 Census)

Region	Jobs No.	% of Region	% of Sydney SD
Western Sydney Centres	150,909	25.3%	7.8%
Western Sydney Total	595,972	-	31.0%
Rest of Sydney Centres	563,587	49.7%	29.3%
Rest of Sydney Total	1,134,729	-	59.0%
Sydney SD Centres	714,496	37.2%	37.1%
No location/unknown/other	193,199	-	10.0%
Sydney SD Total	1,923,900	-	100.0%

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¹ The term 'Western Sydney' is used to refer to the region of Greater Western Sydney as defined in the Metropolitan Strategy and by the combination of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC). It includes the following local government areas: Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills (the Hills), Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly. 'Eastern Sydney' is generally used in this paper to refer to all other LGAs in Sydney combined.

² The author had a key role in commissioning the UWS study for WSROC.