

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION – INQUIRY INTO COMMUTER CAR PARKING IN NSW

Council welcomes the State Government's inquiry into commuter car parking in NSW and for the opportunity to make a submission. Commuter car parking is a critical element of the State's Public Transport System and significantly important to the car dominated Western Sydney community whom often have to travel long distances to work. The ability to access safe and convenient commuter parking at our key rail stations, promotes the use of public transport and reduces congestion on our roads and offers a cost effective way for our community to get to work.

In our submission we raise the following points:

- **There is currently no clarity in State policy or direction to improve commuter parking supply.**
- **Commuter car parking provision at Penrith, St Marys and Emu Plains rail stations should be increased immediately**
- **Current levels of parking provided at stations in the Penrith LGA is not equal to demand, placing a significant burden on Council's public parking**
- **Communities with low effective jobs density require improved access to commuter parking at railway stations**
- **Opportunities to mode shift and utilise priority bus access to stations should be investigated, and**
- **Council is firmly opposed to a user pays system at commuter carparks.**

Penrith Council hold the strong view that any response (strategy) to rail commuter car parking needs, must place a focus on both peak and off peak periods for local rail passengers; particularly those accessing Penrith, St Marys and Emu Plains stations. It is also important to recognise the role Penrith plays as a Regional Centre and the attractiveness of the Western Rail Line to commuters from across the broader Region.

Commuter parking at Penrith, St Marys and Emu Plains Railway Stations is in high demand and exceeding current capacity. Council provides a significant number of unrestricted parking spaces in close proximity to these stations. We have a proud record of delivering additional car parking in line with our growing population, however, commuter parking demand far outstrips supply adjacent to the station.

2014 figures used in the Transport for NSW documents relating to the Penrith Station upgrade show 3,510 people enter the station daily in the morning peak period. Statistics also show only 8% of patrons arrive by bus, suggesting a significant shortfall in the number of commuter parking spaces provided.

Recently, Council intervened to provide relief car parking for commuters during the State Government’s construction of a new multi-decked car park. This saw the establishment of 476 temporary untimed commuter parking spaces north of Penrith Railway Station – which are currently full. Furthermore, to address the partial loss of parking in the Belmore Street Car Park in Penrith during the upgrade to the Penrith Bus Interchange, located adjacent to Penrith Railway Station, Council extended this temporary car parking to deliver a further 113 temporary car parking spaces.

It should be noted these temporary measures provide the same net volume of spaces that will be delivered by the current construction projects and are currently at capacity, illustrating a need for urgent action.

There can be no doubt there is a severe and compounding shortfall of jobs in the West and South West districts. Central to Council’s view, is that a significant step change is needed to create significant and sustained jobs growth and access to employment close to where people live. It is for this reason Council, and our peers in the growth region, supports a new North-South rail link that will connect to the existing network.

Unless a significant change occurs, the difference between jobs and employed residents in Western Sydney will continue to widen alongside population growth. As illustrated (Figure 1) if business-as-usual continues for the next twenty years, Western Sydney ends up with a jobs deficit of 306,063 and a daily worker outflow of 492,521.

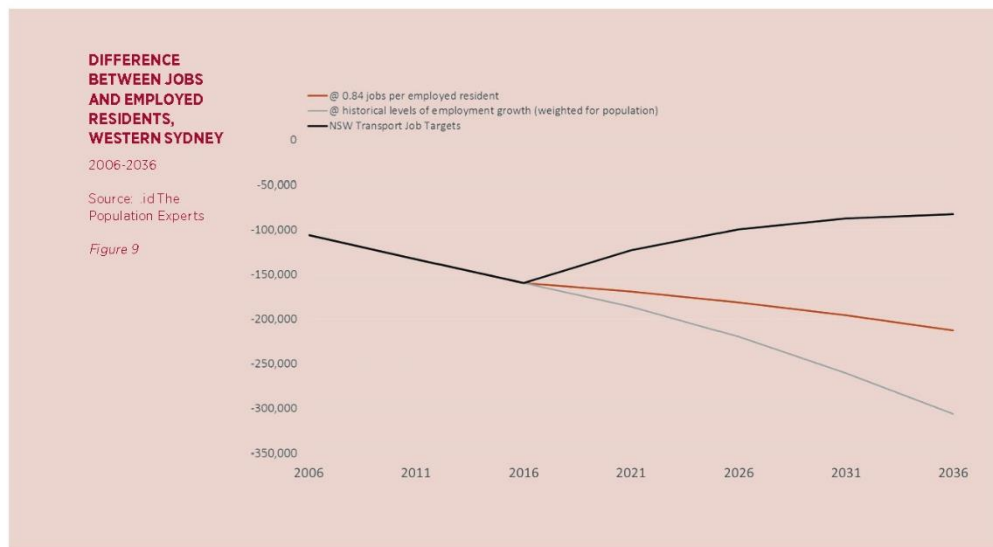


Figure 1: Addressing Western Sydney’s Jobs Slide - Centre for Western Sydney (2016)

It is also worth noting that Western Sydney residents are high users of public transport - when it gets them where they need to go. Calculations (Figure 2) by the Centre for Western Sydney show that outer Sydney workers are the **most likely** of any group in Sydney to use the train to get to work in the CBD. Sydney LGAs with the highest rate of rail use for journeys-to-work to the CBD are Campbelltown (92%), Penrith (87%), and Camden and Fairfield (each 86%).

**JOURNEY TO WORK
MODESHARE TO
SYDNEY CBD BY
ORIGIN LGA, 2011**

Source: BTS figures compiled by Centre for Western Sydney

Table 1

REGION	TRAIN	BUS	FERRY/ TRAM	PRIVATE VEHICLE	WALKED ONLY	OTHER
INNER RING ¹	25	34	3	17	15	5
MIDDLE RING ²	63	14	4	17	1	1
OUTER RING ³	65	18	1	15	0	1
TOTAL	49	23	3	17	6	2

1 Ashfield (A) Botany Bay (C) Lane Cove (A) Leichhardt (A) Marrickville (A) Mosman (A) North Sydney (A) Randwick (C) Sydney (C) Waverley (A) Woollahra (A)

2 Auburn (C) Bankstown (C) Burwood (A) Canada Bay (A) Canterbury (C) Hunters Hill (A) Hurstville Kogarah (C) Ku-ring-gai (A) Manly (A) Parramatta (C) Rockdale (C) Ryde (C) Strathfield (A) Willoughby (C)

3 Blacktown (C) Blue Mountains (C) Camden (A) Campbelltown (C) Fairfield (C) Gosford (C) Hawkesbury (C) Holroyd (C) Hornsby (A) Liverpool (C) Penrith (C) Pittwater (A) Sutherland Shire (A) The Hills Shire (A) Warringah (A) Wollondilly (A) Wyong (A)

Note: C denotes City status, A denotes Municipality status

Figure 2: Addressing Western Sydney's Jobs Slide - Centre for Western Sydney (2016)

We understand that a key impact of rapid growth is the need for additional commuter parking across Western Sydney. We regularly observe the daily influx of vehicles, into the station car parking, and found that it occurs in two distinctive ways:

1. The rail commuter parking at Emu Plains, Penrith and St Marys Railway Stations becomes fully occupied around 7:30am and spills out into the surrounding CBD and local residential streets throughout the day; impacting on local businesses and residential amenity. Council continuously receives complaints from local residents and commuters concerning a lack of car parking available at the Railway Stations and the detrimental impact of spill over. While Sydney City, Parramatta and surrounding suburb's employment opportunities are rapidly growing, the demand for parking is snowballing from Penrith, Emu Plains, and St Marys. Therefore, the State Government should allocate adequate funding to build further multi-decked carparks to meet the rail commuter's demands at these key transport modes. Of course this must be complemented by improved public transport (bus) services to reduce the number of private vehicles accessing the station's car parking.
2. Council has also been receiving many complaints from local rail passengers who are travelling from the Penrith LGA outside of peak periods for medical treatment, education or work and are unable to access convenient commuter parking. They are desperately in need of adequate car parking spaces to cater for off-peak commuter demands. Therefore, the State Government should consider developing a mechanism to ensure that the commuter car parking remains convenient and accessible for rail passengers across the day.

In relation to the Terms of Reference;

A) The Effectiveness of Current State Government Policies and Programs Covering Commuter Car Parking

There is presently no clarity of State Policy. There does not appear to be an adopted strategy or program of improving commuter parking supply, particularly for the car dominated area of Western Sydney where public transport availability is minimal.

The existing “1 km” radius rule is having a detrimental effect on Council’s ability to adequately manage our current public parking supply. This State Policy assumes control over all public parking within a 1km radius of nominated rail stations. This policy position should be removed immediately as it essentially shifts the cost of commuter parking onto Local Government.

Current policy and lack of commuter parking is “flowing out” into surrounding streets and within the CBD. And in the case of Penrith, is having a detrimental impact on the operation of our City Centre and surrounding businesses.

Importantly, the lack of frequent public transport services during the peak hours are compounding the situation, forcing people to drive to the station which is increasing the demand on commuter parking.

B) Processes for Selecting the Location of Commuter Car Parks

Consultation is needed with the public and local authorities.

Priority should be given to location, based upon demand (barrier count), impact, availability of integrated public transport services and key origin / destination points.

Penrith, St Marys and Emu Plains Stations are presently servicing local and regional rail demands. Opal Card data indicates a significantly wide catchment. These three key transport nodes are in dire need of commuter parking stations. Council appreciates the soon to be opened Penrith extension, but it is clear that this facility will be at capacity from day one.

C) The Potential for Restricted Access or User Pays Commuter Car Parks

Council does not support user pays for commuter parking. This will likely drive more people away from public transport and add to road congestion or into all day spots provided for City Centre workers, which they would occupy earlier than the local workforce. We should be offering incentives (not penalties) for using the rail services. Investment in public transport should have equal or higher priority to simply more road infrastructure.

The State Government could consider developing a mechanism using the Opal Card System to limit the commuter parking at Railway Stations to rail users only and allow local authorities (Councils) the autonomy to manage the surrounding public parking space.

There is also an opportunity to provide well serviced, convenient parking outside of the City Centre supported by Priority Bus Services.

D) Consideration of Alternative Modes of First Mile/Last Mile Travel, including Point to Point Transport, Active Transport and on Demand Buses

This is supported and advancement of these initiatives is strongly encouraged. Increased bus services, satellite parking and complimentary shuttle bus services, would all assist in addressing the ever increasing demand on commuter parking at key stations.

Further investigations are needed regarding the provision of commuter parking within the core of our City Centre and how same can be balanced against the need to develop a vibrant, sustainable and prosperous City Centre.

When considering that Penrith's location is at the centre of the North West and South West growth areas, and considering that the Western Sydney Airport is soon to be constructed, the provision of additional car parking spaces at Penrith, Emu Plains and St Marys Railway Stations is critical in order to relieve the demand from rail commuters at these key transport nodes.

Council has been a strong advocate for the implementation of an Integrated Transport Strategy for our Regional Centre. This will include vital elements such as commuter car parking, improved bus services, improved rail services, etc. Transport for NSW (TfNSW) should be strongly encouraged to develop these, particularly for the Penrith LGA and indeed Western Sydney.

Should you require further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 4732 8190 or Mr Walter Sinnadurai, Transportation Planner on (02) 4732 7721 during business hours.

Yours faithfully

Adam Wilkinson
Engineering Services Manager