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Department of Planning, Industry and Environment  
Western Sydney Aerotropolis Precincts Submission  
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**Western Sydney Aerotropolis Draft Precinct Plans**

Submission from:  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Western Sydney Aerotropolis will have significant impact on the lives and futures of many residents of the Fairfield Local Government Area (Fairfield City). As a neighbouring area within the Western Parkland City and a member of the Western Sydney Planning Partnership, Fairfield will benefit from the Aerotropolis' opportunities for employment, education, arts, culture, community facilities, national and international tourism and access to an international airport.

This submission has been prepared by the Social Planning and Community Development team on behalf of Fairfield City Council. Fairfield City Council has previously made a submission to Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE) on the related State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) that took effect in October 2020 that affects Horsley Park and western areas of the City in respect to aircraft noise and land use restrictions.

This submission will identify transformational impact and opportunity that the Aerotropolis and proposed transport infrastructure may have on Fairfield residents and how the proposed development may complement and enhance local lifestyle. It will also highlight the need to make Aerotropolis precincts accessible and inclusive for all to achieve the vision to "become Australia's next global gateway that is accessible, innovative and connected" and align with the NSW Government's plan for Greater Sydney to be a 30-minute city.

The submission offers the following recommendations to be considered by DPIE and other relevant planning bodies:

- That further planning for transport to the Aerotropolis consider direct access routes/corridors from Fairfield City.
- That future precinct planning acknowledges and promotes needs of diverse communities that will make up the resident, workforce and visitor populations of the Aerotropolis.
- That disability access and inclusion be considered through all aspects of further precinct planning, and that this is evident in planning principles and documentation.
- That Federal and State Governments invest in employment programs that have direct employment outcomes linked to the Aerotropolis targeting high needs groups such as young people, refugees and migrants.
- That dedicated employment opportunities/allocations for refugees and migrants be included for the construction and ongoing operations of the Aerotropolis.
- That the Aerotropolis precincts create safe, accessible and welcoming environments for students from disadvantaged areas such as Fairfield.

## 2. FAIRFIELD CONTEXT

Fairfield is located 32km south-west of the Sydney Central Business District and covers an area of 102 square km, incorporating 27 suburbs. It is a densely populated Local Government Area (LGA) with an estimated population at 2019 of 211,695. The people of Fairfield City live in 62,783 dwellings, with an average household size of 3.29 people per dwelling.

Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land. Fairfield exists on Darug Country within the boundaries of both the Gandangara and Derubbin Local Aboriginal Land Councils.

Fairfield City is rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. Over half of Fairfield City's residents were born overseas and 70% of residents speak a language other than English at home. The Smithfield-Wetherill Park industrial area is one of the largest industrial estates in Australia and therefore a major employer, traffic generator and economic powerhouse. The local business community is diverse, informed, connected and collaborative.

Fairfield City, however, is also an area with high social needs and disadvantage. It is widely known as a 'settlement city' due to a long, successful history of settling new migrant communities that arrive under humanitarian programs. It has higher than average unemployment and youth unemployment rates, and is ranked the fourth most disadvantaged LGA in NSW. This places increased importance on access to education and training. With the Western Sydney airport and Aerotropolis at the City's doorstep, such possibilities and opportunities for Fairfield are likely to be far reaching.

Fairfield City is pivotally located between Central City (Parramatta) and the Western Sydney Airport and Aerotropolis. Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020 (LSPS) outlines opportunities for future planning, including for the establishment of new strategic centres, more diverse business and employment opportunities and for more varied housing types. A major transformational element is the alignment of the potential passenger rail corridor that will connect to the Aerotropolis (appearing in the NSW Future Transport 2056 Strategy). This corridor represents a major opportunity for addressing the deficiency in east-west public transport connections in Fairfield City.

Over the next 20 years, Council will facilitate urban renewal and potential growth by planning for a diversity of homes, access to jobs and services, and a green environment for an estimated population of 245,145 across the City by 2036. This is an increase of approximately 39,000 people from the population count at the 2016 Census. The LSPS demonstrates how these needs will be met. This growth shows

more residents needing jobs, education, things to do and places to go. In line with the Greater Sydney Commission's vision of a '30-minute city', many current and future residents will be looking to the Aerotropolis to meet their needs.

### **3. CONNECTING WITH FAIRFIELD CITY**

It is anticipated that the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport and broader Aerotropolis will be the nearest international airport and will be a site that will welcome new residents, visitors and freight from across the globe. For many Fairfield residents, it will be a place for family reunion, and the introduction to Australia for many migrants. As the airport is being promoted as a 'gateway to the world', many Fairfield residents may feel an inherent connection to the airport as it is a representation of the journey of migrants.

Key Driver 4 of the Draft Aerotropolis Precinct Plan, *Transport Investment and Jobs* notes that "rapid bus corridors, including the FAST Corridor bus service along Fifteenth Avenue will provide critical initial transport connection before the Airport opens in 2026". It can be noted that there is planning to "Investigate transport networks servicing the Airport and Aerotropolis Core including rapid bus connections to Liverpool, Greater Penrith, Blacktown and Campbelltown–Macarthur as well as rail connections to St Marys, Parramatta, Leppington and Macarthur (Transport for NSW)".

Transport options need to be available to Fairfield residents prior to the airport opening in 2026, or in the event that the east-west rail link does not eventuate.

The proposed rail-link connecting Parramatta with the Aerotropolis (with a stop in Prairiewood) will be a game-changer for residents of Fairfield City to enable travel across Fairfield and connect to other areas of Sydney via the rail network. It will increase access to popular local centres such as Stockland Wetherill Park and Aquatopia (Prairiewood Leisure Centre).

With more direct access to the Aerotropolis, Fairfield City residents will look to the Aerotropolis as a destination to find employment, attend arts/culture activities, participate in sport or undertake other leisure activities. A new railway station at Prairiewood Town Centre will provide a major boost for change with the possibility to establish the centre as a health, education and commercial hub.

**Recommendation:** That further planning for transport to the Aerotropolis consider direct access routes/corridors from Fairfield City.

### **4. DISABILITY INCLUSION AND ACCESS**

Within *Section 3.3 Access and Movement Framework*, the Principle Guidelines do not mention access for people with disability specifically, nor is accessibility featured in

the Glossary. All levels of government across Australia have recognised the rights of people with disability to be included in social, economic, community and civic life. Governments have also recognised the need for concrete actions to ensure these rights. People with disability have the same human rights as other members of the community and that the Commonwealth, State and the community have a responsibility to facilitate the exercise of those rights.

There is little attempt throughout the precinct planning documents to state the accessibility levels of the infrastructure. It is important that principles of accessibility, and the relevant language become engrained in the planning and delivery of the Aerotropolis. Such precincts must be safe, easy to navigate and fully accessible for people with disability.

Planning needs to adhere to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and be in alignment with the *National Disability Strategy*, *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan*. Disability Access experts should be heavily involved in the development of future plans to ensure the planning process accurately calculates the accessibility of the precincts and that the language used in documents reflects a commitment to accessibility.

**Recommendation:** That disability access and inclusion be considered through all aspects of further precinct planning, and that this is evident in Planning Principles and documentation.

## **5. NATIONAL SETTLEMENT OUTCOMES**

The establishment of the Aerotropolis provides an opportunity for collaborative action between Commonwealth, State and Local Governments to address settlement needs of refugees and migrants in Western Sydney.

Major infrastructure developments such as this can be guided by the *National Settlement Framework* in priority areas such as Employment, Education and Training, Transport, Housing and Civic Participation. By engaging diverse communities in the establishment and operations of the Aerotropolis, a significant contribution towards achieving outcomes of the Framework will be achieved by the Commonwealth.

Fairfield settles significantly more humanitarian entrants than anywhere in NSW. For refugees and other humanitarian entrants, settlement in Australia brings the prospect of a brighter future for themselves and family. Close proximity to the Aerotropolis for settling communities will be beneficial for employment, education and leisure activity and reduce barriers such as excessive travel for employment and education. Planning for the Aerotropolis precinct must consider and include providing targeted opportunities for refugees, humanitarian entrants and migrants to engage with the Aerotropolis from across the Western Parkland City.

Fairfield is widely recognised as one of the most diverse areas in Australia. A 'settlement city', with a strong, proud history of settling new communities. In 2016, 52% of the people in Fairfield City were originally from countries where English was not their first language. Of these, 107,147 people who were living in Fairfield were born overseas and 16% arrived in Australia within the last five years. Between 2015 and 2017, the 'Special Humanitarian Intake' due to conflicts in Iraq and Syria, saw 9,123 humanitarian entrants settled in Fairfield. It is imperative that development of the Aerotropolis is mindful of the needs of the refugees and the opportunity they offer in terms of skill, knowledge and cultural intelligence that can be accessed.

The demographics of the Aerotropolis residents, workforce and visitors, will reflect the cultural diversity of Western Sydney. The Aerotropolis precincts will need to be accessible to people from culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. CALD communities have varying English language proficiency (spoken, literacy and numeracy) cultural practices, faiths and traditions. With this in mind, precinct design and development should aim to support a cosmopolitan vision that reflects modern Australia, whilst appropriately acknowledging Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage.

**Recommendation:** That future precinct planning acknowledges and promotes needs of diverse communities that will make up the resident, workforce and visitor populations of the Aerotropolis.

## 6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

The Aerotropolis provides an opportunity for collaborative action between governments and industry to improve employment outcomes for Western Sydney. The Aerotropolis will accommodate more than 100,000 jobs - creating an innovation precinct and a home for technology, logistics, science, creative industries and agribusiness. It is an opportunity for governments to facilitate increased workforce participation and reduce barriers to employment.

*Employment* is considered a *National Settlement Services Standard* by the Settlement Council of Australia within the *National Settlement Outcomes Standards* (2016). There is a need for strong investment by government to ensure residents of Western Sydney, particularly young people, and those from refugee and migrant backgrounds are equipped to access the employment opportunities. The Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP) currently provides fee-free training to refugees and asylum seekers in Western Sydney and can be linked to programs to support refugees to gain employment at the Aerotropolis.

Fairfield currently has a need for stronger employment outcomes for residents and to address the long term entrenched issue of youth unemployment. Although there are many employment opportunities in Fairfield, there continues to be alarming levels of unemployment that are greater than state and national averages. Employment figures

show that the unemployment rate in Fairfield City remains consistent higher than Western Sydney and NSW rates – sitting at 11% in September 2020. Youth unemployment continues to be high with the rate in Fairfield being 18.2% compared to Greater Sydney (13.3%) (ABS 2016), making youth unemployment one of the most pressing issues in our community.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is also evident in employment outcomes in Fairfield. In January 2021, there were 19,717 residents receiving Job Seeker or Youth Allowance payments, an increase of 5,943 since March 2020. This number makes up 14% of the working age population (non-students) in the LGA.

**Recommendation:** That Federal and State Governments invest in employment programs that have direct employment outcomes linked to the Aerotropolis targeting high needs groups such as young people, refugees and migrants.

The *Fairfield Employment and Community Services Forum* and *Fairfield Migrant Interagency* has previously advocated for dedicated employment opportunities for the refugees and migrants through the Aerotropolis construction and operations. Refugees and new migrants are often highly skilled, motivated and experienced professionals who, with the appropriate settlement support, will be able to establish careers within the Aerotropolis precinct.

The *Fairfield Emerging Communities Action Partnership (FECAP) Employment Working Group* recently conducted consultations with local refugee communities, which has identified substantial numbers of local refugees with engineering backgrounds currently unable to apply their professional skills. Dedicated employment opportunities/allocations for these groups will assist with providing local work experience and new skills and ensure that refugees and migrants contribute to the establishment of a significant, historic piece of national infrastructure.

**Recommendation:** That dedicated employment opportunities/allocations for refugees and migrants, be included for the construction and ongoing operations of the Aerotropolis.

## **7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The Aerotropolis will provide a range of education options for students with new schools and a “Multiversity” with strong focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) learning and careers. The focus on STEM and agribusiness learning and careers will complement the manufacturing opportunities that exist in Fairfield and provide a local opportunity for students who wish to pursue STEM careers.



Fairfield City Council is working in partnership with the CSIRO on the Generation STEM project that aims to promote STEM learning participation and interest for local students. Generation STEM launched in 2019 in Western Sydney, where major industry developments (primarily the Aerotropolis) will generate 200,000 new jobs over the coming years. Generation STEM is a partnership between the CSIRO and local communities and involves tailored programs to meet current and emerging industrial labour needs.

The program supports students to develop STEM and industry work skills and provide exposure to local STEM professionals, careers and study pathways. It is anticipated that many Fairfield residents will look to the Aerotropolis for learning and employment opportunities through labour opportunities (while under development) and STEM related industries for ongoing careers. In 2018, the student population at high schools in Fairfield was 15,424 students, a population that will continue to grow in proportion to the general population growth.

**Recommendation:** That the Aerotropolis precincts create accessible and welcoming environments for students from disadvantaged areas such as Fairfield.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The Western Sydney Aerotropolis will bring great opportunity for residents of Fairfield City in a range of areas including employment, education, arts, culture, community facilities, national and international tourism and access to the airport. It is important that planning bodies directly consult further through master planning processes to ensure that the precincts are accessible to a range of stakeholders, and that regional facilities are developed in consultation with neighbouring Councils to ensure the suitability of new facilities in the Aerotropolis for the broader community of the Western Parkland City.