



**Australian Government**

**Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development**

## Why do we need an airport in Western Sydney?

### To accommodate the growth in demand for aviation services

The 2012 *Joint Study on aviation capacity in the Sydney region* found that demand for passenger journeys in the Sydney region will more than double from 40 to 87 million over the next 20 years. Demand will double again to 165 million by 2060.

However, Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport cannot accommodate this demand and if no additional capacity is provided, 54 million of these forecast passenger journeys will be unmet by 2060. This means that approximately one in every three potential passengers will be unable to travel.

Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport is Australia's busiest airport by passenger movements, but also the smallest by land area – approximately one third the size of Brisbane Airport. There are no real options for increasing aviation capacity to handle demand much beyond 2030.

### To provide significant economic and employment opportunities

As access to Sydney becomes increasingly constrained, Sydney will face increased competition for investment and commercial opportunities from other domestic and/or international cities. Tourism and related industries will also be impacted, resulting in lost economic and employment activity.

While some tourists or businesses may divert to other Australian cities, such as Melbourne or Brisbane, tourism surveys have shown that the more likely scenario is that most potential tourists will be lost to other countries.

Economic modelling has shown that the economic costs of not meeting Sydney's future aviation demand are substantial. If nothing is done, \$17.5 billion in New South Wales (NSW) gross state product will be foregone by 2060, with \$34 billion in foregone gross domestic product. In 2060 alone, 57,000 jobs will be foregone in NSW, and 77,900 jobs will be foregone nationally.

On the other hand, a new airport will generate substantial economic activity and employment opportunities, particularly for Western Sydney. By 2060, an airport at Badgerys Creek has the potential to contribute approximately \$24 billion to the gross domestic product and 60,000 jobs.

### To provide better aviation access to residents of Western Sydney

Western Sydney has a population of over two million people – almost the size of Brisbane. In the mid-2030s, this will grow to three million people, and will be home to one in every two Sydneysiders.

Analysis by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics demonstrates that residents in Western Sydney undertake less air travel than the Sydney average.

An airport in Western Sydney will enable easier access to aviation services for more people in the broader north-west and south-west of Sydney, allowing them to save the time and cost of travelling to Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport. This will be an important source of passengers in the earliest years of Badgerys Creek, although passenger numbers will increase substantially as congestion at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport intensifies.



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## Why was Badgerys Creek chosen?

Badgerys Creek is located approximately 56 kilometres from Sydney's Central Business District by road. It was identified as a potential site for an airport from as early as 1969 and the Australian Government acquired a site of approximately 1,700 hectares between 1986 and 1991.

### Considered as the best site by successive governments and studies

Badgerys Creek has been considered the preferred site in detailed studies commissioned by successive governments since the 1970s. In 1986, following an extensive site selection process, the Australian Government announced that Badgerys Creek had been chosen as the site for a second major airport for Sydney.

While the airport development was delayed due to the construction of a third runway at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport, the Government maintained ownership of the land.

Badgerys Creek has been recommended in subsequent studies and investigations, including the environmental impact statement in 1999 and, more recently, the 2012 *Joint Study on aviation capacity in the Sydney region* (the Joint Study).

### The site has been protected by long-term planning and zoning restrictions

The number of viable greenfield sites that can support an airport development has been declining over the last several decades alongside population growth and Sydney's expansion. However, the site at Badgerys Creek has been largely protected from incompatible residential and urban development through New South Wales (NSW) Government planning restrictions in place since the 1990s.

The NSW Government has also proposed an expansion of the Western Sydney Employment Area (WSEA) which would see the Badgerys Creek site abutted by land zoned for industry and commercial use. While this would further reduce future noise impacts on nearby residential areas, the proximity of the airport to the WSEA presents an opportunity to transform the airport area into a hub for jobs and development.

### Have other options to a second airport been examined?

The Joint Study undertook a comprehensive site selection process, assessing 80 sites across 18 locations in the Greater Sydney region. Consistent with previous studies, it found that the Badgerys Creek site was the best site for a second Sydney airport.

The Joint Study also revisited many previous proposals to increase aviation capacity in the region, including options to expand Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport, adjusting regulatory settings at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport, and using existing airports beyond the Sydney basin such as Canberra and Newcastle. However, none of these options could meet Sydney's needs in the long term.

The Joint Study explains how these judgements were formed and can be found at:  
[http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/sydney\\_av\\_cap/](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/sydney_av_cap/).



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## Building an airport at Badgerys Creek

A new airport will cater for Sydney's passenger demand for the decades to come. This means that Badgerys Creek will eventually develop into a full scale airport with parallel runways.

However, in the initial years it will begin as a smaller airport with a single runway to serve the modest demand expected in the short term. This may be similar to Canberra or Gold Coast Airports which service three and six million passengers respectively.

The airport will grow over time as passenger numbers and aircraft activity warrant additional investment.

### How long will it take and how much would it cost?

Developing a greenfields airport is a long-term project – it is not simply the case of building a runway and terminal. A new airport requires comprehensive planning and consultation, as well as the construction of supporting infrastructure, such as road links and utilities. Although Badgerys Creek is the best site, no site is perfect and each has its own set of challenges. For Badgerys Creek, it involves earthworks of 51 million cubic metres, relocating high tension power lines and realigning the Northern Road.

The Australian Government estimates that the airport could be ready to take its first flight in the mid-2020s. This is not dissimilar to timeframes suggested for the proposed parallel runways at Melbourne and Brisbane Airports.

An initial airport development at Badgerys Creek would cost in the order of \$2.4 billion (in 2012 dollars), based on estimates in the *Joint Study on aviation capacity in the Sydney region*. The question of how the airport will be funded between the private sector and government is one of the vital tasks of the Western Sydney Infrastructure Unit. However, as Australia's major airports are operated by private entities under appropriate lease arrangements, a similar arrangement would be expected for a new airport.

### Will the Government need to acquire more land?

The site owned by the Australia Government is sufficient to support an initial airport development and further land acquisition is unlikely to be required. Any future decision to expand would require consultation between the Government, the airport owner and affected stakeholders.



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# The benefits of an airport at Badgerys Creek

## Significant economic and employment benefits

An airport at Badgerys Creek will be a catalyst for investment and job creation in Western Sydney. Analysis by Ernst and Young found that an airport at Badgerys Creek has the potential to generate \$24.6 billion in direct expenditure by 2060, and contribute a \$23.9 billion increase in gross domestic product to the national economy.

The site at Badgerys Creek is located within the New South Wales (NSW) Government's proposed expansion of the Western Sydney Employment Area (WSEA). The WSEA is expected to accommodate 57,000 new jobs within the next 30 years, with the potential for up to 212,000 jobs when fully developed.

An airport development at Badgerys Creek will contribute substantially in facilitating these jobs for Western Sydney. It could deliver approximately 35,000 jobs by 2035, increasing to over 60,000 by 2060.

While the initial construction phase could generate over 4,000 jobs, the ongoing operation of the airport would generate many more times this amount over its lifetime. Over 30,000 jobs could be generated directly in the airport's operation up to 2060, and indirect employment around the airport site could contribute an additional 30,000 jobs.

These jobs will also provide opportunities for Western Sydney residents to work closer to home and spend less time commuting. By 2035, it is expected that up to 17,000 residents within the airport region will be able to access employment opportunities closer to home.

By 2060, the number of residents working closer to home is expected to increase to approximately 30,000. This equates to local residents collectively saving nearly four million hours of commuter travel time.

## Aviation access to the growing Western Sydney market

Based on analysis in the *Joint Study on aviation capacity in the Sydney region*, residents of Western Sydney have a lower propensity to undertake air travel than the Sydney average. The location of Badgerys Creek relative to the population of Western Sydney would enable easier access and encourage more people to use aviation services.

A second airport will not merely be an overflow airport for Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport, but will tap into a new market of aviation users. Local demand alone could generate an additional 3.4 million trips per year by 2035 (slightly busier than Canberra Airport today), rising to six million trips by 2060 (equivalent to Gold Coast Airport today).

## Upgrades to surface transport infrastructure

One of the real benefits of an airport development is the upgrades and investment in other transport networks. The details of a major western Sydney infrastructure package will be announced in coming days.



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## Noise impacts at Badgerys Creek

Potential noise impacts of a second Sydney airport have been an ongoing concern. The New South Wales (NSW) Government's long-standing planning restrictions around the Badgerys Creek site have largely protected it from incompatible residential and urban development.

The proximity of the proposed expansion of the existing Western Sydney Employment Area, to the north and east of the site will further ensure that development incompatible with an airport has been avoided.

As a result, a typical noise footprint for aircraft operating from a northeast runway at Badgerys Creek would affect approximately 3,900 residents. As a comparison, the equivalent noise footprint at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport affects around 130,000 residents.

At the same time, airlines continue to renew their fleets, investing in more fuel efficient and quieter aircraft, such as the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Its noise footprint is around 60 per cent quieter compared to the aircraft types it will replace.

### Will the airport at Badgerys Creek have a curfew?

In making a decision about the regulatory controls on any airport, the Government will need to make judgments about the economic value of less restrictive hours of operation and the impact on communities.

The merits of a curfew at Badgerys Creek will be carefully considered by the Government.

### What suburbs will be affected by aircraft noise?

Precise approach and departure tracks will need to be determined based on expert advice from Airservices Australia and in consultation with airlines during the development of an airport proposal. If we assume that the airport runways would operate on a northeast/southwest orientation as proposed in the 1990s, air traffic would either approach or depart over the Western Sydney Employment Area to the north of the Commonwealth land at Badgerys Creek.

Indicative noise footprints for Badgerys Creek were published in the 2013 *A study of Wilton and RAAF Base Richmond for civil aviation operations*. It can be found at:

<http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/scopingstudy/index.aspx>.



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## Badgerys Creek and the environment

Badgerys Creek has been subject to extensive environmental assessment in the past, including a comprehensive environmental impact statement in 1999. The Environment Minister at the time stated that there were no insurmountable challenges to developing an airport at Badgerys Creek.

The Australian Government is committed to meeting all of its requirements under Commonwealth environment legislation.

### Community concerns

Concerns that are sometimes raised include jettisoning fuel and air pollution near airports.

#### *Jettisoning fuel*

There are some concerns expressed by the public that aircraft routinely jettison fuel in flight or prior to landing. This is not the case. Jettisoning fuel, more commonly known as 'fuel dumping', is an extremely rare event and there are no recorded cases of fuel from civil aircraft reaching the ground.

Fuel dumping would only be used (mainly by larger international aircraft) in the rare event of an emergency situation to lighten the aircraft's weight to allow for a safe landing. Even in the case of emergencies, fuel dumping is considered as a last resort, with aircraft first circling nearby to burn off the fuel or simply landing overweight.

Many of the commonly used aircraft types in Australia, such as the Airbus A320 and the Boeing 737, are not even capable of dumping fuel. More generally, every day thousands of aircraft land and take-off safely from cities all over the world and deliberate fuel jettisoning is not considered to be an issue.

#### *Air pollution*

New generation aircraft are now quieter and cleaner than ever before. Aircraft operating in Australia are required to meet international emissions standards established through the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The aviation sector continues to reduce its footprint through a range of initiatives. Australian airlines are introducing newer, more fuel efficient aircraft into their fleets. The Boeing 737-800 aircraft, which is in common use on domestic routes, is about 20 percent more fuel efficient than earlier Boeing 737 models. The latest models like the Boeing 787 and the Airbus A350 are considerably more fuel efficient and quieter than the aircraft they will replace.

Airlines will always strive to improved efficiencies to minimise fuel use and modern navigation tools, like satellite approach technologies, help to deliver better environmental and commercial outcomes.



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## Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport

Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport is one of the most important pieces of aviation infrastructure in Australia and will remain the primary airport in the Sydney region. Passenger numbers at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport will continue to grow over the next few decades, until maximum capacity has been reached. However, an airport for Western Sydney is also needed to meet demand in the medium and long term.

### Sydney Airport Master Plan

The Australian Government has approved Sydney Airport's Master Plan; however, approval of the Airport's Master Plan does not negate the need for a second airport.

The Master Plan is a 20 year operational and strategic vision for the airport site, which shows how the airport will cater to the needs of airport users. While the Sydney Airport Master Plan is a crucial planning document, it is not required to assess how to meet all demand in the Sydney region. A new Master Plan is required every five years.

### Efficiency of Sydney Airport

As one of the most important pieces of transport and economic infrastructure in Sydney, the Government will support measures to increase the efficiency of the airport where community amenity is not unduly compromised.

The Government's commitment to WestConnex and the Moorebank Intermodal Terminal will help to improve efficiency at Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport by reducing congestion in the airport/Port Botany precinct and allowing better access to the airport for airport users.

A number of regulatory settings, such as a curfew, are in place to balance the operational needs of the airport with community amenity. Any changes to these arrangements would need to be considered against the impact it would have on surrounding communities. However, any changes to these arrangements would only provide limited additional capacity and would not remove the need for a second airport.

### Right of first refusal

As part of the Government's sale of Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport in 2002, the purchaser was provided with the opportunity to develop and operate a second major airport in the Sydney region, within 100 kilometres of the Sydney GPO. This right was built into the sale price and granted due to the uncertainty at the time over the development of a second airport.

The Government will meet its obligations under the right of first refusal and this has been factored into the project timeline.