

A photograph of two young women in an office setting, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are in the foreground, with other office workers and computer monitors visible in the background. The lighting is bright and professional.

**BUSINESS  
WESTERN  
SYDNEY**

# Closer to Talent

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Why more businesses should  
locate to Western Sydney

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This report has been prepared by Astrolabe for Business Western Sydney as part of NextGen West.

NextGen West is a campaign between Business Western Sydney and UDIA NSW. They are pleased to be working together to bring the leading voices for City Shaping and jobs creation for Greater Western Sydney covering the Western Parkland City and Central River City regions of Sydney.



Business Western Sydney would like to thank the Centre for Western Sydney for their invaluable contribution to the report.



# Western Sydney the place to be

Western Sydney is undergoing unprecedented change.

The region is experiencing exponential growth, shifting economic structures, a growing population, and an increase in the number of skilled workers, particularly young people and migrants.

The 'Closer to Talent' report comes at a timely juncture, with labour markets and work-life balance disrupted globally during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As recently as 2018, 29 per cent of Western Sydney's workforce was leaving the region each day to commute to jobs across the rest of Greater Sydney.

Recent changing patterns of work and an increasingly skilled local workforce have intensified the need for businesses to provide opportunities for the Western Sydney workforce closer to home.

Business Western Sydney and the Centre for Western Sydney are committed to advocating for our communities. We want to see the residents in our region afforded the opportunity to live and work in Western Sydney.



**David Borger**

Executive Director  
Business Western Sydney

Achieving that requires addressing inequality, providing workers with access to local jobs, improving employee wellbeing and - very importantly - making it easier for women participate in the workforce.

Together, if we can get this right, it will create enormous opportunities for businesses to draw on the skills of the existing workforce and invest in future talent essential to establish a long-standing, successful presence in Western Sydney.

The State Government needs to invest in the Western Sydney commercial market, just like it has in Tech Central, enticing more businesses both nationally and internationally, giving them access to Greater Sydney's talent.

Western Sydney is integral to the future prosperity and wellbeing of Sydney. Business Western Sydney and the Centre for Western Sydney are committed to progressing the findings of this report to ensure we deliver transformational change and a brighter future for our region.



**Professor Andy Marks**

Director, Centre for Western Sydney  
Western Sydney University

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# Executive Summary

For 200 years, the imperative has been about getting people from the West to the East, however, it is now time to bring business to the people. Selecting a location for a business requires consideration of a number of factors including access to infrastructure, suppliers, customers and employees. In the last two decades the Western Sydney workforce has changed. We've grown in number and we are also more highly qualified. Western Sydney has become one of the most significant and compelling labour markets in Australia.

There is a reasonable chance that you haven't appreciated Western Sydney's engine of talent. They're hidden in plain sight, commuting long distances across Sydney every day to access jobs that match their skills and qualifications. So if accessing talent is a pain point, turn West and locate '**Closer to Talent**'.

Approximately 48 per cent of Greater Sydney's workforce comes from Western Sydney and this talent base is growing - now also driven by a new generation of skilled young people and skilled migrants.

There is a great growth opportunity for businesses in the region, particularly with access to talent in the knowledge-intensive industries of Information, Media and Telecommunications; Financial and Insurance Services; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; and Public Administration and Safety.

Western Sydney is changing fast. Once the base of operations for Sydney's manufacturing sector, it is now a rapidly de-industrialising region with a variety of industry strengths and specialisations.

Locating in Western Sydney will help you win the battle for talent. The ongoing management of COVID-19 has brought into focus established patterns of behaviour that have long been taken for granted. It has changed people's working preferences, and propelled demand for accessing work and opportunities closer to home. Businesses need to respond to these employee preferences.

Being closer to employment has far-reaching benefits for people and place: getting back the time spent commuting, providing opportunities for graduates and early career workers, increasing the potential for women to participate in the workforce, and capturing and containing local economic activity so cafes, supporting services and other businesses can succeed together.

The scale and significance of Western Sydney's market and workforce will only grow. With 2.6 million people already living in Western Sydney, and the growth of this population set to outpace the rest of Sydney, this is a call for businesses to locate **Closer to Talent**.

The future is very bright. **Be part of the action!**

# Make your move

Western Sydney's sphere of influence has drastically changed over the past decade, becoming integral to the future prosperity and wellbeing of Sydney. The momentum and pace of change of Parramatta and the Metropolitan Cluster of Liverpool, Greater Penrith, Campbelltown-Macarthur has outstripped most of Greater Sydney, fuelled by billions of dollars of investment and anchored by government agencies and leading education and health facilities.

**Move to Western Sydney** and be part of change happening at a rate unlike any other city in Australia. You will be putting yourself at the doorstep of a wealth of skills and talent.

## 309,000

workers were leaving  
Western Sydney for  
work each day in 2018

## 96,000

skilled workers were leaving  
Western Sydney for work each  
day in 2016, up from 76,000 in  
2011

## 27%

increase in  
Western Sydney's  
skilled workforce  
between 2006 and  
2016

equal to  
**+40,000**  
workers

## 13%

increase in Western Sydney's skilled  
workforce between 2011 and 2016,  
greater than both the remaining  
Greater Sydney LGAs (7%) and  
Greater Sydney as a whole (9%)

## 4,200

public service  
roles will be  
located in  
Parramatta by  
2022

equal to  
**90,000 sqm**  
of office space

## 2.7 million

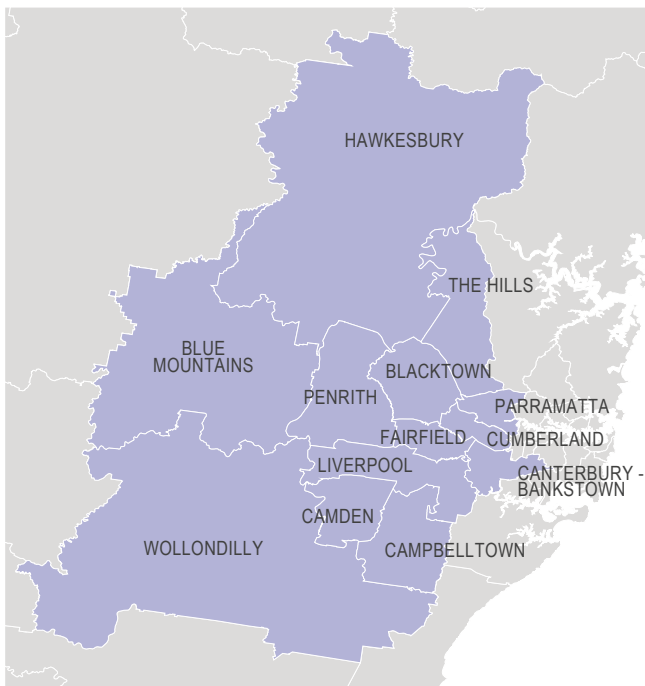
forecasted working-age  
residents across Western  
Sydney in 2041

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# New Generation Western Sydney



*Western Sydney has  
changed. Meet the new  
generation Western  
Sydney.* ”



**Figure 1** In this report 'Western Sydney' includes the 13 Local Government Areas shown above, capturing Business Western Sydney's member base.

Western Sydney (Figure 1) is a population and labour powerhouse, comprised of a diverse mix of communities and skills. It has been on a sustained pathway of growth and positive change.

Since the turn of the new millennium, deliberate planning interventions have re-positioned key employment centres across Western Sydney, enabling them to grow, strengthen and attract regional economic activity.

The announcement of *City of Cities* in 2005 – a 25 year plan for the Sydney metropolitan region – identified the economic and lifestyle offerings of Parramatta, Liverpool and Penrith as central to Sydney's growth story. At the same time, the North West and South West Growth Centres were announced, spatially shaping the trajectory of the Sydney's growth and activity.

Since then, Local, State and Federal investment in infrastructure and services in the region has further strengthened the key economic role that Western Sydney's centres will play into Sydney's future.

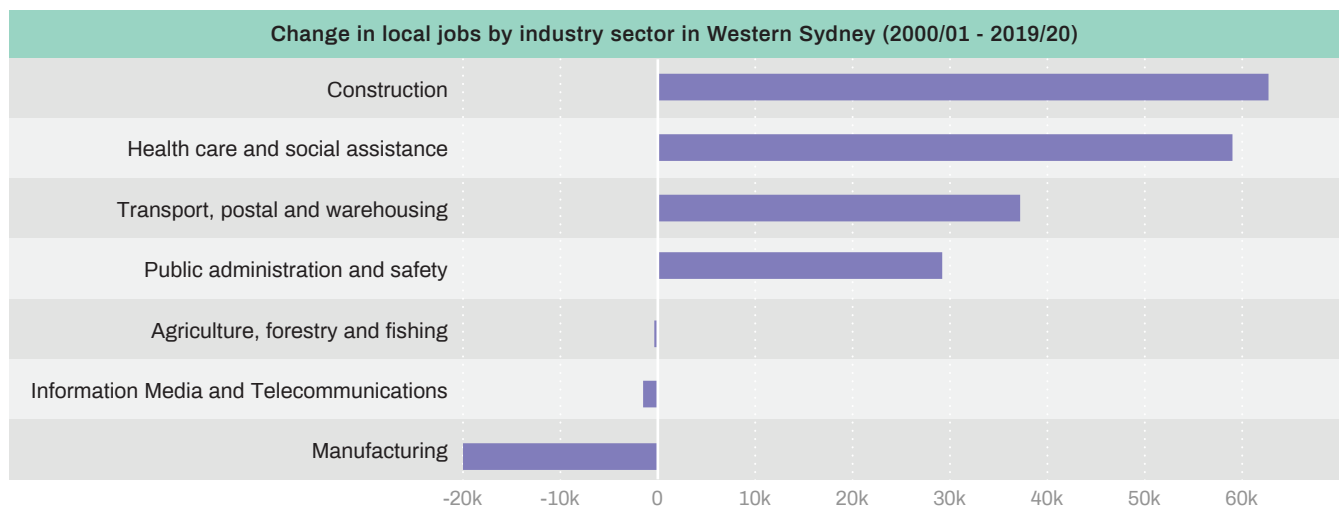
Western Sydney is now recognised as integral to the future prosperity and wellbeing of Sydney. The current planning framework for Greater Sydney – *A Metropolis of Three Cities* – is an acknowledgement of Western Sydney's changing sphere of influence, positioning Parramatta and the Metropolitan Cluster of Liverpool, Greater Penrith, Campbelltown-Macarthur and the future Aerotropolis as Sydney CBDs. These existing centres are established, modern places anchored by government agency offices and leading education and health facilities.

Three factors are making Western Sydney a good place to locate, fuelling the opportunities that businesses seek: a changing economic structure, a growing population and an increase in skilled workers.

## Changing economic structure

Over the last 20 years, Western Sydney has shifted from a historical reliance on manufacturing, evidenced by the significant loss of jobs in the sector since 2000/2001.

Instead, substantial growth has been seen in local jobs in construction and health, with over 120,000 additional jobs across both sectors.



**Figure 2** The total change in number of jobs by industry in Western Sydney between 2000/01 and 2019/20 (Source: *economy.id, Employment by Industry*)



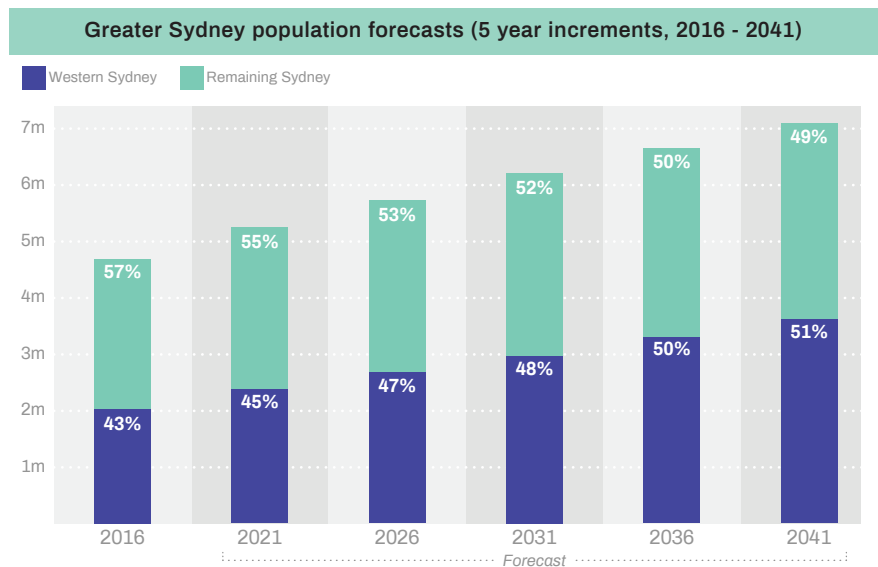
## Growing population

Western Sydney has experienced rapid population growth in the last two decades. In 2020, Western Sydney had a population of approximately 2.5 million people – a 35 per cent increase since 2001<sup>1</sup>.

It is estimated that Western Sydney will be home to over 3.6 million people by 2041 – representing over 50 per cent of Greater Sydney’s population (Figure 2).

Between 2016 and 2021 just the working age population (15 - 64 years olds) in Western Sydney increased by 138,000 people, signalling a rate of growth greater than Eastern Sydney (Figure 3).

In the next 20 years, it is expected that Western Sydney’s working age population will grow by over 800,000 people. Some suburbs across the region will see the number of workers at least double or triple in just two decades.



**Figure 3** Total population forecast and percentage split between Western and remaining Sydney LGAs, every 5 years between 2016 and 2041 (Source: Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2019 Population Projections)



**Figure 4** Total number and change in working age population in Western and Eastern Sydney between 2016 and 2021 (Source: Labour Market Information Portal, Labour Force)<sup>2</sup>

1 Source: ABS Estimated Residential Population sourced for the 13 LGAs 2001-2020.

2 Labour force data used in this report is at the SA4 scale. For the purposes of this report, Western Sydney is defined by 6 SA4s: Sydney – Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury; Sydney – Blacktown; Sydney - Outer South West; Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains; Sydney – Parramatta and Sydney – South West. By way of comparison Eastern Sydney is defined as the combination of the Sydney - Inner South West, Sydney - City and Inner South, Sydney - Eastern Suburbs, Sydney - Inner West, Sydney – Ryde and Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby SA4s.

## Skilled workers

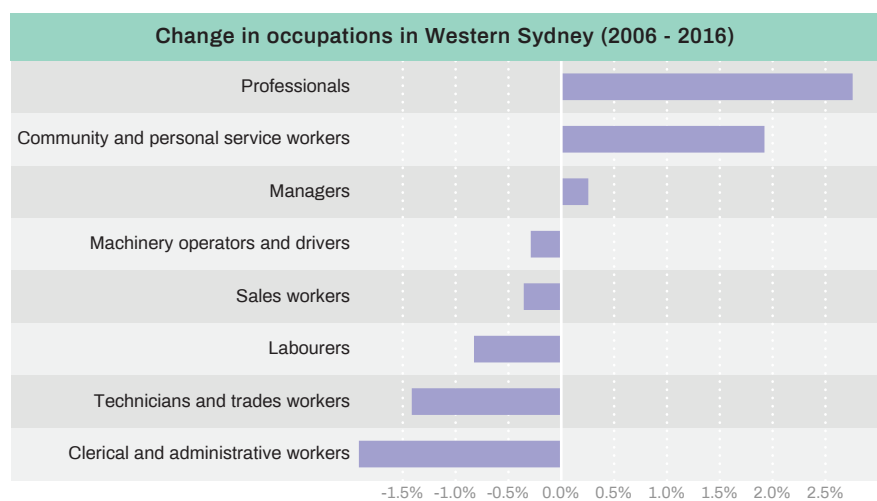
The Western Sydney labour market will be a significant force - with ongoing population growth it will be larger in size than both Greater Adelaide and Greater Perth.<sup>3</sup>

Between 2006 and 2016, Western Sydney's skilled workforce grew 27 per cent, equal to over 40,000 skilled workers<sup>4</sup>.

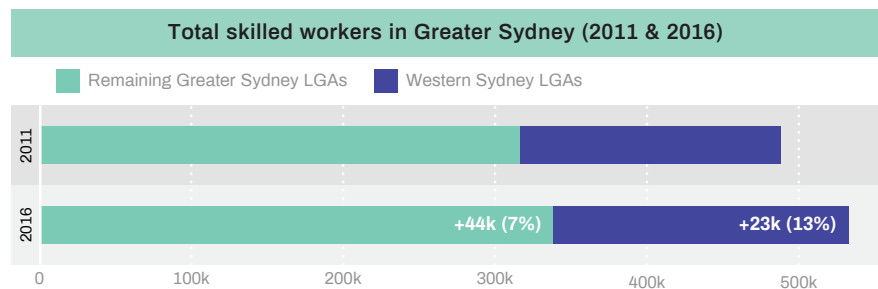
The region has seen a notable rise in professional occupations, countered by a decrease in clerical and trades workers, as well as labourers (Figure 4).

More recently, between 2011 and 2016, the rate of Western Sydney's skilled workforce growth exceeded that of both the remaining Greater Sydney LGAs and Greater Sydney as a whole (Figure 5). These skilled workers employed in knowledge intensive industries, which include:

- Information, Media and Telecommunications
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Public Administration and Safety



**Figure 5** Percentage change in occupations of Western Sydney working residents between 2006 and 2016 (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016, Table Builder)



**Figure 6** Total number and change of skilled workers in Western Sydney and remaining Sydney LGAs between 2011 & 2016 (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016, Table Builder)

<sup>3</sup> O'Neill (2020) Where are the Jobs? Part 1: Western Sydney's short lived jobs boom. Centre for Western Sydney

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016, Table Builder

# A skilled workforce hidden in plain sight

People with the skills you and your business need are already here. There is a density of latent skills in Western Sydney - a pool of skilled workers waiting to be hired, as local talent cannot always access local jobs.

One way to understand latent skills is to calculate employment capacity: the ratio of local jobs to employed residents. A value over 1 indicates that there are more jobs available than employed residents.

The employment ratio in Western Sydney LGAs is less than one, except in the City of Parramatta, where there are an estimated 1.41 jobs for every worker who lives there. This means that more often than not, across Western Sydney, employed residents are having to travel outside their local area to access jobs.

## Estimated employment capacity by LGA

	2014/15			2019/20		
	Local jobs	Employed residents	Ratio jobs : residents	Local jobs	Employed residents	Ratio jobs : residents
<b>Blacktown</b>	118,313	158,569	0.75	152,928	193,023	0.79
<b>Camden</b>	26,050	38,962	0.67	40,289	60,738	0.66
<b>Campbelltown</b>	50,985	73,438	0.69	61,601	83,870	0.73
<b>Canterbury- Bankstown</b>	109,809	147,171	0.75	118,735	167,902	0.71
<b>Cumberland</b>	80,191	93,043	0.86	88,563	108,736	0.81
<b>Fairfield</b>	64,021	76,069	0.84	80,408	85,909	0.94
<b>Hawkesbury</b>	27,525	34,903	0.79	27,678	37,042	0.75
<b>Liverpool</b>	75,220	87,276	0.86	98,419	105,370	0.93
<b>Parramatta</b>	157,580	111,321	1.42	192,988	136,781	1.41
<b>Penrith</b>	76,296	101,745	0.75	89,715	115,048	0.78
<b>The Hills</b>	70,128	85,626	0.82	85,064	99,107	0.86
<b>Wollondilly</b>	12,790	25,505	0.50	13,990	29,498	0.47

**Figure 7** Ratio of local jobs to employed residents in Western Sydney LGAs in 2014/2015 and 2019/2020 (Source: NIEIR 2021 via economy.id (note Blue Mountains data was not available))

## IN FOCUS

### Where are the jobs?

In 2020 Western Sydney University's Centre for Western Sydney published three research reports, as part of a series titled 'Where are the jobs?'

One report in the series estimates that in 2018, over 309,000 workers were leaving Western Sydney for work each day – equivalent to 29 per cent of workers.

Reflecting the jobs deficit for knowledge-intensive industries in Western Sydney, data from the last Census showed out-commuting was more prevalent for workers in the information, media and communications, finance and insurance, and professional, scientific and technical services industries. In addition, one in four residents leaving for work in 2016 were in professional occupations<sup>5</sup>.

The third report looked to Western Sydney's workers in 2036, interrogating projections to understand the extent of this problem into the future. Using Transport for NSW's assumptions, by 2036 Western Sydney will have 156,000 less local jobs than employed local workers. Over 426,000 workers will leave Western Sydney every day for work<sup>6</sup>.

Left unchecked, the current Western Sydney jobs deficit will have far-reaching implications for people and place, for the next generation, and result in missed opportunities to establish a strong regional economy.



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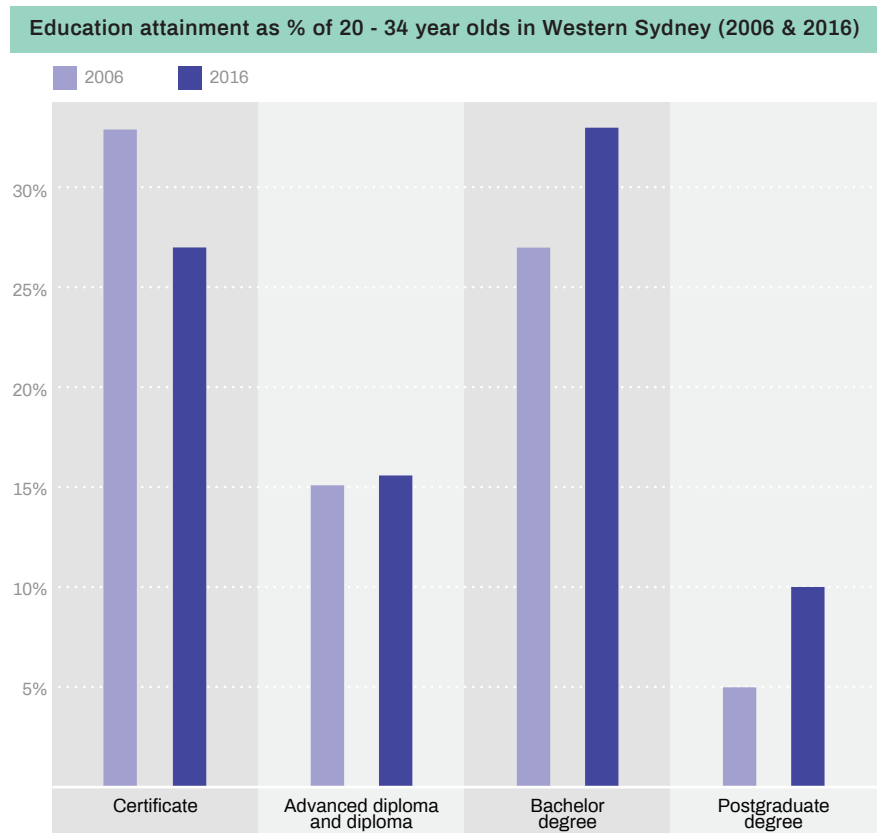
5 O'Neill (2020) Where are the jobs? Part 2: The geography of Western Sydney's jobs deficit. Centre for Western Sydney

6 O'Neill (2020) Where are the jobs? Part 3: Western Sydney workers in 2036. Centre for Western Sydney

The increase in Western Sydney's skilled labour force is coupled with a rise in higher education attainment. In 2016, approximately 850,000 Western Sydney workers had formally recognised qualifications - one in three workers had a university qualification, and half had a trade qualification through on-the-job training (Diploma or Cert III or IV)<sup>7</sup>.

The last decade has seen a significant increase in the number of young Western Sydney workers (20 - 34 year olds) attaining Diploma qualification, at minimum. Whilst there was a decrease in the number of young workers with certificate qualifications from 2006 - 2016, this has been countered by a significantly greater increase in those with bachelor or postgraduate degrees. In 2016, over 32 per cent of workers aged 20-34 held a Bachelor degree, and over 10 per cent have a Postgraduate degree (Figure 7).

Over recent years, the increased presence of university and TAFE campuses in Western Sydney has attracted and enabled students greater choice to commence tertiary studies locally.



**Figure 8** Percentage change in education attainment of 20-34 year old in Western Sydney between 2006 and 2016 (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016, Table Builder)

7 Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016, Table Builder

## Sydney's incubator of talent and skills for jobs of the future

Western Sydney has become an incubator for Sydney's future workforce. One in five people in Western Sydney are currently in primary and secondary school, accounting for over half a million people.

Western Sydney's young population - those born after 2008 - are the biggest generation of young people since the post-World War II 'Baby Boom'. They will be a key asset for the region, providing the engine of Sydney's future workforce, and their education and work choices will be informed by the options they see in their city.

Businesses have a significant window of opportunity now to invest in the future talent and skills by establishing strong lasting relationships with Western Sydney's next generation.

Leading universities have already established themselves in Western Sydney, future-proofing the emerging workforce, and upskilling and reskilling existing workers and industries change and new industries emerge

By being on the ground in Western Sydney, businesses have an opportunity to be in the driver's seat of this transformation.

### IN FOCUS

#### Western Sydney's university network

- **Western Sydney University (WSU)** has campuses at Parramatta, Westmead, Bankstown, Sydney Olympic Park, Penrith, Campbelltown, Richmond, and Liverpool. Parramatta CBD and Liverpool are vertical 'City Campuses', which enables the university, businesses and students to foster strong and active partnerships.
- **WSU's** The transformational Western Growth program is reshaping WSU's network to deliver the highest educational opportunities and world-class research expertise to the region. It has delivered two vertical campuses in Parramatta CBD, including the recently completed Engineering Innovation Hub, a vertical campus in Liverpool and the Bankstown City campus is under construction to be opened in 2023.
- **UNSW** through Liverpool and Bankstown Hospitals.
- **University of Wollongong** opened their South Western Sydney Campus in Liverpool in 2017.
- **University of Sydney** has a clinical school at Westmead that has a strong connection to the hospital and a core foundation for the health and education precinct. There is a further Clinical School at Nepean Hospital in Penrith.
- **University of New England** opened their Parramatta Campus in 2013.
- **Australian Catholic University** has partnered with Blacktown City Council to deliver a campus within the Blacktown CBD.

#### Future initiatives in tertiary education

- A **Multiversity** is proposed for the Aerotropolis, delivered by the NUW Alliance: a collaboration between the University of Newcastle, University of NSW, University of Wollongong, Western Sydney University and TAFE NSW. The focus of the Multiversity is to 'connect the future of learning to jobs of the future', and targets teaching and research in STEM-specialist disciplines such as advanced manufacturing, aerospace, defence, and high-tech freight and logistics<sup>8</sup>.
- The **NSW Institute of Applied Technology for Construction** was announced in 2021. Located at the TAFE NSW Nepean-Kingswood Campus, the Institute has been specifically designed to become a signature training hub to support the pipeline of major infrastructure and residential development now and into the future. As well as enhancing education and training within the region it will allow students and staff to engage with industry and foster a network between schools, VET, universities, and industry, and enable seamless study pathways between university and TAFE NSW<sup>9</sup>.

8 NUW Alliance, 'Multiversity', <<https://www.nuwalliance.edu.au/home/projects/aerotropolis-multiversity>> (accessed 5 August 2021)

9 TAFE NSW 'NSW Institute of Applied Technology for Construction (formerly TAFE NSW Construction Centre of Excellence)', <<https://www.tafensw.edu.au/instituteofappliedtechnology>> (accessed 5 August 2021)

## Understanding the hidden opportunity: focusing on knowledge-intensive workers

This new generation of skilled Western Sydney workers are needing to look further afield to find jobs that fit their skillset and qualifications, which tend to cluster in the 'Eastern Economic Corridor' that stretches from Sydney's CBD, through North Sydney and to Macquarie Park.

This section provides a snapshot of Western Sydney workers and jobs across four knowledge-intensive industry sectors:

- Information, Media and Telecommunications
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Public Administration and Safety.

As each of these sectors have a surplus of employed residents to local jobs across Western Sydney, there is a hidden opportunity to locate closer to the talent that is leaving for work in Eastern Sydney every day.

Government planning and investment is supporting the transition of centres in Western Sydney into 'knowledge intensive' strategic centres - such as Parramatta CBD, Sydney Olympic Park and Norwest Business Park.

There is already a significant workforce choosing to live and wanting to work in Western Sydney. The relocation of government offices combined with major private firms establishing additional offices in Parramatta is fuelling a shift of knowledge-intensive jobs westward.



**IN FOCUS:**  
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

**95,900**

Western Sydney residents employed in 2021 (compared to 71,600 in 2016)

**34%**

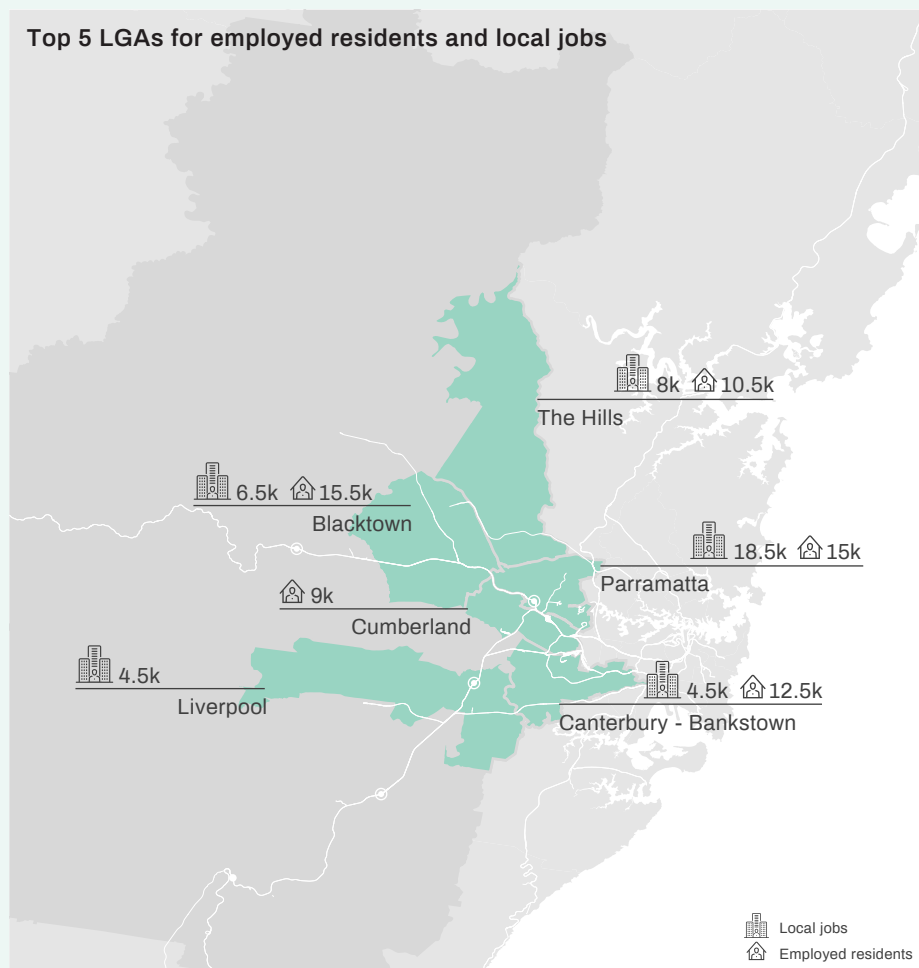
Increase in Western Sydney talent base from 2016 to 2021

**0.55**

Jobs per working resident in Western Sydney in 2016

**34,500**

Skilled working residents leaving Western Sydney everyday in 2016



**Figure 9** Total number of local jobs and employed residents in the top 5 LGAs for the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services industry (Source: Residents employed and local jobs - NIEIR data accessed via economy.id (excl. Blue Mountains); Jobs-to-worker ratio and worker leakage - Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016))



**IN FOCUS:**  
Public Administration and Safety

**61,200**

Western Sydney residents employed in 2021 (compared to 52,500 in 2016)

**17%**

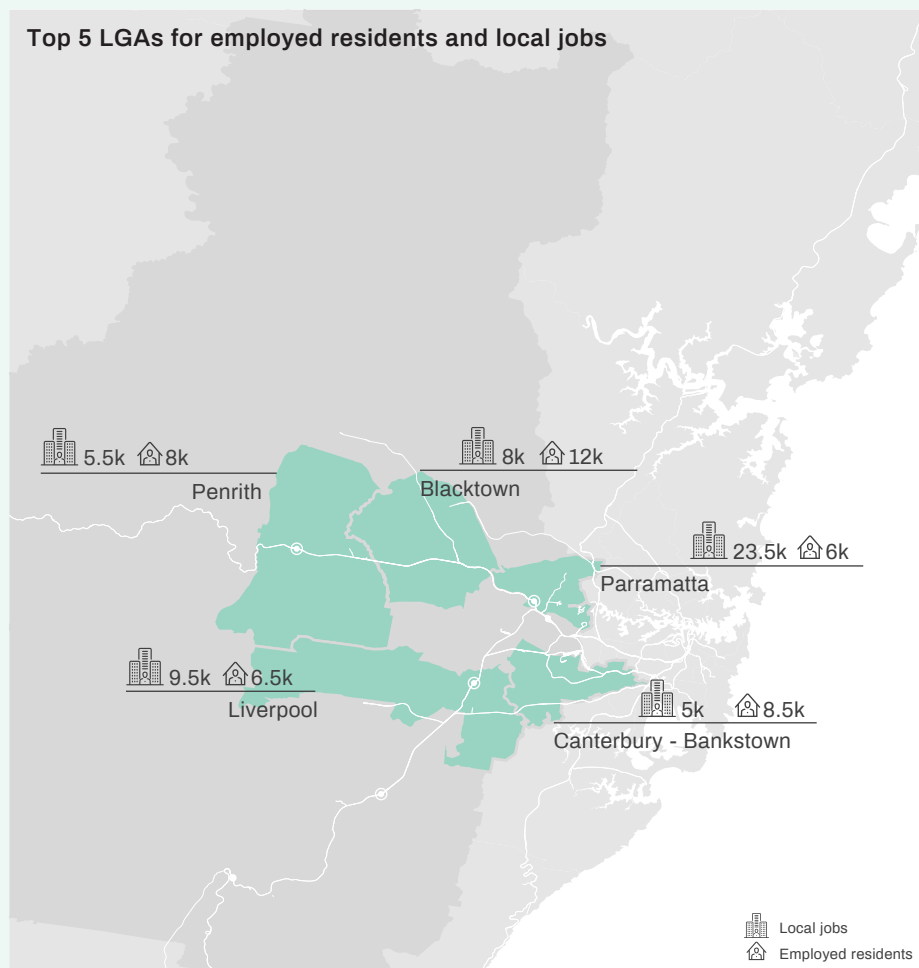
Increase in Western Sydney talent base from 2016 to 2021

**0.83**

Jobs in Western Sydney per working resident

**18,400**

Skilled working residents leaving Western Sydney everyday in 2016



**Figure 10** Total number of local jobs and employed residents in the top 5 LGAs for the Public Administration and Safety industry (Source: Residents employed and local jobs - NIEIR data accessed via economy.id (excl. Blue Mountains); Jobs-to-worker ratio and worker leakage - Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016)

**IN FOCUS:**  
Finance and Insurance Services

**55,600**

Western Sydney residents employed in 2021 (compared to 45,600 in 2016)

**22%**

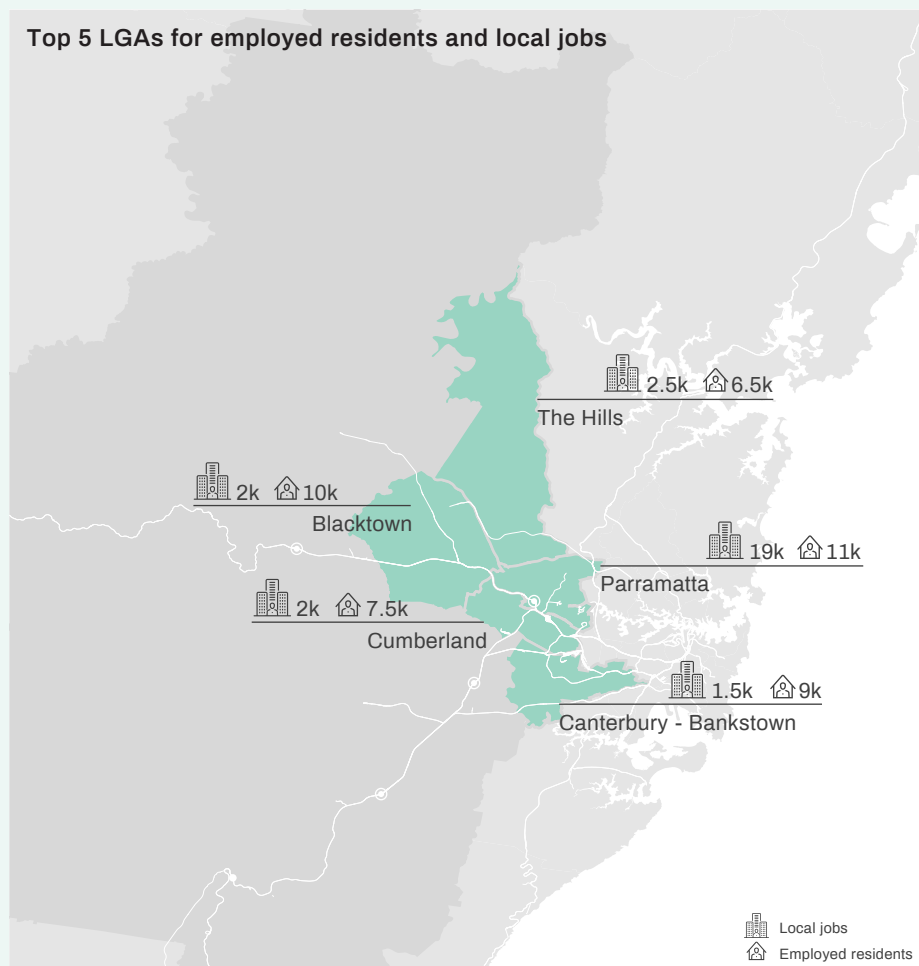
Increase in Western Sydney talent base from 2016 to 2021

**0.48**

Jobs in Western Sydney per working resident

**30,700**

Skilled working residents leaving Western Sydney everyday in 2016



**Figure 11** Total number of local jobs and employed residents in the top 5 LGAs for the Finance and Insurance Services industry (Source: Residents employed and local jobs - NIEIR data accessed via economy.id (excl. Blue Mountains); Jobs-to-worker ratio and worker leakage - Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016)

**IN FOCUS:**  
Information, Media and Telecommunications

**20,900**

Western Sydney residents employed in 2021 (compared to 14,400 in 2016)

**20%**

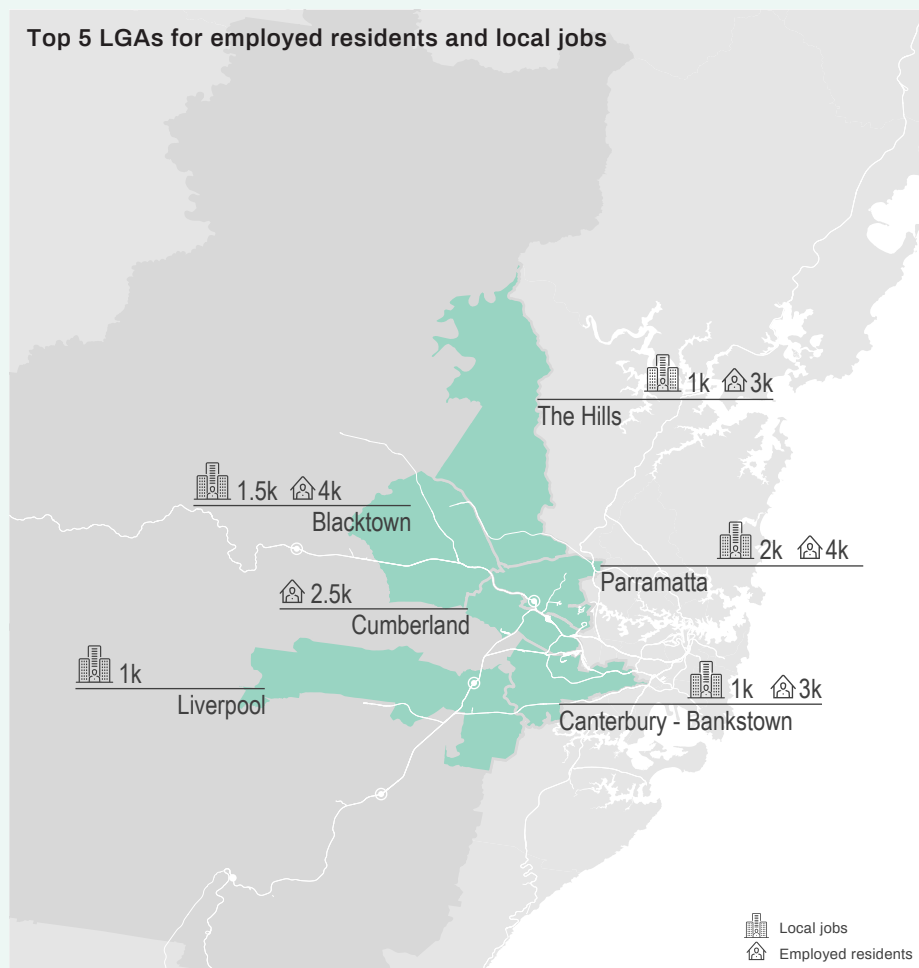
Increase in Western Sydney talent base from 2016 to 2021

**0.37**

Jobs in Western Sydney per working resident

**12,300**

Skilled working residents leaving Western Sydney everyday in 2016



**Figure 12** Total number of local jobs and employed residents in the top 5 LGAs for the Information, Media and Telecommunications industry (Source: Residents employed and local jobs - NIEIR data accessed via economy.id (excl. Blue Mountains); Jobs-to-worker ratio and worker leakage - Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016)

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# Being Part of the action

## Choose Western Sydney

Moving to Western Sydney is the right decision! Over the past decade, planning and investment by government and industry and big moves by key institutions have shifted the role of Western Sydney and its potential for higher-order economic activities.

Western Sydney has incredible access to talent, materials and resources across Greater Metropolitan Sydney, and a strong customer base with 2.6 million people calling Western Sydney home.

In addition to being closer to talent, there are 3 compelling reasons to choose Western Sydney right now.

### 1. Significant planning and investment is enabling the change needed to support a strong regional economy

- Public investment into Parramatta as Sydney's second CBD, and the new Western Sydney International Airport and Bradfield is designing a new city structure, creating land supply and delivering facilities that are fit for purpose to support significant economic activity.
- A focus on the delivery of more homes is allowing people to move to and stay in Western Sydney.
- The NSW Government has announced the WestInvest Fund which allocates a total of \$5 billion towards improving economic, social and green infrastructure to support rejuvenation of local spaces for communities across Western Sydney.
- The NSW Government has commenced a review and policy reform on Employment Zones to simplify the process for delivering land for employment through increased flexibility and reduced complexity. This will enable businesses to locate in places where they need to be faster.

## 2. Western Sydney is diverse and well connected

- Western Sydney presents a variety of business environments to suit varied firms and industry sectors - from office precincts at Parramatta CBD, business campuses at Norwest and Sydney Olympic Park, to health and education precincts at Blacktown, Liverpool and Penrith, to significant employment lands that support freight and logistics operations in NSW and nationally.
- The M2, M4, M5 and M7 Motorways enable fast connections to businesses, suppliers, customers and a workforce living across Sydney.
- New mass transit connections between Western Sydney's centres are being delivered through the Sydney Metro West and Western Sydney Airport line.
- Improved digital connectivity is underway across the region, including the installation of smart city infrastructure and trialling 5G technology<sup>10</sup>

## 3. Key anchor institutions are already in Western Sydney

- Leading universities, international firms and key government agencies have already established themselves in Western Sydney.
- Customer bases and industry ecosystems have started to form around Western Sydney centres, presenting an opportunity to co-locate with like-minded businesses, establish strong networks, and shape the future of these centres.



10 NSW DPIE (2021) 'Digital Western Parkland City', <<https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/strategy-and-innovation/smart-places/Smart-Places-in-Action-Programs>>



## Centre profiles

Parramatta, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Western Sydney International Airport and Bradfield will be key locations with the greatest growth opportunities for knowledge-intensive industries. Talent will gravitate towards the supply of premium office spaces, co-location of leading universities and institutions, a strong presence of government offices, and diverse cultural and lifestyle offerings.

### PARRAMATTA

Over the next two years the Parramatta CBD will become the second largest CBD by office stock size behind Sydney, headlined by Walker Corporation's \$2.8 billion Parramatta Square redevelopment.

#### Key anchor institutions

- **State Government** – By 2022, more than 4,200 public service roles will be located in Parramatta across three agencies: NSW Department of Education, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the NSW Department of Finance, Services and Innovation.
- **Professional services** – Government relocations have attracted major professional services that support government activity, including Deloitte, KPMG, EY and PwC.
- **Finance, legal and insurance firms** – Major tenants for new office supply in Parramatta include NAB, Commonwealth Bank, Westpac, Coleman Greig and QBE.
- **Universities** – Western Sydney University, University of New England, University of New South Wales, University of Sydney and Swinburne University of Technology.

## Activity headlines

- Parramatta Square redevelopment – a major urban renewal project providing 6 new office towers, a refurbished Town Hall and upgraded public domain. Parramatta Square has added 130,000 square metres of prime office space to the CBD in the past three years<sup>11</sup>.
- Western Sydney University's (WSU) Parramatta City Campus precinct, completed in 2017. A new Engineering Innovation Hub at Hassall Street will be shared with UNSW and WSU<sup>12</sup>.
- Significant State investment in infrastructure including Parramatta Light Rail, which connects Westmead to Carlingford via Parramatta's CBD.
- Parramatta City Council are currently finalising a review of CBD Planning Framework review – reviewing the Local Environmental Plan to provide additional commercial floorspace in Parramatta's CBD.
- Sydney Metro West is a new 24-kilometre metro line with stations confirmed at Westmead, Parramatta, Sydney Olympic Park, North Strathfield, Burwood North, Five Dock, The Bays, Pyrmont and Hunter Street in the Sydney CBD.
- Building the **Powerhouse Parramatta**, the NSW government's largest investment in cultural infrastructure since the Sydney Opera House.

11 Knight Frank Research (2021) Parramatta Office Market: Market Report, April 2021

12 Knight Frank Research (2021) Parramatta Office Market: Market Report, April 2021

## Office Market Reports for Parramatta, Sydney CBD and North Sydney (2021)

Location/Grade	Total stock (sqm)	Average gross face rent (\$/sqm)
<b>Sydney CBD / prime</b>	3,137,209	1,385
<b>Sydney CBD / secondary</b>	1,944,908	1,017
<b>North Sydney / prime</b>	364,536	972
<b>North Sydney / secondary</b>	558,257	832
<b>Parramatta / prime</b>	368,113	707
<b>Parramatta / secondary</b>	441,413	592

**Figure 13** Total office market stock and rent in key centres (Source: Knight Frank Research/Property Council of Australia)

## LIVERPOOL

Liverpool CBD is located on the doorstep of an international airport and already has a strong presence of health and education institutions.

In 2018 Liverpool City Council rezoned 25 hectares in the heart of the CBD, creating new land supply and catalysing a pipeline of projects, worth more than a billion dollars, to grow and enhance the CBD.

To ensure that Liverpool CBD benefits from its proximity to the new Airport, Council is delivering the Fifteenth Avenue Smart Transit (FAST) Corridor: a smart public transport link that will directly connect Liverpool's CBD to the Airport.

### Key anchor institutions

- **Health** – Liverpool Public Hospital
- **Universities** – University of Wollongong's South Western Sydney Campus and Western Sydney University's Liverpool Campus and a Medical Research Centre, delivered in partnership with Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research, the Local Health District and UNSW.

The Liverpool Innovation Precinct has been established to bring together the South Western Sydney Local Health District, the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research, South Western Sydney Primary Health Network, Western Sydney University, UNSW, University of Wollongong, Department of Education, Sydney Catholic Schools, TAFE NSW and Liverpool City Council.

## CAMPBELLTOWN

Campbelltown is undergoing significant change and renewal. In April 2020, Campbelltown City Council released the *Reimagining Campbelltown CBD Masterplan*. This is Council's plan to transition Campbelltown into a vibrant city centre, leveraging its local and regional public transport connections, and its strengths as a health and education precinct.

The proposed Community and Justice Precinct is a new style of justice precinct combining Federal and State justice services alongside community services, providing high-value career opportunities and a more supportive experience for those utilising justice services in the rapidly growing Western Sydney region.

### Key anchor institutions

- **Education** – Western Sydney University's Campbelltown campus, Macarthur Clinical School and future Lang Walker AO Medical Research Building, in partnership with the Local Health District and UNSW, TAFE NSW South West Sydney

## WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT AND BRADFIELD

The Western Sydney International Nancy Bird-Walton Airport is anticipated to be operational by 2026. It is forecasted to service 10 million passengers by 2031 – more passengers than pre-COVID passenger movements in Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart and Darwin (Figure 13).

New economic opportunities and investment will be generated by increased Western Sydney access to national and international export and job markets, improved access to freight, and increased tourism opportunities as Western Sydney becomes a gateway to the city.

Bradfield will support businesses and operations of the Airport. The city is expected to host thousands of high-skilled jobs with the attraction of new industry sectors to Western Sydney – including technology, science, creative, advanced manufacturing, aerospace industries, and agribusiness.



**Figure 14** Western Sydney Airport's forecast passenger totals compared to other Australian capital city airports (Source: BITRE (\*estimated Western Sydney International Airport total passengers in 2031))



# Responding to changing employee preferences

## Working flexibly and locally

Changes to business-as-usual brought on by COVID-19 restrictions has resulted in a worldwide shift in well-worn working arrangements.

Employers need to be aware and responsive to how employee preferences are changing and consider what this means for where and how people work.



For those who can work remotely, the NSW Innovation and Productivity Council's Remote Working Insights report found that the preferred option is working at home 2 to 3 days per week. This is particularly true for employees working in knowledge-intensive industries who have the ability to fulfil their responsibilities while working from home.<sup>13</sup>

These changing employee preferences invite employers to consider changes to workplaces and office locations that are close to where employees live. Businesses can support the digital and physical requirements of remote working through 'third spaces' and satellite offices (see In Focus breakout box).

The daily pilgrimage of talented workers from Western Sydney to Eastern Sydney can no longer be taken for granted. There are risks for employers that are not responsive to these shifting preferences. Already surveys are showing that business that do not offer flexible working arrangements are risking their ability to attract and retain talent.

Microsoft's 2021 global Work Trends Index identifies a sharp rise in employee's job-switching intent: 41 per cent of employees are considering leaving their current employer this year. If employers are not meeting employee expectations by prioritising employee experience, they risk accessing the most talented workforce.<sup>14</sup>

13 NSW Innovation and Productivity Council (2020), NSW Remote Working Insights: Our experience during COVID-19 and what it means for the future of work. < <https://www.investment.nsw.gov.au/about-investment-nsw/nsw-innovation-and-productivity-council/our-publications/nsw-remote-working-insights/>>

14 Microsoft (2021) 2021 Work Trend Index: Annual Report. < <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>>



## IN FOCUS

### Closer to Home: Unlocking the hybrid workplace in Western Sydney

In May 2021, Business Western Sydney released **Closer to Home** – a report on how to seize the opportunity presented by the pandemic to shift from business-as-usual to better support Western Sydney workers.

To respond to employee preferences for 'hybrid' working models, **Closer to Home** recommends that the public and private sector consider developing 'touch down' spaces in Western Sydney – small offices closer to where employees live so they can access the necessary hardware or software of working life without the long commute.

Not only is the cost of commercial real estate comparatively cheaper in Western Sydney, this also presents an opportunity for businesses to explore co-working spaces and/or co-locating with other organisations. The **Closer to Home** report recommendations include:

- State Government to continue to pilot and expand hubs across Sydney that can house both public and private sector, in key centres including Campbelltown, Liverpool, Penrith, Blacktown, Bankstown, Olympic Park and Parramatta - ensuring a large portion of the workforce can work 15 minutes from home
- Private companies to consider their structure and invest in a more distributed workforce with satellite offices and co-working spaces in Western Sydney closer to where their employees live
- Local Government to ensure each of their city centres have the services and amenities to accommodate a significant increase in local employment, and ensure planning and land use controls encourage agglomeration

## Benefits of being 'Closer to Talent'

By locating in Western Sydney – and being 'closer to talent' – you can help your company create a more diverse and satisfied workforce by keeping people in their local place. There are significant benefits that can come from removing barriers of distance and cost for your employees.

These benefits are widespread across your business, your employees, and the places in across our city.

### GREATER ACCESS TO WESTERN SYDNEY'S NEW GENERATION OF WORKERS

Locating close to where people live can give your business immediate access to the new generation of Sydney's labour force.

This is especially true for centres in Western Sydney with Universities. Locating business operations near University Campuses in Parramatta, Liverpool, Campbelltown and Penrith increases your visibility for graduates and will make your business more appealing to the strong pipeline of graduates.

### ENABLING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WORK

The distance required to access well-suited jobs discourages talented people from the workforce – particularly women. Participation rates are lower for women in Western Sydney. While there are cultural factors at play in the decision to work, locating in Western Sydney you removes some of the barriers to work.

Enabling women's participation in work can give your business access to an untapped, more diverse labour force. At the same time, you are increasing opportunities for career progression and making it more achievable to balance caring responsibilities with part-time and flexible working opportunities.

### WELLBEING BENEFITS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

Removing or reducing the commute from employees' days creates the conditions for happier employees.

The commute to and from work is commonly cited as the most stressful part of people's days. Western Sydney workers have some of the longest commutes in the country. Commuting is shown to contribute to a number of negative health outcomes, including stress, poorer health outcomes, and straining family relationships.

### BETTER ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR LOCAL PLACES

If you relocate you are making it more appealing for other like-minded businesses to do the same. Be a first mover, set the scene, and start your network.

In addition, locating closer to talent in Western Sydney not only retains people in their local places, but retains their everyday spending. This will have positive benefits on the local economy – for example, more people in place that need coffee, breakfast and lunch during the work day, more people accessing local services, more bars and restaurants after 5pm.

# A Voice for the Region

Formerly known as the Western Sydney Business Chamber, Business Western Sydney is the region's peak business advocacy organisation representing a regional economic footprint in the tens of billions.

Our members include the CEOs, chairs and leading executives from more than 110 top global businesses, major Australian corporations, local not-for-profits and government agencies with a significant presence in Western Sydney.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we focus on bringing together business and industry with government to create communities of shared interest for the benefit of Western Sydney.

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