

Media Release

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New Figures Reveal Extra Distance Faced by Western Sydney Workers

New figures show that Macarthur residents are forced to travel almost three times the distance to get to their place of employment compared to workers in Inner Sydney.

Census data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and analysed per region by the Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue, reveal that employees in Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly spend on average, more time commuting to their place of employment, than any other worker in Sydney.

Dialogue Chairman Christopher Brown AM said the research reaffirmed the need for job centres in Western Sydney, and stronger, faster transport connections, particularly in the south-west and north growth areas.

“We need to get serious about job-creation – and that means the development of strategies aimed at helping fuel more employment centres in Western Sydney – closer to where the majority of Sydneysiders will live within the next 15 years,” Mr Brown said.

“Currently there are more than 300,000 residents leaving the region each day for work and this trend needs to be reversed. It’s particularly difficult for those in the Macarthur region who can spend more than four hours every day getting to and from their place of employment.”

Mr Brown added that the State and Federal Government’s commitment to the creation of 30-minute cities was a step in the right direction, as was their investment in critical transport infrastructure projects, headed by the North-South Rail Link and West Metro.

“The employment opportunities that are set to come off the back of the Western Sydney Airport and across the south-west have been widely publicised, and the North-South rail link has a vital role in connecting the region to these jobs of the future,” Mr Brown said.

“Unfortunately, only the northern part of this rail project has a firm delivery date. Residents in the Macarthur, and other areas in the south-west, where population growth is set to explode over the coming decades will be left to spend hours every day stuck on the M5 or jumping from train to train, unless something is done.

“If Western Sydney is going to be housing the majority of the city’s population then the very least it deserves is the infrastructure that supports its employment and lifestyle ambitions.”

General Manager of Campbelltown City Council, Lindy Deitz, backed calls for improvements to transport infrastructure saying the figures proved what residents of the Macarthur region had always known.

“Distance truly is a tyranny for residents of this region, who can spend half a working day travelling to and from their place of employment,” she said.

“Not only is this a waste of time, it means people are tired and frustrated before their working day even begins. This eventually takes a toll on people’s physical and mental health, places a strain on relationships, and clogs our roads and public transport.

“It also means that people are forced to place children in day-care or before and after school care for longer hours. This imposes an additional financial burden on families – not to mention the strain on young children who may not get home until after 6pm.”

Commuting distance from Place of Usual Residence by Region – 2016

Region	No. of employed people living in region	Average commuting distance (kms)
Macarthur	125,644	25.8
Inner Sydney	722,380	9.3
Greater Western Sydney	964,130	18.1
Rest of Sydney	1,073,266	11.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - 2071.0.55.001 Census of Population and Housing: Commuting to Work – More Stories from the Census

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