

# TOURISM ON THE MOVE

The need for an integrated NSW tourism and transport policy

---

May 2015



TOURISM & TRANSPORT FORUM (TTF) IS A  
NATIONAL, MEMBER-FUNDED CEO FORUM,  
ADVOCATING THE PUBLIC POLICY INTERESTS  
OF LEADING CORPORATIONS AND  
INSTITUTIONS IN THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM,  
TRANSPORT AND AVIATION SECTORS.

**For further information, please contact:**

**Trent Zimmerman**

Deputy CEO and Director, Transport Policy  
Tourism & Transport Forum  
E: [tzimmerman@ttf.org.au](mailto:tzimmerman@ttf.org.au)

**Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF)**

Level 8  
8-10 Loftus Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
T: +61 2 9240 2000  
[www.ttf.org.au](http://www.ttf.org.au)

TTF would like to acknowledge the support of its members in the preparation of this strategy and the work of former TTF policy analyst, Benoit Bost, in its research and preparation.

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	5
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....	6
<b>1. THE NEED FOR A TOURISM AND TRANSPORT POLICY.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.1. THE VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1.1. Tourism, a pillar of the Australian economy .....	9
1.1.2. The contribution of the visitor economy in NSW .....	10
<b>1.2. WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO REACH THE NSW 2020 TOURISM TARGET .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.2.1. Keeping NSW ahead of the game .....	12
1.2.2. The need for a whole-of-government approach.....	13
<b>1.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURISM AND TRANSPORT.....</b>	<b>13</b>
1.3.1. The role of transport in destination management.....	13
1.3.2. The role of transport in destination development and regional dispersal .....	14
1.3.3. The value of the visitor market in public transport.....	16
<b>2. IMPROVING THE VISITOR'S JOURNEY .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.1. VISITOR-FRIENDLY TICKETING .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1.1. Develop an Opal visitor product.....	17
2.1.2. Multilingual Opal top-up machines .....	19
2.1.3. Extend the Opal card to private ferry operators .....	19
2.1.4. Transport ticketing for international conventions and exhibitions .....	19
2.1.5. Transport support for major events.....	20
<b>2.2. ACCESS TO INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>21</b>
2.2.1. Access to digital information.....	21
2.2.2. Develop a transport app for visitors.....	21
2.2.3. Distribution of visitor packs.....	21
2.2.4. Promotion of tourism on public transport .....	22
<b>2.3. WAYFINDING.....</b>	<b>23</b>
2.3.1. Consistent signage.....	23
2.3.2. Wayfinding on public transport.....	24
2.3.3. Staff presence at key stations .....	25
<b>2.4. EXTRA CUSTOMER SERVICE ON VISITOR ROUTES.....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.4.1. Free Wi-Fi at stations and on-board rolling stock and buses .....	25
2.4.2. Catering on Sydney ferries .....	26



<b>3. EXTENDING THE REACH OF VISITORS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>3.1. IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND FROM SYDNEY GATEWAYS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1.1. Removing the Station Access Fee at domestic and international terminal stations.....	27
3.1.2. Airport rolling stock.....	28
3.1.3. Support Western Sydney Airport with rail infrastructure .....	29
3.1.4. Increase air access to Sydney Airport.....	29
3.1.5. Transport services to and from cruise passenger terminals .....	30
3.1.6. Campaign for shared cruise ship access to Garden Island .....	31
<b>3.2. ENCOURAGE DISPERSAL THROUGH IMPROVED ACCESS TO REGIONAL NSW .....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.2.1. Refreshing NSW regional rail.....	31
3.2.2. Developing international regional airports .....	33
3.2.3. Support domestic air services to regional NSW .....	33
3.2.4. Improve air access to Lord Howe Island.....	34
3.2.5. Improve the drivability of the regional road network.....	35
3.2.6. Support the caravanning and camping industry .....	35
3.2.7. Promote regional bicycle tourism .....	36
<b>3.3. ENHANCE TRANSPORT LINKS TO MAJOR VISITOR PRECINCTS.....</b>	<b>37</b>
3.3.1. Sydney CBD light rail and the impact of the construction period .....	37
3.3.2. CBD street amenity and active transport .....	38
3.3.3. Barangaroo ferry wharf .....	39
3.3.4. Support the development of Sydney Olympic Park .....	39
3.3.5. Rail access to Bondi Beach .....	40
3.3.6. Improving access to Sydney's waterfront .....	41
3.3.7. Plan for transport links to the western harbour precinct and Bays precinct.....	41
3.3.8. Weekend and late night public transport .....	42
<b>3.4. IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH OTHER TRANSPORT SERVICES .....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.4.1. Develop a taxi strategy for Sydney CBD .....	43
3.4.2. Coach access to Sydney CBD .....	43
3.4.3. Harmonise car rental regulation .....	44

# INTRODUCTION

---

Creating liveable cities starts with transport.

Think of London and red double-decker buses will feature. Movies set in Paris use the ornate entrances of the city's Métro as visual shorthand just as tense scenes in the New York Subway punctuate many a US drama.

Where public transport becomes part of a city's tapestry, it becomes part of its brand. Few tourists will have left Hong Kong without a ride on, and picture of, the Star Ferry. Similarly, riding the 400km/h Maglev train is the single defining moment for many Shanghai visitors and San Francisco's street cars are emblematic of that city. As the Sydney 'First Fleeter' ferries and Melbourne trams demonstrate, a city's public transport can become tourist icons in their own right.

Beyond the iconography that public transport can provide, the ability to move around quickly, cheaply and efficiently leaves a deep imprint on visitors' minds. The simplicity of European city ticketing is not lost on the thousands of Australian tourists who venture to Germany, France, Denmark or the UK each year. One ticket, valid for several days, can be a great destination marketing tool once access to museums and attractions is integrated into the transport fare. Just as annual passes encourage locals to visit attractions more regularly, so too visitor cards provide an incentive to visit more attractions than planned.

Good public transport systems need investment. Visitors provide a perfect revenue stream, but one whose potential goes untapped. Often without access to a private car, fully independent tourists rely on public transport to get around. Tourists prop up services in Sydney like the 333 bus route to Bondi Beach and the Manly ferry, subsidising the provision of efficient, regular services for locals. So too the Airport Rail Link, whose patronage is swelled by international tourists more familiar with airport rail links than many Australians.

This in turn creates a virtuous circle. Increased ridership leads to higher fare box recovery, allowing for greater investment, which leads to better connectivity and improves the quality of life for residents. A good transport system impacts tourists who leave with a better impression and recommend the city to their networks.

Yet too often cities do not consider the needs of visitors in planning their commuter networks. Poor signage, confusing fares and the exclusivity of English language are among the gripes of visitors to Sydney. There are also opportunities to use public transport to drive visitation outside of Sydney and into regional NSW. Most visitors live in cities and countries better connected than Sydney and so instinctively turn to trams, buses, ferries and trains to get around. With the right products and the right marketing, many more can be encouraged to sample the delights of the Hunter Valley, the North and South Coast and the Blue Mountains.

Unleashing the potential of tourism and transport requires a whole of government approach. NSW needs a strategy that brings the visitor to the heart of transport planning. The NSW government needs to consider both the benefits better integration would bring in revenue terms and also the requirements of the millions of visitors who visit the state every year.

TTF has developed a sound understanding of both industries and has compiled in this report a number of recommendations to the NSW government for inclusion in a future joint policy. These recommendations aim to improve the visitors' experience in NSW and will require better coordination between government agencies, especially Destination NSW and Transport for NSW.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>Develop a tourism and transport policy</b>
<b>Develop an integrated tourism and transport policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In consultation with the tourism industry, develop an integrated tourism and transport policy.</li> <li>• Improve coordination between transport and tourism government agencies and develop a mutual understanding of the two sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Improving the visitor's journey</b>
<b>Visitor Friendly Ticketing</b>
<b>Develop an Opal visitor product</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a transport smartcard dedicated to visitors providing unlimited travel for a set duration and fixed fee.</li> <li>• A visitor Opal product should include discounts to visitor attractions and other visitor services.</li> <li>• Extend the distribution network of the Opal visitor card to major hotels and visitor attractions and offer to visitors the possibility to order online the Opal card before their trip.</li> </ul>
<b>Multilingual Opal top-up machines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include multilingual options reflecting the diverse origins of visitors to NSW to future Opal top-up machines.</li> </ul>
<b>Extend the Opal card to private ferry operators</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage a fair and competitive environment by extending Opal to private ferry operators covering commuter services.</li> </ul>
<b>Transport ticketing for international conventions and exhibitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an Opal card to attendees of major international conventions and exhibitions.</li> </ul>
<b>Transport support for major events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with major event organisers and venues to better integrate the transport service fare as part of an event's ticketing.</li> <li>• Ensure that transport maintenance works do not clash with major events and disrupt services.</li> </ul>
<b>Access to information</b>
<b>Access to digital information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure digital transport information is available in foreign languages.</li> <li>• Better integrate transport and trip planning information on tourism business' websites.</li> </ul>
<b>Develop a transport app for visitors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a smartphone app combining tourism and transport information.</li> </ul>
<b>Distribution of visitor packs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and distribute a visitor pack including an Opal card, and basic transport information.</li> </ul>
<b>Promotion of tourism on public transport</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the visibility of tourism promotion on the public transport network.</li> </ul>
<b>Wayfinding</b>
<b>Consistent signage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove inconsistencies in wayfinding signage between different land authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Wayfinding on public transport</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide basic wayfinding information at bus stops and on-board buses.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff presence at key stations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate and provide training to Sydney Trains staff to proactively assist visitors.</li> </ul>
<b>Extra customer service on visitor routes</b>
<b>Free Wi-Fi at stations and on-board rolling stock and buses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll-out free Wi-Fi on the public transport network, starting with the Airport Line.</li> </ul>
<b>Catering on Sydney Ferries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the opportunity for Harbour City Ferries to provide catering services to its passengers, especially on the most popular route among visitors, the Manly to Circular Quay service.</li> </ul>

## Extending the reach of visitors

### Improve access to and from Sydney gateways

#### Removing the Station Access Fee at domestic and international terminal stations

- Remove the station access fee at airport stations to encourage higher use of existing train services among air travellers and airport employees.
- Negotiate with the operator of the airport rail link the provision of additional bus routes to Sydney Airport.

#### Airport rolling stock

- Improve the fit-out of trains servicing Sydney Airport to include luggage room, free Wi-Fi and real-time information screens.

#### Support Western Sydney Airport with rail infrastructure

- Extend the South West Rail Link to Badgerys Creek and the Western Line.
- Seek federal funding to support the funding of rail links to Western Sydney Airport.

#### Increase air access to Sydney Airport

- Continue to advocate for reforming Sydney Airport's operating restrictions

#### Transport services to and from cruise passenger terminals

- Improve access for taxis and coaches to cruise ship terminals.
- Investigate the feasibility of ferry services between the White Bay terminal and Circular Quay during the cruise season.

#### Campaign for shared cruise ship access to Garden Island

- Work with the federal government to increase cruise shipping access and implement customs facilities to process passengers at Garden Island.

### Encourage dispersal through improved access to regional NSW

#### Refreshing NSW regional rail

- Replace aging rolling stock with modern trains with aircraft style fit-out.
- Upgrade rail infrastructure along major regional routes.

#### Developing international regional airports

- Engage with the federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development on the review of International Operator's Guidelines and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service-led Joint Review of Border Fees, Taxes and Charges.

#### Support domestic air services to regional NSW

- Expedite implementation of recommendations from the final report of the Regional Aviation Services Inquiry that were supported and supported in principle in the government response.
- Continue to create an operating environment that supports regional airports and regional aviation services through implementation of efficient regulations and provision of funding programs.

#### Improve air access to Lord Howe Island

- Continue to seek environmentally-sensitive runway extension options to continue air services to Lord Howe Island.

#### Improve the drivability of the regional road network

- Implement region-specific funds to assist local councils to maintain and upgrade roads that are vital to the local visitor economy.
- Maintain funding and timeframes for highway upgrades.

#### Support the caravanning and camping industry

- Improve the visibility, support and marketing of caravanning and camping to international visitors.

#### Promoting regional bicycle tourism

- Promote regional bicycle tourism through new rail trails and better bike storage facilities on-board regional train services.

### Enhance transport links to major visitor precincts

#### Sydney CBD light rail and the impact of the construction period

- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy targeting visitors to mitigate the impact of the construction period on the visitor's experience and tourism industry.

#### CBD street amenity and active transport

- Improve the walkability of the city through design excellence and reduction of waiting times at key intersections for pedestrians.

**Barangaroo ferry wharf**

- Maintain funding and construction timeframes for the construction of a ferry hub at Barangaroo.
- Ensure sufficient berth space is allocated to private ferry operators.

**Support the development of Sydney Olympic Park**

- Improve public transport connections to Sydney Olympic Park through better direct bus services, light rail links as part of the Western Sydney Light Rail network and, in the longer term, direct rail links to the Sydney Olympic Park station.

**Rail access to Bondi Beach**

- Extend the Eastern Suburbs Rail Line to Bondi Beach to better service the commuter and visitor markets.

**Improving access to Sydney's waterfront**

- Improve access to Sydney's waterfront through continuous accessible footpath, consistent wayfinding, enhanced ferry services and late night services to cultural venues.

**Plan for transport links to the western harbour precinct and Bays precinct**

- Plan public transport, road and active transport links to support the development of the western harbour and the Bays precincts.

**Weekend and late night public transport**

- Support Sydney's night time economy through extended hours of operation on the public transport network.
- Maintain good level of service on the public transport network on weekends, especially around major visitor attractions such as beaches and sporting event venues.

**Improve coordination with other transport services****Develop a taxi strategy for Sydney CBD**

- Better integrate the needs of the taxi industry in the government's transport strategies.
- Develop a customer-oriented strategy benchmarked against world best practice.
- Ensure taxi ranks' locations and times of operation reflect the needs of visitors.

**Coach access to Sydney CBD**

- Develop a coach access strategy for Sydney CBD, including a new coach terminal at Central.

**Harmonise car rental regulation**

- Work with the federal and other state governments to harmonise the tax and regulation framework applying to the car rental industry across Australia.



# 1. THE NEED FOR A TOURISM AND TRANSPORT POLICY

## 1.1. THE VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY

### 1.1.1. Tourism, a pillar of the Australian economy

Against the backdrop of an economy in transition, tourism continues to emerge as one of the foundations of Australia's future prosperity.

The significant potential of Australia's tourism industry was highlighted in the recent Deloitte report *Positioning for Prosperity, Catching the next wave*. The report identified tourism as one of Australia's five super growth industries capable of collectively delivering an additional \$250 billion to the national economy over the next 20 years<sup>1</sup>.

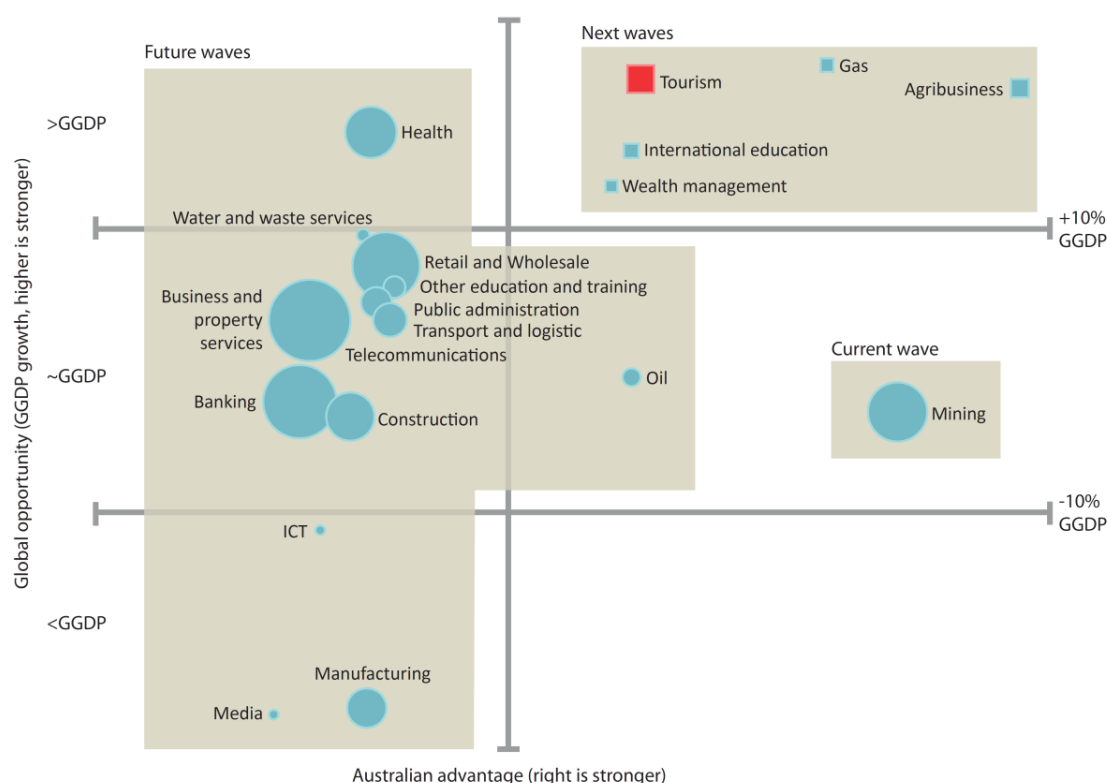
Results from the International Visitor Survey for the year ending September 2014 conducted for Tourism Research Australia show international visitor arrivals to Australia increased 8 per cent to 6.3 million while trip spend increased 9 per cent to

a record \$30.7 billion<sup>2</sup>. In times of low global economic growth, these are encouraging results.

Australian tourism offers high-employment opportunities, a rapidly expanding customer base and a strong competitive advantage. Tourism is already Australia's largest service export, employing almost twice as many people as the mining industry, and generating expenditure in excess of \$100 billion every year - more than all Australian primary industries combined.

There is still significant room for growth in tourism. The federal government, along with all states and territories, has endorsed an aggressive tourism target as part of the Tourism 2020 strategy. Very strong growth in Asian visitor spending, the fastest growing segment of Australia's visitor economy, underpins the target of doubling nominal overnight visitor spending from \$70 billion in 2009 to \$115-140 billion by 2020.

**Figure 1: Australia current, next and future waves of growth**



Source: Deloitte Access Economics

<sup>1</sup> *Positioning for Prosperity, Catching the next wave* – Deloitte, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> *International Visitors in Australia* – Tourism Research Australia, September 2014.

### 1.1.2. The contribution of the visitor economy in NSW

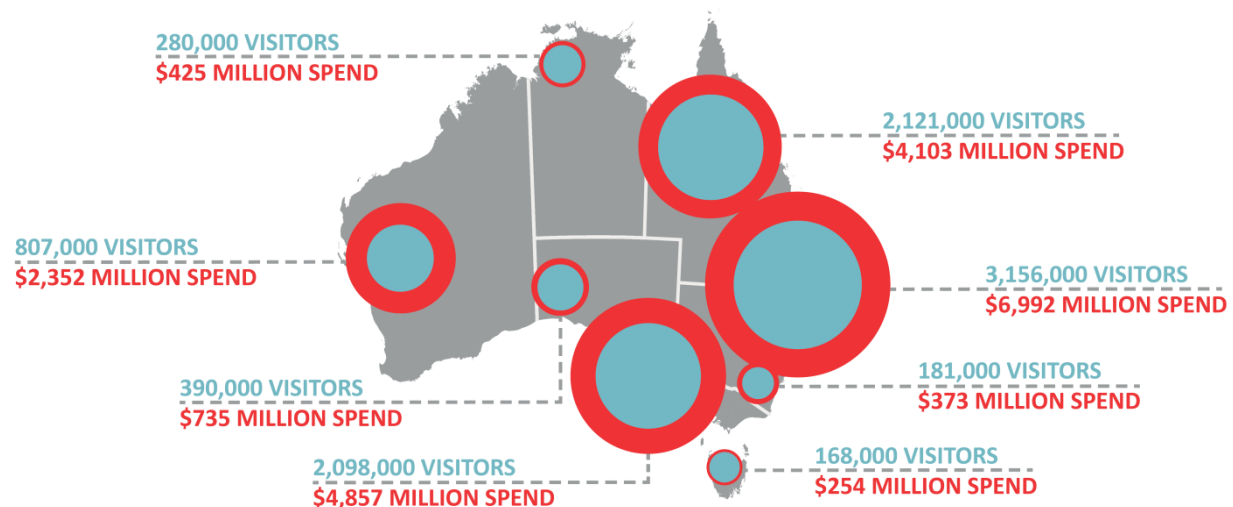
Sydney is the nation's gateway and hosts international symbols for Australia such as the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge and Bondi Beach. NSW is also home to some of Australia's most iconic regional destinations such as the Blue Mountains, Hunter Valley and the Australian Alps. NSW has, not surprisingly, been a popular destination choice for domestic and international visitors in both the traditional western markets and growing eastern markets. It remains the Australian state with the highest number of visitors, visitor nights, and visitor expenditure.

Domestic and international visitors spend an average of \$75 million in NSW every day and

support 267,000 jobs across the state<sup>4</sup>. Tourism employment extends far beyond travel agents and those who work in hotels. It includes chefs and cooks, transport workers from pilots to taxi drivers, tour guides and those who provide services to visitors across the state's cultural, attraction and entertainment offerings and in our retail stores. There are approximately 91,000 businesses relying on tourism in NSW, representing 13 per cent of all businesses in NSW<sup>5</sup>.

This makes tourism a critical economic driver for NSW, generating \$33 billion in overall expenditure for the state. Tourism contributed \$28.4 billion in gross state product (GSP) in 2012-13, including \$13.3 billion in direct GSP and another \$15.1 billion in flow-on indirect GSP, a 6 per cent share of the New South Wales economy<sup>6</sup>.

**Figure 2: Visitors numbers and spend by state<sup>3</sup>**



Source: IVS - Tourism Research Australia

<sup>3</sup> Tourism Research Australia, year ending September 2014.

<sup>4</sup> *Tourism Satellite Account 2012-13*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, cat. No. 5249.0 and State Satellite Accounts 2012-13, Tourism Research Australia.

<sup>5</sup> *Counts of Australian Businesses*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, June 2014.

<sup>6</sup> *Tourism Satellite Account 2012-13*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, cat. No. 5249.0 and State Satellite Accounts 2012-13, Tourism Research Australia.

In the 2014 edition of the New South Wales Tourism Business Count & Employment Atlas, TTF analysed data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Tourism Research Australia to provide estimates on the tourism industry's contribution to employment for each of NSW's 93 Legislative Assembly seats.

Among the seven electorates with the highest proportion of tourism employment, three are in metropolitan Sydney and four in regional areas. Tourism has far-reaching impacts on local communities in terms of employment and upkeep of basic services. For example the rapid demographic growth that occurred on the NSW coastline over the past decade can be largely attributed to tourism activation in these regions.

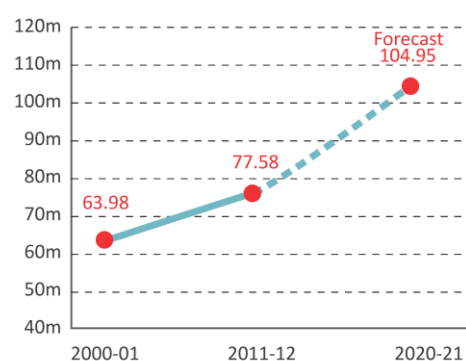
**Figure 3: NSW electorates with the highest intensity of tourism employment**

Rank	Electorate	Tourism employment	% of total employment
1	Bega	1900	7.3%
2	Tweed	1900	7.3%
3	Rockdale	3200	7.2%
4	Ballina	2100	7.1%
5	Sydney	3600	7.1%
6	Coffs Harbour	1900	6.8%
7	Kogarah	2400	6.5%
NSW Total		158600	5.1%

The visitor economy is also critical to the Sydney CBD. Research conducted by the City of Sydney Council estimated that in 2013 the City of Sydney Local Government Area (Sydney LGA) attracted 480,000 visitors and students a day, with the combined shopping spends of international and domestic visitors to the LGA estimated to make up around 20 to 25 per cent of the city's retail turnover<sup>7</sup>. Tourism is a major contributor to the Sydney LGA economy with around 11 per cent of its workforce directly or indirectly employed by the tourism industry.

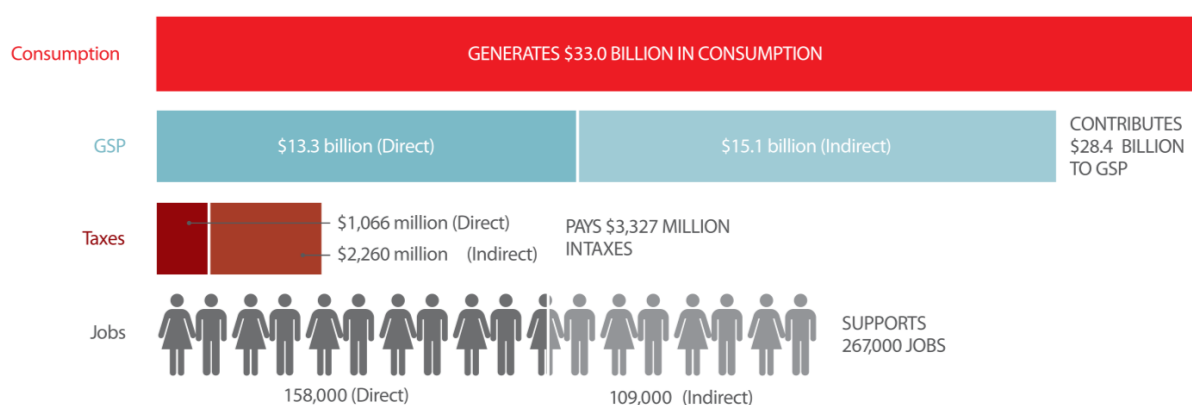
The contribution of tourism to the local economy is expected to grow further with the number of visitor nights anticipated to increase by 35.3 per cent from 2012 level by 2020-21.

**Figure 4: Visitor nights to Sydney (million)**



Source: Tourism Action Plan, City of Sydney 2013

**Figure 5: Impact of the visitor economy in NSW**



Source: Tourism Research Australia (2014), State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2012-13

<sup>7</sup> Tourism Action Plan - City of Sydney, 2013.

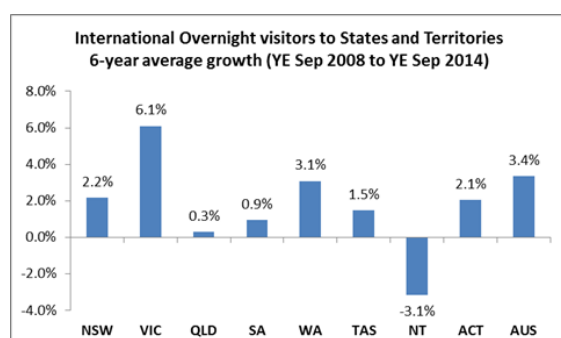
## 1.2. WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO REACH THE NSW 2020 TOURISM TARGET

### 1.2.1. Keeping NSW ahead of the game

The NSW government understands the importance of tourism to its economy and has set a similar target to the one set by the Australian government in 2009. NSW aims to increase overnight expenditure to \$36.6 billion by 2020 - \$18.3 billion above current expenditure levels. TTF commends the NSW government on the leadership shown in forming the NSW Visitor Economy Taskforce and progress made to date on the NSW Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan<sup>8</sup>.

NSW leads Australia in terms of visitor numbers, visitor nights and visitor expenditure. However, despite a 2.2 per cent average growth in the number of international overnight visitors between 2008 and 2014, NSW has underperformed against the national average (3.4 per cent) and in particular against key competitor destinations such as Victoria (6.1 per cent).

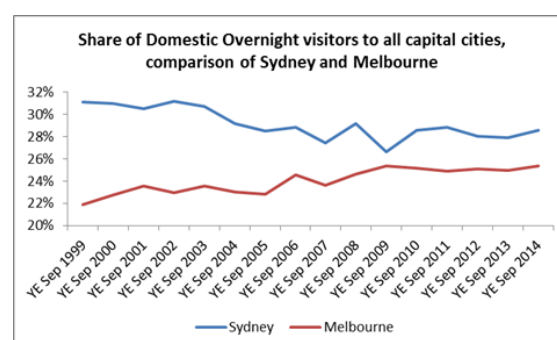
**Figure 6:**



However, NSW remains number one in volume terms with more than half (51 per cent) of all international visitors to Australia visiting NSW.

Similarly, while NSW retains a greater share of all domestic overnight visitors with growth being recorded in recent years, Melbourne has been narrowing the gap. In order for Sydney to continue this positive growth trend and stay ahead of Melbourne, additional support from government across a range of measures will be required.

**Figure 7:**



<sup>8</sup> NSW Government Department of Trade and investment, *Visitor Economy Action Plan: The NSW Government Response to the Final Report of Visitor Economy Taskforce*, December 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

### 1.2.2. The need for a whole-of-government approach

By its very nature, tourism supports a wide range of businesses and industries. The Visitor Economy Taskforce identified a number of actions required to reach the target of doubling overnight visitor expenditure in NSW by 2020. These range from improving the visitor experience to better targeting growth markets, overcoming the shortfall in Sydney's accommodation market, increasing flight capacity, improving cruise ship access, filling the gap in skilled labour supply and re-launching regional tourism marketing<sup>10</sup>.

Such a diverse set of actions needs a whole of government approach and at all levels of government. Whether it is taxation, immigration, infrastructure, marketing or regulatory reforms, there must be a coordinated approach to promoting tourism. While the relationship between these portfolios and tourism is direct and well understood, other strategies can be

developed to improve the visitor's experience and promote NSW as a visitor-friendly destination.

This report focuses on one aspect of destination management: enhancing the mobility of visitors within Sydney and NSW. The report does not address travel from the visitor's origin to destination such as air or cruise travel but rather examines what can be done to improve the traveller's journey once in NSW.

The majority of recommendations included in this report require action from Transport for NSW and will require a greater collaboration between transport authorities and tourism agencies.

TTF is calling for the development of a tourism and transport policy that integrates the activities of relevant departments and tourism agencies.

The announcement during the 2014 state election that the NSW government will develop such a strategy is an important step forward.

## 1.3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

### 1.3.1. The role of transport in destination management

Tourism's very existence depends on accessibility. This concept is widely accepted when focusing on air and cruise travel to a destination, but the role of transport networks and services within a destination are often less considered. The visitor market is not the primary target of public transport services which largely focus on the local commuter task. However, the relationship between the visitor economy and passenger transport cannot be underestimated.

With the exception of those using the car rental sector, international tourists and business travellers frequently do not have access to personal vehicles when visiting Australia. Public transport, taxis and coach services remain the primary mode of transport for visitors within major metropolitan areas.

Transport services and their legibility have an impact on the experience of the visitor and the appeal of a destination in many ways, starting with arrival at Australian international airports and sea ports.

Airports and transport links from the airport are the first impressions of the city and the country for most visitors. As such, they significantly affect the visitor's experience. The majority of successful international airports around the globe are serviced by rail links providing visitors easy access to the destination's city centre.



Rail services can offer a faster, more frequent, comfortable and reliable journey for air passengers arriving in Australia after a long flight. Connecting airports to rail networks also enhances the accessibility of airport precincts for the large workforce they employ. While Brisbane and Sydney and soon Perth airports are serviced by rail links, such links do not exist at Melbourne and Canberra airports and are not yet funded for the planned Western Sydney Airport. Adelaide is also only serviced by bus services, although it has the

<sup>10</sup> Final Report of the Visitor Economy taskforce, June 2012.



potential to be serviced by light rail. Illustrating the importance of good transport links from airports for the visitor economy, the American Travel Coalition found that cities with rail links from the airport to the city centre saw hotel revenues and occupancy rates grow roughly 20% faster than those cities without rail connections<sup>11</sup>.

The visitor's experience of the broader urban public transport network is an important factor contributing to the overall visitor's satisfaction of a destination. Research conducted in Western Australia found that transportation was the second most important, yet the most poorly perceived in terms of performance of the 13 attributes measured<sup>12</sup>. Great international cities such as London, Paris, New York, Dubai or Hong Kong are well known for their urban rail networks and the ease of getting around. Conversely, a poor experience on the transport network will negatively affect a visitor's stay and reduce the chances of the visitor promoting the city as a destination within their professional, family and social networks.



Many factors will influence a visitor's experience of the local transport network. A visitor's needs differ from the expectations of the regular commuter who is primarily concerned about travel times, reliability and safety. Regular users generally know how much their daily commute costs, where the bus stop or train station is and how to keep updated on service disruption. With a limited understanding of a network and language barriers in many instances, a visitor requires more assistance to plan and complete their journey on public transport services.

Understanding the local public transport network is the most significant challenge for visitors. The fare structure and ticketing system can be confusing, information difficult to access, and wayfinding systems inadequate. Unfortunately, because the majority of regular public transport users know how to travel on the network, these areas have not been the focus of successive governments and transport departments.

In order to improve the visitor's stay and increase the customer's destination satisfaction, specific attention needs to be given to the needs of visitors.

### **1.3.2. The role of transport in destination development and regional dispersal**

The Tourism 2020 target is to double visitor expenditure. A key part of achieving this ambitious target is to encourage visitors to stay longer and travel to regional areas within NSW.

NSW does not have a shortage of tourism products. From Sydney Harbour to the Blue Mountains, Byron Bay, the Snowy Mountains, Jervis Bay, Dubbo, the Hunter Valley, Coffs Harbour and other natural, cultural and culinary destinations, there are destinations that offer visitors an unforgettable experience. The challenge is to make these destinations easily accessible. The concept of better accessibility leading to more visitor expenditure can be tested on two different scales, within metropolitan areas and between cities and regional areas.

In urban areas, the ease of access to local visitor attractions across the metropolitan area, primarily via public transport, is essential to promoting the city as a holistic destination and broadening the tourism offer. Good transport links enable visitors staying in a CBD hotel to do day trips to Taronga Zoo, Manly, the eastern suburbs beaches, Parramatta, the Blue Mountains and other metropolitan attractions.

Sydney's public transport links are also critical to the promotion of major events. With over 130 events across NSW in 2014 and over \$510 million in visitor spending, the sector is a critical component of the visitor economy<sup>13</sup>. In addition to visitors coming to Australia to attend an event, they provide the opportunity to showcase Australia to the world. The Opening Series of Major League Baseball promoted Sydney to an estimated international audience of more than 168 million people<sup>13</sup>.

Sporting and cultural events or international conventions attract large crowds. Making sure the public transport network adequately responds to the increase in travel demand is a prerequisite to the success of an event.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Travel Association, Support Investments to Modernize America's Travel and Transportation Infrastructure.

<sup>12</sup> Pritchard, M.P., Havitz, M.E., 2006. *Destination appraisal: an analysis of critical incidents*.

<sup>13</sup> *Big year of major events for NSW in 2014* – Media release from the Hon. Troy Grant MP, 06/02/2015.

Improving access to major events venues such as Sydney Olympic Park, the Moore Park Precinct, the Sydney International Convention Centre or the CBD will increase Sydney's potential in hosting major international events in what is a very competitive market.

Beyond metropolitan areas, transport links facilitate the dispersal of visitors on a larger scale. Regional Tourism has a great potential in NSW which is home to spectacular natural landscapes, rich aboriginal history and culture, major music festivals and internationally recognised food and wine products.

Despite these key assets, the dispersal potential of international visitors to regional NSW is relatively untapped.

Traditional markets such as visitors from New Zealand, North America or Europe tend to visit regional areas but visitors from the fastest growing markets in Asia tend to limit their visits to cities. Only 17 per cent of international visitors to Sydney and 6 per cent of domestic visitors stayed overnight in one or more regions outside Sydney with the level of dispersal particularly poor from Asian markets (China 4 per cent; Japan 3 per cent; and 7 per cent for other Asian countries combined)<sup>14</sup>. Access is one of the main barriers to regional dispersal. An online survey conducted by Destination NSW showed that more than 20 per cent of respondents rated travel to regional NSW by train, coach or air as 'hard' or 'very hard' and 26 per cent disagreeing with the statement 'driving is easy and simple'<sup>14</sup>.

Improving access from Sydney to regional NSW is a key element in developing regional tourism.

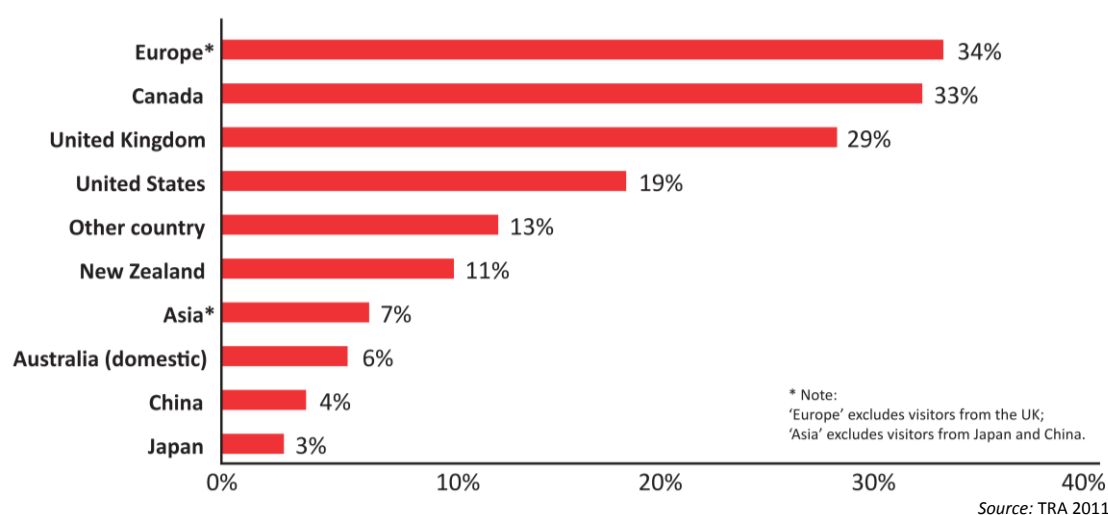
Whether it is via air services to regional airports, rental vehicles, coaches or public transport, all transport modes have a role to play in connecting visitors to regional NSW.

Investment in regional transport infrastructure should be a priority for the NSW government, along with key initiatives including innovative marketing campaigns, regulatory changes and improved customer service.



Adrian Brown / Tourism Australia

**Figure 9: Incidence of dispersal from Sydney to regional NSW by origin market**



<sup>14</sup> Destination Visitor Survey, Strategic Regional Research, 2011 – Destination NSW.

### 1.3.3. The value of the visitor market in public transport

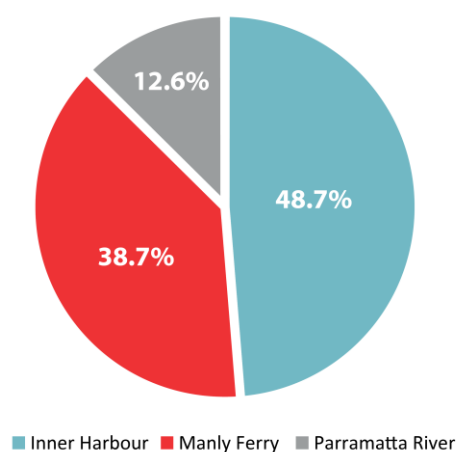
While public transport authorities predictably focus on the commuter task, the share of visitors in total public transport patronage is easily underestimated.

During the year ending June 2014, Sydney welcomed 8.6 million overnight domestic visitors (62.5 per cent of whom came from interstate) and 2.9 million overnight international visitors<sup>15</sup>. The average length of stay of these visitors was respectively 2.7 nights for domestic travellers and 21.5 nights for international visitors. While it is unknown how frequently these 11.5 million visitors<sup>16</sup> used public transport during their stay in Sydney, it is safe to assume that tens of millions of public transport trips are taken by visitors every year.

International visitors do not have access to their personal vehicle and only 49.3 per cent of domestic overnight visitors reached Sydney by car in the year ending June 2014<sup>17</sup>. Although some of these visitors are likely to have rented a car for their stay in Sydney, the majority would have relied on public transport and taxi services.

Despite the significant task of moving visitors, there is little data available about visitors' journeys on public transport in Sydney and NSW. Failing to understand and service this market is not only detrimental to the visitor's experience and the visitor economy but is also a missed opportunity for public transport authorities.

**Figure 10: Sydney Ferry Routes – Passenger Journeys for the Year Ended 30 June 2013**



Source: NSW Auditor-General

The visitor market plays an important role in the viability of some public transport services in Sydney. Ferry services on Sydney Harbour, especially the city to Manly route, are supported by visitors with commuters accounting for about 50 percent of patronage. Manly ferry services alone account for 38.7 per cent of passenger journeys on the ferry network. It is clear that this route, assisted by the visitor market, is supporting the operation of other ferry services focusing on residents' travel demand.

Without the visitor market as a revenue source, the government would not be able to provide the same level of service while maintaining its current cost recovery.

Although the bus network is fulfilling a much bigger task than the ferry network, similar observations can be drawn on some bus routes. The CBD to Bondi bus route (route 333) is a prime example of where the visitor market is justifying higher service frequency that benefits local residents and workers. The 333 bus route is one of Australia's most profitable bus routes with 3.5 million passenger journeys per year<sup>18</sup>.

On the rail network, visitors contribute significantly to the patronage of the airport line which, as a suburban rail line, also services local residents and on regional rail services.

Importantly, this additional demand from the visitor market on the public transport network is often not directly competing with local demand as the times of travel are frequently different. The bulk of the commuter transport demand is during morning and afternoon peak hour (7.30-8.30am and 4.30-6pm), when the public transport network has limited spare capacity. Conversely, visitors' travel demand is weighted towards the off-peak, including on weekends, when the network is under-utilised.

There is an opportunity to make sure the transport network is attractive to visitors in order to increase off-peak patronage and increase public transport service cost recovery.

Improvements in visitor's customer service will ultimately benefit local public transport passengers. If the information, ticketing and interchange facilities work for a first-time, non-English speaking visitor with small children and luggage, it will work for everyone.

<sup>15</sup> *Travel to Sydney, Year ended June 2014 – Destination NSW.*

<sup>16</sup> Excluding the 20.9 million domestic daytrip visitors to Sydney over the same period.

<sup>17</sup> *Travel to Sydney, Year ended June 2014 – Destination NSW.*

<sup>18</sup> *Opal Card starts on popular 333 Bondi bus – Media release 02/12/2013, Transport for NSW.*

## 2. IMPROVING THE VISITOR'S JOURNEY

### 2.1. VISITOR-FRIENDLY TICKETING

#### 2.1.1. Develop an Opal visitor product

Smartcard ticketing simplifies public transport by allowing people to make a journey without the complication of purchasing single tickets or understanding different fare structures. TTF commends the NSW government for successfully rolling out the Opal card ticketing system to all transport modes. With the roll out nearing completion, it is timely for the NSW government to consider extending the benefits of the Opal card to the visitor market.

Domestic destinations such as Adelaide and Brisbane and overseas destinations such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Stockholm and London have smartcard ticketing options specifically designed for visitors which also integrates information and sometimes access to visitor and cultural attractions.

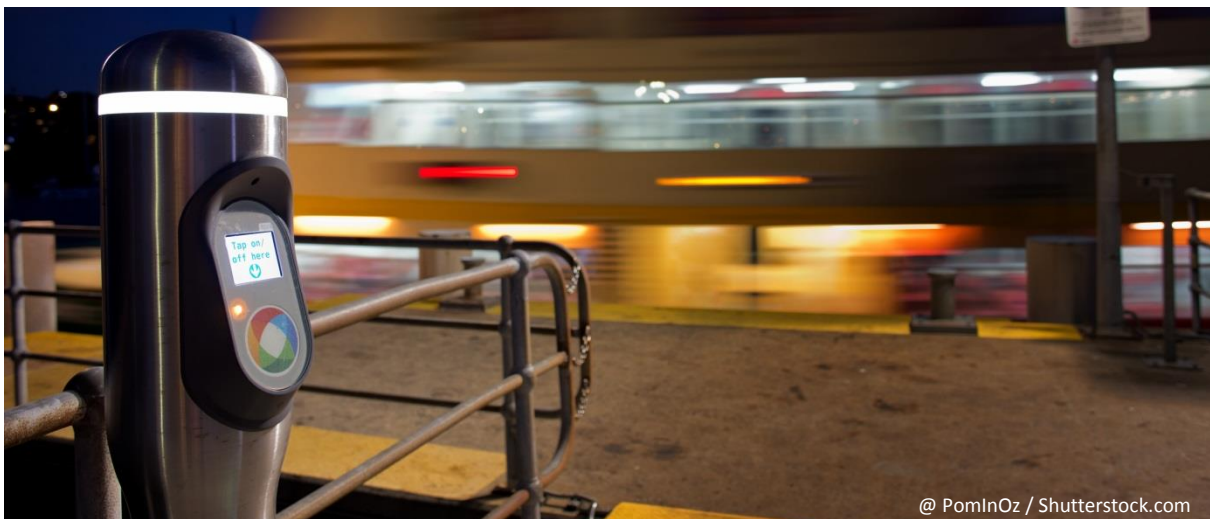
While the Opal smartcard is a significant improvement over the previous paper-based ticketing system, it can be further optimised for visitors.

Under the current system, visitors are required to purchase an Opal card and manually add value to the card. With little understanding of the fare structure or their transport needs for the duration of their stay in NSW, visitors find it difficult to estimate how much money to add to the card. Visitors need a product that is designed to be extremely simple to use and buy.

Streamlining processes to make it easier for visitors to use public transport will assist in improving the visitor experience and ease of their travel. NSW should, at a minimum, have a dedicated Opal visitor card to encourage visitor use of public transport. A tourist Opal card should be sold at a price which allows unlimited travel on Sydney's public transport for set periods (e.g. one, three or five days). Plans for a more sophisticated system of integrated ticketing should be pursued, allowing visitors to access both attractions and transport on the one card.

The tourist Opal card should be available for purchase at tourism information centres and in major hotels and hostels or at visitor attractions in addition to convenience stores and train stations.

The possibility to order the card online and get it delivered before visitors leave their home country should also be considered. At present, visitors landing at Sydney Airport have to purchase the Opal card from the domestic or international terminal train station. When landing in Sydney after a long flight, the process of finding out how to get an Opal card can deter travellers from using public transport to reach their final destination. The ability to order the Opal card from overseas would facilitate the planning of the visitor's stay in NSW. Travel agents could also be able to provide their customers with an Opal card before their trip to Australia, eliminating one cumbersome task for the customer. This would be particularly useful in fast growing Asian markets such as China where 48 per cent of visitors to Australia use a travel agent to book their trip<sup>19</sup>.



@ PomInOz / Shutterstock.com

<sup>19</sup> TNS Omni data as featured in the PwC report: *Distribution in Australia's international markets: Situational Analysis*, March 2013.





### Best practice snapshot 1:

#### THE COPENHAGEN CARD, THE SMART CARD THAT FULLY INTEGRATES THE NEEDS OF VISITORS

Similar to Australia, tourism is a key growing industry in Denmark where the sector accounts for 3.6 per cent of the country's export revenue. Copenhagen is Denmark's flagship visitor destination and the Danish Transport Authority (Trafikstyrelsen) recognises the importance of public transport to the visitor economy.

The Copenhagen Card is a comprehensive and user-friendly transport smartcard dedicated to visitors. The card covers all modes of public transport in the Danish capital, including the trip to and from the airport, in addition to regional rail.

The Copenhagen Card offers unlimited travel for one, two, three or five days. The product is family friendly with a 50 per cent discount available for children between 10 and 15 years old and adults able to bring along two younger children (0-9 years old) for free.

In addition to unlimited travel on the metropolitan transport network, the smartcard includes free admission to 72 museums and attractions. Other discounts are available for many other visitor services including car rental, tourist tours, the bike sharing network and local shops and restaurants.

The card can be easily purchased online on a website translated in English and German and the card can be delivered to the visitor's home country. Alternatively, visitors can purchase the Copenhagen Card on their arrival at Copenhagen Airport, at visitors centres and at a number of hotels.

Extensive information about the transport network and the benefits associated with the Copenhagen Card is provided through a visitor pack handed over at the time of purchase. The Copenhagen Card App is also downloadable on smartphones and provides all the necessary tourism and transport information.



### 2.1.2. Multilingual Opal top-up machines

Unlike many cities around the world, existing ticket machines at train stations do not meet the needs of visitors with limited English language skills.

With the roll out of the Opal Card and the progressive withdrawal of paper tickets, there is an opportunity to fix this gap in customer service. The new Opal top-up machines must include multilingual options. Transport for NSW should work with Destination NSW to identify which languages should be available on the top-up machines.

### 2.1.3. Extend the Opal card to private ferry operators

The Opal card should be available for both public and private ferry services in order to enhance the offering of an Opal visitor product and encourage a fair, competitive environment. Visitors do not differentiate whether public transport services are operated by the public or private sectors. As private operators innovate with new ferry routes, it is important they are given access to critical customer service improvements and are able to leverage the value of the Opal card for consumers. Now that the Opal card has been rolled out to all public transport modes, the NSW government should expand its coverage to include private ferry operators contracted by the NSW government to deliver regular services.

### 2.1.4. Transport ticketing for international conventions and exhibitions

Major business events are important to the visitor economy. International business event visitors spend on average 20 per cent more than interstate visitors. Business events also foster business investment and the exchange of new information and ideas, as well as profiling Australian know-how to the world. In 2013, business events contributed \$24 billion to the Australian economy. By 2020, the figure is expected to increase by almost 30 per cent to \$31 billion.

Specific Opal cards for major events such as conventions and exhibitions should be developed. Sydney is competing with other national and international cities to host major events. The availability of a transport smartcard for delegates and attendees for the duration of an event would significantly improve Sydney's offering in what is a very competitive market. Such temporary, event-specific cards are under consideration in Queensland where a dedicated G20 GoCard was distributed to attendees and media delegates to facilitate their stay in Brisbane and promote the event.



### 2.1.5. Transport support for major events

Major events are an important part of the sporting and cultural life in Australia and are vital to the visitor economy. Most major event venues can be accessed by public transport, either through regular services or special event services. Some larger venues, like Sydney Olympic Park, were constructed with public transport infrastructure included as an integral part of their development. However, public transport usage can vary considerably for different venues. For example, the public transport mode share for major events at Sydney Olympic Park averaged 55 per cent in 2010 while only 5 to 20 per cent of those attending events at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Sydney Football Stadium utilised bus services provided to the Moore Park Precinct.

The provision of public transport services during major events is critical to reduce congestion on the road network and improve the visitor experience. Transport for NSW should ensure that transport services to major events are not affected by trackworks, as it has been the case during the 2013 City2Surf race or the 2014 Vivid festival at times when large crowds were converging on or leaving the city centre. Transport for NSW must coordinate its rail maintenance work with Destination NSW to ensure these major yearly events are not affected.

However, more can be done than simply maintaining transport services. Integrated ticketing, the integration of the transport fare in an event's ticket is a proven method in promoting public transport during major events. The additional cost of public transport is included in the price of all tickets sold for an event and is not dependent on whether a ticket-holder actually uses public transport. This provides a direct

incentive for event-goers to use public transport. It also means that, in most cases, the public transport component is offered at a discounted price for those that utilise this option.

Integrated ticketing was in use for the Sydney 2000 Olympics and since on a more regular basis for large events such as the Royal Easter Show, sporting events at ANZ Stadium or the City2Surf race. Integrated ticketing provides considerable benefits for transport authorities, event organisers, event goers and the broader community.

However, the current arrangements around integrated ticketing in NSW are relatively complex and rely on case-by-case negotiations between Transport for NSW and event organisers and venues. The ticket pricing resulting from these negotiations is considered commercial-in-confidence and hence figures for the additional transport cost are not publicly available. Integrated ticketing in NSW is also limited to large events requiring additional transport services and neglects other events.

TTF believes there would be a merit in Transport for NSW exploring options to make the system simpler and more attractive for smaller events, noting that in Victoria the threshold for the provision of integrated ticketing is as low as 500 event participants. This could be achieved by offering integrated tickets at a common price for events that do not require additional transport services. A set charge for all tickets for an event, which results in saving for event-goers who opt to use public transport, would make the system more attractive to event organisers. The Victorian and West Australian models are examples of this approach.

## 2.2. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

### 2.2.1. Access to digital information

Digital information has already taken over physical timetables and public transport maps among commuters and local residents. The trend is likely to extend to visitors particularly as free Wi-Fi coverage expands. With this in mind, official transport information websites such as the trip planner website should be available in several languages.

The information contained within the Opal card website is already translated in ten foreign languages through customer guides available for download on the website. However, visitors needing translation assistance on the trip planner website are still expected to call translating and interpreting services. This barrier must be overcome with multilingual options on the website.

Similarly, when sharing real-time information with smartphone app developers, Transport for NSW should encourage the use of the foreign languages most used by visitors.

Transport for NSW should also work with local visitor attractions and hotels to include the trip planner tool on their websites.

### 2.2.2. Develop a transport app for visitors

While translating web and app content from English to foreign languages is a good first step, it should be noted that visitors may not need the same information that is available on the standard resident-based transport apps.

Smartphone apps are great opportunities to promote tourist destinations, give access to simplified network maps and explain fare options and potential discounts. A 'visitor transport app' could also include information about transport services operated by the private sector such as tourist shuttles, private ferry routes, airport shuttles or taxi rank locations.

Hong Kong transport operator, MTR Corporation Limited, has developed a transport app targeting visitors called MTR Tourist. MTR Tourist is more than a transport app and promotes Hong Kong as a visitor destination. It suggests sightseeing, history, shopping or art and culture tours around the city,

using public transport between each stop. The app also provides detailed information about main visitor attractions, hotels and free airport shuttles.

Destination NSW has been developing a Sydney app which is available in English and Mandarin. This should be augmented by a multilingual transport app targeting visitors.



### 2.2.3. Distribution of visitor packs

Most residents and commuters access transport services information such as routes and times of departure via smartphone apps and websites, but many visitors still rely on maps and paper brochures. This is partly due to the high cost of roaming data for visitors. Until free Wi-Fi services are more broadly available in the public domain, at transport hubs and tourism attractions, physical communication tools will be required.

In Melbourne a 'visitor pack' is available for purchase. The visitor pack includes a pre-loaded Myki card, information about the transport network and discounts to visitor attractions. The City of Melbourne has developed a Melbourne City Map which features the main visitor attractions, visitor information centres, visitor shuttle bus routes, main transport corridors, taxi ranks, free Wi-Fi spots, post and police offices, public toilets and other facilities visitors need to be able to find.

Sydney is lacking such visitor information and visitor maps. Destination NSW, Transport for NSW and the City of Sydney should work together to



provide a 'visitor pack' similar to Melbourne's, including an Opal visitor product. The documents provided in the pack should be available in several languages, reflecting the largest and also growing visitor markets.

The 'visitor pack' should be available for purchase on arrival at Sydney Airport, at visitor centres across Sydney and in major visitor venues and accommodation providers.

#### 2.2.4. Promotion of tourism on public transport

Advertising in train stations, bus stops and on-board vehicles is an integral source of revenue for public transport operators and helps fill the gap

between the transport fare the customer pays and the actual cost of providing the service.

Advertising on public transport is also an efficient way to promote destinations accessible by public transport. This is especially relevant in stations highly frequented by visitors such as Bondi Junction station, Circular Quay train and ferry hub, Town Hall station and Central station.

Destination NSW has recently signed an MoU with NSW TrainLink to promote the state on the NSW train network and begun advertising on the Sydney Train network.

TTF recommends that Destination NSW continue the roll out of advertising on stations particularly to encourage visitors to go further than Sydney and extend their stay in NSW.



#### Best practice snapshot 2:

##### BRISBANE'S BUS STOP TOURISM PROMOTION

Brisbane City Council, through its subsidiary Brisbane Marketing, transformed four CBD bus stops to promote tourism in the Brisbane region.

The customised bus stops showcase local beaches, rainforests and other destinations through interactive designs. There's a beach-themed shelter with a surfboard for a seat, a faux hot air balloon hovering over the countryside, a rainforest complete with a "press to refresh" mist generator and a mock-up of a roadside fresh produce display.

The \$340,000 tourism campaign, which also included billboards print and television advertising and digital media, was co-funded by Brisbane Marketing, leisure operators, the seven councils in the greater Brisbane region and a \$160,000 Tourism and Events Queensland grant.

## 2.3. WAYFINDING

### 2.3.1. Consistent signage

The value of wayfinding is often underestimated. While locals often do not even notice signs, domestic and international visitors are constantly looking for them. Without efficient wayfinding, the area traversed by visitors is significantly reduced and many suburbs or businesses are missing out on a crucial growing market of customers.

Research undertaken as part of the Visitor Information Services Review identified that tourists visiting Sydney find it hard to orientate themselves around the city<sup>20</sup>. Visitors are walking up and down George Street with little knowledge of how to reach Darling Harbour, Hyde Park or the Royal Botanic Gardens. A suburb like Surry Hills, which is within walking distance of the CBD, is a vibrant bar and restaurant precinct for residents but is little known by visitors who mostly stay in the CBD. Enhancing access to diverse precincts with tourism potential is important to broaden the offer, extend the visitor's stay in Sydney and promote local retail, cultural or culinary experiences. Combined with marketing, wayfinding can lead more visitors to these precincts.

The City of Sydney Council has developed a wayfinding strategy based on a successful signage program in London. The new system is currently being tested in the CBD and Walsh Bay. The signs include public transport information that matches the new wayfinding strategy developed by Transport for NSW. TTF supports this initiative which is critical to visitors.

However, more can be done to roll out consistent wayfinding signage system across the city centre and between visitor precincts. The multiplicity of land ownership has led to several wayfinding standards developed by different agencies. Signs in the City of Sydney LGA are different to the ones found on land managed by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority or in the Royal Botanic Gardens. This is confusing to customers and undermines the legibility of these signs.

The NSW government should work with each land authority and ensure a consistent wayfinding system is delivered through the city centre. Multilingual messaging on signs located in visitor precincts should also be considered.



<sup>20</sup> Tourism Action Plan, City of Sydney.





### Best practice snapshot 3:

Image courtesy of Dotdash

#### BRISBANE'S MULTILINGUAL SIGNS

In its report *Brisbane's Unique Window of Opportunity*, Brisbane City Council has identified the need to establish stronger links with the Asia Pacific economy. One of the key recommendations to better engage with Asian markets was to provide multilingual support to international visitors.

In a step towards becoming a more foreigner-friendly city, the council developed a wayfinding system targeting its key visitor markets. Based on the target audience of short stay international tourists and long stay international students, messages in Korean, Japanese, Traditional Chinese and Arabic were introduced to the signage. Thirty three new wayfinding signs now direct foreign visitors to main attractions, transport services and other destinations, replacing English-only signs.

While design consistency is critical to all wayfinding systems, some precincts might require add-ons such as multilingual messaging. TTF believe that multilingual information should be considered for key visitor precincts in Sydney such as Darling Harbour, Barangaroo and Circular Quay.

#### 2.3.2. Wayfinding on public transport

Wayfinding is not limited to street signs. Visitors and casual public transport users need additional information about routes and connections with corresponding services.

This kind of information is already available for customers on the rail network. Network maps are displayed in station concourses and platforms, on-board information screens inform the passenger about what the next stop will be and audio messages announce the next stop and possible connections with other train services. Sydney Ferries passengers also have access to information screens and audio messages to facilitate their journey.

Bus passengers currently have very limited information available to them. Most bus stops only display the timetable without any indication of the route and stops along the route. Once on the bus they rely on the bus driver's assistance to find the stop they need to alight from and there is no information on potential service connections. The lack of information complicates the journey of the non-regular public transport user and reduces the appeal of the service.

As a minimum, a map of the route should be available at bus stops. This is especially important along routes frequently used by visitors such as services to the eastern suburbs beaches and to the Northern Beaches. However, now that most buses are equipped with GPS localisation systems, the NSW government should also consider rolling out

on-board information screens announcing what the next stop is. This would considerably ease the journey of all casual public transport users who are not familiar with the network, including visitors.

### **2.3.3. Staff presence at key stations**

Efficient wayfinding signage, simple fare systems and real-time information are major components of a seamless journey. With these in place, most locals and visitors will be able to find their way around Sydney and NSW's public transport network. However, staff presence in train stations and major bus interchange remains critical.

For visitors, finding basic information can be challenging. In these cases, the best way to respond to their needs is via informed and pro-active staff. With the roll out of the Opal Card, less staff are required at train stations across the network. Part of this workforce should be trained and relocated to stations platforms and concourses to actively help visitors. Highly visible staff will facilitate the visitor's journey and increase their perception of safety. Ideally, this workforce would include multilingual staff able help non-English speaking visitors from key segments of the market such as China, India and Indonesia.

## **2.4. EXTRA CUSTOMER SERVICE ON VISITOR ROUTES**

### **2.4.1. Free Wi-Fi at stations and on-board rolling stock and buses**

When travelling to a first world country, visitors expect to find internet access. On their arrival, travellers need to locate their hotel, check their email or be active on social media. When travelling between visitor attractions, internet access helps in finding transport information and encourages visitors to upload pictures or comments about their vacations on social media, which is an efficient way to promote the city internationally at no cost. However, using 3G or 4G with a foreign phone service is usually very expensive and deters most travellers from using the internet.

Providing free Wi-Fi on public transport would greatly improve the visitor's experience.

Currently only Sydney Ferries and the platforms of Circular Quay and Central Station offer free Wi-Fi to public transport passengers. Other state governments are considering the provision of Wi-Fi, for example Gold Coast rail services provide this service.

Providing Wi-Fi on platforms has limited value as the train is likely to arrive at the platform shortly after the customer gets access to the internet. The NSW government should investigate the roll out of Wi-Fi services on-board public transport vehicles. This is especially relevant on the airport line, but should also be rolled out to other services with a high proportion of visitors such as regional train services.



### 2.4.2. Catering on Sydney ferries

Visitors represent about 50 per cent of Sydney Ferries' patronage and are vital to its operation. Encouraging visitors to explore the harbour spreads the benefits of visitors' expenditure to suburbs with tourism attractions such as Manly, Parramatta and Watsons Bay while increasing farebox revenues for what is also a critical commuter service.

In order to improve the customer's experience on-board their vessels, several private operators have developed licensed catering services for their customers. These licensed cafes/bars offer refreshments during the passenger's journey across the harbour. This has been proven popular in the private sector and could be extended to the public ferry services.

Sydney Ferries recently applied for a licence to open a café on its vessels operating the Many-CBD route, the route most frequented by visitors. Despite the duration of the trip, clientele and restricted hours of operation, the licence was not granted.

TTF believes that both Sydney Ferries and visitors would benefit from an on-board licensed café. On-board catering has been in place for years on private services without incidents and public services should be given the opportunity to increase their attractiveness.

### 3. EXTENDING THE REACH OF VISITORS

#### 3.1. IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND FROM SYDNEY GATEWAYS

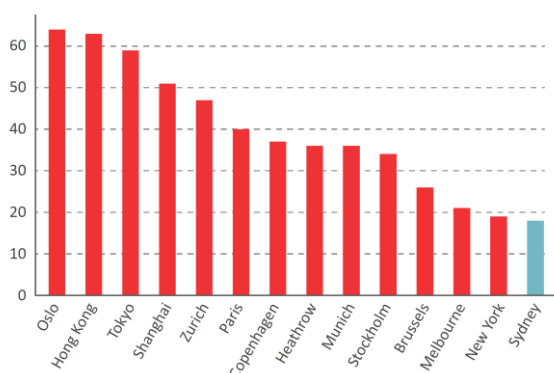
##### 3.1.1. Removing the Station Access Fee at domestic and international terminal stations

Sydney Airport is the primary gateway to Australia for visitors. Journeys between the airport and the city centre are often a visitor's first and last experience of NSW and Australia. When promoting a destination, first impressions count. For international visitors landing in Sydney after a long flight, comfort and ease of use of transport services will shape their perception of the city as a destination. This is why many international airports around the world are serviced by state of the art transport infrastructure, whether it is public transport or road networks.

Sydney Airport is served by frequent and relatively fast rail link that connects the two airport stations with the Sydney CBD and the rest of the NSW rail network.

Despite high transport demand and relatively good service levels, rail mode share among those travelling to the airport is low. Total public transport mode share is less than 20 per cent<sup>21</sup>. This is particularly low compared to other comparable international airports around the world such as London Heathrow, Paris CDG, Zurich, Copenhagen or Hong Kong (which all have a public transport mode share between 30 and 60 per cent).

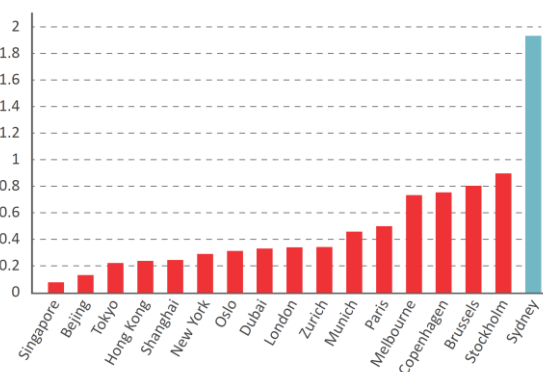
**Figure 12: Public transport mode share for airport users (%)**



This is primarily the result of the high cost of using the Airport Rail Link. Users of the international and domestic terminal stations must pay a fee of

\$12.60 per adult in addition to the standard one-way, single fare of \$3.80, totalling \$16.40 for a one-way fare to or from the CBD. Per kilometre, this is one of the world's most expensive fares for a CBD-to-airport rail journey<sup>21</sup>. As a result, the vast majority of airport users still travel by car or taxi, contributing to rising congestion on the road network around the airport.

**Figure 11: Airport to CBD via public transport, cost per kilometre (AUD\$)**



Removing the Station Access Fee (SAF) to bring fares for the Airport Link in-line with the Sydney Train network is an important initiative for reducing road congestion as well as improving the visitor experience for airport users. It is important to note that the removal of the Station Access Fee would not only support the visitor economy but also the large labour market working at the Sydney Airport site. Up to 28,000 full-time equivalent jobs are supported by Sydney Airport; this is the equivalent of the future Barangaroo workforce.

The NSW government should fund the removal of the Station Access Fee for the two airport stations.

The contract between the NSW government and Airport Link Company also affects public bus service levels. A compensation clause exists within the contract that forces the NSW government to compensate the Airport Link Company if public services to the airport are increased<sup>22</sup>. Due to this expense the NSW government has been reluctant to significantly expand bus services. Accordingly, latent demand for additional bus services remains unmet and mode share has stagnated. Sydney Airport's master plan includes the construction of a major new transport interchange at the airport,

<sup>21</sup> *Unlocking the full potential of Sydney's airport rail link*, TTF, January 2013.

<sup>22</sup> *Economic Regulation of Airport Services Report*, Productivity Commission 2012.



which will provide the opportunity to establish new bus routes.

A review of this compensation clause would make the most of the planned infrastructure at Sydney Airport and reduce congestion around Sydney Airport.

### 3.1.2. Airport rolling stock

The existing double decker trains in use on the Airport rail line are not optimal for passengers with luggage due to the presence of stairs to access the lower and upper level seats and the lack of storage room. Single deckers with less seats and more room are best suited for airport services. They are commonly used in many international cities such as Hong Kong, Dubai, or London.

The NSW government is planning to convert parts of Sydney's rail network from double decker lines to single deckers in a move to a metro-style network operation. TTF firmly supports the NSW government's view that a metro-style network will increase the capacity of Sydney's transport system and improve the commuter's experience.

A metro-style service on the Airport line would greatly improve the experience of both visitors and commuters. However, TTF recognises the cost and complexity of converting a suburban line into a metro line makes it a long-term potential project. In the short term, other facilities such as free Wi-Fi, enhanced wayfinding and real time information display would significantly improve the visitor's experience of the service.



#### Best practice snapshot 5:

##### HEATHROW EXPRESS

Heathrow Express is a privately operated rail service connecting London Paddington and Heathrow Airport. The service was launched in 1998 and is the fastest link from London to Heathrow with a 15 minute journey. The Heathrow Express services both business travellers (69 per cent of customers) and leisure travellers (31 per cent of customers).

The rolling stock is made of modern single decker step-free trains with air-conditioning, luggage racks, on-board Express TV providing weather and entertainment clips as well as transport information and on-board 4G-enabled Wi-Fi. Each train is also equipped with First Class compartments with more legroom and personal tables and complimentary newspapers and magazines.

On-board staff are also available to assist mobility impaired passengers or provide information on transport connections or airport services.

Heathrow Express services are highly popular among its 16,000 daily business and leisure passengers with a 93 per cent satisfaction index in the latest independent National Passenger Survey (2010). Along with other public transport services available at the airport, the Heathrow Express line contributed to the growth in public transport usage among airport users (over 40 per cent of all air travellers).

Unlike Sydney's Airport Line, the Heathrow Express line is dedicated to airport users and is not a suburban line, which gives more flexibility to the operator in providing extra services to passengers. However, some of the services available on the Heathrow Express could be transferred to the existing fleet in use on Sydney's Airport Line such as Wi-Fi coverage, luggage room and additional information display for visitors.



### 3.1.3. Support Western Sydney Airport with rail infrastructure

TTF supports the federal government's decision to build a second Sydney airport at Badgerys Creek. However, to maximise its success, Western Sydney Airport must have fast and reliable rail and road transport access from early in its operational life to maximise its potential.

The state and federal government have committed \$3.5 billion to a road package for western Sydney to support the operations of the new airport. TTF strongly believes that rail access to the airport and the broader region is also a prerequisite to the successful operation of a western Sydney airport.

The NSW government has started a consultation process on potential extensions of the South West Rail Link to Badgerys Creek and St Marys, but neither the state nor federal government have committed funds to the construction of these rail lines.

TTF recommends that the state and federal governments commence planning and fund the expansion of rail to:

- Link the South West Rail Line at Leppington to the Western Line via the proposed Badgerys Creek airport. Ultimately this line should include the option of heading north to join the North West Rail Link. This will require an interchange between metro-style single deck trains operating on the North West Rail Link and double-deck trains servicing the airport.
- Provide broader benefits to the South West Growth Centre by linking the South West Rail Link with Bringelly and Narellan and ultimately to Campbelltown.

In developing rail links to the airport, the government should plan for rolling stock that will meet the needs of airline passengers, including luggage storage facilities and other passenger facilities.

### 3.1.4. Increase air access to Sydney Airport

At the heart of our national aviation network, Sydney Airport remains the state's single most important aeronautical asset. Around 42 per cent of all international visitors arrive at Sydney Airport and more than one-fifth of all domestic air travel

passes through Australia's key hub. Additionally, Sydney has benefited from having its international airport less than 10 kilometres from the CBD, allowing demand from travellers to grow over time.

However, the future growth of Sydney Airport is artificially constrained well below its maximum design capability. It can and should accommodate more aircraft than the current limits allow – limits imposed by federal government regulation. These constraints to growth are crude mechanisms designed decades ago to suit political purposes and do not reflect any of the ongoing safety, noise and emissions developments created by industry since the beginning of the jet age.

This is principally evident in the application and imposition of the Sydney Airport movement cap of 80 take-offs or landings per hour. As an arbitrary number reflecting none of the advances in aircraft noise output in recent years, this typifies an old-fashioned approach holding back Sydney Airport from its maximum efficient potential.

Furthermore, its enforcement in 15-minute blocks triggers delays across the entire Australian national aviation networks that are avoidable if international best practice of an annualised target were followed. More important is restructuring its enforcement, away from actual movements to restricting the number of scheduled departures or arrivals in any given hour block. Doing so would increase Sydney Airport's flexibility to manage and reduce delays without increasing the number of flights. This also has the added benefit of reducing noise exposure to the community, delivering greater noise amelioration benefits than the existing system allows.

A review should also be conducted on the existing curfew shoulder period to ensure flexibility in the event of unavoidable delays or early arrivals. Airlines today make better use of the earth's trade winds to reduce their fuel burn, but in doing so long haul international flights can arrive earlier than scheduled. Similarly, severe weather and operational issues occasionally force airlines to arrive later than scheduled, after the commencement of the curfew at 11pm. Current rules allow for neither eventuality despite technological advances and improvements to air traffic management that mean such flights could be accommodated with no significant noise impact on the community.

The NSW government has lent its support to the growing calls to reform Sydney Airport's operating

restrictions and TTF recommends the state government's continued efforts in this space. The recommendations of the NSW Visitor Economy Taskforce report and the Joint Study on Aviation Capacity for the Sydney Region, both released in 2012, outline the position of the NSW government and all opportunities to pursue these issues with federal government counterparts should be explored.

### 3.1.5. Transport services to and from cruise passenger terminals

Cruising is the fastest growing sector within the tourism industry. In 2013, the direct economic contribution of cruise tourism in Australia consisted of \$1.72 billion in direct expenditures, \$826 million in value added and 8,378 full time equivalent jobs. The indirect and induced economic contribution was estimated at an additional \$1.49 billion in output and 5,590 full-time equivalent jobs<sup>23</sup>.

Sydney Harbour is one of the world's most popular cruising destinations. NSW accounts for approximately 75 per cent of the national economic contribution of the cruise ship industry and the sector is expected to generate over \$1 billion for the NSW economy by the end of the decade.

Sydney Harbour is home to three terminals used by cruise ships at Circular Quay, White Bay and, during the peak of the season, Garden Island. Similar to airports, these cruise ship terminals are gateways to NSW and Australia. The quality of transport services to and from cruise terminal will affect the visitor's experience and first impressions of Sydney.

Assuring transport services at cruise terminals can be challenging as the volume of passengers varies greatly with the arrival and departure of cruise ships, making the operation of regular public transport services difficult. With the largest Australian cruise ships able to carry up to 3,800 passengers, the transport services required to and from the terminals should be approached as services for event crowds. However, these 'events' are occurring every day during the peak season.

Considering the value of the cruise shipping industry and the volume of passengers, the NSW government should guarantee that the three cruise ship terminals are equipped with adequate transport infrastructure and services. This includes bus services, staffed taxi ranks with weather protection and tourist coach parking bays. Transport for NSW should also investigate the feasibility of ferry services connecting the White Bay terminal to Circular Quay during the cruise season.



<sup>23</sup> CLIA (2014) - *The contribution of Cruise Tourism to the Australian Economy in 2013*.

### 3.1.6. Campaign for shared cruise ship access to Garden Island

Sydney Harbour is one of the world's most popular destinations for cruise ships and this has placed serious constraints on the harbour's cruise ship berthing facilities. This is exacerbated by the worldwide trend towards larger cruise ships. Within five years, 85 per cent of new cruise ships constructed will not be able to fit under the Sydney Harbour Bridge and access the White Bay cruise terminal.

The Overseas Passenger Terminal is now at capacity for much of the summer cruising season. To ensure the growth of the lucrative cruise ship sector is not curtailed, the state government needs to continue to work with the federal government to secure regularised and increased shared access for large cruise ships to Garden Island.

TTF recommends increasing cruise shipping access from three visits to a base of 20 visits per year, in the peak of the season.

The NSW government should also work with the federal government to develop the ability to process passengers at Garden Island. Processing passengers at Garden Island would greatly improve the customer experience and increase the competitiveness of Sydney as a global cruise destination. The additional time given to visitors will also maximise the benefits of the cruise sector to Sydney's visitor economy.

TTF recommends a future NSW government work with the federal government to increase cruise shipping access to a base of 20 visits per year and implement customs facilities to process passengers at Garden Island.

## 3.2. ENCOURAGE DISPERSAL THROUGH IMPROVED ACCESS TO REGIONAL NSW

### 3.2.1. Refreshing NSW regional rail

Patronage on regional services have been falling from 2.2 million passengers in 2001-02 to 1.55 million in 2007-08 before slowly climbing back up to 1.9 million in 2010-11. Patronage since 2010 has stagnated at 1.9 million passengers<sup>24</sup>. This is partly due to a lack of long term direct investment in rail infrastructure and a lack of service innovation. Enhancing regional rail services is critical to NSW communities and will also promote regional tourism.

In July 2013, major rail reforms divided RailCorp into two separate entities, NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains. NSW TrainLink is operating regional and intercity services while Sydney Trains manage Sydney's metropolitan network. The operational changes led to significant improvements for regional services including better punctuality.

However, the dilapidation of regional rail infrastructure is still a major barrier to service improvements. The Endeavours, XPT and XPLOER trains running on these rail lines have been in service for more than 30 years and need to be replaced with modern rolling stock allowing greater speed and reliability. Modern rolling stock such as the Tilt Train in Queensland has proven much faster and more popular. Upgrading rail tracks would further reduce travel times, as has

been done in Victoria where patronage doubled within only four years following line upgrades. Priority should be given to upgrading rail tracks between Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne as they are the lines with most potential. Previous analysis from Transport for NSW indicated that with new "premium" trains, travel times between Sydney and Canberra could be reduced by more than an hour, attracting 60 per cent more patronage<sup>25</sup>.

The internal fit-out of trains is also important. As journeys on regional train services are longer than metropolitan services, a passenger's comfort is paramount. An aircraft style fit-out is more appropriate than conventional urban trains. Key features can include reclining seats, power sockets, Wi-Fi and in-seat entertainment. Popular regional services in Queensland, Victoria or European countries also include better catering options, first class cars with more space for customers and bicycle storage facilities.

Innovation plays a key role in providing a competitive and sustained service, whether it is in the design of the rolling stock, passenger amenities or marketing and ticketing strategies. The private sector is often more likely to foster innovation in transport services, as seen with the franchising of Sydney Ferries where both customer satisfaction and patronage have been steadily improving.

<sup>24</sup> NSW TrainLink patronage, BTS, TfNSW.

<sup>25</sup> Analysis obtained by the Sydney Morning Herald through a freedom of information request, *Tilt trains seen as way to lure users to rural rail* – 15/08/2012.





Image courtesy of Bombardier

#### Best practice snapshot 4:

##### V/LINE REGIONAL RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE UPGRADES

By patronage, V/Line is Australia's largest regional public transport operator, with more than 14.47 million train and coach passenger trips recorded in 2013-14.

In 2000, the Victorian government launched the Regional Fast Rail project to upgrade its ageing regional rail network, which accounts for the vast majority of V/Line's patronage. The project focused on reducing travel time and enhancing service frequency and safety. The upgrades included changes to rail tracks, new rolling stock, modernisation of the signalling system, a new timetable and changes to connecting bus services.

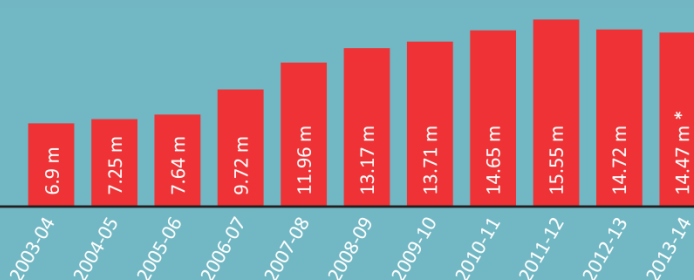
Following completion of the project in 2005, the introduction of new rolling stock in 2006 and a regional transport fare reduction in 2007, a strong and sustained growth was observed on V/Line services. Within four years, patronage figures nearly doubled. Subsequently, the Victorian government ordered additional rolling stock to cope with the demand.

The new Vlocity trains enable travel speeds of up to 160 km/h, significantly reducing travel times, and provide significant customer service improvements to customers. Today the V/Line fleet counts 130 Vlocity carriages in service with a further 19 planned to be added to the network in the near future. Each Vlocity train is equipped with air-conditioning, information screens, adjustable seats, fold-down tables, toilets, luggage racks, bike and surfboard storage, and drinking fountains.

Additional on-board services provided to the customer include quiet carriages, food and drinks catering at the on-board café bar and, from 2016, passengers will have access to Wi-Fi. First class is also available on some reserved services, providing larger reclining seats, more leg room and meal trays. The V/Line Escape smartphone app has also been developed to promote over 300 Victorian events, festivals, special offers, town guides, galleries, tours, markets, museums, wineries, walking and cycling tracks and hospitality services.

V/Line train and coach passenger trips over ten years (millions)

\* Note: the recent drop in patronage reflects the incorporation of Sunbury and Diggers Rest Stations in the metropolitan network



### 3.2.2. Developing international regional airports

One opportunity to grow international tourism in NSW is to open up additional ports of entry for international flights. The combination of a growing critical mass of travellers in Asia, a strong preference for direct flights and the lower operating costs associated with new long-range aircraft, means point-to-point traffic is set to be a growth area in aviation globally<sup>26</sup>. Yet Australia is currently ill-equipped to take advantage of this shift, with international entry restricted to eight airports.

As outlined in the NSW Visitor Economy Taskforce final report, there are some opportunities within NSW and ACT for additional international gateways. The strongest candidates of these are Canberra, which has recently completed a terminal redevelopment; and Newcastle, which has received a \$11 million grant through the Hunter Investment Fund to upgrade its terminal. There is also more limited, seasonal potential for New Zealand flights to both Ballina-Byron and Coffs Harbour, according to a 2012 federal government study into trans-Tasman air services.

Growing New Zealand visitation by opening up new routes to regional airports represents a great opportunity for tourism operators in NSW. Unlike tourists from emerging source markets of Asia, who tend to restrict themselves to either large cities or well-defined tourist destinations<sup>27</sup>, New Zealanders have the highest dispersal rate of all international tourists to Australia, with only 49 per cent of the 7.5 million room nights spent by New Zealanders within the four major gateway cities of Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney<sup>28</sup>.

Through the example of the three-year trial of Air New Zealand services between Auckland and the Sunshine Coast Airport at Maroochydore, there now exists a new terminal design model available to airports such as Newcastle on which to base international facilities. The federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development is currently undertaking a review of the International Airport Operators' Guideline list of physical infrastructure requirements to define a new set of border agency-mandated facilities for most small regional airports. TTF urges the NSW government to support this process.

However, a secondary question surrounds the funding of federal border agency staff at secondary airports.

Unless designated a full international airport, there is an additional charge for border agency staff such as customs, immigration and quarantine, which makes marginal new services unfeasible. The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service is currently reviewing these charges as part of its Joint Review of Border Fees, Taxes and Charges together with the Department of Agriculture. The NSW government needs to support the calls by Newcastle and Canberra Airports to remove the additional staffing costs these airports and others wishing to start international air services face.

The NSW government should engage with the federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development on the review of International Airport Operators' Guidelines and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service-led Joint Review of Border Fees, Taxes and Charges.

### 3.2.3. Support domestic air services to regional NSW

Regional air services are utilised by a variety of visitors that contribute to the local economy. In addition to leisure visitors, business, conference, and event travellers rely on these services. These visitors spend time in regional destinations during which they spend money on accommodation, meals, other transport and products and services available locally, supporting local businesses and creating local jobs. The reduction in frequency or withdrawal of regional aviation services has an impact on this expenditure and generally on the attractiveness of a destination for all types of travellers.

The NSW government, in its response to the Regional Aviation Services Inquiry, acknowledged the importance of regular passenger transport services in regional NSW and confirmed its understanding of air travel being vital to the economies and communities of regional NSW. In doing so, it also supported the majority of the recommendations from the Inquiry.

While there are many economic factors and demand drivers that impact on the viability of regional aviation services, it is important for the NSW government to work with the federal government and local governments across NSW to create a regulatory and operating environment that supports regional airports and regional aviation services.

<sup>26</sup> Outlet Rocky Mountain Institute, *Getting to the Point: Why air travel is ripe to migrate from hub-and-spoke to point-to-point*, January 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Tourism Australia, *New Zealand Market profile*.

<sup>28</sup> GHD, *Trans-Tasman Project – Final Report*, June 2012.



The provision of government funding support is of particular significance, especially in light of the shift towards larger aircraft sizes and the impact of changes to civil aviation safety legislation and regulation on airport infrastructure.

The NSW government's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, with a dedicated \$50 million allocation for the development of regional airport infrastructure, is a welcome initiative that will help stimulate economic growth in the state. However, it is important to ensure government funding support for airport infrastructure and regional aviation services continues, and is also complemented by whole-of-government destination development initiatives, including tourism marketing and airline partnerships.

The Final Report of the Regional Aviation Services Inquiry (October 2014) undertaken by the Standing Committee on State Development, found that the provision of a return passenger air service to and from Sydney is the most important transport issue facing many communities across NSW. Better utilisation of Sydney Airport provides one means of addressing this issue by opening up more landing slots for regional carriers. Addressing the regulations related to the hourly movement cap, the application of the 15-minute slot management system and aircraft movements within the curfew periods, would all make considerable headway in increasing the capacity of Sydney Airport to accommodate more regional, national and international aircraft movements. The NSW government should continue to work with the federal government to ensure the removal of artificial constraints on aircraft movements at Sydney Airport is expedited.

#### **3.2.4. Improve air access to Lord Howe Island**

Lord Howe Island is an outstanding tourism product lying within NSW's jurisdiction. The whole island group, including Lord Howe Island, Ball's Pyramid, adjacent islands and the surrounding marine environment are on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It was also named best place in NSW to holiday and best island in Australia in the Australian Traveller Magazine's in 2014.

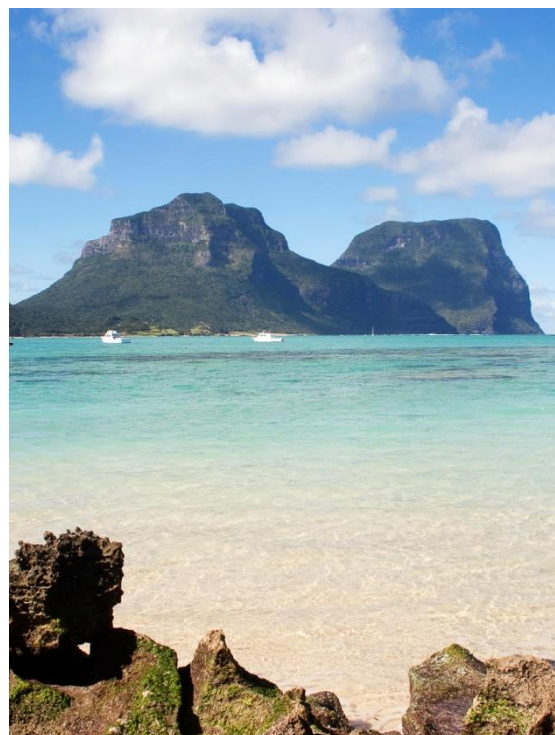
Scheduled air services to Lord Howe Island are currently provided by QantasLink using a de Havilland Canada DHC-8-200 aircraft capable of the extremely short take-off and landing required of the island's 886-metre runway.

However, this aircraft is no longer in production and QantasLink is in the process of retiring this fleet in favour of larger, faster aircraft. QantasLink's contract with the NSW government for the services from Sydney to Lord Howe Island runs to 2018, after which date services to the island could be in doubt, as the larger aircraft requires a take-off run of 1,400 metres.

The state government has recently approved a grant of \$8 million to undertake a resurfacing of the runway, which has also received \$4 million in federal funding. However, the resurfacing works do not include an extension of the runway and will not alleviate the access restriction.

The potential to extend the runway are limited due to both local topography and strict environmental protections inherent in the UNESCO World Heritage listing but alternative solutions are available. Other remote islands around the world have encountered similar issues which were overcome by adding elevation to short runways. Several Caribbean islands faced the same issue and have increased the effective runway length thanks to innovative engineering options.

TTF recommends the NSW government continues to seek environmentally sensitive runway extension options to continue air services to Lord Howe Island.



### 3.2.5. Improve the drivability of the regional road network

Long term investment in transport infrastructure is critical to ensure regional NSW's ongoing economic viability, by providing links to other regional and urban centres and enabling travellers to reach regional tourism destinations.

Regional NSW has the highest private vehicle mode-share in the state and roads will continue to be the most important transport link to regional visitor destinations. The drivability of the road network is critical to travellers using their private vehicles, coach operators and rental vehicle customers.

Around 90 per cent of the state's road network is under the jurisdiction of local councils, many of which simply do not have the resources to maintain or upgrade vital tourist routes to a satisfactory standard. This issue is particularly evident in regional NSW, with non-metropolitan councils facing a combined infrastructure and maintenance backlog in the order of \$3 billion. Councils on the Mid North and Far North Coast of NSW make up almost 30 per cent of this figure<sup>29</sup>.

The implementation of region-specific funds can assist local councils to maintain and upgrade roads that are vital to the local visitor economy, with priority projects determined by local community stakeholders. For example, the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund has delivered approximately \$20 million in upgrades to roads around the regions renowned vineyards, improving safety for visitors and locals alike. Similar funding programs should be developed in other regional tourism areas.

Another key element in increasing access to regional destinations is to complete the on-going upgrades of major road corridors such as the Pacific Highway, the Princes Highway and the Great Western Highway.

The NSW and Australian governments are to be commended for their commitment to the upgrade of these major tourism routes. The upgrades will increase capacity, reduce travel times and improve safety. The NSW government should ensure that the construction timeframes for these critical projects are maintained.



### 3.2.6. Support the caravanning and camping industry

NSW is Australia's most popular destination for caravanning and camping with a market share of 39 per cent and 2.4 million visitor nights recorded last year, up 15 per cent compared to the previous year.

Caravanning and camping accounts for over 28 per cent of visitor holiday nights in regional NSW, highlighting the importance of the sector in encouraging visitor dispersal beyond capital cities.

With an annual contribution of \$2 billion in economic value to NSW, promoting the industry will boost the visitor economy and employment in regional NSW.

While domestic travellers represent the core of the industry's market, there is a significant potential for growth in the international visitor market. Tourism marketing is crucial to unlock this potential and Destination NSW has a crucial role in promoting regional destinations to international visitors and especially the Chinese market.

<sup>29</sup> NRMA, *Funding Local Roads*, April 2014.

### 3.2.7. Promote regional bicycle tourism

Bicycle tourism is growing in popularity across Australia. Mostly taking place in regional areas, bicycle tourism is another lever to spread tourism expenditure further than major urban areas. Research conducted in Victoria demonstrates that cycle tourists riding on rail trails (disused railways converted to cycling paths) are high yield visitors, regularly exceeding expenditure in regional areas of other visitors<sup>30</sup>. Food and beverage appear to be among the largest components of cycle tourists' expenditure, especially in wine regions. Promoting the purchase of local produces and overnight stays, bicycle tourism has a high potential in regional NSW.

Bicycle tourism is best promoted by the availability of safe cycling paths in regions with tourism potential. TTF commends the NSW government for trialling its first rail trail in the Northern Rivers region and encourages the government to consider other rail trails across NSW. Converting disused railways into rail trails is a low hanging fruit when it comes to building new cycling paths as they are often government owned, relatively flat and cross

regional towns with high tourism potential. For a relatively low construction cost, rail trails have the potential to deliver significant returns. Other cycling tracks such as the NSW Coastline Cycleway, which follow the coast from Queensland to Victoria, have great potential for the visitor economy.

In addition to cycle path infrastructure, improving bicycle storage on-board regional train services would further boost bicycle tourism in regional NSW. There currently is very limited space for bicycle storage on-board XPT and XPLOER trains. In order to take a bike on regional services, a customer is currently required to make a reservation by phone or at the booking office (it cannot be done online) and pay a \$12 fee. The bike also has to be disassembled and packed in a bicycle box. This cumbersome process is a significant deterrent for these potential high-yield travellers.

The NSW government should work with Destination NSW to further develop regional cycling networks and improve bicycle facilities on-board regional train services.



<sup>30</sup> Beeton, S. (2009) *Cycling in Regional Communities: A longitudinal Study of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail*, Research Report, La Trobe University, Bundoora.



### 3.3. ENHANCE TRANSPORT LINKS TO MAJOR VISITOR PRECINCTS

#### 3.3.1. Sydney CBD light rail and the impact of the construction period

TTF is a long-time supporter of light rail for Sydney's CBD and the south-eastern suburbs. Light rail is a visionary project that will transform George Street into a world class retail boulevard while providing a major new public transport link from Circular Quay to major precincts like Moore Park, Royal Randwick Racecourse, UNSW, and the Prince of Wales Hospital campus. TTF commends the state government for its commitment to the project.

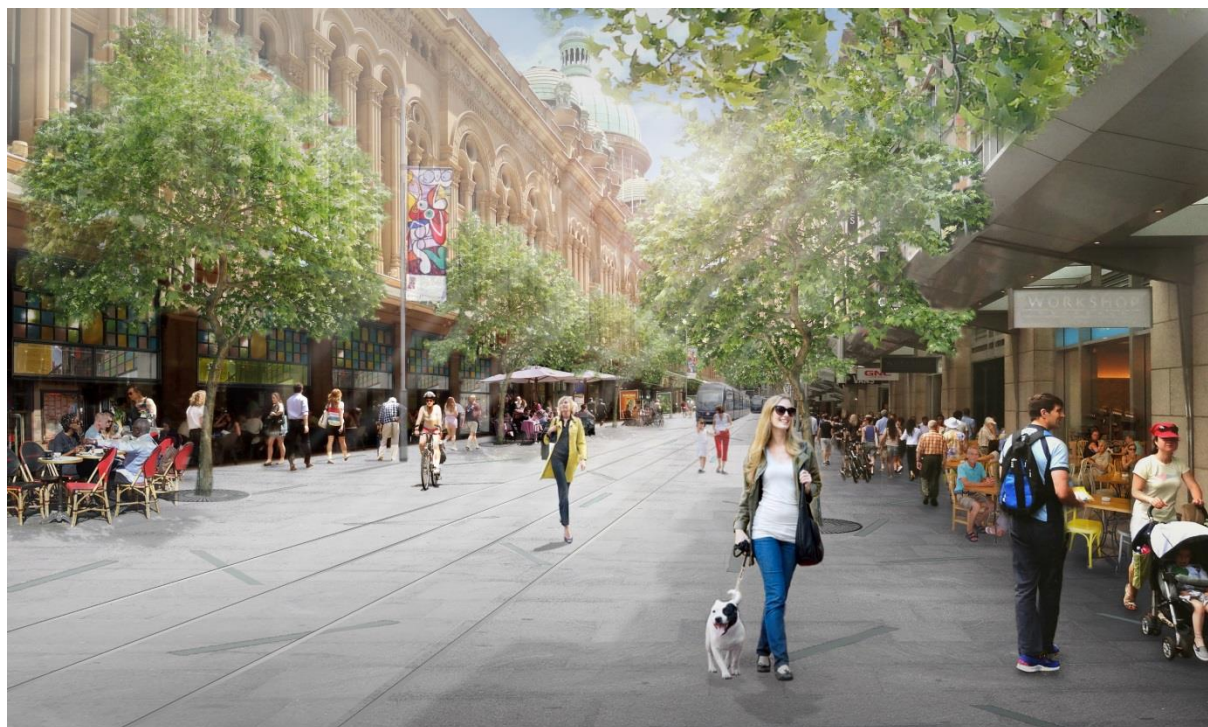
Two of the key benefits enabled by the introduction of light rail are the pedestrianisation of sections of George Street and the creation of a bus interchange at the southern end of the CBD, alleviating the need for large numbers of buses to enter the city centre. These will deliver major improvements to the city centre's amenity and to the wider public transport network.

Public communications about the light rail project will be vital, especially during the construction phase, to ensure the community is prepared for

these changes. Such campaigns were proven highly effective during special events such as the Sydney' and London's Olympic games. A similar approach should be considered for the construction phase of the light rail project.

Transport for NSW and Destination NSW should also develop a communication strategy targeting visitors. Making sure visitors understand why the city is undergoing major construction works is crucial. During the construction period, noise, dust and construction hoardings will affect the visitor experience. To mitigate the impact on the tourism appeal of the city, visitors must be well informed about alternative transport options and what the city will look like post-construction.

Visitors will inevitably mention the construction works and their impact of their trip when writing reviews online on websites such as Tripadvisor. Destination NSW and Transport for NSW should ensure these websites are provided with adequate information and, if possible, respond to negative reviews by promoting the benefits that the project will bring to the city as a tourism destination.





### 3.3.2. CBD street amenity and active transport

When visiting a city, walking is the main transport mode. Great city destinations are walkable cities with pedestrianised street networks and pedestrian places. The implementation of light rail in the core of Sydney's CBD and the associated pedestrianisation of George Street will transform Sydney's main street into a world class boulevard.

With its heritage buildings and major retail spaces, George Street is set to become a major destination for visitors. The pedestrianisation of one block of Pitt Street has shown how popular car-free spaces are among visitors.

While there are limited opportunities for more streets to be closed to traffic, there is room for improvement in making Sydney more walkable. Although the maintenance of footpaths is a local council's responsibility, the NSW government can also play its part.

The reduction of waiting times for pedestrians at traffic lights probably is the single change with the most potential. Waiting times at intersections in Sydney are among the longest in the world and significantly impact journey times for the 90 per cent of trips made in the CBD on foot.

A study led by the City of Sydney found that up to 50 per cent of walking time is spent waiting to cross a road<sup>31</sup>. This significantly affects the reach of walking visitors and locals alike.

Roads and Maritime Services should work with local councils to reduce pedestrian waiting times at intersection and roll out count-down timers.

Cycling also plays an increasingly important role in reducing congestion and improving the CBD's amenity. The NSW government should continue to promote this alternative mode of transport through delivering a safe and connected cycleway network.



<sup>31</sup> *Public Space Public Life* – Jan Gehl, 2007

### 3.3.3. Barangaroo ferry wharf

Barangaroo is one of the largest urban renewal areas in Australia and is expected to accommodate 25,000 workers and 2500 residents. In addition to demand generated by workers and residents, the transport network will need to cater for an estimated 33,000 daily visitors to the area. The parkland, cultural venues, casino, hospitality and retail venues and architecture planned for the precinct will transform Barangaroo into a new major destination on the harbour foreshore.



With many visitor attractions around the harbour, ferry services are critical to visitors. TTF strongly supports the construction of the Barangaroo ferry hub and commends the government for its commitment to start construction in 2015. The ferry hub will also alleviate the pressure on Circular Quay, which is operating close to capacity.

Importantly, the new wharves should not only support government-run ferry services but also cater for private ferry operators who run both regular services and harbour cruises. Sydney Harbour is one of NSW's most valuable assets when it comes to visitors' attraction. Private ferry operators remain one of the best ways to promote this asset and are essential to Sydney's tourism industry. Berth space allocation at the new Barangaroo ferry hub should reflect the important role of private ferry operators. The NSW government should consult with the industry and secure the required berth space for them to expand their tourism offering.

### 3.3.4. Support the development of Sydney Olympic Park

Already experiencing strong and sustainable growth, Sydney Olympic Park represents a unique opportunity for urban densification and activation. The Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 plans for 1.4 million square metres of new construction

to support more than 31,500 jobs, 14,000 additional residents, 5000 students, and around 10 million visitors per year. A wide range of services and infrastructure will be needed to cater for such growth and public transport access will be a key to the precinct's future success.

Sydney Olympic Park's role has been re-enforced by the release of the NSW's government *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, which establishes Parramatta to the Olympic Peninsula as a new priority growth area. The Plan commits the government to improving infrastructure links along the main corridor of this area.

Despite a train station within the precinct, public transport connections are hampered by the lack of direct train services. Currently, 82 per cent of employees at Olympic Park must undertake three or more connections for their journey to work, with more than half rating their journey as "quite difficult" or "very difficult".

The shortcomings of existing public transport access to Olympic Park is damaging the attractiveness of the precinct as a workplace, but also as a residential area and major events destination.

TTF believes that public transport should be improved to Sydney Olympic Park through better direct bus services, a light rail link to Parramatta and Strathfield as part of the Western Sydney Light Rail network and, in the longer term, direct regular rail services to the Sydney Olympic Park station.

### 3.3.5. Rail access to Bondi Beach

Bondi Beach is one of Australia's most popular visitor destinations for both domestic and international travellers. Bondi Beach averaged over 2.2 million visitors per annum between 2012 and 2014<sup>32</sup>. Of all international visitors who travelled to Sydney, 42 per cent visited Bondi. Bondi Beach is also a major events location including the iconic City2Surf race, Sculpture by the Sea and New Year's Eve celebrations. Each of these events brings tens of thousands of visitors to Bondi's coast.

However, the transport network is not coping with Bondi's popularity. Bus services between Bondi Beach and Bondi Junction are at capacity during peak hours and weekends, regularly unable to accommodate all passengers waiting at bus stops whether they are residents or visitors. Roads between Bondi Junction and Bondi Beach (i.e. Bondi Road and Old South Head Road) already experience daily traffic congestion on weekdays and weekends and existing bus services are caught in traffic.

Adding clearways to Bondi Road and Old South Head Road to speed up bus services is challenging due to undesirable impacts on traffic, parking and Bondi Road's shopping strip.

More services alone would also be problematic with CBD streets having limited spare capacity for additional services from the eastern suburbs.

With limited opportunities to enhance bus services, TTF believe there is a strong case for extending the Eastern Suburbs rail line to Bondi Beach. The existing line provides a quick and reliable link between the CBD and Bondi Junction but is currently underutilised despite its high potential. Its peak hour services are among the few on Sydney's rail network with spare capacity. Removing the forced rail to bus interchange at Bondi Junction and increasing the catchment of the line to Bondi Beach would unlock the potential of the existing infrastructure, reduce travel times, and ease bus and traffic congestion in the CBD and Eastern Suburbs.

The extension of the Eastern Suburbs line to Bondi Beach would improve access to one of Sydney's most important tourism assets and enhance the visitor experience. Importantly, it would also improve the daily trip for commuters and encourage a shift from private vehicle to public transport in an area deeply affected by traffic congestion. TTF recommends the NSW government investigate the extension of the Eastern Suburbs rail line.



<sup>32</sup> Destination NSW, Bondi Visitor Profile, 2014.



### **3.3.6. Improving access to Sydney's waterfront**

Sydney's waterfront is home to an impressive list of iconic venues and attractions including the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Opera House, Circular Quay, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Theatre Company, Barangaroo, Darling Harbour and its multiple venues, the Star casino, the Sydney Fish Market and multiple prestigious restaurants and hotels. The continuity of offer along the waterfront will spread even further west with the redevelopment of the Western Harbour and Bays precincts between Pyrmont and Balmain. The density of visitor attractions along the water front offers an unprecedented opportunity to promote these venues as part of an integrated visitor experience. Visitors should be encouraged to follow the harbour and explore all these venues.

Easy and continuous access to the waterfront is essential to promote these visitors attractions. The Sydney Foreshore Authority, City of Sydney and NSW governments should work collaboratively to deliver a continuous accessible path along the waterfront. Once Barangaroo is complete, it will be possible for visitors to walk by the water between the Royal Botanic Gardens and Pyrmont. This walking path should be further extended to reach the Fish Market and link with the Glebe waterfront walking path.

Rolling out consistent wayfinding along the waterfront should be a priority to improve its legibility for visitors. There currently are inconsistencies between signs reflecting the multiplicity of land ownership and authorities (e.g. Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney Foreshore Authority and City of Sydney). The NSW government should work with these stakeholders and facilitate the harmonisation of wayfinding.

Ferries also have a key role in servicing these attractions. Providing good berthing facilities around the key visitor attractions could support a hop-on hop-off ferry service operated by either the private or public sector.

Some cultural venues along the waterfront also rely on night time public transport. Walsh Bay for example is poorly serviced by public transport. While the 998 bus route links the precinct and Wynyard's transport hub on Friday and Saturday nights, no services are available on weekday evenings. The only option left to customers is a 15 to 20 minutes' walk to Circular Quay or Wynyard to catch a train or bus service to their final

destination. This kind of walk at night can be perceived as unsafe or too far by older customers of Walsh Bay's theatres. The NSW government should consider extending the operation of a shuttle bus services to Walsh Bay to weekdays aligned with the conclusion of events and performances in the arts precinct.

### **3.3.7. Plan for transport links to the western harbour precinct and Bays precinct**

The NSW government has identified the Bays precinct as the site of a major urban renewal project. The precinct includes 5.5 kilometres of waterfront and 80 hectares of land and includes major sites like the Sydney Fish Market, the disused White Bay Power Station and the White Bay Cruise Ship terminal.

TTF believes that the Bays precinct has the potential to become a major commercial, educational, cultural and residential precinct that will enhance the Sydney economy while providing an exciting new offering for Sydney's visitors.

The 'front door' of the Bays precinct is Sydney's western harbour which stretches from Walsh Bay around Darling Harbour to the tip of Pyrmont. With multiple new developments joining existing commercial, residential and visitor attractions, this precinct is set to become a major economic generator for Sydney.

The success of plans for these precincts will rely on providing new or improved transport links. The existing road network is unlikely to be able to provide adequate capacity so new rail, light rail and ferry services will need to be considered by the government. Since both precincts are expected to become significant visitor destinations, the provision of appropriate taxi ranks must be integrated into the planning process.

Given the location of these two precincts, active transport has the potential to be a major transport mode to and from the CBD for visitors and commuters. The NSW government should work closely with local councils to ensure adequate pedestrian and cycling facilities are planned for the precinct.

TTF recommends that the NSW government identify the transport requirements of both these precincts to facilitate their further renewal.



### 3.3.8. Weekend and late night public transport

Sydney's public transport network is very much focused on weekday commuter needs. Unfortunately, weekend and late night public transport services do not provide a satisfactory level of service and are often unable to respond to demand. With weekend patronage up 12 per cent following the roll out of the Opal card, which provides cheaper transport fares on weekends, there is a strong case for improving weekend public transport services.

On weekends service frequency significantly drops, bus lanes are replaced by parking lanes, and services often end earlier in the evening. Poor public transport patronage leads to road congestion on weekends, with some arterial roads experiencing their peak traffic volumes on Saturdays. Sydney's public transport services must reflect changes in transport demand. Services to key tourism and weekend event sites can be enhanced through higher frequency and priority measures. These weekend destinations include northern and eastern suburbs beaches, Moore Park and Sydney Olympic Park sport venues.

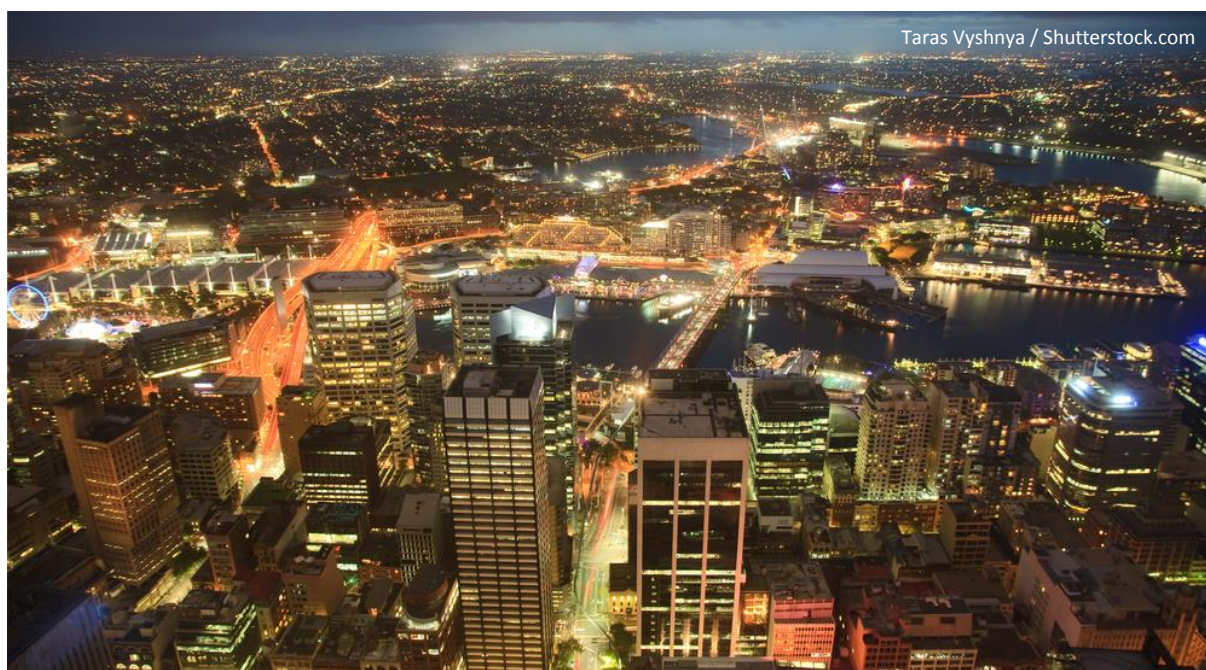
The City of Sydney's OPEN Sydney strategic document includes a series of actions aiming to support the night-time economy and improving safety for those travelling after dark. TTF strongly supports these initiatives which acknowledge the importance of Sydney's night-time economy.

Research commissioned by the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors found that Sydney's night-time economy generated \$3.2 billion in the 2012-13 financial year, the largest night time economy in Australia, and accounted for 28.4 per cent of all jobs<sup>32</sup> in Sydney LGA. A safe and dynamic night life with a wide range of entertainment and hospitality venues and events is integral to the promotion of a city as visitor destination.

However, good public transport and taxi access late at night is paramount for a safe and thriving night time economy. The City's own research found that crowds on George Street on Saturday night between midnight and 1am were the same as the evening peak on Martin Place. Late-night transport services currently do not match this demand. The University of Sydney found 58 per cent of people surveyed were not satisfied with public transport in Sydney at night and wanted more bus and rail services<sup>33</sup>.

Connecting entertainment and cultural precincts to the main public transport hubs should be a priority. Increased bus frequencies and potentially extended hours of operation of rail services should be investigated on routes servicing entertainment and visitor precincts (e.g. the Rocks, Circular Quay, Kings Cross, Darling Harbour).

Better weekend and late night public transport services would better promote Sydney as a visitor destination for both domestic and international visitors.



<sup>32</sup> Comprising core and non-core activities in the night time economy (food, drink and entertainment led business plus supply chain business). *The Australian Night Time Economy and the NTE Economic Performance of Key LGAs 2009 to 2013*, CCCLM, February 2015.

<sup>33</sup> City of Sydney – *OPEN Sydney, Future directions for Sydney at night, strategy and Action Plan 2013-2030*.

### 3.4. IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH OTHER TRANSPORT SERVICES

#### 3.4.1. Develop a taxi strategy for Sydney CBD

Taxis play a crucial role for Sydney's residents and workers and even more so for visitors. The taxi industry is especially important at night time to service entertainment precincts and cultural venues. They are also a critical element of the transport network during special events, whether it is a convention, sport event, music festival or New Year's Eve.

However, the lack of strategic planning is a key issue for the taxi industry. Despite their crucial role as a transport service provider, taxis have been given little consideration in strategic transport planning documents. Most transport modes, from private traffic to buses and walking, have been the focus of Transport for NSW with the release of mode-specific strategic planning documents. To date, taxis have been left out.

The NSW government should work with the taxi industry and local councils to develop a customer-oriented strategy benchmarked against world best practice.

Providing more opportunities to legally and safely pick up and drop off customers is the most efficient approach to reducing traffic disruptions that can be caused by non-compliant kerbside stopping. Additional taxi ranks must be located within easy access of arterial roads in order to minimise unnecessary mileage. Once George Street is partially pedestrianised, it will be crucial to install a network of taxi ranks on east-west streets adjacent to the pedestrian area.

The taxi strategy should acknowledge the changing level of use of taxi ranks according to time of day and location. The most heavily used taxi ranks, especially in the vicinity of tourist attractions, should be sheltered to protect customers from the weather. Such shelters have already been delivered by the City of Sydney on Jamison Street. Circular Quay and Darling Harbour are other locations where shelters would be appropriate.

Where late-night problems exist, more secure taxi ranks should be established. Existing staffed secure taxi ranks (e.g. Park Street and Bayswater Road in Sydney, Queen Street in Melbourne) have demonstrated the benefits of such measures.

Other initiatives for consideration include better lighting and seating at taxi ranks, incentives to promote multi-hiring taxis, pre-paid fares, staggered changeovers, and educational campaigns targeting taxi drivers and customers on their rights and responsibilities.



#### 3.4.2. Coach access to Sydney CBD

Coach services are critical to domestic and international tourism. Foreign visitors get picked up in Sydney from hotels, airports, and cruise terminals to visit regional NSW while residents and school groups in regional NSW use coaches to visit Sydney. Coach operators are a critical element to the tourism industry.

Coach operators need to be able to access transport hubs and tourist destinations to pick up and drop off groups of passengers. Sydney currently lacks such coach facilities.

The RMS-led Investigation of Tourist Coach Parking in the CBD (2012) highlighted a number of issues including:

- Limited availability of short-term coach parking in the CBD;
- Need to upgrade and/or relocation of the Sydney Coach Terminal;
- No long-term policy document addressing the future needs for coach movements and parking in the CBD, and;
- Lack of appropriate planning and infrastructure for compliance with Accessibility Standards.

The RMS investigation recommended the development of Transport Access Plans at key attractions and accommodation sites as well as the development of a long-term CBD coach policy and the inclusion of tourist coach issues in the

development of a CBD transport improvement strategy.

One year later, in December 2013, the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy was released to coordinate the service and infrastructure changes required to support the light rail project. Although the strategy reiterates the need for improved coach facilities, especially near visitor destinations and 'key precincts', there still is no action plan or long-term coach policy to address for the lack of adequate pick-up/drop-off areas.

There is a need for a better coordinated approach to the allocation of kerb space in the CBD, including coach bays and taxi zones.

The introduction of light rail and the relocation of bus services will further increase competition for kerb space in the CBD and that will be a significant challenge for coach operators. Circular Quay and Central Station are currently heavily used by coaches and both precincts will be affected by the introduction of light rail. Following completion of the light rail project, the supply of coach bays in Sydney's CBD will be even lower.

Sydney desperately needs a new modern coach terminal. Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra have the required infrastructure to facilitate this critical part of the visitor economy and Sydney needs to catch up.

TTF strongly recommends, in consultation with the coach industry, that work urgently commences on a coach access strategy. This should include plans for the establishment of a coach terminal, vital infrastructure to support a global tourism destination like Sydney.

### **3.4.3. Harmonise car rental regulation**

Car rentals play a critical role in the visitor's mobility. Whether it is for domestic travellers, Sydney's residents who don't own a car or international visitors, it often is the favourite transport mode to escape the city and visit regional NSW. However, red tape is impeding the efficiency of rental car businesses, which in turn affects the visitor's experience.

The rental vehicle industry abides by eight different state and territory regulatory and tax regimes – with only Tasmania recognising rental vehicles within their own regulatory framework. Regulatory guidance and legislative instruments have been created without a clear national policy objective and lack the simplicity and flexibility required for a healthy operating environment.

For operators, this has stymied industry growth, hindered product innovation, reduced the efficiency of the workforce, made it difficult to determine the compliance task, created a significant administrative burden, and led to cost inefficiencies. For regulatory agencies, it has fashioned a significant knowledge gap, limited national data on the size, value and economic contribution of the industry, and created cost inefficiencies.

TTF calls for regulation and tax reform to ensure the industry has a nationally harmonised framework that allows it to invest in the innovation required to drive the sector forward.





**For further information, please contact:**

**Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF)**

Level 8

8-10 Loftus Street

Sydney NSW 2000

T: +61 2 9240 2000

**[www.ttf.org.au](http://www.ttf.org.au)**