



**PAUL FLETCHER MP
MEMBER FOR BRADFIELD
MINISTER FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND CITIES
24 JANUARY 2018**

TRANSCRIPT – PRESS CONFERENCE
WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT SITE, BADGERYS CREEK

Topics: Western Sydney Airport

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, I'm very pleased to be here at the Western Sydney Airport site here at Badgerys Creek, and I'm here with Paul O'Sullivan, the chairman of WSA Co, which is a government-owned company which is charged with building and owning Badgerys Creek. I'm here with Michael Gatt, who is a senior executive of TransGrid; and with Graham Millett, who is executive general manager of airport infrastructure at WSA Co. And we're here to mark two important milestones for Western Sydney Airport, because this is really the day on which this land goes from being farmland to a construction site. This is the day that this land goes from being farmland to a construction site so that WSA Co can get on with the job of building Western Sydney Airport in time for it to be open and operational before the end of 2026.

Over the last three and a bit years, since the Federal Government committed to proceed with a second Sydney airport here at Badgerys Creek, we've done a huge amount of work: an airport plan, put out in draft and in final form; an environmental impact statement – thousands of pages in drafts and final form and a lot of community consultation. We've had extensive consultation with Sydney Airport before it decided it would not be taking up its right of first refusal.

The Turnbull Government committed that we would invest \$5.3 billion to get this airport built and that we would establish WSA Co, a government-owned company, to take on the job of building and owning the airport. WSA Co is up and running – as you can see – with a chairman, a board, extensive executive staff now appointed; its head office is in Liverpool and it's hard at work at all of the procurement activities that will be necessary to let the very large construction contracts for this project to proceed and for the airport to be open and operational by late 2026.

And today, we are marking two important milestones in this land being transformed from farmland into an active construction site. Firstly, not far from here, the last remaining building on the site is going to be demolished. On this 1780 hectare site, there were some 230 buildings. Those have gradually been falling vacant as the leases have come to an end – they're all Commonwealth-owned buildings – they've been coming vacant as leases have come to an end and buildings have gradually

been demolished. Today, the last building on the site will be demolished, and that's all part of the Commonwealth handing over to WSA Co a construction site so it can get on and do what it needs to do.

And there's one other very important thing that we need to do where work is kicking off today as well. There's a high voltage transmission line which runs across the site – in fact, part of where it runs presently goes right across where the runway will be. So that high voltage transmission line needs to be put underground, and a substantial contract has been entered into between WSA Co and TransGrid, which is the owner and operator of that high voltage transmission line. It's a close to \$100 million project to move this 3.2 kilometres of high voltage transmission line underground. It needs to be put underground and, indeed, the final route of the underground line will be a little bit longer than the 3.2 kilometres so as to preserve the maximum operational flexibility for the airport site.

And so today, physical work on that major project is getting underway, as well as, as I've mentioned, the demolition of the last building on the site. So today, a very important day as we progress towards Western Sydney Airport being open for business by late 2026. Today, this land is moving from being farmland to being a construction site, with construction activity underway under the TransGrid contract and the last existing building on the site being demolished. So, a very important day.

I'm going to ask Paul O'Sullivan to say a few words and then, if there are any technical questions, of course, we have our technical experts who can answer those, but I'll ask Paul to say a few words before time for your questions.

Paul.

PAUL O'SULLIVAN:

Yes, thank you, Minister, and welcome everybody. Obviously today is a very significant day as work commences on shifting the transmission line here at Western Sydney Airport.

The new Western Sydney International Airport delivers some very significant benefits to Sydney. First of all, here in Western Sydney, this \$5 billion project will drive thousands of new jobs and strong economic growth in the Western Sydney area. Secondly, for Western Sydney residents – and indeed, for Sydneysiders generally – it creates competition and choice compared to Sydney's existing, only airport, and we all know competition's a really good thing. And finally, it makes sure that Sydney does not run out of capacity for new flights, which would otherwise happen in a couple of decades time. So it adds extra capacity and future-proofs Sydney.

So today is a very significant milestone in turning this farmland into a very exciting new airport for Sydney.

Thank you. Back to you, Minister.

QUESTION:

Minister, the 230 buildings, is that all of the buildings that have been acquired or subjected to this? Are there others outside this area that are still to be demolished?

PAUL FLETCHER:

On the 1780 hectare site there were some 230 buildings. Today, the last one of those will be demolished and that means that, on the airport site, all existing buildings will have been demolished as part of this becoming a construction site where work can commence, including, of course, the work that's commencing today on the high voltage transmission line.

QUESTION:

The task of removing these, how big an undertaking is that, putting this underground?

MICHAEL GATT:

It's significant and it's unusual. For us, it's not something we commonly do, but there's about 3.2 kilometres there to relocate underground. There's a lot of trenching work and a lot of engineering work that goes into getting the technical design right so that it operates as intended.

QUESTION:

These lines head to Canberra and the Southern Highlands; will electricity ever be impacted down there?

MICHAEL GATT:

No, we don't expect there'll be any impacts on the electricity network. We've planned very carefully to ensure that the continuity of supply is there for consumers and our program will work to ensure that that takes place.

QUESTION:

Minister, beyond today, can you just give us some insight into what other big challenges you're going to face out here over the next eight years?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, there's an enormous job ahead of WSA Co and the Commonwealth Government in getting Western Sydney Airport delivered. There are going to be three very large construction contracts being led by the company over coming years. One of those will be for earth moving and the construction of the runways, taxiways, and apron. The next very big contract will be for the terminal building and the third big contract will be for the land side works. That's roads leading up to the terminal, parking stations and other facilities on the land side of the airport. Before the end of this year we will have early stage earth moving works underway and over the next few years there's a huge amount of construction to be done.

In addition, we need to plan the flight paths and that's a very major undertaking involving Airservices Australia and other stakeholders and of course there'll be very extensive community consultation as part of that process. Very importantly we also need to work with airlines and other stakeholders. And of course the Turnbull Government is also very focused on working with the Berejiklian Government here in New South Wales and with local councils on maximising the economic benefits of the airport.

The airport will generate some 27,000 jobs by 2030. That will be some 13,000 jobs on the airport side itself, 9000 jobs at the airport, 4000 at the onsite business park and then the balance of the downstream jobs we expect will be generated and that's based upon economic modelling by EY.

But it is very important that we are planning and working across all three levels of government to maximise the economic benefits of the airport for the people of Western Sydney and particularly in attracting jobs and economic activity and that's why we've committed we will be entering into a Western Sydney City Deal between the Commonwealth, the New South Wales Government and relevant local councils and work on that city deal continuous.

QUESTION:

Is it still the case, Minister, that a train won't be operating to this airport on day one?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, we continue to do a lot of work in relation to the ground transport connectivity. There's \$3.6 billion being spent under the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan, including the Northern Road, which is not too far from us in that direction, being upgraded so it's at least four lanes across its full 35 kilometre length. In addition there'll be a new M12 motorway that will run from the airport to the M7 and connecting to the Sydney motorway network. And of course over those roads there will be public transport buses. In addition there is extensive work underway between the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments. We've had a joint scoping study into the rail needs of Western Sydney and Western Sydney Airport. That joint scoping study has now reported to the two governments, and we'll have more to say about the next steps in coming months.

QUESTION:

Have the flight paths for this new airport been finalised?

PAUL FLETCHER:

The flight paths certainly haven't been finalised. In the draft and final environmental impact statement there were a set of indicative flight paths that were set out. Now those were set out for the purpose of demonstrating that you can successfully operate an airport in the Sydney Basin and a second Sydney airport given the existing flight paths needed for Kingsford Smith Airport, for military use for general aviation and so on. But we now need to do a whole level of detailed planning on the flight path and that work will take a number of years. It will involve the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, the Commonwealth Department, it will involve Airservices Australia, CASA and other relevant expert participants and stakeholders. So there's a lot of work to do on finalising the flight paths and there will be very extensive community consultation as part of that process.

QUESTION:

Because releasing that indicative flight path has caused you nothing but pain as far as residents are concerned, you had a lot of anger out there.

PAUL FLETCHER:

The whole purpose of releasing the draft environmental impact statement was to attract community feedback – and I'm pleased to say we got strong community feedback. As part of that, the Turnbull Government made a number of commitments about the flight paths. We committed that there would not be a single merge point over any residential area. That's a commitment we've made and that is one of the principles that will apply in the flight path planning. Amongst the other principles are that, during evening hours, flights will take off to and land from the south west, the much more lightly populated direction, whenever safe to do so. And the indications are it will be safe to do so the vast majority of the time.

And so there's a number of commitments that we've made that will guide and underpin the flight path planning process and those commitments respond to the community consultation that occurred through the environmental impact statement process.

Okay, well if there are no other questions let's go and have a look at the machine.