Links to infrastructure network urged

THE president of a planning advocacy group says an airport at Badgerys Creek can’t be built in “glorious isolation”, but needs to be supported by links to Sydney’s existing infrastructure network.

David Ryan, president of the NSW division of the planning institute of Australia, said the organisation has always supported a second airport at Badgerys Creek.

“We play an advocacy role on behalf of the planning industry and we have a long-standing position of support for the airport,” Mr Ryan said. “And of course it would need all the logical connections to transport, including its own train station, which would be an extension of the south-west rail link and a connection to the M7. But exactly how these connections are created is something that needs to be assessed by proposed engineering and feasibility studies.”

Economic geographer Phillip O’Neill, a research fellow at the Urban Research Centre said an airport is a major infrastructure investment and in turn it generates a lot of infrastructure demands.

“There is almost no infrastructure there at the moment,” Professor O’Neill said.

“If you take Elizabeth Drive west from Liverpool, once you reach Cowpasture Road it ceases to be a genuine arterial road and becomes a rural laneway.”

He said that a lot of people did not realise that Liverpool’s central business district was as close by road to Kingsford Smith Airport as it would be to an airport at Badgerys Creek and once the M5 was expanded and WestConnex built, access to Kingsford Smith would be enormously improved.

“The problem with Sydney airport is the traffic congestion surrounding it, but Sydney Airport corporation is working improving access to it.”

“So the real question is whether it is desirable to have two airports in Sydney, with each of them costing vast amounts in infrastructure spending and each of them running below optimum capacity.”
Economist prioritises jobs growth

AN AIRPORT at Badgerys Creek will only create 20,000 new jobs if it is a "comprehensive, fully functioning, international airport, not a strip of asphalt through a cow paddock", an economics expert says.

Professor Phillip O'Neill, research fellow at the Urban Research Centre, who said the figure, a projection from the Deloitte Access Economics report released late last year, could be possible.

"But it depends what sort of airport this will be," Professor O'Neill said. "Without those details, it's impossible to know how many jobs could be created.

"Airports are great generators of jobs and 20,000 jobs for western Sydney would be a very welcome improvement because the region has a major jobs deficit."

Professor O'Neill said western Sydney needed an extra 20-25,000 jobs every 18 months, "simply to keep its head above water and to meet the job needs of its growing population."

But he said the state government already had an excellent plan for generating local employment for the past 10 years.

"The Metropolitan Strategy, developed in 2004, outlined the goal of creating jobs growth in the designated regional cities: Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith and major subregional cities Campbelltown, Bankstown and Blacktown," he said. "These centres aren't starting from scratch. They have already had a substantial investment in public administration, infrastructure and retailing, so they have all the necessary amenities.

"Discussions over Badgerys Creek shouldn't distract people from the need for major job creation and western Sydney's regional centres. "If it ever goes ahead, the employment the airport creates should not replace the targeted employment growth in these areas."
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