My Western Sydney Airport Adventure

From Family Farmland to International Gateway

When people think about Western Sydney International Airport, they often think about runways, terminals, aircraft and infrastructure. For me, the story has always been much more personal.

My family's connection to the land on which the airport now stands dates back to the 1800s, when my ancestors farmed parts of what would one day become one of Australia's most significant infrastructure projects. Long before there were plans for an airport, this was farming country, and like many local families, we have deep roots in the Luddenham district.

Over the past decade, I have been fortunate to witness first-hand the transformation of that land into Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport. Along the way, I attended community meetings, briefings, announcements, groundbreakings, construction milestones and special events. I had the privilege of meeting government ministers, airport executives, community representatives and many of the people whose vision, determination and hard work helped bring this project to life.

As a member of the Forum on Western Sydney Airport (FOWSA) and through my involvement in the local community, I was able to observe the project from a unique perspective. I watched as paddocks became construction sites, earthworks reshaped the landscape, the terminal emerged from the ground, and aircraft finally touched down on the completed runway.

One of the greatest privileges was being able to fly on the inaugural passenger service from Western Sydney International Airport on 25 October 2026. For me, that flight represented the culmination of many years of planning, consultation, construction and anticipation. It was the closing chapter of one journey and the beginning of another for Western Sydney.

This booklet is not intended to be a complete history of the airport. Rather, it is a collection of memories, photographs and personal experiences gathered along the way. It captures some of the milestones I was fortunate enough to witness and records a remarkable period of change for Luddenham and the broader Western Sydney region.

I hope you enjoy sharing in this adventure as much as I have enjoyed being part of it.

Wayne Willmington - Luddenham - October 2026

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My Family's Long History with the Airport Land

When people think about Western Sydney International Airport, they see a modern international gateway that will serve millions of passengers for generations to come. For my family, however, the story of the airport began more than 160 years ago.

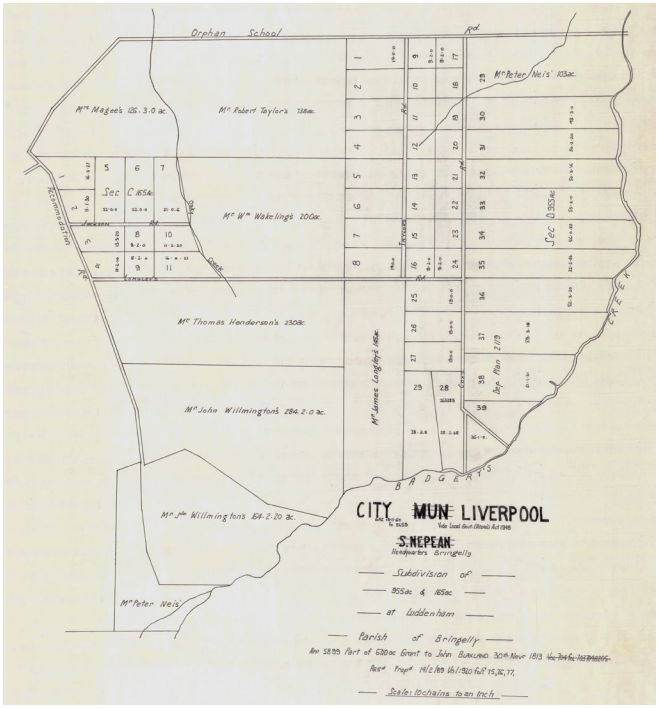
On 31 October 1859, the Blaxland Estate was offered for sale. Two of the unsold parcels, known as Lots 26 and 39, would later become part of the Willmington family story. Lot 26 comprised around 40 acres of previously cultivated land, complete with a cottage, barn, yards and substantial creek frontage. Lot 39 consisted largely of open forest country adjoining the reliable waters of Badgerys Creek.

It is believed that my great-great-grandfather, John William Willmington, entered into a formal agreement to purchase this property on 21 January 1862. Over the following years he progressively paid off the land, and on 1 January 1870 his name appeared on the deeds for Lots 26 and 39 of the Blaxland Estate. The combined holding totalled approximately 450 acres and had cost £569. John later started farming the neighbouring 230-acre Henderson property, creating a substantial farming operation in the Luddenham district. The property remained in Willmington family ownership until it was sold on 20 June 1923. Records from the 1885 Windsor Returns for Landholders provide a fascinating snapshot of life on the property. At that time, John Willmington reported owning three pigs, seventeen horses and fifty-eight head of cattle across his 710-acre Luddenham farm.

The family's connection to the airport site extended beyond this holding. When my great-grandfather married in 1885, he purchased a separate 50-acre farm located on what is also now part of the airport precinct, close to the site of the Airport Fire Station (heading up towards the experience centre). The property was known as Fairview, named for its commanding position on a hill overlooking the surrounding countryside. From that hill, the family looked out across land that would one day become Western Sydney International Airport. Sadly, my great-grandfather passed away at Fairview on 2 April 1888 after contracting typhoid fever.

Today, both families are buried at St James Church, Luddenham. Their final resting place now overlooks the runway of the airport that stands on the land they once farmed, creating an extraordinary connection between the past and present.

As I reflect on today's airport, I am reminded that long before there were runways, aircraft and terminals, this was simply farming country. For my family, the story of Western Sydney International Airport is not just a story about aviation. It is also part of our family history.





Maps show the original Willmington farm in relation to the airport site, including the terminal precinct.

Airport Timeline Background

It is reported on the 15 April 1964 that authorities from the Department of Civil Aviation and the NSW Government are discussing the establishment of a second major airport in Sydney

In January 1969 Badgerys Creek / Luddenham was named officially as a possible location for Sydney's second airport for the first time.

On the 6 July 1976 a combined Commonwealth-State government inquiry into the building of a second airport was announced. This group is known as the Major Airport Needs of Sydney (MANS) group. They were considering five sites including Badgerys Creek, Bringelly, Luddenham areas for the second airport.

The MANS group releases a preliminary report from Commonwealth members on 14 December 1979. The construction of a third runway at KSA was recommended. In the event that a second airport is needed in the future, the report recommends that it be constructed at Badgery's Creek

October 1980 opposition leader Mr Hayden pledges that a Labor government would build a second airport.

On the 17 June 1981 the Badgerys Creek Anti-Airport Group was formed.

7 October 1982 the Minister for Aviation, The Hon. Wal Fife MP announces that the Commonwealth would proceed (without the agreement of the State Government) to build a third runway at KSA. Construction would start in 1984 and is to be complete by 1992.

In 1986 Prime Minister Bob Hawke's Labor Government announced Badgerys Creek/ Luddenham as the site for Sydney's second airport. The Government also announced land acquisition was to start immediately.

On the 22 March 1989 The Prime Minister, the Hon. Robert J. Hawke MP, announces the Government's decision to develop a third runway at KSA (subject to a favourable Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)) and to begin the development of a second airport at Badgery's Creek. The remainder of land required for the second airport is to be acquired, and a general aviation facility to be constructed immediately. Design work for future development is also to commence.

14 November 1991 After the receipt of a favourable EIS about the construction of a third runway at KSA, Cabinet approves the project. Cabinet to examine a proposal to build a scaled-down aerodrome at Badgery's Creek, initially capable of taking light aircraft, but with the potential to be later developed into an international standard airport.

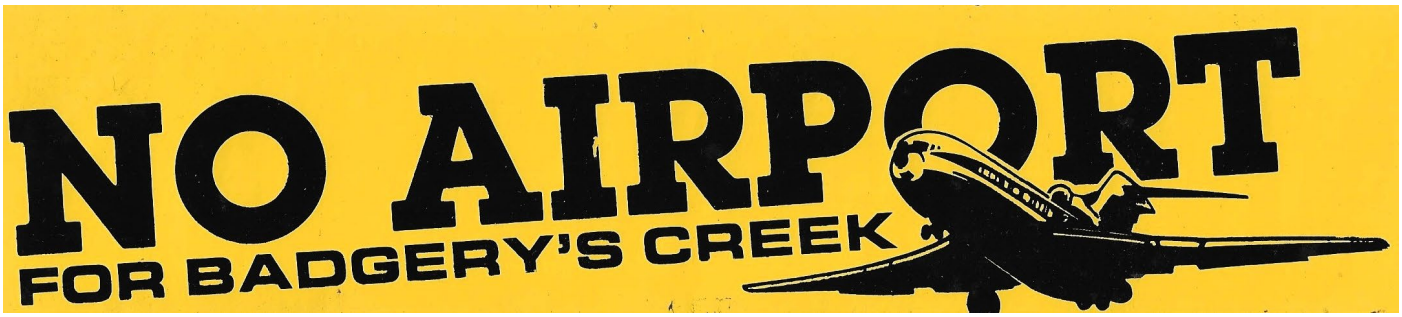
23 March 1998 It was reported that State Cabinet has rejected the Badgery's Creek EIS. There is speculation that NSW may refuse to supply roads, rail, water and sewerage if the project goes ahead.

13 March 2012 in response to a question about a second Sydney Airport from Mr John Murphy, Minister Albanese stated that: 'This month the federal and New South Wales governments received the most comprehensive independent study ever done into Sydney's and, therefore, Australia's aviation needs. The report makes it clear that Sydney needs a second airport sooner rather than late

6 April 2012 the NSW Premier, Barry O'Farrell, ruled out a second airport ever being built near Sydney under a Coalition government, claiming the community should not have to put up with any more aircraft noise.

On the15 April 2014 Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Infrastructure Minister Warren Truss announced Federal Cabinet approval of Badgerys Creek/Luddenham as the site for the Western Sydney Airport. Subsequently, Luddenham and Badgerys Creek residents were advised they must vacate their (rented on airport land) properties by mid-June 2015. After decades of debate about the location, Mr Abbott - who wants to be known as the "infrastructure prime minister" - says he wants to "get cracking".

Badgerys Creek Anti-Airport Group Days



Many thousands of these car stickers were printed and displayed on car bumpers in the 80's

On the 26 May 1981 a public meeting was held in the Luddenham Hall that was attended by over 250 people as well as lots of media. The meeting was to talk about the proposed airport, invited guest Mr K.J. Cosgrove - Chair of MANS Study Group (Major Airport Needs of Sydney). A resolution was passed to write to Federal & State MP's asking for Sydney airport to be expanded. It was also decided to have a meeting in Badgerys Creek in June to form an Anti-Airport Group to stop an airport being built here.





I still have the 22 Information Bulletins released by the MANS Group in 1979

Luddenham Anti-Airport Meeting May1981 with K.J. Cosgrove - Chair of MANS Study Group, Bob Green - Secretary Luddenham Progress & Wayne Willmington – Publicity Officer Luddenham Progress.

On the 17 June 1981 a public meeting was held at the Badgerys Creek Hall and the Badgerys Creek Anti-Airport Group was formed with the following office bearers being elected - Ron Dunbier Chairman, John Tapp Secretary/Publicity Officer to be assisted by Wayne Willmingon, Mr D McCarron Treasurer, Mr J Gavage & S Grima Vice Chairmen. This Group was very active up until 1984 Luddenham and Badgerys Creek had some big anti-airport marches and rallies, that were led by an elephant from Bullen's on the back of a truck (the only Jumbo for Western Sydney). As well we had people in Penrith St Marys, Liverpool & Campbelltown every Thursday night and Saturday morning getting petitions signed. We also held lots of fun raising events. I stood down in 1984 and since 1989 after the Government started purchasing land for the airport and they dropped the plan for a third runway that would have gone thru Luddenham Village, I have supported the airport.





Thousands marched along Northern Road to a rally in Freeburn Park Luddenham

The Airport Finally Becomes Reality



On 26 August 2015, what had been debated for decades finally began to feel real with the first on site media conference. Standing at Badgerys Creek, Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss announced that plans for the long-awaited second airport were moving ahead. Against the backdrop of open paddocks that would one day become the airport precinct, Mr Truss confidently declared: "**We're all systems go**.".

He described the project as one that would transform Western Sydney, saying it would help develop the region into a mature and thriving metropolis. The announcement signalled that the Australian Government was committed to laying the foundations for the airport and supporting the infrastructure needed to make it a reality. However, not everyone welcomed the decision, there several nearby tenants who have so far refused to move on from airport land and legal proceedings were continuing.

September 2016 I was in Parramatta for the release of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Western Sydney Airport and was issued with a copy. This followed extensive community consultation in response to the draft EIS. There was a strong reaction to the indicative flight paths set out in that document, particularly the proposal for a 'single merge point' over the community of Blaxland. In response, the final EIS contained extensive commitments about the flight paths, including a commitment that there would not be a single merge point for flight paths over any residential community





I still have the original EIS Book and the USB

I was invited to Canberra on the 17 October 2016 to speak with Josh Frydenberg MP, Minister for the Environment and Energy and Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Urban Infrastructure to discuss WSA along with the EIS, and thanks to Emma Husar MP (then Member for Lindsay) for the tour around the corridors of Parliament.

The Western Sydney Airport Plan was determined on the 5 December 2016.





Joining FOWSA and Getting a Front-Row Seat

In April 2017 I was asked to be part of The Forum on Western Sydney Airport (FOWSA) representing the Luddenham area, the first meeting of (FOWSA) was held in Werrington on 26 May 2017. It was a formal mechanism for consultation with stakeholders and the broader community. FOWSA was chaired by Professor Peter Shergold AC, Chancellor of Western Sydney University, and brought together 23 member representatives from community, state and local government, business and the airline industry. FOWSA's role as a community forum was discussed. Members were advised of their obligation to consult on a regular basis with stakeholders, parliamentary colleagues and communities. The Chair acknowledged that regular community and stakeholder communication by members would maintain transparency and help get FOWSA messages out. Later it became a very much box ticking group after Professor Peter Shergold stood down as chair.





Penrith Mayor John Thain, Professor Peter Shergold AC, Wayne and Kiersten Fishburn Liverpool Council CEO at the first FOWSA meeting



Sydney Airport officially announced its decision to decline the federal government's offer to build and operate the Western Sydney Airport on 2 May 2017.

Following the rejection, the federal government moved ahead and WSA Co was incorporated on 7 August 2017 with the former Optus chief executive Paul O'Sullivan selected as chair. Establishing that the government owned company that would build and operate the airport. Graham Millett was soon after appointed as the original CEO.

WSA Co Chair (Paul O'Sullivan) & CEO (Graham Millett) with Wayne in the middle

As part of the FOWSA role I was invited to Sydney KSA for a day on the 29 August 2017 to check out the airport and its operation including spending time in the control tower to learn about flightpaths, plane movements and an airside site visit to the end of the runways.





I am checking out the KSA Control Tower, not a bad view of the Sydney Airport

What had to be Moved First

So, in 1991 at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church Cemetery, Northern Road Luddenham around 70 graves were exhumed and moved to the Greendale Catholic Cemetery. This was done on the quiet and I happen to be driving past and saw that something was happening and took these pics.





Headstones removed and crosses placed on the Graves, soon after a fence was erected so you couldn't see in

Then in October 2017 from St John's Anglican Church 9 Pitt Street and Uniting Church 34 Pitt Street, Badgerys Creek almost 50 another graves (around 42 to 44 documented burials) were exhumed and relocated, this time it was covered by the media unlike what happened in Luddenham.



One of the major pieces of infrastructure required before construction of the Airport could begin was the relocation of The Northern Road. Northern Road passed directly through what would become the airport site. The relocation formed Stage 4 of the broader Northern Road Upgrade project, with the construction of 5.5 kilometres of new roadway around the western side of the site. The Northern Road upgrade extended around 35 kilometres between Narellan and South Penrith.

June 2017 - Turning the sod Northern Road Upgrade PM Malcolm Turnbull, Treasurer Scott Morrison, Minister for Urban Infrastructure Paul Fletcher, MP for Mulgoa Tanya Davies and Assistant Minister for Cities Angus Taylor

Power lines also went thru the airport - Transmission Line 39 is a 330 kilovolt (kV), single circuit overhead connection that extends 114 kilometres between the Sydney West and Bannaby substations (Southern Highlands). An approximate 3.2-kilometre section of the Line crossed the site Western Sydney Airport. A new 3.8-kilometre underground cable that generally follows the perimeter of the airport site was laid underground. During May 2019 the 3.2-kilometre section of overhead transmission line and towers were demolished.







With Sherrie Anderson TransGrid where the lines go underground and the towers being fell

Groundbreaking and Early Days

At 9.45 am on Monday, 24 September 2018, invited guests and media gathered at a temporary car park near the future airport site for a safety induction before being transported by bus into the construction area. It was an exciting morning, as we were about to witness history in the making. This event marked the commencement of the initial earthworks and the beginning of construction of Sydney's long-awaited second airport. The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Minister for Cities, Urban Infrastructure Alan Tudge. Although NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian was unable to attend, she was represented by Minister for Western Sydney Stuart Ayres. The initial earthworks phase involved moving approximately 1.8 million cubic metres of earth to prepare the site for the major earthworks program and future runway construction. The works also included preparations for the relocation of Badgerys Creek Road to the eastern side of the airport boundary, another important step in making way for the airport. As buses made their way across the site, it was still difficult to imagine that this vast expanse of farmland would one day become a modern international airport. Yet this was the moment when the vision finally became reality, and construction officially began.



The Prime Minister started construction with saying "Ok Trevor Let it Go"



The Biggest Media Contingency I have ever seen



Early earthworks are now underway on Westen Sydney Airport.





October 2018 Badgerys Creek Rd Site Office and adjacent clearing





In January 2019 work started on the perimeter fence around the airport site





January 2019 early earthworks at Badgerys Creek compound

Starting in 2019 every 2 months I would have a briefing with the management team at the Airport to discuss issues in the community and to get updates for locals



Nicole Ryan (General Manager Stakeholder and Community Engagement), Wayne and Maryanne Graham (Head of Corporate Affairs).

On the 4 March 2019 WSA became Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport unveiled as the Airport's operating name by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who was joined by members of Nancy-Bird's family. Western Sydney Airport Chief Executive Officer Graham Millett said Nancy-Bird Walton's pioneering spirit made her the perfect namesake for the transformational infrastructure project. "I think it is a fitting recognition of a trailblazing aviator and one of Australia's great pioneers, Nancy-Bird Walton." Mr Millett said that the inclusion of 'International' in the name was important, so the airport is recognised globally.





Nancy-Bird Walton's Family with Gladys Berejiklian NSW Premier and Stuart Ayres MP and I am with Wendy Waller Mayor of Liverpool and Ross Fowler Mayor of Penrith



Over the years I got to chat with Nancys Family – here with Son-in-law Pete, her Granddaughter Anna and Daughter Anne Marie, such a nice Family were humbled with the Airport name.

During May 2019 early earth works were progressing well at Badgerys Creek as well as at the Western Sydney Airport Visitor Centre in Eaton Road Luddenham This centre which will give the community the chance to watch the airport come to life right before our eyes. Western Sydney Airport Chief Executive, Graham Millett, said the visitor centre will use digital and augmented reality technologies to give the public an immersive experience. “We want the public to be a part of the journey and discover the airport’s story, particularly the benefits it will bring to the region in terms of jobs and opportunities,” Mr Millett said. “Floor-to-ceiling glass panels will offer a first-class view of the airport construction area. “Augmented reality will allow visitors to see exactly where the runway and terminals will be built and what they will look like from the vantage point of the Visitor Centre.” Community and school groups as well as local and international visitors and members of the public will enjoy free access



Earthworks at Badgerys Creek and the Eaton Road Offices and Experience Centre construction

Western Sydney International Airport launched Airport bus tours for groups. The first tour was launched on 9 July 2019 by WSA CEO Graham Millett and Melissa McIntosh MP Federal Member for Lindsay and Local Community members. Our first stop on the tour.





New Badgerys Creek Road meets Elizabeth Drive with the Old Rd on Left to become the Airport entrance and the Experience Centre and office almost finished August 2019

On the 2 September 2019 the Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack MP, along with lots of MP's opened the Western Sydney Airport Experience Centre. The Centre is designed in conjunction with the local landscape; the centre will guide visitors through an exhibition space before opening to a viewing area where they will be able to see airport construction underway. The viewing area is also equipped with augmented reality, allowing visitors to view how the terminal and runway will look and where they will be positioned. The centre will feature interactive digital videos including the history of the region.

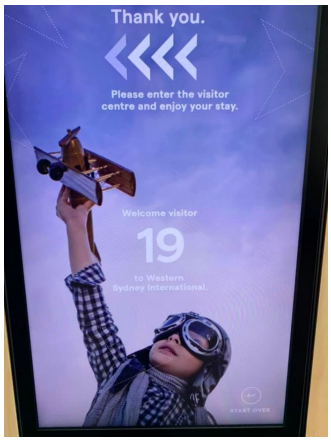




The opening and cake cutting at Experience Centre with Angus Taylor MP, Prime Minister - Scott Morrison, Melissa McIntosh MP, Michael McCormack MP and Stuart Ayres MP







Local School Children help the PM cut the ribbon – PM leaving Experience Centre – I was the 19th Person in.





The view from the Experience on the 2nd September 2019 (wish I had taken more photos)

Watching the Airport Rise

CPB Contractors and Lendlease organised open day at Airport construction site on the 23 November 2019 for local residents who were given the opportunity to get up close and see how big some of the earthmoving is





The 11th of March 2020 saw the official start of the Major Earthworks at Western Sydney Airport, for me it was the chance to stand on the original Family land before it would be flattened. The Deputy PM Michael McCormack MP gave the command to begin along with Melissa McIntosh MP, Stuart Ayres MP & Tanya Davies MP. Also, representatives from Penrith & Liverpool Council as well as some of the Family of Nancy-Bird Walton. More than 200 earthmoving machines were rolling onto the site as the next phase of work begins on one of the largest earthmoving challenges in Australian history. Western Sydney Airport Executive General Manager – Airport Infrastructure Jim Tragotsalos said major earthworks will see around 25 million cubic metres of earth moved to make way for construction of the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport terminal, runway, roads and rail. “Major earthworks will see us moving up to 1 million cubic metres of earth a month, working across 67 percent of the site, which is the entire footprint of the first stage of the Airport. “We’ll have hundreds of workers and more than 200 scrapers, excavators, graders, dump trucks and dozers, including some of the world’s biggest machines, on site getting to work on this mammoth task. “We need to flatten what is a very hilly site – the difference between the highest and lowest points is equivalent to a 12-storey building”.





Stuart Ayres MP, Tanya Davies MP, Deputy PM Michael McCormack MP and Melissa McIntosh MP. Wayne with Stuart Ayres MP and Melissa McIntosh MP with the final plan



On July 17, 2020 · Mr Simon Hickey was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of Western Sydney Airport (WSA Co). Finance Minister Mathias Cormann and Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure Alan Tudge welcomed the WSA Co Board's decision to appoint Mr Hickey.

Mr Hickey had more than 30 years' experience in commercial, aviation, and construction roles, including executive roles at Qantas and Lendlease.

Western Sydney Airport required one of the biggest earthmoving tasks in Australian history, using 260 pieces of earthmoving equipment. In March 2021, the airport reached the halfway point in the earthworks, with 13 million cubic metres of soil moved.



View from the Experience Centre 30 May 2021

On the 4th of June 2021The Hon Paul Fletcher Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts was in Luddenham to announce the contract for the construction of the terminal at Western Sydney International Airport had been awarded to Multiplex Construction Pty Ltd. Terminal construction alone is expected to create more than 1400 direct jobs and thousands more indirect jobs through its flow-on benefits to suppliers and the local economy. Terminal construction is due to begin at the end of the year.







This is actually at the terminal site, the hole in the background is now the baggage basement

The first of four cranes being installed to construct the airport terminal, on the 19th of October 2021 the Prime Minister, Premier and Other Federal and State Members of Parliament were in Luddenham to witness work start on the Airport Terminal Building. This terminal will be a destination in its own right with specialty retail, cafes and restaurants as well as an outdoor plaza that can host events like local food festivals, markets & community celebrations, as well as being an international and domestic passenger terminal all under the one roof.





Prime Minister Scott Morrison gives the go-ahead to start work on the terminal

Western Sydney International Airport for opening the gates for a community open day on Saturday 17th June 2023, it was great to get a close look at the terminal building and runway as well as witnessing history in the making. With only 1,000 tickets available for the public, they were snapped up in less than 20 minutes. As well as getting to see the Airport Progress all the different projects were onsite to answer any questions and talk about other local developments







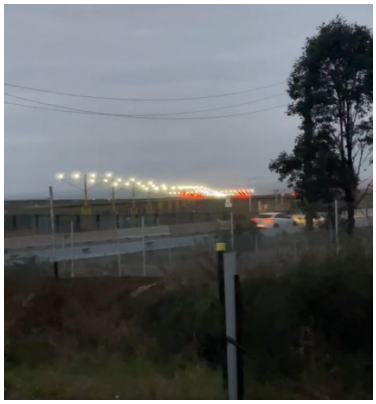
Also the first appearance of the famous WSI letters with Bec Lynch from WSI



Airport open day 2023 - we got a chance to get up close and check it all out



During July 2024 the Airport tested all the runway lighting that is made up of 2800 aeronautical lights that are linked with 300 kilometres of cable, the approach lights are visible from 10 kilometres away and are very visible in Luddenham





August 2024 cranes are gone and roof is completed

On Wednesday the 2nd of October 2024 the first plane landed on the finished runway at Western Sydney International Airport in Luddenham. While it might not look like much, the Piper PA-30 Twin Engine Comanche landed as part of the commissioning of the Aeronautical Ground Lights and associated equipment, completing validation from both land and sky and by taking off and landing from both ends of the runway during daylight, dusk and evening conditions to ensure the system is fit for purpose and ready to welcome aircraft.







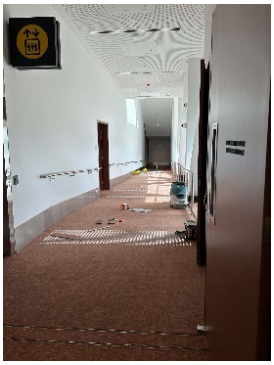
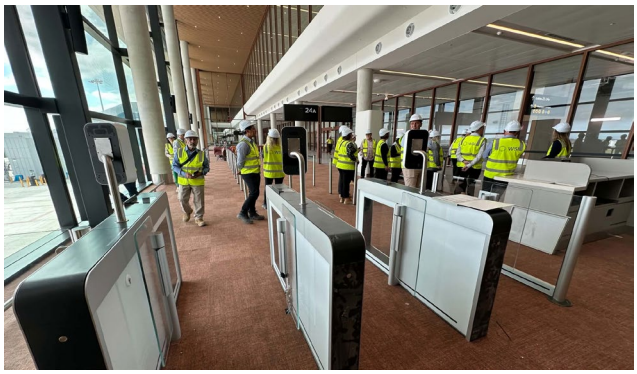


The first plane to land was a Piper PA-30 Twin Engine Comanche- Cargo in the background on last pic

The Airport Cargo Precinct in Luddenham is very visible, the construction of the precinct that will include up to 75,000 square metres of warehousing and be capable of servicing eight wide-body aircraft at any one time. Construction began earlier this year and remains on track for cargo operations to commence in 2026. The new hub will also be capable of facilitating Qantas' transformed freighter fleet of new and upgraded Airbus A321 and A330 aircraft.



The Airport Cargo Precinct on the 12 November 2024

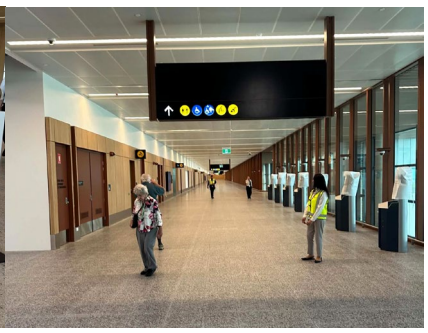
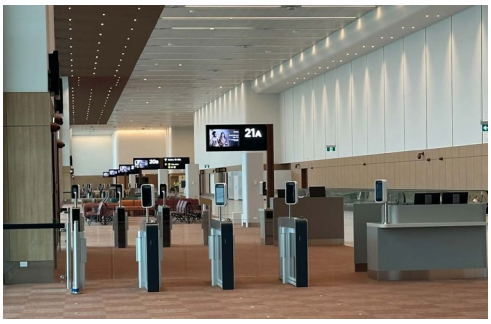




FOWSA Terminal inspection 21 February 2025 Wayne with Penrith Mayor Todd Carney



Last FOWSA Meeting in Penrith 19 June 2025 with Gordon Henwood, Jacob Idiculas, Wayne, Lee de Winton-Chair, Susan Templeman MP and Gregory Copeland



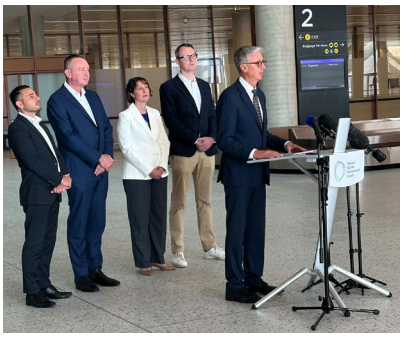
Luddenham Progress Tour 12 December 2025

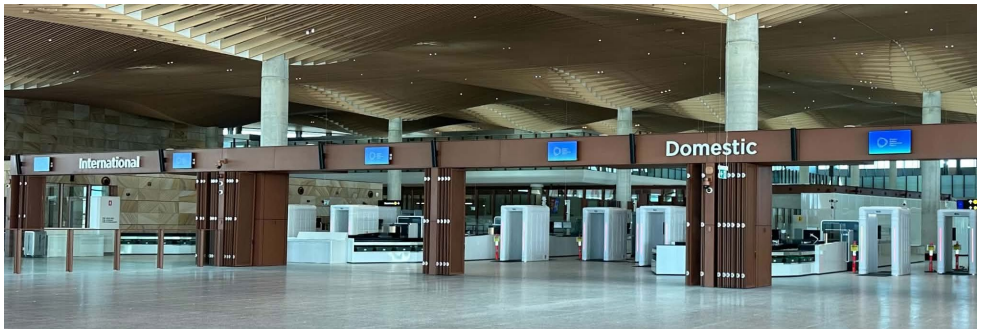
The Announcements

Construction of the first major piece of Sydney's 24-hour airport is complete, with Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport's (WSI) runway and other key airside facilities officially finalised as the countdown to opening continues. Announced by WSI CEO Simon Hickey 4 June 2025, he said this significant step demonstrated the rapid rate of progress as major construction continues to wrap-up to make way for testing and live trials across the airport precinct.

28 October 2025 WSI announced it is undertaking a multiagency emergency exercise as part of the airport's ongoing program to prepare for opening in the second half of 2026. The exercise kicked off this morning, during which WSI will test a full-scale aerodrome emergency response to a simulated aircraft incident, when a NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) 737 aircraft operated by Coulson Aviation landed on the WSI runway, which marked the beginning of the simulated exercise. This is the first time a 737 jet has landed at the new airport.

WSI CEO Simon Hickey announced on the 25 March 26 that this is an historic moment for everyone who's played a role in bringing WSI to life – Australia's first international greenfield airport in more than 50 years. "We mark a terrific milestone moment today with our first international airline partner, Skytrax certified 5-Star carrier Singapore Airlines, now giving passengers the first opportunity to book tickets from Western Sydney International Airport," he said. "Singapore Airlines will operate daily non-stop flights from 23 November that will depart WSI just before midnight, with passengers arriving at the award-winning Changi Hub around 5am – offering a new era of global connectivity for Sydney-siders.





WSI CEO Simon Hickey on the 25 March 2026 announces – "A daily non-stop flight between Singapore and WSI, beginning on 23 November 2026"



On the 2 April 2026 WSI CEO Simon Hickey welcomed the launch of Air New Zealand's services, which will be the first international flights to operate from Sydney's new 24-hour global gateway from 26 October 2026. "We're delighted to have Air New Zealand as a trusted partner, with the airline significantly advancing its flight schedule to take off from WSI in October – operating trans-Tasman services three times a week between WSI and Auckland," he said.

Retail partner announced 31 March 2026, in a significant show of confidence in Australia's new 24-hour international gateway, Lagardère AWPL (part of Lagardère Travel Retail) - one of the top three travel retailers in the world and the largest in the Pacific region - has secured two major contracts to become WSI's official duty-free and travel essentials partner for the next decade.

On the 23 April 2026: dnata, a leading global air and travel services provider, announced it will invest approximately A$32 million to establish a dedicated cargo terminal operation at Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport (WSI), reinforcing its long-term commitment to the New South Wales market and Australia's aviation industry. dnata will operate from a 5,000 sqm warehouse facility within WSI's 24-hour Cargo Precinct, supported by an additional 4,000 sqm of surrounding land.

On the 10 June 2026 it was announced that after 15 years of planning, seven years of construction and a full year of testing, Western Sydney International Airport will officially welcome its first passengers on Sunday 25 October. The inaugural commercial service will be a Jetstar Airbus A320 flight to the Gold Coast at 11am.



Minister Catherine King, Simon Hickey, Vanessa Hudson QANTAS & Steph Tully Jetstar – Jetstar promo photo

Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport marked a major milestone in July with the commencement of flights at its Cargo Precinct. On Monday 13 July 2026 at 2pm, a Qantas A321 freighter became the first freight aircraft to land at the new facility, taxiing into the precinct as part of WSI's ongoing operational readiness program. In partnership with Qantas Freight, the airport carried out a series of live testing activities, including aircraft arrivals and departures operating on the newly published flight paths that came into effect on 9 July. The successful trial marked an important step toward preparing the precinct for full operations.



The historic landing with WSI CEO Simon Hickey and the plane's captain David McCutcheon, David is related to the Luddenham Hughes Family and has spent a lot of time in Luddenham

Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport reached another historic milestone on 27th July 2026 with the official opening of its 24-hour Cargo Precinct by Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development Catherine King. The first commercial freight operations commenced immediately, marking a significant boost for Australia's supply chains, domestic producers and manufacturers, and Western Sydney's rapidly expanding economy. WSI CEO Simon Hickey said the airport's state-of-the-art cargo hub will unlock opportunities for Greater Sydney's businesses, workers and broader logistics networks as it connects Western Sydney to global markets. The launch underscored the national importance of the precinct and cemented Luddenham's role at the centre of Australia's newest aviation gateway.



The VIP's - Minister Catherine King & Simon Hickey CEO Official Opening – Wayne Unofficial opening



Cargo Precinct opening day



10 August 2026 Vietjet Air signed on to fly from Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport (WSI). From January 2027, Vietjet will operate two weekly services to Ho Chi Minh City, increasing to three weekly services in March, while the airline's joint venture – Vietjet Thailand – also plans to operate four weekly services between WSI and Bangkok from November 2027, subject to regulatory approvals. Tickets for the Ho Chi Minh City flights taking off in January are now available for purchase with prices starting at AUD $299, one-way.

September 1, 2026 – saw the first passenger aircraft to park at the new terminal. Jetstar's JQ7990 Airbus A320neo flew in empty from Melbourne and headed out again as part of the final phase of Operational Readiness testing before flights officially begin on 25 October.







First passenger aircraft & I was able to chat with Jetstar Chief Pilot Tyrone Simes, who flew it in.

9 September 2026 saw the announcement that tickets to fly from WSI to Nadi, Fiji, went on sale today, with Fiji Airways the latest international airline to join Sydney's new 24-hour global gateway. From March next year, Fiji Airways will operate three weekly flights between WSI.





Introductory return fares from Western Sydney to Fiji starting from just $639 AUD

Sunday, 25 October 2026 - Opening Day and the First Flights

A day that has been a long time coming the opening of Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport (WSI) happened at 11 am on the 25 October 2026 with the Prime Minister Anthony Albanese declaring the Airport Open, I was lucky enough to be on the first ever flight JQ365 to the Gold Coast.



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese ipening WSI and I was able to congradulate CEO Simon Hickey



Peter Shergold AC and Hon. Paul Lucas CACG. Flight deck with pilot Aglaya Papadokokolakis



WSI -Chair Paul O'Sullivan - CEO Simon Hickey, Catherine King MP & Anthony Albanese PM



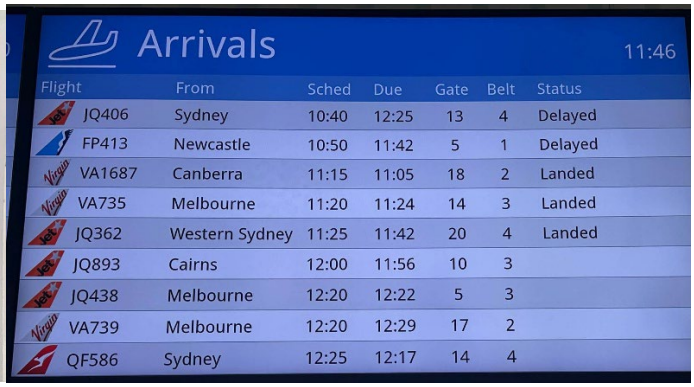












Then on the 26 October WSI welcomed its inaugural international passengers, with Air New Zealand touching down from Auckland NZ165. It then returned across the Tasman as NZ166

Looking back through these photographs reminded me just how remarkable this journey has been. From family land and community meetings to inaugural flights and international services, I have been fortunate to witness one of the most significant infrastructure projects in Australia's history.

Thank you for sharing the journey with me. Wayne Willmington - Luddenham