

OPINION 19

Mascot is flying high for growth

Paul Nicolaou



Compared with many other global cities, Sydney is in a fabulous position for welcoming international visitors to our wonderful city.

We have a magnificent domestic and international airport within sight – literally – of the CBD and all that it has to offer. At Circular Quay, we have an international cruise terminal on our doorstep to welcome visitors arriving by sea.

As if these weren't enough, we are on the threshold of the Western Sydney Airport opening.

Having a second major airport is a great thing but let's not forget the existing airport will continue to make a huge economic contribution.

This week, Sydney Airport is in the spotlight with the release of a draft master plan looking ahead to 2045.

It's a plan for growth that confirms the airport – after 106 years of service – will continue to play a big role in the economic life of Sydney.

But the airport's draft master plan, open for public comment, is firmly on the future envisaging 72 million passengers a year by 2045: 75 per cent more than now.

Capacity will be created with a new terminal built between T2 and T3, adding 12 new aircraft gates and moving some international services to the new terminal.

The plan also forecasts \$70bn in annual economic contribution – up from \$45.3bn — and more than 105,000 direct jobs.

International passengers are expected to shift from 40 per cent of total volume to 50.4 per cent.

The airport is already a powerhouse for local jobs. In 2024, of the 84,600 full-time jobs it supported, 11,000 of the workers lived within 10km of the airport and another 11,000 lived within 20km.

Proximity to the city requires commitment to environmental stewardship. The plan includes the airport's new five-year environment strategy.

It embeds environmental goals and commits to reducing emissions, building climate resilience and operating more sustainably.

Sydney Airport CEO Scott Charlton gets it right when he says: "When Sydney Airport grows, so does business, trade, tourism and jobs."

And that's exactly what Sydney needs from this celebrated airport gateway.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney