

Transcript of Interview #11 (31/03/25)

Interviewer: Hi, my name is Jodie, a master's student at the University of Sydney School of Architecture, Design and Planning. I'm the responsible researcher for this study and will be conducting this interview. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

Please note you can withdraw from this interview at any time even after it's finished. If you withdraw, your responses will be removed from this research study. For this interview, I'm going to be asking you some questions about what you think of the boundaries of Western Sydney when shown on a map and what makes it different from the rest of Sydney? There are no right or wrong answers. Before I ask you the questions, I have provided you with a map called Map 1. This map is for you to look at and think about the key question - where is Western Sydney?

You can draw lines, arrows, images, write comments, or mark anything on this map to show where you think Western Sydney starts and ends today. You can draw on Map 1 at any time before the end of this interview, and I'll let you know when we're reaching this end. You can make as many changes as you like.

Okay, I'm going to start asking you the interview questions now.

Interviewee: Yeah, that's fine.

Interviewer: In whatever way you like. Tell me a little bit about yourself, and where in Sydney you live.

Interviewee: I have grown up in Sydney most of my life, except for a stint in Canberra for 5 years, so I, I consider where I live in Milperra as south-west Sydney. So is that kind of the level of detail you need?

Interviewer: Yeah, that's fine. I mean.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Would you consider south-west Sydney to be part of Western Sydney, or do you think it's a different thing?

Interviewee: Really depends on what you're describing it. So to me, I get, look, I guess technically it is Western Sydney, just south-west, Sydney. So -

Interviewer: Do you?

Interviewee: Yeah, I would probably say, Yeah, Western Sydney, it's just south of Western Sydney. Yeah.

Interviewer: What are the first four words that come to your mind when you read or hear Western Sydney?

Interviewee: Um, overlooked - it's probably a big one. Developing. Future.

How many words was it? Three of four? Four, so I need one more? So what I say, overlooked, developing, future, work in progress.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate about each of these four words?

Interviewee: Yeah, look, I think, from a political point of view, Western Sydney for a long time has been overlooked. I think it's only been the last sort of 5 to 10 years that they've kind of been given a look in in terms of funding for infrastructure, in particular, and I think a lot of it has to do with there's a lot of what I consider part of Western Sydney. So you've got like that south-west: so like, you know, Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool - there's a lot of development going on there. So I think, because of those areas, they're now getting a bit of a look in so I don't know if there's, like, political motivations for why you're seeing more money being thrown at Western Sydney. But yeah, that's kind of why I've sort of described in those sort of four terms of overlooked, developing. I just think there's a lot of like infrastructure upgrades that need to be done in Western Sydney. In like the airport [Western Sydney Airport].

Interviewer: And do you? In what way infrastructure to you, transport infrastructure?

Interviewee: But for me, when I think infrastructure, I think transport, but I also think in terms of things like social and health, as well, needs to be improved in Western Sydney, and I think it's been communicated by a lot of the councils in the area, particularly, I know, Fairfield Council's quite vocal about it.

So there's lots of developments and stuff happening, particularly in that south-western area but I don't think the supporting infrastructure's there. And that's not just roads and rail, I think it's social and health as well, so I think that parks could be improved, school hospitals, and maybe not just hospitals, maybe medical centres. So I don't think that supporting infrastructure is in place. A lot of people always talk about the transport, but I don't think that social and health infrastructure is quite there yet, and that's just based on my experience with talking to some of those councils in previous roles.

Interviewer: Yup.

Interviewee: Yeah, there's a lot of high-rise developments and there's not much, yeah, green space around it to go with it.

Interviewer: What are your perceptions or associations of Western Sydney today?

Interviewee: Look, I think Western Sydney's gotten a bit of a bad rap over the years. People, you know, I don't know has seemed to always look down on it but I think developments like Bradfield, the airport [Western Sydney Airport], is starting to, you know, lift Western Sydney and I think some of the councils in there in the area have done a really good job. So like, I know Blacktown have done a really good job from a sport and

recreation perspective to uplift some of their facilities to me. I kind of consider the Hills [Hills Shire] as part of the Western Sydney as well; they've done a really good job but I think they've also got a lot of money from developments to make some of that happen. Um, but yeah, I think it's gotten bit of a bad rap, but I think the future of Sydney is Western Sydney now, and so politicians, in particular, I think are paying more attention to it. They're not -

Interviewer: Why do you think area has such a bad rep?

Interviewee: To be honest, I have no idea, but it's just like I was. I was born in Sydney, grew up in Sydney, but for a long time Western Sydney was kind of just, don't know, looked down upon which I don't think is quite fair. Yeah, I think they're finally getting their turn at getting infrastructure, upgrades and things like that.

Interviewer: And would you say that you were born and raised in somewhere that you called Western Sydney, or you were born and raised somewhere outside and then later moved?

Interviewee: Yeah. So I've moved to sort of Western Sydney. Well, south-western, what I call south-western Sydney. But yeah, I grew up in sort of South Sydney, so the Saint George area. That's where I sort of went to uni, school, was born and stuff like that in that area. But yeah, as I've grown older, sort of, yeah, moved to Western Sydney, and I've got, you know, extended family in Western Sydney. So I think I've probably got more visibility on what happens in Western Sydney, whereas growing up. Yeah, when I think Western Sydney, I was like, "oh, so far, so hard to get to", that was kind of always my perception

Interviewer: Why do you say that it is the future of Sydney?

Interviewee: Um, to be honest, there's no room to build anywhere else in Sydney, like, they've actually got, you know, land available. They've got, like, I think you can even see it in some of the corporates, like, I know Parramatta is probably a bit of a stretch for Western Sydney, but you've got a lot more corporates moving to Parramatta, which I think is kind of at least a middle ground between Western Sydney and Eastern Sydney kind of thing. So yeah, like, I, I think that's why it's the future. And you've got the airport. You've got all the, you know, the road infrastructure that's happening out that way.

So I'm just looking at the map. You know, Liverpool's got a bit of funding in the recent months because of the airport. You've got Bradfield out there. Yeah, I just think it's the future, because that's where, you know, there's a bit of land to start developing kind of thing and there's all sorts of industrial development happening out there as well

Interviewer: What do you think makes Western Sydney a distinct part of Sydney?

Interviewee: Probably the demographics, very multicultural, although, I mean, I'm just looking at the maps now, like, I mean, some of the eastern areas of Sydney are

becoming more multicultural but I think that's what kind of makes it very distinctive, yeah. Probably, yeah, multiculturalism out that way. Yeah.

Interviewer: How has your view of Western Sydney changed over time, particularly if, um, your background, since you, only like you, moved into Western Sydney at a later stage of your life.

Interviewee: Yeah, look, I think, I think, I was one of those people that had that bias towards Western Sydney. But now there's I guess I've been lucky enough to work on some projects in Western Sydney I can see that there's so much potential out there, and I can see, and, and having family that live in - my husband was born and grew up out in Penrith-Mount Druitt way so I've got that perspective of what it was like for him growing up, that I think it's great that the opportunities now that are coming up in Western Sydney mean that people can work, live, and play in Western Sydney rather than having to always travel, you know, hour to two hours to get into the city, to, to work or study.

So that's I guess. Yeah, my perception is, yeah. I did have a bit of a bias, but I think getting to know people from Western Sydney and living Western Sydney.

Interviewer: Is that because you, just before you moved, there, like, just didn't go or like, where did these biases come from?

Interviewee: Yeah, I just never really had a need to go but now that I've obviously married someone who's from Western - like, from Penrith - which I see is kind of part of the heartland of Western Sydney, yeah, like, I get a, I've got a better understanding of what he had to go through sort of growing up and how, you know, he to go to uni, he had to go to Wollongong kind of thing to work, you know.

He'd had to, kind of, had to move out of the area, whereas I think some of these developments, like the airport and Bradfield City means that people can actually, you know, live and work and study closer to home. They don't necessarily have to move to the east or the south to get opportunities. Yeah.

Interviewer: Before we move on to the mapping questions, was there anything that you wanted to comment on or to say before we close this section?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay, please start sharing your Map 1. How would you show where Western Sydney starts and ends today on this map? Please talk me through your process.

Interviewee: How on earth do I share in this?

Interviewer: The little box with the arrow should be a share function.

Interviewee: Little box with the arrow.

Interviewer: Next to react and -

Interviewee: Oh, yeah, share, in bright green. You see, it's been a long day. Alright. Can you see my screen?

Interviewer: Not yet.

Interviewee: Isn't it? Oh, here we go. Yep, sorry, I don't use Zoom a lot.

Interviewer: That's all right.

Interviewee: Is that now showing?

Interviewer: Oh, wait! Did you get Map 1? Let me just send it to you.

Interviewee: That's not the right one?

Interviewer: Uh, wait, no, it should be. Let me just look at the other two attachments. Oh, God, I didn't send you Map 1! Let me just do that now.

Interviewee: All good

Interviewer: I'll send you, so you'll have Map 1 and Map 2. Don't look at Map 2 yet. You'll need it after this mapping question, just sent to you now, Maps 1 and 2.

Interviewee: That you dropped in the chat, or it's email?

Interviewer: I'll just send it to your email

Interviewee: Oh, cool. Oh, no, that's so much. You sent didn't you? It's weird, I got all your other emails.

Interviewer: Should be with you in a minute.

Interviewee: Here we go. So which one do you want me to bring up first? One?

Interviewer: Map 1, please.

Interviewee: So, share?

Interviewer: Please.

Interviewee: There we go. Oh, you just want me to draw up what I think is Western Sydney. I'm just trying to see. So to me like, all this, to the, to the left, is kind of Western Sydney

Interviewer: So, including the Blue Mountains, and up there as well?

Interviewee: Um, I always struggle with whether or not that's part of Western Sydney, but I'd probably say the foot of the mountains. So, hmm, maybe if you want to sort of like that. Yeah, so potentially that but yeah, I do struggle with whether or not Blue Mountains is in. It almost seems like this chunk here, and even then, I don't know, I always find the

definition of Western Sydney very confusing, because it depends on who you talk to, and which body you talk to.

Interviewer: Exactly. Yup.

Interviewee: But to me, it's kind of like, yeah, probably the foot of the mountains back. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, so that line that you've drawn, following the road into the mountains?

Interviewee: So maybe not all the way up, so maybe - how do I undo this? Yes, I don't know - so probably say, oh, that's probably better. So, trying to think Windsor. Windsor is almost getting towards the mountains, too. Almost like sort of need to - so that's Western Sydney.

Interviewer: Okay. So I noticed that you've included a lot of the southern kind of communities, like the peri-urban areas. Walk me through your process. What makes them Western Sydney?

Interviewee: I don't know. So you mean, like Camden, and stuff like that?

Interviewer: Oh beyond Camden, so south of Campbelltown, and then you've got like up to Picton and Douglas Park.

Interviewee: Um, lookm the only reason I think I've included them is because I see them as sort of part of that Camden catchment.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: But yeah, you probably could move the boundary. Could probably move it up a bit, and then have that as like part of the Southern Highlands in that catchment. But yeah, that's kind of the only reason I sort of brought them in, because I thought, I'm not sure. Again it comes back to my question of the like the social and health infrastructure that's in place.

Interviewer: Yep.

Interviewee: And school infrastructure. If there's sort of nothing significant here, Camden, might be their local or Campbelltown, so Campbelltown not Camden -

Interviewer: So what logic are you using to draw your line? Are you following road infrastructure, natural boundaries, your associations?

Interviewee: My association with what's going on in those areas like, I know Campbelltown, Narellan, and that area sort of doing, and even Camden, are doing a lot in the sort of school, health, road infrastructure, space. So whether or not Yyeah, this area here is reliant on what's happening up here. That's the only reason I sort of

captured them in that catchment. If not then, yeah, I'd be happy to sort of just draw the line, sort of Camden, Campbelltown.

Interviewer: Walk me through eastern boundary. What's going on there?

Interviewee: This here? So that's just based on oh, sorry, that's good. This is a bit of a dog's breakfast now, but I just sort of realised I've missed Bankstown and Revesby, which is kind of where I – that's Western Sydney too.

So, we may need to draw a new map after this but yeah, like, that's just where I grew up, south-western Sydney, and given like the M7 link and M5-7 link to Western Sydney. That's kind of -

Interviewer: So in your mind what stops anything east of Bankstown from being Western Sydney?

Interviewee: I don't know. I think it's just maybe just the definitions that I've heard from, like the public service that it's always been, I forget what they call the region under the, like, the city's deal [Western Sydney City Deal], and stuff like that, but it was never envisaged as part of Western Sydney.

So whenever I think Western Sydney I always think of, like Fairfield Council, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Liverpool, those sorts of councils - I never sort of envisaged the Inner West councils, like I guess it's Inner West Council now, it's not Burwood Council. But yeah. So to my - the way I sort of picture things, are in terms of LGAs [Local Government Areas].

Interviewer: Oh, okay. And is that just because of your professional experiences?

Interviewee: Basically, yeah. So with my mind, just because my background's in infrastructure development, and social, as well as sort of like transport, it's also social infrastructure, so whenever I used to talk to councils, that's kind of how I used to group them.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Like Inner West. You'd have the eastern suburbs, North Sydney, beyond that, like you've got Hornsby in those areas.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Then you have, yeah. So that's kind of how my mind works. Yeah. But that's again, my professional background I want them into sort of LGA and how the same space work together.

Interviewer: Talk through your northern boundary, so you kind of split the Hills District kind of into two. So you got -

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Quaker's Hill on one side, Kellyville and Castle Hill on another.

Interviewee: Yeah, look, I've just sort of pulled Dural out because I feel like there's so much development up there it's probably going to be its own little area now same as Castle Hill and all those sorts of areas. And, to be honest, you could probably pull out Marsden Park and Schofields, and sort of, almost have, like, this new sort of development area.

Interviewer: Would that be like a new Western Sydney at some point for you?

Interviewee: Yeah, it's like, there's just so much going on in that area in terms of like Metros in terms of development, like in housing development, social infrastructure development. I just wanna – honestly, I think you're gonna end up with Western Sydney having, like a north-western Sydney, a south-western Sydney, western Sydney, like you're gonna have to group it because there's just so much Western Sydney. I don't know how you track it all as Western Sydney.

Interviewer: Would it be like a, like a, massive – 'cause like, have you heard the term like Greater Western Sydney? And then people refer to –

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So do you consider them different terms: you've got greater Western Sydney, and then all your various different sub regions of Western Sydney?

Interviewee: Think so like, I think if you're looking at Western Sydney now, because of how much investment it's getting, it's getting quite unwieldy to call it just Western Sydney. I think you actually have to group them, because that's sort of in my experience with the councils, they're kind of doing their own thing up here eith Schofield and Marsden Park and the Hills Council. Yeah.

Interviewer: Would you mind labelling your, your map to say you think this is Western Sydney? This is future Western Sydney, or like unsure about this bit.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. Do you want me to do that now?

Interviewer: Yeah, no, no, I mean you could, you could, you have this map until until, like two days later, to send it to me? So that's all good.

Interviewee: Yeah, I might tidy it up - bit of a dog's breakfast at the moment. But yeah, the way I kind of see it is Western Sydney used to be this big thing, but now you can almost have to just deal with it in separate chunks. If that kind of makes sense?

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: Because I think different people have different ideas of Western Sydney.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah. Now I can label it.

Interviewer: That's alright. Were there any other comments you wanted to make before we move on to looking at Map 2?

Interviewee: No, no, just yeah. Stresses, I look at it in terms of LGAs and what they're doing.

Interviewer: Now, please look at Map 2. This should be the PDF in your email. This map is the exact same as Map 1, but it's just a satellite view of the land and patterns of open settlement. After seeing Map 2, does this affect anything about how you've shown Western Sydney in Map 1?

Interviewee: So sorry, so you mind repeating that again? I was just looking

Interviewer: Look at Map 2. This is the exact same as Map 1 but it's a satellite view of land and patterns of urban settlement. After seeing Map 2, does this affect anything about how you've shown Western Sydney in Map 1?

Interviewee: Look, the only thing would have it, would probably make it easier for me to markup the drawing, I think, because you can actually see some of the stuff that I was talking about.

Interviewer: Hmm, okay.

Interviewee: Um, yeah just set up here. Yeah, so little bit more. Yeah, see, I'm able to sort of follow.

Interviewer: So what are you using to follow?

Interviewee: Just where there's like development

Interviewer: Hmm, okay.

Interviewee: I don't know if that's the right way of looking at it, but it just it helps me. This is all sort of this but yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Probably be how I kind of look at it as the catchment.

Interviewer: You can also send me this map, too, if you want.

Interviewee: Yeah, I might, let me, let me have a look at it. And the, but yeah, so to me, it's kind of like we're -

Interviewer: So for you. You just look like Western Sydney to you kind of reflects patterns of development. Yeah, right?

Interviewee: But again, it's just I feel like Western Sydney has become such a big concept. It's just.

Interviewer: When does Western Sydney - parts of Western Sydney - stop being Western Sydney and becoming something else, like, for example, when does the West Western Sydney become Inner West?

Interviewee: So for me, how do I describe it? I know, like with the Blue Mountains, it'll be the foot of the mountains. So I think before you have mountains that will make the cutoff for me. But Inner West I feel like it's getting really messy with all the motorways you've got going in, like with the M8, making it easier to sort of access so almost sort of like the line between Western Sydney and in a West is getting a little bit blurred.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Interviewee: But yeah, usually for me, it's like transport corridors.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And it used to be like Parramatta Road but now I'm like, I've got the M8, so that makes it a bit more complicated. Yeah.

Interviewer: Any other comments on the mapping or the = maps? Before I close this interview, Nope, or in general?

Interviewer: No.

Interviewee: You've got a hard task on your hands.

Interviewer: It's been very interesting talking to people. I've had different accounts of what Western Sydney is -

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And different logics of boundaries. This has actually been a really great exercise, I think, of just talking to people.

Interviewee: Yeah, no, all good. No, nothing further from me

Interviewer: This is the end of interview. Thank you so much for participating and for your inputs. You can contact me at any time if you had questions or concerns about the study or your specific interview response. My contact details are in the Participant Information Statement that I gave you for the interview. All your inputs are greatly, greatly appreciated.