

Next stop, higher prices? The uneven housing impact of Sydney's Metro Northwest



Executive summary

The lessons from Sydney's Metro Northwest reach far beyond a single corridor. As the network expands into the south-west and west – and as Brisbane prepares for Olympic-driven upgrades – the Northwest demonstrates that housing impacts from new transport infrastructure aren't automatic or evenly distributed. They tend to be front-loaded, highly localised and shaped by context, not just by the presence of a rail line.

The Sydney Metro Northwest has reshaped the housing market across one of Sydney's fastest-growing regions. By cutting commute times and anchoring new hubs, the Metro has unlocked significant value uplift for nearby properties.

Our analysis finds:

- **Proximity pays – up to a point.** Houses within 400m of a new Metro station sold for around **16.6% more** than comparable homes 2-3km away (roughly \$150,000 extra on a \$900,000 home) at its peak. Prices were still 9.3% higher within 400-800 metres, but the premium faded quickly beyond walking distance (800m-2km).
- **Units benefit even more.** Units within 400m sold for 24.4% higher, and those within 400-800m for 12.9% higher, compared to those 800m-2km away.
- **Timing divides houses and units.** House premiums grew steadily during construction and peaked one-to-two years prior to services starting in 2019. Unit premiums emerged much earlier – already visible at the announcement stage – and also peaked shortly before opening.
- **Not all locations benefited.** Growth hubs such as Bella Vista, Norwest and Hills Showground experienced strong uplift, while commercially focused areas like Macquarie Park recorded a small negative impact.
- **Gains front-loaded.** Since operations began, house premiums have held steady while unit premiums have eased. Most value is captured before opening.

The lesson:

Transport infrastructure can reshape local housing markets, but its benefits are far from uniform. The Metro Northwest shows that price and demand shifts depend not just on proximity to rail, but also on timing of delivery, station location and the surrounding housing mix.

The Metro is a game-changer

For many Northwest households, daily life has been transformed. A trip from Rouse Hill or Schofields to the CBD that once took over 70 minutes now takes under 40 minutes. That reclaimed half hour each way translates into more time for family, work and leisure.

The accessibility boost is landing in one of Sydney's fastest-growing regions. The population in Sydney – Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury has surged 26.7% over the past decade, well ahead of the city-wide increase of just 14.8%. Better connections make it more attractive for families and buyers trading city proximity for space and value. Shorter commutes let households stretch budgets into larger, higher-quality homes.

Transport projects also reshape land use. New stations trigger rezoning and higher-density development, generating additional

land value uplift. Already, precincts around several Metro stations have evolved into hubs with apartment towers, cafes, gyms and local retailers. These new amenities reinforce desirability and property values.

But the longer-term picture is nuanced. While proximity to a station can deliver sustained premiums, the extra housing supply enabled by rezoning may temper price growth over time.

From plans to trains

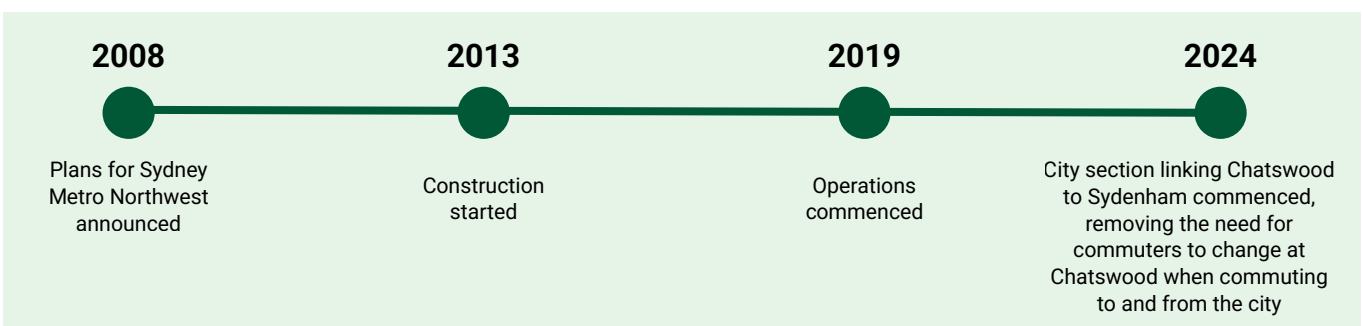
Plans for the Metro Northwest were first announced in 2008. Construction began in 2013 and operations commenced in 2019, linking Tallawong to Chatswood via 13 stations (figure 1). The extension through the CBD to Sydenham opened in 2024, removing the need for commuters to change trains at Chatswood (figure 2).

Figure 1. Map of Sydney Metro Northwest stations.



Source: Transport for NSW 2016

Figure 2. Timeline Metro Northwest.



Source: Transport for NSW 2016



Who gains the most?

For houses, the price premium peaks at 16.6% for properties within 400m of a new station (compared to houses located 2-3km away), falling to 9.3% within 400-800m, and diminishing to negligible levels beyond 800m (figure 3). This suggests that walkability to a station is the key driver of uplift. Once a property is outside an easy walking distance to a Metro station, the price benefit from Metro access rapidly declines.

For units, the effect is even stronger. Prices were 24.4% higher within 400m, and 12.9% higher between 400-800m, compared to units located 800m-2km away. This premium reflects the greater reliance of apartment residents on public transport and the attractiveness of higher-density precincts built around new stations.

These findings align with international evidence showing that value uplift is highly localised, typically concentrated within walking distance of stations. For both houses and units, benefits taper sharply once commuting convenience is offset by the need for a bus or car connection.

Table 1. Estimated price premiums by distance to a metro station.

Distance	Houses	Units
0-400m	16.6%	24.4%
400-800m	9.3%	12.9%
800m-2km	2.0%	NA

Note: Premiums are estimated as averages across stations. House premiums are measured relative to properties 2-3km away, while unit premiums are measured relative to properties 800m-2km away.

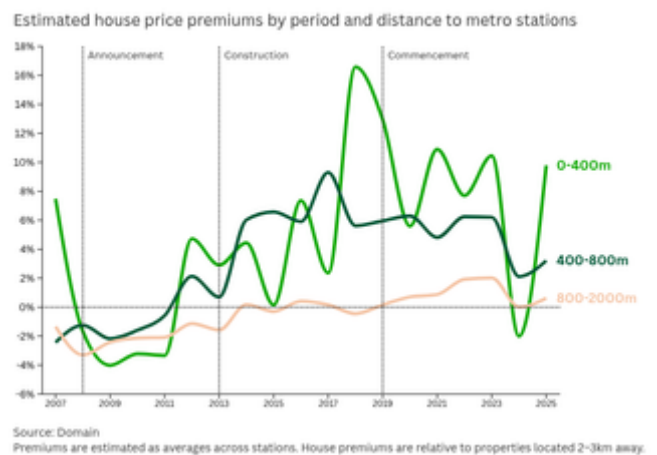
Source: Domain

When do prices peak?

The timing of the price uplift differs between houses and units, reflecting how different buyer groups respond to new infrastructure.

House premiums grew steadily during the construction phase (2013-2019), as visible progress built market confidence, and peaked one-to-two years prior to services starting in 2019 (figure 3). Since then, premiums have stabilised, suggesting that most of the price uplift was capitalised into values prior to opening.

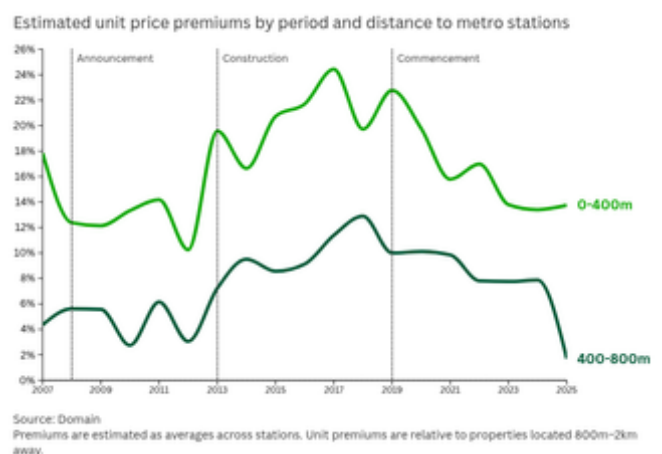
Figure 3. For houses, uplift occurs during the construction stage.



For units, the uplift emerged earlier (figure 4). Premiums were evident even before the Metro was formally announced, reflecting that stations were likely located in already desirable areas or that investors anticipated infrastructure improvements. The premium peaked one-to-two years before opening, after which it eased slightly as new supply entered the market.

This highlights a broader lesson: infrastructure-led gains are often front-loaded, with the largest windfalls captured before opening, rather than in the years that follow.

Figure 4. For units, uplift is already sizable at the announcement stage.





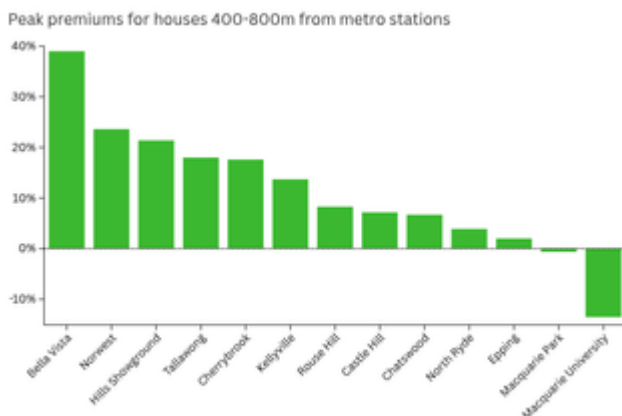
Winners and losers by station

The size of the premium varies considerably across the 13 stations of the Metro Northwest line.

Growth areas where rezoning and master-planned communities coincided with Metro investment saw the biggest gains (figure 5). Bella Vista recorded an extraordinary 39% uplift, followed by Norwest 23.6%, and Hills Showground approximately 21.4%. These areas benefited not only from improved transport access but also from large-scale redevelopment and the creation of new mixed-use precincts.

By contrast, some established areas such as Macquarie University and Macquarie Park saw no uplift. These stations are dominated by commercial and industrial development, with limited houses within walking distance, while premium housing remains in quieter pockets further from the station and commercial centre.

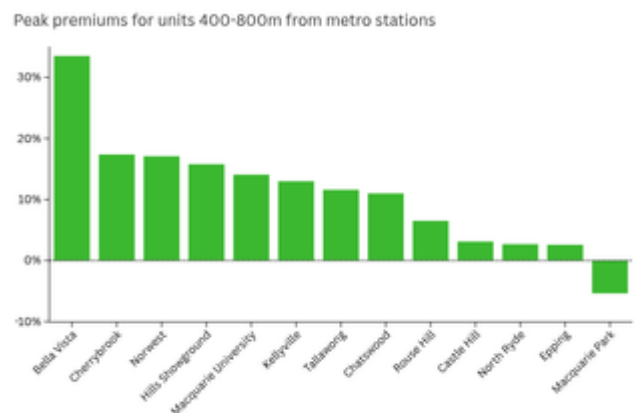
Figure 5. Size of house premiums varies considerably across stations.



A similar pattern is evident for units, with Bella Vista recording the largest premiums, while Macquarie Park showed no uplift (figure 6). At Macquarie Park, the lack of a premium reflects zoning as very few residential properties are located within 800m of the station.

These results underscore that transport infrastructure is not a one-size-fits-all driver of value uplift. Local land use, rezoning potential and baseline amenities all shape whether proximity to a new station translates into higher home values.

Figure 6. Similar results are evident for units.



Houses versus units

Units generally attract stronger and earlier premiums, driven by younger households, renters and professionals who rely heavily on rail. The clustering of units around stations also means the uplift is concentrated and visible in sales data.

Houses experience more gradual gains as the Metro shifts the desirability of entire suburbs over time. Detached housing markets respond less to announcement effects and more to tangible changes once construction is underway.

This contrast reflects differences in buyer segments: apartment markets are more sensitive to accessibility improvements, while house markets are driven by broader family and lifestyle considerations.

What it means for buyers, sellers and policy-makers

The Sydney Metro Northwest shows that transport infrastructure can deliver substantial but uneven housing benefits. The size of the uplift depends on *when* you buy, *where* you buy and *what* type of property you hold.

Buyers and investors benefit from shorter commutes and new amenities, but premiums vary sharply across stations. Growth hubs capture large gains, while areas already well-connected and dominated by commercial development saw no uplift in prices. Units often respond earlier than houses.



Sellers should note that much of the premium is captured before or at the opening of new infrastructure – selling earlier in the project cycle can sometimes yield stronger returns.

For policy-makers, the key message is that uplift is not uniform. Land-use planning, rezoning potential and existing amenities shape outcomes just as much as the transport project itself. Capturing part of the value created could provide a funding source for future infrastructure.

The Metro Northwest shows that transport projects don't affect all housing equally. As Sydney's new lines open and Brisbane upgrades for the Olympics, most value is captured early, and impacts will depend on local context, property type, and timing – not just proximity to rail.

Methodology

We applied a hedonic price model to isolate how housing characteristics and location factors drive prices. Separate models were estimated for houses and units, controlling for features such as bedrooms, bathrooms, car spaces and land size. Properties were grouped into distance bands – 0-400m, 400-800m, 800m-2km, and 2-3km – to measure the effect of walkable access. Station-specific models were also used to identify variation in uplift across locations.

In plain terms, we compared the price growth of homes near stations with similar homes further away, adjusting for property features. This allowed us to separate the impact of the Metro from broader market movements.

Copyright and Disclaimer

[Copyright notices and third-party terms](#)