

Report highlights

What the report is about

Sydney Metro is Australia's largest public transport project. It requires the acquisition of many private properties, including residential and business properties.

This audit assessed the effectiveness of the acquisition of private properties for the Sydney Metro project. The audited agencies were Sydney Metro, the Department of Planning and Environment (Valuer General NSW) and Transport for NSW (the Centre for Property Acquisition).

The audit assessed agencies against the framework for property acquisitions in New South Wales. It did not re-perform the valuations done for individual properties that were acquired by Sydney Metro.

What we found

Acquisitions of private property for the Sydney Metro project were mostly effective in the sample of acquisitions we assessed. We found Sydney Metro:

- complied with legislative and policy requirements for compensation and communication with people subject to property acquisitions
- kept accurate records of its acquisitions and applied probity controls consistently
- did not complete detailed plans or negotiation strategies for the high-risk and high-value acquisitions we reviewed
- did not comply with legislative timelines for most compulsory acquisitions because of delays in receiving the required information from the Valuer General in these cases.

The Centre for Property Acquisition has overseen the implementation of reforms to residential acquisition processes, but its assessment of the effectiveness of these reforms has not been comprehensive.

What we recommended

The audit made four recommendations to the audited agencies to improve:

- plans and strategies for the acquisition of high-risk and high-value properties
- timeliness of issuing compensation determinations for compulsory acquisitions
- data quality on the experience of people subject to property acquisitions.

Fast facts

511

private property acquisitions were completed by Sydney Metro between 2020 and mid 2022

>\$2b

was the total cost of the private properties acquired by Sydney Metro between 2020 and mid 2022

30%

of properties acquired by Sydney Metro between 2020 and mid 2022 were residential properties

45 days

is a legislative requirement for acquiring authority to issue a compensation determination for compulsory acquisition

155 days

was the average time taken by the Valuer General to deliver a compensation determination for compulsory acquisitions between 2017–18 and 2021–22

89%

of residential properties acquired by Sydney Metro were acquired by agreement between 2020 and mid 2022