

ITEM 6 SUBMISSION ON NSW DRAFT FREIGHT AND PORTS PLAN

This report seeks Council's endorsement of a submission to Transport for NSW (TfNSW), in response to the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan. Submissions are due by 25 March 2018. This draft plan is one of a number of issue specific plans that support the State Government's Future Transport 2056 Strategy, subject of a separate submission endorsed by Council at its meeting on 11 December 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager be delegated to finalise the attached submission on the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan to forward to Transport for NSW by 25 March 2018.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Mike Dowd, Manager Infrastructure Strategy and Planning
Authorised by: Greg Doyle, Director Infrastructure and Works - Connectivity Assets and Liveable City

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Submission on the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan

BACKGROUND

The NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan has been developed in line with the commitment in the 2013 NSW Freight and Ports Strategy to reissue that strategy within five years.

The intervening five years has seen significant changes in government planning and delivery of transport infrastructure such as recent commitments to build the "Inland Rail" project and Western Sydney Airport. Shifting technological, economic, demographic and social trends also necessitates a review of strategy.

In March 2013, Council made a detailed submission on that previous draft strategy with six recommendations and outcomes to date summarised as follows:

- 1 Social and environmental issues (in relation to freight transport) as identified be addressed by a package of measures set out in the strategy supplemented by:
 - Additional "point to point" speed enforcement
 - Additional heavy vehicle noise monitoring and enforcement
 - Mandatory "Code of Conduct Contracts" for all road freight operators

OUTCOME: Not implemented (some noise monitoring and enforcement implemented)

- 2 Integrate freight modelling with existing TfNSW multi-modal transportation models for "whole transport system" scenario evaluation.

OUTCOME: Not Implemented

- 3 Prepare regional Freight and Port Plans.

OUTCOME: Partially implemented (Port Kembla Growth Plan has been prepared)

- 4 Confirm a timetable for implementation of freight / passenger separation projects (including Maldon to Dombarton).

OUTCOME: Confirmed in draft Future Transport 2056 Strategy with 10 to 20 year investigation timeframe

- 5 Confirm project details and timetable to upgrade the South Coast Rail Line to improve train reliability and operations.

OUTCOME: Not implemented

- 6 Confirm individual road network upgrade project scopes and feasibility to develop an implementation timetable.

OUTCOME: Partially implemented. Investigation of escarpment crossing for freight in 10 to 20 year timeframe.

In December 2017, Council endorsed a submission to TfNSW on the NSW Government's Draft Future Transport 2056 Strategy. That strategy, being a high level overarching strategic document nevertheless includes some references to freight and ports. Council's submission emphasised the importance of good transport infrastructure and access, particularly between the Illawarra and the imminent growth in South Western Sydney around the Badgerys Creek "Aerotropolis". Also within Council's December 2017 submission, of the six key issues identified, three relate directly to local freight and port matters. Those key freight and port issues were:

- 1 Maldon – Dombarton: A dual function freight and passenger rail link between Wollongong and South West Sydney – "South Western Illawarra Rail Link" (SWIRL). Acceleration of this project design and implementation recommended.
- 2 Port Kembla – Cruise Ship facilities: Significant government budgets are committed to both Newcastle and Eden whilst the Strategy is silent on the provision of needed facilities for an already established cruise ship visitation to Port Kembla.
- 3 Princes Highway: Recognition as being of regional, state and national significance. Mount Ousley Road is approaching capacity with over 50,000 vehicles per day and some 15% heavy vehicles require urgent planning of capacity improvements.

The NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan is one of a number of issue specific and placed based "Supporting Plans" that underpins the NSW Government's Future Transport 2056 Strategy. The Plan acknowledges that an efficient transport system is fundamental to the economic prosperity of the State and Regions.

The Illawarra economy is valued at over \$20 billion per annum (2016-17) and is the third largest economy in NSW. Its proximity to Sydney, diverse economy and "Global Gateway" port are all very dependent on the safe, efficient and reliable movement of a wide range of freight and goods. With a doubling of freight movement forecast in the next 20 years and a population increase of 20% by 2036, Wollongong and the Illawarra's future residential and business communities demand a transport system that addresses its needs at the right point in time.

PROPOSAL

Council's submission sets out additional issues and details to those raised in its 2013 submission and reflects current and future regional issues.

Whilst the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan addresses relevant issues across NSW, Council's submission is focused on local Illawarra issues. Three key issues are not specifically mentioned at all in the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan. These critical issues are:

- i Rail freight access to and from Port Kembla.
- ii Road freight access to and from the Illawarra.
- iii Port Kembla cruise ship facilities.

Numerous other freight and general transport issues have been previously identified, however it is contended that the above first two issues are of utmost importance to the Illawarra and NSW State economy, particularly given growth in South West Sydney which has again been highlighted in the "360

Illawarra Shoalhaven Economic Outlook” report (released 1 March 2018). These two projects must be addressed through detailed project planning and development in the short term with implementation in the medium term (10 to 15 year timeframe). The third issue should be addressed in the short term as cruise ship visitation is already creating demand for appropriate passenger facilities.

1 Rail Freight Access

The absence of any reference to the proposed Maldon-Dombarton rail line within the government’s current freight plan (other than in a minor notation in Figure 37 on page 76) is considered to be a significant omission and should be rectified by inclusion in the final document.

The early completion of the South Western Illawarra Rail Link (SWIRL) is considered by many expert authorities to unlock the Illawarra, not just for freight access but potential as a dual function freight/passenger line to connect the Illawarra to South West Sydney and the proposed Badgery’s Creek “Aerotropolis”. The greater economic benefits achieved by the dual function SWIRL have been found to justify its implementation in the short to medium term.

The completion of SWIRL would also enable the earlier development of a container terminal at Port Kembla thus providing an alternative to Port Botany. A major benefit of this strategy is a significant reduction in road and rail congestion impacts in the Sydney suburbs adjacent to and approaching Port Botany.

In addition, significant upgrades to the South Coast Rail Line between Waterfall and Thirroul, whilst previously acknowledged by the Australian Government as a “Key Strategic Corridor” does not feature in the current Freight and Ports Plan other than a notation to investigate additional capacity within a 10 year timeframe. An upgrade of the South Coast Line would also provide additional capacity for both freight and commuter demands between the Illawarra and Sydney.

2 Road Freight Access

Vehicular movements to and from the Illawarra are predominantly between Sydney to the north (commuters) and the Hume motorway to the northwest (freight). Both these vehicle movement corridors are currently severely constrained by available road capacity across the Illawarra Escarpment. The primary access route is Mount Ousley Road which, on its steepest part carries in excess of 50,000 vehicles per day with some 15% heavy vehicles. This route is supplemented to some small extent by Bulli Pass and Macquarie Pass both of which are subject to geometric constraints plus a history of unscheduled road closures due to the occurrence of severe natural events causing land slips, flooding and slope stability issues.

Notwithstanding some recent project planning work by the NSW Government for significant upgrades to Mount Ousley Road, the issue of approaching road capacity limits on the steep ascent and descent of Mount Ousley is addressed only in a very strategic manner under the heading “20 Year Vision Initiatives”. The Plan identifies a project; “Outer Sydney Orbital – Illawarra connection” between the Hume Motorway and the Illawarra to improve freight capacity and reliability. It is imperative that this additional capacity be provided on Mount Ousley within 10 years and funding for its planning and design provided as a high priority.

3 Port Kembla Cruise Ship Facilities

In December 2017, Council made a submission on the Future Transport 2056 Strategy that noted Government support for cruise ship facilities in Newcastle and Eden but no reference to the provision of any such facilities at Port Kembla. Port Kembla is perfectly placed as an overflow port, given the intense pressures on berthing availability in Sydney. Council eagerly awaits the findings of the “Collins Report” into Greater Sydney cruise ships facilities with expectation of Port Kembla’s inclusion in the NSW Government’s priority provision of cruise ship facilities.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Regional forums were held late in 2017 by TfNSW with key stakeholder groups (including Council) for input to the Future Transport 2056 Strategy. That engagement included some freight transport issues. A “Wollongong: NSW Draft Freight and Ports roundtable” is scheduled by TfNSW for Tuesday 13 March 2018.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Wollongong 2022 objectives *Walking, cycling and public transport is an accessible and well-resourced means of transport, and the use of private cars is reduced and Wollongong is supported by an integrated transport system and Transport disadvantaged communities have increased access to services* under the Community Goal *We Have Sustainable Affordable and Accessible Transport*.

TfNSW has stated that “the final NSW Freight and Ports Plan is to be released in 2018 to align with the overarching Future Transport 2056 Strategy”. It is envisaged that the release of these documents will necessitate a revision of the NSW Government’s Illawarra Regional planning and transport strategies to reflect both the recommended transport initiatives as well as the resultant accelerated land use and economic growth within the Illawarra Region.

CONCLUSION

With TfNSW predicting a doubling of freight volumes within the Greater Sydney area (including the Illawarra) over the next 40 years, the social, environmental and economic impacts of freight movement require whole of government, industry and community collaboration.

Council’s submission addresses some key regional freight and port issues and recommends TfNSW consider these for inclusion in the final Freight and Ports Plan. In particular, Council strongly advocates for TfNSW to give high priority to the Maldon-Dombarton (SWIRL) rail link plus the provision of additional capacity on Mount Ousley. In addition, the provision of cruise ship passenger facilities within Port Kembla Harbour is recommended to accommodate and already establish visitation schedule.

These projects are considered to be the keys to, not only unlocking the full economic potential of the Illawarra Region, but also contributing to South Western Sydney’s economic and social prosperity.

As shown in the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan, (Figure 10 Page 17:- Working together with industry and key stakeholders) Local Government has an ongoing role in working with the NSW Government. The Plan states the NSW Government’s aim is to work together with industry and all levels of government for “Moving goods in an efficient, safe and environmentally sustainable manner, providing successful outcomes for communities and industry”.

Wollongong City Council looks forward to working closely with TfNSW in the planning and implementation of the priority projects identified in this report and the attached submission.

WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL



SUBMISSION ON NSW DRAFT FREIGHT AND PORTS PLAN DRAFT FOR COUNCIL MEETING 12 MARCH 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the preparation of the NSW Government's NSW Freight and Ports Plan.

This submission provides Council's feedback and comments on the draft plan. In addition to this submission, I request a meeting between Council's elected representatives and Executive and Transport for NSW to further discuss and clarify our issues raised in this submission.

This submission was endorsed by Council resolution (Ordinary Meeting of Council) on 12 March 2018; Minute No...

Overall, Council commends the State Government and Transport for NSW (TfNSW) for the structure, direction and framework established by this Plan. There are a number of existing and emerging freight and port related issues within the Illawarra, but with three key issues that are elaborated on below.

These critical issues are:

- i Rail freight access to and from Port Kembla
- ii Road freight access to and from the Illawarra
- iii Port Kembla cruise ship facilities

Council considers the above first two issues are of utmost importance to the Illawarra and NSW State economy. These should be addressed through detailed project planning and development in the short term with implementation in the medium term say, 10 to 15 year timeframe. The third issue should be addressed in the short term as cruise ship visitation is already creating demand for appropriate passenger facilities.

1 Rail Freight Access

The absence of any direct reference to the proposed Maldon-Dombarton rail line (other than a tag on the map shown as Figure 37 on Page 76) within the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan is considered to be a serious omission. Council requests this key project be included in the final document with appropriate supporting explanation.

Significant recent research has been undertaken by a number of organisations including Illawarra First in association with the SMART Infrastructure Facility of the University of Wollongong that demonstrates a positive economic case for a dual function freight/passenger rail link for the Maldon-Dombarton rail link. This rail project would significantly improve both freight and commuter access between the South Western Sydney growth area (including the

Badgery's Creek "Aerotropolis") and the Illawarra. This Rail link is now referred to as the "South Western Illawarra Rail Link" (SWIRL). Council's previous submission on the Draft Future Transport 2056 Strategy provided TfNSW with additional details of the benefits of this project as being well beyond just a freight route which is now seen as the key to unlocking numerous land use and transport opportunities in the south and south west of the Greater Sydney Metropolitan area.

The completion of SWIRL would also enable the earlier development of a container terminal at Port Kembla thus providing an alternative to Port Botany. A major benefit of this strategy is a significant reduction in road and rail congestion impacts in the Sydney suburbs adjacent to and approaching Port Botany.

In addition, significant upgrades to the South Coast Rail Line between Waterfall and Thirroul, whilst previously acknowledged by the Australian Government as a "Key Strategic Corridor" does not feature in the current Freight and Ports Plan other than a notation to investigate additional capacity within a 10 year timeframe. An upgrade of the South Coast Line would provide additional capacity for both freight and commuter demands between the Illawarra and Sydney.

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Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan. Council also will be seeking a meeting with TfNSW to discuss the contents of our submission in support of recommended amendments to the draft plan.

Please contact Council’s Manager Infrastructure Strategy & Planning Mike Dowd on telephone 4227 7111 for further enquiries regarding this submission.

Yours faithfully

David Farmer

General Manager

Wollongong City Council