

## CITY OF BOTANY BAY

### SUBMISSION ON THE "NATIONAL LAND FREIGHT STRATEGY"

#### DISCUSSION PAPER.

#### INTRODUCTION

The City of Botany Bay has the majority of Port Botany and Sydney (Kingsford-Smith) Airport within its boundaries. In addition virtually all road freight to and from both Ports passes through the city area, as does all rail freight.

The City of Botany Bay therefore has an intimate understanding of the issues confronting the freight industry as well as the conflict which arises with the community and with other road and rail users.

The issues surrounding prospective interfaces within the freight industry along with interim measures to be employed during implementation of identified strategies are urgent and important matters to be addressed. However the fact is that issues surrounding entry and exit of freight from both Port Botany and Sydney Airport are already critical with every indication that they will spiral incrementally with the projected increase in freight volumes, even without the competing pressures on an already overloaded transport system.

#### THE PRESENT AND THE PREDICTIONS

**Sydney:** Sydney's transport system is heavily car dependant with congestion estimated to have cost Sydney \$4.58 billion in 2009 with a forecast that this will rise to \$7.76 billion by 2020. That is a cumulative cost in excess of \$60 billion to the economy over the period.

Sydney's population is projected to increase by 1.7 million by 2036 with further projections in excess of 7 million by 2050.

**Port Botany:** The substantially completed port extension will add a new 5 berth container terminal to the existing 6 berths and is projected to deliver an additional 1.6 million TEU capacity to meet projected increases in trade for a 20 year period. This extension is scheduled to come on line in 2012.

Total container trade in 2009/10 neared 2 million TEU with a projection of 13.5 million TEU by 2039/40.

In 2005 the Freight Infrastructure Advisory Board recommended to government that the 40% rail share target for containers must be met and, if possible exceeded. However statistics show an actual decrease in container volumes by rail from 21% in 2005/06 to 18.7% in 2009/10. During this period there was an increase in rail movements from 287,700 TEU to 316,030 TEU (+ 28,330 TEU or + 9.85%). However carriage by road for the same period increased from 1,082,300 TEU to 1,373,970 TEU (+ 291, 670 TEU or + 26.95%).

This projection does not include existing or projected increases in bulk liquids handling and associated landside movements.

Furthermore a snapshot of railway on-time running for June 2010 shows 120 movements for the month with 52% early, 40% late and only 8% on time.

As for road transport, the NSW government has responded to IPART's report of 2008 by introducing the Botany Landside Improvement Strategy aimed at establishing an access compliance program for carriers and benchmarking the performance of stevedores. As a result and due to the vagaries of road travel times in the Sydney metropolitan area, trucks from time to time are required to rush to meet their slot (becoming a danger to themselves and other road users) or congregate in side streets awaiting their allotted time.

**Sydney Airport:** In 2010 Sydney was ranked as the 27<sup>th</sup> busiest airport with close to 36 million pax. This number is projected to reach almost 80 million pax by 2029.

At the same time air freight in 2007 was 471,000 tonnes with a projected growth to 1,077,000 tonnes by 2029.

During the same period aircraft movements are projected to increase from some 290,000 to around 425,000 movements with attendant ground servicing access demands.

The Federal government is understood to be in active consultation with the State government regarding the future use of the Badgerys Creek site previously nominated for Sydney's second airport as well as seeking to identify another site for this purpose. Regardless of the outcome of those investigations it is not contemplated that an operational airport would be in place within the timeframes cited for the projected expansion of passengers and freight from the existing airport and/or seaport.

**Other Issues:** Under the State governments Metro Strategy the City of Botany Bay is called upon to establish an additional 6,500 dwelling units. Targets have also been imposed on surrounding Council areas which will impose additional demands in relation to access and transport within the City and throughout the region. These demands will "compete" with increased freight movements into and out of two of the principal consumer freight nodes in this nation.

### **COMMENTS ON THE NATIONAL LAND FREIGHT DISCUSSION PAPER**

While the Paper successfully identifies the sometimes self evident issues confronting land freight movement, its tone appears to recognize but, at the same time, be somewhat dismissive of the adverse impact road freight movement has on key transport infrastructure. For example Table 5 "suggests that trucks will make only a small contribution to any increase in city wide congestion in the medium term, even at 'twice the task' growth rates. At an aggregate level urban congestion may be more of an issue for freight than freight is for congestion."

A proposition such as this is based on a false premise. For example - Are the number of freight vehicle units on the roads in the City of Botany Bay and the Sydney metropolitan area small by comparison to the total of vehicle units on all roads Sydney wide? The answer is clearly yes. However, it is unreasonable and unsustainable to aggregate road freight across the entire city road network or rail freight across the entire rail system. The reality is that the vast majority is focused on key corridors radiating out from both sea and air ports. These are the same corridors which are the major routes for commuter traffic and public transport to and from centres of employment. Due to increasing congestion and the stop-start nature of metropolitan traffic on these major arteries, large freight vehicles and commuter traffic engage in an adversarial relationship competing for road space and improved traffic flow. Undoubtedly, on key arterial roads emanating out from the Sydney Ports, road freight is a significant inhibitor of traffic flow.

The Paper does on to suggest that “congestion could be reduced by greater public transport connectivity, speed and reliability.” Again, a somewhat obvious conclusion without supporting acknowledgement of the hurdles in deriving a sustainable solution. Speed, reliability, safety, comfort and cost are key drivers in diverting commuters to public transport. Most critical though are access to destination and system capacity.

In Sydney, road and rail corridors are “hub and spoke” in nature. That is to say there are reasonably accessible services from all but the outer suburbs to the Greater Sydney City CBD and destinations along those routes. The problem is that, at peak travel times many of these services are already operating at above capacity. There is also the issue of satisfactory access to commuter interchange in terms of user assembly points (stations and stops).

The overwhelming issue is that, with the distribution of employment nodes a concentrated corridor based system does not work for commuters whose needs do not fit that system. The result is that, either the public transport commuter engages in a time consuming and circuitous travel experience or takes the car and travels directly.

Substantial diversion to public transport for many potential users will only be achieved with a safe, reliable, speedy, cost effective and accessible grid based transport system.

Competition for rail space too is an issue. The conflict between passenger and freight services within the metropolitan area is already acknowledged with operating constraints in place. Any envisaged increase in commuter, intra and interstate rail services along with a substantial increase in container freight services will only be achievable through a major investment in either dedicated or parallel rail infrastructure including duplication of the Port Botany rail line.

The Paper references “high productivity vehicles” with the inference of desired moves to greater use of B-doubles and further introduction of B-triple vehicles into the freight system. Certainly, from an emissions and unit transport cost perspective, lower vehicle numbers carrying increased loads can deliver a positive result. However, once again the practical reality is the actual capacity of existing infrastructure to meet the demands of all users. Unfortunately there is very little of the road system in the Sydney metropolitan area capable of sustaining such vehicles without further exacerbating congestion issues, compromising existing infrastructure and eroding the amenity of nearby

properties. Even outside of the metropolitan area there are limits on available road systems capable of allowing efficient use of such vehicles without compromising other road users. Indeed such vehicles would experience extreme difficulty negotiating most inner city streets and so the need to break down their load and double handle for distribution would be unlikely to be overcome to any worthwhile extent.

The Paper also cautions on the need to protect freight infrastructure from population incursion. It must be recognized, in the Sydney instance, that residential and industrial activity existed in the City of Botany Bay long before the development of the sea and air ports and so it is instead these freight centres which have impacted upon existing properties.

The need for a priority response to freight issues in this city is supported by the Paper's own detailing of the "Consequences of Market Imperfections" which, the Paper states "may be greatest where:

- There are the largest and most intense freight activities and flows. *In the case of City of Botany Bay we have two of the major freight movement generators in the country within a few kilometers of each other and surrounded on all three sides of land based access by the greater Sydney metropolitan area.*
- "Large scale personal transport tasks share infrastructure with freight." *Road based freight to and from both Ports locally traverse and compete with the needs of airport passengers as well as the vast majority of commuters travelling between the southern, northern and eastern suburbs and those travelling to and from the Sydney CBD.*
- "Infrastructure is used for many freight tasks." *In this instance "many" can refer to freight to and from either Port as well as inter and intra state and intra metropolitan transport of locally produced items. All will, and do, occupy the same major transport routes.*
- "There is rapid growth in freight transport and in personal transport." *Available statistics establish that this is the case while projected growth referred to earlier in this submission provides a snap-shot of where things are heading if a range of major infrastructure commitments are not activated urgently.*
- "The freight flows and activities adjoin residences." *Tick.*

The Paper goes on to state that "Evidence of problems caused by these market imperfections includes:

- Inability to use the most productive freight vehicles on transport infrastructure. *Yes, as already referred to.*
- Urban encroachment on freight tasks. *In the case of the City of Botany Bay the case has been the encroachment of freight tasks on urban amenity.*
- "Congestion." *Undeniable.*
- "Uncertainty about the future adequacy of capacity for freight." *There is absolute certainty that any further delay in delivery of key infrastructure in the vicinity of both the air and sea ports and across metropolitan freight routes will incrementally increase existing problems.*
- "Inability to finance potentially necessary infrastructure." *The availability of funds and whether these should come from government and/or the private sector are recurrent themes throughout the Paper. The outcome of this will be established by government policy. Until that time the "do little" or "do nothing" options will continue to prevail with*

*the inevitable consequences. Unfortunately the favoured options identified in the Paper are directed towards such options in the short to medium term. Therefore, bearing in mind the lead time to get a determined outcomes on the ground an operational suggests an extended period of further deterioration and inefficiency.*

Finally the Paper recognizes a need for increased intermodal terminal capacity in the capital cities, especially Sydney and Melbourne.

In this regard it is noted that the Freight Infrastructure Advisory Board's 2005 recommendation that the Enfield terminal be operational by the end of 2008 is due to reach fruition in 2012. Further, it is noted that the Board, among its twenty recommendations, proposed additional terminals at Eastern Creek, Moorebank, Ingleburn and Minto connected to Port Botany by dedicated freight rail links.

### **LOCAL FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

In order to start to address the infrastructure needs closest to the air and sea ports the City of Botany Bay has identified the following:

- Access ramps from Southern Cross Drive to and from Foreshore Road and Sydney Airport to help reduce any further congestion as the Mill Pond Road intersections with Botany Road and General Holmes Drive;
- Duplication of the Port Botany rail line to increase rail transport and improve on-time running of the network;
- Improvements to the Mill Pond Road, General Holmes Drive and Botany Road intersections including grade separation of the existing General Holmes Drive rail level crossing;
- A truck marshalling area within Port Botany complete with associated amenities for operators;
- Duplication of the M5 link;
- Construction of the Port Botany to M4 link;
- Identification of the site for and construction of a second Sydney airport with 24 hour operating capability;

The Mascot area, west of Botany Road to Alexandra Canal, is developing quickly and traffic generated by this and major activities nearby such as Sydney Airport, Port Botany and industrial areas, has brought into focus potential growth limitations due to the traffic environment. As a result, Council, in conjunction with Department of Transport, Department of Planning and the RTA, are in the process of appointing a consultant to carry out a TMAP and attendant transport investigations which will be used to determine how and to what extent the Precinct's transport and road systems need to be managed to meet the intended population and employment targets, and conversely, to determine the potential extent, if any, that the land use changes need to be tempered to cater for transport constraints of that locality, or potentially expanded if spare capacity exists.

### **CONCLUSION**

In terms of addressing the increasing transport paralysis surrounding Port Botany and Sydney Airport, the time for further studies and strategizing has already passed. Even with an immediate

start to investment in public transport alternatives, the development of additional rail freight capacity, attendant intermodal facilities and essential road infrastructure, the lead time delivering the vast majority of these will undoubtedly see an escalation in congestion and a multiplied cost to the nation . The latter, not only due to increased delay, but also the increased operational costs (travel and productivity costs) lost on people, vehicles and freight mired in gridlock.