



27 May 2010

Mr Michael Deegan
Infrastructure Coordinator
Infrastructure Australia
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Michael

On behalf of the Bunbury Wellington Economic Alliance (BWEA), I wish to commend the draft National Ports Strategy developed by the National Transport Commission and Infrastructure Australia.

The vision, objectives and priorities recommended in the draft strategy are consistent with positioning the nation's ports to accommodate the inevitable growth in container and bulk freight.

BWEA is a partnership between the six local governments of the City of Bunbury, Shires of Capel, Collie, Donnybrook-Balingup, Dardanup, and Harvey, and significant local companies involved in the resources sector, construction, transport, engineering, water supply, timber processing, telecommunications, consulting, health, education, accounting, legal and tourism industries.

The Bunbury Port Authority (BPA) is a key member of our alliance, and is the major conduit linking our region with global markets. Trade through the BPA was 13.3 million tonnes in 2008/09, and the South West region exports nearly 20% of global alumina supply.

The Gross Regional Product of the South West region has increased by 80 percent over the past five years to \$11.3 billion in 2008/09 and is set to increase, particularly in the Bunbury Wellington area, with growth in alumina exports and projected new export streams in bauxite, coal and urea.

However, current rail infrastructure to the port is operating at close to capacity and has limited ability to handle increases in production by local alumina refineries, and the anticipated trade in urea, coal and bauxite.

The future prosperity of our region has been compromised by the lack of investment in common user transport infrastructure.

BPA has a well recognised Structure Plan to allow for staged development of the existing Inner Harbour Basin including the construction of multiple new berths, the diversion of the Preston River and re-alignment of existing road and rail systems. Feasibility studies on berth expansions are in progress to accommodate forecast demand for containers, bauxite, urea and coal shipments, which are expected to commence over the next four years.

In a submission last October to the Western Australian Government and Infrastructure Australia we advocated for the inclusion of a transport development package for the South West which includes strategic investment to boost the capacity of the BPA and improve the road and rail interface between the port and hinterland.

The BPA and our region stand to benefit from a National Ports Strategy that is sufficiently flexible to allow for regional differences, but which encapsulates the regulatory and governance frameworks to underpin public and private investment in port infrastructure. As well, the strategy should contribute to preserving freight corridors to minimise disruption to port operations and inconvenience to the local community.

Crucially the National Ports Strategy should ensure a timely, rational investment in port and related infrastructure to prevent the freight bottlenecks which have economic, social and environmental consequences.

BWEA welcomes the opportunity to make comment on this draft and will seek to stay closely engaged in the development of the National Ports Strategy.

Yours sincerely

Matt Granger
Chief Executive Officer
Bunbury Wellington Economic Alliance