From: _____
To: Infrastructure Australia;
Subject: submission
Date: Wednesday, 15 October 2008 09:34:09
Attachments: SUBMISSION COVERSHEET.pdf

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Individual Submission
By

I should point out that my interest in the development of infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure in the Sydney-Brisbane axis has been long standing and I have raised some of these issues with various politicians, public servants and academics over a long period. I have some background in Regional Economic Planning having completed postgraduate work at Macquarie University in the early 1980's. Some of this research work was undertaken in the Canberra-Southern NSW region in consultation with the Cities Commission and the then Department of Urban and Regional Developmentwhich were both established in the early days of the Whitlam Government. Part of the research involved the possible enhancement of land transport infrastructure as a requirement for development in the Sydney-Melbourne corridor. This and most subsequent research generally pointed out that development would be favoured by a significant upgrade in both rail and road transport. This has happened to a limited extent and some of the centres on or near the Sydney - Melbourne axis have benefited.

This submission is concerned with the northern part of the Sydney-Brisbane axis. I am aware that community groups based in Northern NSW may have made submissions similar to this one but for various reasons I have been unable to work/consult with these groups at the moment.

The growth in the Brisbane-Gold Coast region is now having a major effect on growth and development in the NSW North Coast at least as far south as Coffs Harbour. Some of the effects of this are correctly regarded as negative, but the overall result needs to be positive for the North Coast and at least the northern part of New England and the Northwest and this can be best achieved by ensuring the infrastructure, especially the transport network, is adequate to cater for and hopefully enhance any new development projects. In other words infrastructure needs to be upgraded to ensure that desirable trickle down effects do occur in this large and important region of Australia.

One of the two most obvious needs are the provision of an adequate freight link from the south to the Gold Coast and this can be best met by re-opening and upgrading the Casino to Murwillumbah railway and establishing a freight terminus closer to Tweed Heads. In the future this should be connected to the Queensland railway network at Robina, and a passenger service could be introduced on this railway to enable commuting to local employment opportunities. When the north coast branch line was capable of handling freight a large amount of cement was able to be transferred to the Gold Coast with the

only road haulage required being the 30-40 kilometres from the rail terminus to the suburb where it was required. It should be noted that even though growth in the Gold Coast will mean that its population will almost certainly exceed that of Adelaide in the next few years there is no direct effective rail freight connection into the city at present.

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The second need is the continued upgrading of the main road from Woodenbong to Warwick and Toowoomba via Legume. The road is presently in a disgraceful state and is a major hindrance to development of interlinkages between the NSW north coast and the rapidly developing Darling Downs region of Queensland. Woolworths have located their Big W bulk store (to supply their stores from Queensland through to Newcastle) at Warwick in the Southern Downs and it is a major user of this inter-regional road. Again this route would be enhanced by a new crossing of the Clarence either just to the west of Grafton or perhaps to the north-east of Grafton at Bluff Point (the site of a car ferry at present)-options previously mooted by bthe NSW State Government but which at present seem to have no priority. A road-rail freight interchange presently being built at Namoona (near Casino) may require a new bridge over the Richmond River in the vicinity of that town as well.
Upgrading of this inland access from Coffs Harbour to Queensland will provide an alternative to the Pacific Highway and this could be important for strategic reasons and in times of extreme climate events (floods etc). This route and further development of the Mount Lindsay Highway in Queensland will also provide better access to the major rail freight interchange being built at Bromelton south of Brisbane.

I believe cost benefit analysis of these possible inter-regional transport projects by the relevant government bodies would show a major benefit to regional development of both the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast regions of NSW. Comprehensive studies may also stimulate private investment in at least part of this infrastructure.