

**Orana Regional Organisation of Councils**  
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**The Hon Melinda Pavey MP**  
**NSW Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight**  
**GPO Box 5341**  
**SYDNEY NSW 2001**

Dear Minister Pavey,

**NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan**

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in respect to Draft NSW Freight and Ports Plan.

**Background**

**The OROC Region - An Overview**

The current Member Councils of OROC include Bogan Shire, Bourke Shire, Brewarrina Shire, Cobar Shire, Coonamble Shire, Dubbo Regional, Gilgandra Shire, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine Shire, Warren Shire, Walgett Shire, and Warrumbungle Shire Councils. OROC is characterised as being regionally focussed by supporting the interest of councils and communities with positive relationships that have been well developed over many years of collaboration.

This geographic footprint relies on the connections of existing and emerging economies, agricultural and mining industries, water catchment, community, cultural and heritage connections, supported by regional service delivery in areas such as health, education, law enforcement, community services, regional development, planning and catchment management.

The OROC region gains its strength due to a natural fit of well-established communities of mutual interest that are linked to and supported by the regional centre of Dubbo.

- **Freight and Transport**

The robust agricultural and mining industries that exist in the Orana region rely heavily on the transport and freight routes that traverse the region (22,338 kilometres of road network). Both of these industries generate significant freight flow, exporting products and importing production inputs such as fertiliser and fuel using both road and rail.

The freight needs for agriculture in the OROC region are projected to grow between 1% and 3% per annum until 2031.

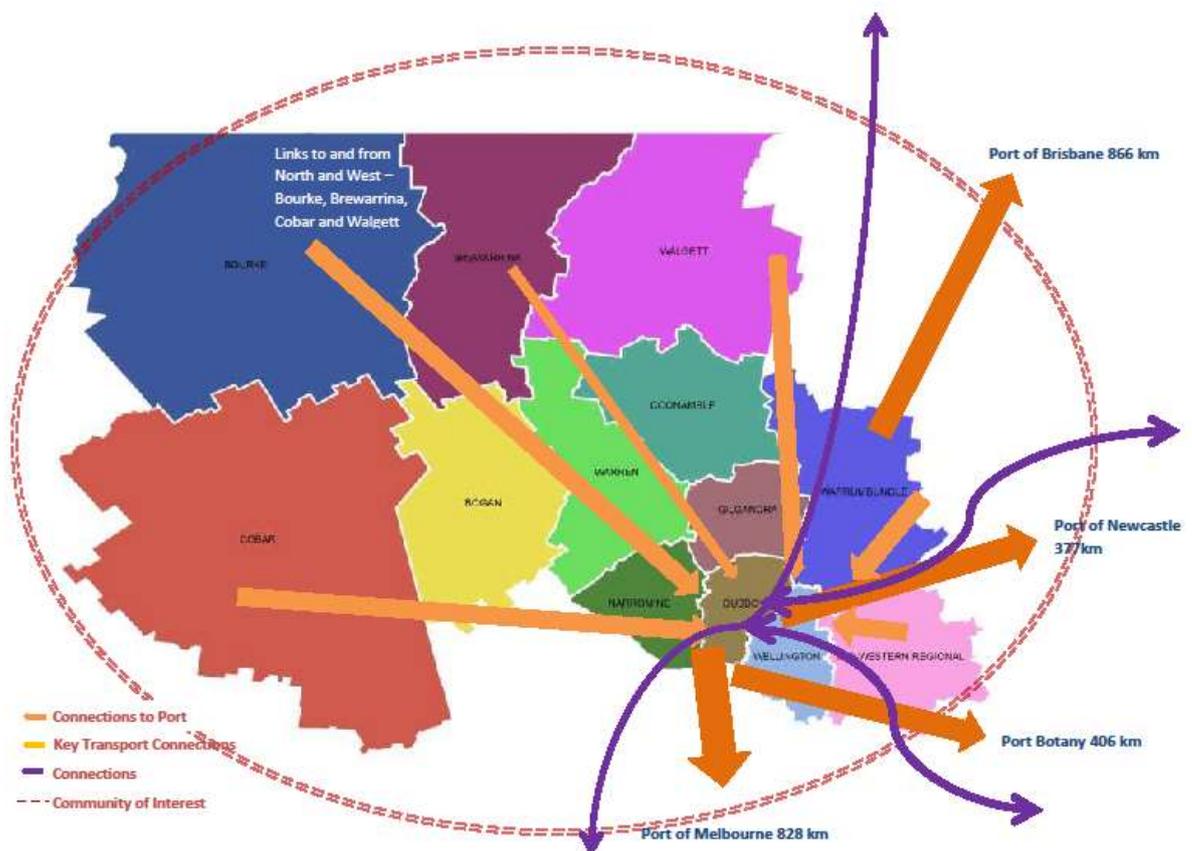
To ensure the efficient and safe movement of freight in, out and throughout the region, the most critical role of local government is to maintain road assets and infrastructure to accommodate the larger, heavier and increased freight task from this point into the future.

Given the importance of the extensive transport network throughout the region, OROC has an agreed position on a regional freight route and is committed to further developing this route.

OROC Member Councils invested collaboratively in the Western Roads Plan (Phase 1 and 2) that prioritised road infrastructure for improvement over the next 10-15 years in order to boost productivity and efficiency across the entire area of Western NSW.

In recent times the availability of Restart NSW funding for roads, bridges and rail infrastructure has been regarded as a positive opportunity for local government.

The map below indicates the various (inter and intra) connections throughout the region including agricultural industries, settlement patterns, diversified regional economies, tourism, freight/transport, environmental assets and the strong connection that link all communities strategically to the City of Dubbo.



The initiatives as published in the Plan are commendable especially those that are aimed to improve the freight task with safer HPVs on to the road network and new technology locomotives and rolling stock added to the rail network.

It is also commendable to note the proposed longer term initiative for the Hunter –Orana Fuel pipeline. Road usage is taken up with large import (input) components (from outside the region) including fertiliser, chemical, fuel and equipment.

OROC comprises of Bourke, Bogan, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Narramine, Warrumbungle, Warren, Walgett and Western Plains Regional Councils.

The main regional population centres and agricultural regions generate significant freight flow in this region. Products from the region are commonly transported to Port Botany, Port Kembla or to the Port of Newcastle for export or to major distribution networks.

There is a lot of bulk grain exported by rail to the ports whereas domestic feed grain is delivered using more flexible road deliveries.

Cotton that is produced and processed in the region is freighted by rail to Sydney with some warehousing available in Dubbo. There are major logistic and transport tasks involved in the cotton export supply chain, including the movement of:

- Bales or modules of raw cotton
- Bales from the gin to warehouse
- Bales from warehouse to port.

Transport of livestock occurs across the entire region (intra and inter). Although there are some inefficiency gains here, mostly the larger transporters operate a higher mass limit which provides significant productivity benefits to the entire industry.

It is expected that the growth in freight demand will keep growing if not double or triple. Local Government in this region is keen to see opportunities to shift more freight on to rail. As road freight becomes more efficient and competitive, it hoped the funding committed to the highway networks will have the capacity to meet these regional freight needs into the future.

A major constraint that is identified by freight users in this region is the significant growth in passenger trains within the Sydney metropolitan network which reduces the availability of freight paths from the West into Sydney. The existing low productivity operating standards (single track, low speeds and restricted axle loads) are due to the poor condition of bridges, track and tunnels and outdated signalling. The same can be said for the Hunter lines and Port of Newcastle access, as track time is occupied by ore and coal trains.

The forecast growth in agriculture alone in this region is at between 1% and 3% per annum until 2031. This region is eager to ensure there is quality freight transport and infrastructure networks through improving and maintaining the road and rail infrastructure and upgrading strategic roads assets to accommodate larger and heavier loads for efficient agricultural freight movement. This can only be achieved with significant investment from State and Federal Governments.

Yours sincerely

**Clr Doug Batten**  
**Chair**  
**OROC**