



**ACT**  
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and  
Economic Development

Our ref: CMTEDD2018/1425

Your ref: N/A

Ms Julie Gee  
Associate Director, Regional Strategy  
Transport for NSW

Dear Ms Gee

### **Draft NSW Freight and Ports Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft *NSW Freight and Ports Plan*. The ACT and NSW Governments share a strong and collaborative cross-border relationship, framed by the *ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration*. This input is provided at officials' level outlining existing ACT Government policy.

The ACT and Southern NSW freight networks are deeply interconnected, with Canberra operating as a regional freight hub and providing access to international export opportunities via the Canberra Airport. It is essential that the ACT and NSW Governments work together to coordinate cross-border infrastructure planning, freight connectivity and accessibility to achieve the best whole-of-region outcomes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this submission. I look forward to seeing the final *NSW Freight and Ports Plan* later this year and continuing to work with Transport for NSW to improve freight networks across the Canberra Region.

Yours sincerely

Sam Engele  
Executive Director  
Policy & Cabinet  
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# ACT GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION

## NSW DRAFT FREIGHT AND PORTS PLAN

### INTRODUCTION

The ACT Government is keen to work closely with the NSW Government and Transport for NSW to achieve the best whole-of-region outcomes for the NSW South East and Tablelands, with which it has a strong and interconnected relationship. Known as the “Canberra Region,” this area encompasses the ACT and surrounding nine NSW local government areas which make up the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CBRJO): Queanbeyan-Palerang, Hilltops, Yass Valley, Upper Lachlan, Goulburn Mulwaree, Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Snowy Monaro and Wingecarribee.

Regional freight, infrastructure and related economic development initiatives are key areas of work under both the *ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration* and the *ACT-CBRJO Memorandum of Understanding*. The ongoing positive progress of this work reflects the collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships between all parties involved.

### OVERALL COMMENTS

The ACT Government supports the NSW Government’s integrated planning approach and notes the overview of the *Future Transport 2056* (Figures 4 and 34, p.9 and p.71) that outlines the role of the *Draft NSW Freight and Ports Plan* (the Plan) and other supporting plans in achieving the overarching strategy.

Noting the substantial focus on metropolitan Sydney and its growth constraints, the Plan contains few references to cross-border freight movement or freight flows with adjoining jurisdictions. The future freight task in South East NSW as it relates to the ACT is virtually not mentioned.

To emphasize the geographical area of the Plan, the ACT Government suggests the inclusion of a diagram showing Metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW areas with their relevant supporting and complementary plans. We suggest the inclusion of the *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036*<sup>1</sup> that outlines 28 directions, including enhancing strategic transport links, to support economic growth through delivering cross-border regional freight network connectivity and improving associated supporting infrastructures. In this light, we also suggest to update Figure 10 to include other jurisdictions in addition to Local Government.

Noting that the *2013 NSW Freight and Ports Strategy* was previously part of the *National Land Freight Strategy*, on page 23 it would be beneficial to reflect the key road investments as part of the *NSW Key Freight Routes Map*<sup>2</sup> endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Council. This also highlights Transport for NSW’s intention to explore the implementation of dedicated freight lanes on key corridors (p.42).

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<sup>1</sup> *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036* - <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/south-east-and-tableland-regional-plan-2017-07.ashx>

<sup>2</sup> *NSW Key Freight Routes Map* -

[http://transportinfrastructurecouncil.gov.au/publications/files/freight\\_route\\_maps/NSW\\_State\\_Map\\_A3\\_ROAD.pdf](http://transportinfrastructurecouncil.gov.au/publications/files/freight_route_maps/NSW_State_Map_A3_ROAD.pdf)

## REGIONAL FREIGHT

With the Canberra Region encompassing major economic development and agricultural activities and with good surface transport connections, the ACT and NSW freight networks are strongly interconnected. Strategically located between Sydney and Melbourne, Canberra is a logical future transport hub for the NSW Riverina, Southern Tablelands and South Coast regions. The ACT Government suggest this be acknowledged in the Plan to promote this opportunity to stakeholders and potential investors in the Canberra Region.

The ACT Government suggests, as part of the development of this freight strategy, that the NSW Government consider referencing key transport corridors and infrastructure assets based in other jurisdictions. This may include not only future growth potential at Canberra Airport, but also incorporate air and surface transport connections through Melbourne Airport and the Port of Melbourne, particularly for major agricultural producers present in Southern NSW.

The Port of Eden is also not noted as a key development area in the Plan, despite being Australia's primary woodchip export site and well located to support regional timber exports to key Asian markets. The Port of Eden has also been undergoing continuous upgrades and development to expand Eden's capacity to handle more bulk freight. This includes the \$44m Breakwater Wharf Extension which will allow cruise ships over 300 metres in length to dock.

As the draft Plan sets out, more efficient freight networks mean more savings for all supply chain participants. Efficiency not only entails technological innovation and regulatory reform, but minimising transit times. For a large portion of southern NSW, Canberra's growth as a freight hub and a global gateway – particularly with the expansion of international flights at Canberra Airport – presents opportunities to minimise transit times and grow efficiency in freight supply chains.

The importance of partnerships with industry is included in the Plan (Priority Action Area 4.1, p.65). We suggest adding partnerships with the Commonwealth, State, Territory, and Local Governments, in order to take a strategic approach to protect and enhance freight routes and facilities.

The Plan briefly refers to an intent towards collaboration with adjoining jurisdictions (p.65). The Plan could strengthen this key strategic consideration to examine broadening cross-jurisdictional engagement, such as the ACT Government participation in the NSW Freight Advisory Council.

The Plan references building strategic (road) freight networks with local government/s but does not consider coordinating or partnering with the ACT Government. It should be noted that while many of the Priority Action Areas would allow for and benefit from such initiatives, the Plan does not acknowledge the origins and destinations of secondary freight routes linking the southern NSW and the ACT.

The ABS Road Freight Movement Survey<sup>3</sup> indicated that in the twelve months ending 31 October 2014, 13.8 million tonnes of freight entered into the ACT and another 10.8 million tonnes originated from the ACT. The incoming freight movement was equivalent to around 902 million tonne-kilometres travelled, which predominantly came from the NSW.

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<sup>3</sup> ABS Road Freight Movement Survey - [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/D76CD319E1FDA154CA257FA8001C0BB7/\\$File/92230p008201605.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/D76CD319E1FDA154CA257FA8001C0BB7/$File/92230p008201605.pdf)

The majority of the incoming freight were crude materials (37%), commodities and transactions (22%), manufactured goods (14%) and machinery and transport equipment (11%) – a trend earlier reported by BITRE and Transport for NSW and captured in the *ACT Freight Strategy*<sup>4</sup> (p.17, p.33).

Overall, noting ACT's geographical location, the ACT Government is keen to work closely with Transport for New South Wales to improve freight accessibility and connectivity in the Canberra Region. In particular, there is scope for greater collaboration on cross border freight matters, including around emerging future freight transport technology.

## **RAIL FREIGHT**

The NSW Government recognises the importance of the dedicated rail freight line to Port Botany (p.34). From the ACT Government's perspective, in addition to current movement of scrap metals via rail, the ABS Road Freight Movement Survey identified that 47.7 million tonne-kilometres travelled (5% of ACT's incoming total) is attributed to truck movements carrying commodities from Port Botany to the ACT industrial suburbs of Fyshwick, Pialligo and Hume.

The Plan (p.39) references a 'border' Intermodal Freight Terminal site at Fyshwick (ACT) and a non-operational terminal at Kingston (ACT). This reference is repeated within the maps (p.79 onwards) depicting an Intermodal Terminal under development. There is potential merit in an expanded multi modal terminal in this location. However, we strongly recommend that further discussions occur with the ACT Government as part of transitioning operations away from the previous Kingston terminal.

The ACT Government has noted the funding granted by Transport for NSW to Access Recycling to upgrade rail siding at Fyshwick as part of the Fixing Country Rail pilot projects (p.18). The ACT Government has also received a new application for an Environmental Impact Statement scoping document for a materials recovery facility in this location. The proposal aims to divert waste from Mugga Lane landfill to be sorted, separated and prepared for transfer at the Fyshwick site, processing more than 300,000 tonnes of waste per year. However, until an Environmental Impact Statement is prepared and assessed, the extent of this expansion for freight operations in this location cannot be fully determined.

Faster rail between Canberra and Sydney will allow the Canberra Region to take advantage of new tourism, freight and business investment opportunities, create productivity gains through reduced travel time and congestion, and provide easier access to travel between the two cities. While the joint ACT-NSW application to the Commonwealth's National Rail Program was unsuccessful, the ACT Government believes that continued work to improve the Sydney-Canberra rail line is crucial for future regional prosperity.

An upgrade to the heavy rail corridor between Sydney and Canberra could deliver significant productivity gains through reduced travel time, diverted traffic volume from the Hume Highway and increased connectivity between Canberra and Sydney. Enhanced rail capacity between Canberra and Sydney could also complement new tourism, freight and business investment opportunities created by the recent introduction of international flights at Canberra Airport.

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<sup>4</sup> ACT Freight Strategy - [http://www.transport.act.gov.au/about/policy/transport\\_planning\\_studies/act-freight-strategy/ACT-Freight-Strategy-ACTGov-ACCESS.pdf](http://www.transport.act.gov.au/about/policy/transport_planning_studies/act-freight-strategy/ACT-Freight-Strategy-ACTGov-ACCESS.pdf)

## AIR FREIGHT

The *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036*<sup>5</sup> notes Canberra Airport's important regional role and contains an action item to 'Protect Canberra Airport's current and future operations by maintaining restrictions on the location of nearby residential development.' The importance of protecting Canberra Airport's role in the region, particularly with regards to residential development and as an international gateway for the region, should be acknowledged.

Canberra Airport is not mentioned in the Plan as part of the NSW air freight task, which mention Sydney Airport and Regional NSW Airports (p.49). However, the ACT Government sees the Canberra Airport playing a key role in the movement of goods from regional NSW and continues to explore its stated intention to increase freight throughput at Canberra Airport.

Recently the ACT Government commissioned Cadence Economics and Auxiem Management to investigate the economic impacts of international air freight in the Canberra region. The findings estimated that 37,107 tonnes of exports leave the Canberra catchment each year through Sydney and Melbourne airports, valued at \$226 million. This is equivalent to roughly one 747 freighter landing at Canberra Airport each day or around four B-double trucks worth of road freight each day. The findings shows a maximum potential boost to the combined gross regional product of ACT and NSW of nearly \$1200 million over 15 years and the creation of more than 540 jobs. These findings will inform future collaboration activities between the ACT Government, NSW Government and the CBRJO to capitalise on prospective freight opportunities across the Canberra Region.

## OTHER COMMENTS

Figure 39 (p.79) outlines some proposed intermodal terminals in Yass, Gundagai and Cooma. However it is unclear what role these will play in an integrated freight strategy.

Under introduction of technologies (p.67), we have noted that automation such as AutoStrads have been introduced at Port Botany. The NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan could include further discussion on the future of this technology and similar developments.

Regarding regulation and enforcement (p.68), the ACT Government's Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) have been undertaking joint cross-border operations with NSW Roads and Maritime Services and have participated in the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator National Compliance Information System.

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<sup>5</sup> South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036 - <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Plans-and-policies/south-east-and-tableland-regional-plan-2017-07.ashx>