

NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan

"A plan for moving goods in an efficient, safe and environmentally sustainable manner, providing successful outcomes for communities and industry"

March 2018



CENTRAL NSW
COUNCILS



Centroc's Mission is to be recognised as the lead organisation advocating on agreed regional positions and priorities for Central NSW whilst providing a forum for facilitating regional co-operation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources; effectively nurturing sustainable investment and infrastructure development.

www.centroc.com.au

Chairman: Cr John Medcalf, Mayor, Lachlan Shire Council

23 March 2018

The Hon. Melinda Pavey, MP
Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight
Freight, Strategy and Planning
Transport for NSW
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Reference: jm:vp 180323
Enquiries: Ms J Bennett: 0428 690 935

Dear Minister,

Re: NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan (the Draft Plan)

Central NSW Councils (Centroc) represents over 200,000 people covering an area of more than 50,000 sq kms comprising the Local Government Areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Hilltops, Lachlan, Lithgow, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Upper Lachlan, Weddin, and Central Tablelands Water.

It is about the same size as Tasmania with half the population and a similar GDP.

Centroc's vision is to be recognised as vital to the sustainable future of NSW and Australia.

Its mission is to be recognised as the lead organisation advocating on agreed regional positions and priorities for Central NSW whilst providing a forum for facilitating regional cooperation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources.

Centroc has two core objectives:

1. Regional Sustainability - Encourage and nurture suitable investment and infrastructure development throughout the region and support members in their action to seek from Governments financial assistance, legislative and/or policy changes and additional resources required by the Region.
2. Regional Cooperation and Resource Sharing – Contribute to measurable improvement in the operational efficiency and effectiveness of Member Councils through facilitation of the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources and, where appropriate, the aggregation of demand and buying power.

The Centroc Board is made up of the 28 Mayors and General Managers of its member Councils who determine priority for the region. These priorities are then progressed via sponsoring Councils. For more advice on Centroc programming and priorities, please go to our website <http://www.centroc.com.au/>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback both in writing in this submission and at the workshop in Dubbo 26 February attended by our Executive Officer, Ms Jennifer Bennett.

We make the following observations and recommendations:

1. The greatest challenge for Central NSW is its transport constraints. The biggest constraint is freight, be it road or rail, travelling both ways over the Blue Mountains. High productivity vehicles traversing the Blue Mountains are our biggest constraint where currently only 19m BDoubles are permissible. Arguably the solution for freight will also enable tourism and other forms of passenger transport. There needs to be commentary about corridors and forward plans for reducing travel times, mass restricted bridges and improving safety for the freight task traversing the Blue Mountains. The plan should focus on ways to shift the majority of freight from road to rail. While reference is made to improvements in freight capacity across the Blue Mountains, it is recommended that specific reference is made to the Bells Line Expressway or equivalent¹ of which there has been substantial previous study and recent debate. Additionally, short-term timeframes should be put in place for the reservation of the Bells Line corridor.
2. The mapping in the Draft Plan is not reflective of the pattern of settlement in Central NSW. This is typical of the suite of plans under the Future Transport 2056 banner. Central NSW has the two regional cities of Bathurst and Orange; the significant townships of Lithgow, Parkes, Forbes and Cowra that have populations of up to 14,000. Then there are a series of towns and villages across the region with populations up to 5000. It is dense. It is hard to get all the names of the significant centres onto a map. Visual misrepresentation can easily lead the reader to believe that there are far fewer people and industry in the region.
3. The Draft Plan is at a very high level and while making very welcome commentary in its objectives, it is unclear about what this looks like in place in regions across NSW. It is therefore recommended as follows:
 - a. There be a by region value proposition that outlines the positive impact the plan will make. This could be a simple one pager that identifies ten key outcomes, activities or outputs per region. Examples could include the skills project mentioned at the workshop in Dubbo currently being trialled in Tamworth, the Freight Links project identified in the Central West Orana Regional Plan, the RMS Live Traffic project looking to include Council owned roads in its emergency advice footprint, the Newell Flooding Project, corridor work by RMS, what “separating people from trucks” looks like with case studies for example the South Orange Economic Development Corridor and policy work. Ideally there would be a list of infrastructure projects where Centroc working with RDA Central West had identified a ranked order for transport infrastructure which could be included. Looking at feedback from member Councils, dry porting and tailgating policy review could also be included.
 - b. There be an Implementation Plan that accounts for the value proposition per region. This Implementation Plan would require resourcing in regions by personnel with delegation to enable the change required. To reduce duplication and foster communication, it is recommended that implementation be administered by a multi agency committee. Centroc already resources a Regional Strategic Transport Group and would welcome the opportunity to assist Transport for NSW by supporting the governance of the implementation. This model has been adopted by the Department of Planning for the Regional Plan and is working very well. We do not want an “undelivered Plan on a shelf,” or a plan full of nebulous motherhood statements that do not pass the common sense test or improve outcomes for this region. We seek to work collaboratively with TfNSW on implementing real solutions for our greatest challenge in Central NSW.

¹ The recently published Future Transport 2056 Regional Infrastructure and Services Plan references the need for a long term solution for the connection between Central NSW and Western Sydney. This Plan should align with this commentary.

- c. The 0-10 Year Initiatives should also include the investigation of electric vehicle supportive infrastructure to develop a viable and traversable network throughout NSW. Additionally, road improvements should be complemented by the reduction of mobile black spots along all transport routes in order to achieve a safer and smarter transport system.
- 4. The Draft Plan needs to align with the Regional Plan for the Central West and Orana. Notably for the Freight Linkage project. Dual carriageway from Sydney to Orange is essential in order to implement the Central West and Orana Regional Plan.²
- 5. Industry attendees at the workshop in Dubbo suggested that there be advice provided on the consequences of not improving the current situation or the “do nothing” case. Centroc supports this approach.
- 6. At the workshop in Dubbo advice was provided that the opportunities for Inland Rail and how it may assist with the growing freight task in Western Sydney and Badgerys Creek have not been considered. It is assumed that the capacity issues for Port of Botany have also not been given consideration as opportunities for moving freight east to west. Dry porting and tailgating are also considerations that could be included.
- 7. The workshop in Dubbo had poor local government representation, indeed industry were disappointed that Dubbo Regional Council was not there. Feedback from our members is that it is not always easy to cancel arrangements at such short notice. Centroc has offered to assist both with future consultations and providing advice on realistic timeframes when consulting with Local Government.

This region is thrilled by the concept of Transport for NSW (TfNSW) Open Data and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate on future projects and contribute to the data set. Ultimately, we would like to be part of a different conversation on induced demand.

This region has consistently argued that basing the considerations for growth of the freight task on the past data will only ensure that we get more of the same. We seek to work with TfNSW and other agencies on changing the conversation leading to safer, swifter journeys and better productivity.

Yours sincerely,

Cr John Medcalf
Chair
Central NSW Councils (Centroc)

² Ibid – aligns with the DoP Regional Plan

