

Submission to the NSW Draft Freight and Ports Plan



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Executive Summary

The NSW Government has developed a draft Freight and Ports Plan, as a component of the Future Transport Strategy 2056.

This submission is a response to the public exhibition of the draft Plan, with a focus on opportunities in Eurobodalla Shire, and the south coast and ACT region.

Eurobodalla Shire Council has already provided two submissions to Transport for NSW which should be read in conjunction with this submission:

- i) Submission to the Draft NSW Future Transport Strategy 2056

<http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/inside-council/project-and-exhibitions/advocacy/infrastructure-priorities/Future-Transport-Strategy-December-2017.pdf>

- ii) Submission to the Draft NSW Road Safety Plan 2021

<http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/inside-council/project-and-exhibitions/advocacy/infrastructure-priorities/Submission-to-Draft-NSW-Road-Safety-Plan-2021.pdf>

Road Transport

Eurobodalla is highly dependent on road, bus and air transport with no rail service south of Bomaderry. Our gross domestic product is estimated at \$1.3B per annum with \$408m related to the visitor economy. The vast majority of our visitors arrive via road, with the Kings and Princes Highways providing the critical links to our region. Investment in transport infrastructure is essential to enable ongoing safe and effective connectivity of the Far South Coast region with the rest of the State and the ACT.

It is fundamental to the economic growth of our region to see the transformation of the Princes Highway from Nowra to the Victorian border for movement of freight, safety and our visitor market.

Eurobodalla Shire Council strongly supports the current NSW Government advocacy to the Australian Government to secure a funding agreement for the transformation of the Princes Highway (similar to the Pacific Highway funding agreement).

It is also fundamental that the NSW Government recognise the key role the east-west link via the Kings Highway plays. This highway will need major progressive upgrades to facilitate safer access to Canberra, Goulburn and western Sydney, particularly for the movement of goods and services, and high value freight.

The NSW Government strategy to develop three cities in Sydney, including one at Badgerys Creek airport, will transform the movement of people and freight movement to and from the south coast.

We strongly encourage the NSW Government to identify and lock in regional inland inter-modals, one of which should be considered at Goulburn. This would allow certainty and more effective land-use and transport planning.

We recognise the extensive freight already coming from the logistic hub in Goulburn and western Sydney that already travels to our region via the Hume Highway, Goulburn to Braidwood and Braidwood to Batemans Bay via the Kings Highway.

The NSW Government should do sufficient preliminary engineering designs and environmental work to establish the future road corridor for the Kings Highway between Batemans Bay & Braidwood.

The recognition of **Canberra as a global city** and the fundamental role of **Canberra international airport** in the NSW Transport Plans is a welcome fundamental shift in the transport and economic planning for New South Wales. The NSW Government and Transport for NSW are to be commended for this strategic and common sense borderless approach. However, there is a fundamental mismatch between the NSW Transport Strategy and the draft Freight and Ports Plan. The latter needs to be amended to recognise the key role Canberra airport will play in delivering high value product to international markets, and in bringing return visitation to Canberra, the greater Canberra region and south coast region via the Kings Highway.

The proposed **'hub and spoke'** model included in the NSW Transport Strategy is to be commended as is the strong recognition throughout the documents that the **NSW Government must shift focus to provide vastly improved east-west linkages**, specifically **upgrading of the Kings Highway**.

Eurobodalla Shire Council has worked with the South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc. (SEATS) to identify key infrastructure projects which when implemented, will have a marked impact on meeting the current and future transport needs of Eurobodalla and our region, supporting an improved quality of life for our residents and visitors. This will also help meet growing international trade, investment and tourism markets that support current domestic and interstate activities.

Our previous submissions included recommended transport infrastructure priorities for our region to grow freight and visitation to our region. This must include provision of 26m HML B-double access from Nowra to Eurobodalla, ultimately linking through to Bega.

To achieve the efficient movement of freight, all levels of Government must work with Local Government to resolve the 'first mile' issues, improve road safety, ensure social equity and deliver enabling infrastructure to support growth within the Eurobodalla region. The requirements to achieve this are well laid in our previous submission and the NSW Roads Congress Communique attached to that submission.

Council commends the NSW Government for the measures taken to date such as the NSW Fixing Country Roads Program and other supporting funding programs outlined under Section 5.3 Regional NSW Initiatives. However, Eurobodalla Shire Council urges the NSW Government to adjust the 0-10 Year Initiatives to incorporate the transformation of the Princes Highway south of Nowra to the Victorian boarder.

Marine Infrastructure

Eurobodalla is the marine playground of a much wider region including the ACT, western NSW, Sydney and Victoria.

Batemans Bay has been identified as a Regional Port within the draft Freight and Ports Plan.

The marine infrastructure that supports marine activities is therefore crucial to our community. Government income from marine activities goes direct to the NSW Government.

Council has invested considerable funds over the last decade to maintain, renew and upgrade marine infrastructure in collaboration with the NSW Government through its Better Boating and Boating Now Program and the Recreation Fishing Trust. Much has been achieved yet there remains more to do to support and grow our marine based economy.

Investment in the marine transport market should be planned now to ensure the area is well-positioned for future growth in this market space. Eurobodalla is already experiencing significant growth in tourism via ocean going marine vessels now coming into Batemans Bay. With the development of Eden as a deep water port, there is significant potential to expand our economy through supportive marine infrastructure.

At the high level identified within the NSW Freight and Ports Plan, this should include:

- i) investment in, and expansion of, the Batemans Bay Marina and associated foreshore commercial precinct, including further activation of adjoining Crown lands
- ii) an ongoing dredging strategy for Batemans Bay entrance, potentially linked to a sand re-use scheme to protect and adapt the Batemans Bay foreshore environment, and to better manage existing ocean inundation and future sea level rise
- iii) investigation of the development of suitable waterside infrastructure at Batemans Bay to support the NSW cruise market, linked regionally along the NSW, and potentially Victorian, coastline between Sydney and Melbourne.

This latter item should be seriously considered in the development of the NSW Government's Cruise Development Plan including the development of appropriate marine infrastructure and on-land commercial and servicing developments.

Eurobodalla Shire Council seeks the opportunity to be more directly involved in direct engagement on the NSW Government's Cruise Development Plan.

Batemans Bay Marina

The Economic Development and Employment Lands Strategy (ESC 2011) identified the Batemans Bay Marina as a critical piece of marine infrastructure for the Eurobodalla region, being the only significant marina along the Eurobodalla coast. There is both the demand and the potential for an expansion of the marina to increase the number of berths and improve the supporting infrastructure and activities, including marine service industries, commercial activities and tourist facilities.

The Batemans Bay Marina is advancing to become a productive and active development. This includes foreshore restaurants, oyster bar, businesses and office space. Continuing marina development will provide a trigger for confident investment in other development activities within Eurobodalla and the region.



Marine transport has a strong future in Eurobodalla.

Incentives should be provided to aid in the development of the Batemans Bay Marina for the broader economic and employment benefits of the region.

Properly developed, the Batemans Bay Marina, with certainty of the level of passage across the bar, will provide boating facilities for the longer term and complement other local boating facilities within the region to enhance connectivity via our waterways.

We encourage Government assessment of the potential to expand the Batemans Bay Marina lease area to create additional capacity and land based commercial space on the western side of the marina to maximise returns to the NSW Government and facilitate tourist related commercial development.

Clyde River Wharf – Batemans Bay

Council strongly supports the provision of a new NSW Government owned wharf facility for use by commercial operators using the Clyde River estuary and to provide access to Batemans Bay CBD for recreation boating.

The Roads and Maritime Services has indicated it will construct a new wharf structure for this purpose in association with the new Batemans Bay bridge. This new structure should have additional capacity to cater for the future.

The potential users of this facility include houseboats, yachts, recreation boating, the oyster industry, tourism and commercial operators using the Clyde River, all of whom contribute income to the NSW Government. Once constructed, the NSW Government could potentially lease this wharf facility to private enterprise to enable maintenance of the facility under a user-pays system.

The NSW Government currently owns other marine infrastructure within the Bay, for example the navigation rockwalls and the Batemans Bay Marina. The arrangement for the proposed new accessible wharf is a natural fit with the NSW Government's other commercially focussed infrastructure.

Waterways dredging

To enable consistent and accessible waterway connectivity, the NSW Government needs to be responsible for all dredging of NSW waterways and develop a Centre of Marine Excellence to provide the expertise to facilitate accelerated outcomes for private investment as well as strategically placed public infrastructure.

We urge the NSW Government to introduce a fully funded dredging program for all boating access in NSW tidal waters. In particular the Batemans Bay Sand Bar, Wagonga Inlet, Tomaga River and Tuross Lake systems are current issues within Eurobodalla.

The NSW Government collects income from a wide range of sources from a wide range of users of waterways including leases and licenses. These funds should be used to provide adequate boating access to waterway facilities including Council-owned boat ramps.

We believe it is an unreasonable imposition on coastal Councils to expect our community will fund dredging operations for boating access.

We believe that the NSW Government should fund and undertake a comprehensive statewide monitoring program of coastal waters for all boating. The advances in technology will mean that the NSW Government could gather significant data on tidal waters, sand movements and other changes that will support Government policy-making on coastal waters, ocean inundation, sea level rise and future adaptation strategies.

We specifically ask the NSW Government to fully fund an ongoing review of boating access of all boating facilities in Eurobodalla. Council will continue to advocate to the NSW Government for a 100% funded waterways monitoring and dredging program.