

24 June 2024

Transport for NSW

[Freight@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Freight@transport.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir / Madam

## **FREIGHT POLICY REFORM PROGRAM**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Freight Reform Policy. We note the feedback period has concluded however our submission is provided for your interest. We specifically seek to provide feedback on matter 3 – road and rail networks.

UOW, through the SMART Infrastructure Facility, has a long track record in research regarding the need for a rail connection between the Illawarra and western Sydney, utilising the incomplete Maldon-Dombarton rail corridor.

Research was commissioned by the Illawarra Business Chamber and consortium partners Wollongong City Council and Wollondilly Shire Council, which investigated a potential new rail link between the Illawarra and St Marys in Western Sydney.

Out of this arose the concept of the South West Illawarra Rail Link (SWIRL) linking the Illawarra, Wollondilly and Western Sydney, but adding passengers as well as freight.

It was proposed that a new dual freight and passenger line, a 48-kilometre extension of the partially built Maldon-Dombarton line, would be able to connect the Illawarra region with Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek, and the planned Western Sydney Freight Terminal at St Marys.

Better connectivity to Greater Sydney, and more specifically the future Western Parkland City, was recognised as a major enabling factor to the sustainable economic growth of the Illawarra region and Wollondilly shire.

*The South West Illawarra Rail Link (SWIRL) Assessing the economic impacts of better connecting the Illawarra to Greater Sydney and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis*, published in 2020, makes the following points on the perceived benefits;

- *Overall, a regional economic uplift, partly supported by better road and rail*



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

*connectivity (including SWIRL) would contribute to an additional 14,000 jobs being created in the Illawarra and 600 in Wollondilly Shire, reducing the overall regional deficit of investment by \$745 million p.a. by 2041.*

- *Furthermore, an additional passenger rail link between Wollongong and St Marys, via Wilton, could potentially take 19,100 daily commuters from the road network by 2041.*
- *Overall, a passenger rail link between Wollongong, Wilton and St Marys could result in a productivity gain of \$75 million p.a. due to faster commuting time by 2041.*
- *Failing to increase the road and rail capacity (under a BAU scenario), NSW Ports and the Illawarra region could face a \$229 million p.a. economic loss by 2041.*

The report also identifies some of the broader challenges the region faces if there is NOT an additional rail line accessing the region;

- Addressing regional job deficits in both the Illawarra and the Wollondilly Shire: Without intervention, 46,000 commuters will be travelling from the Illawarra to Sydney for work by 2040, and a further 39,000 commuters will be travelling from the Wollondilly Shire to Sydney.
- Addressing population and commuter growth: By 2050, the population of the Wollondilly is expected to grow by 50,000 people and the Illawarra by 60,400. Commuters from the Illawarra to Greater Sydney will grow from 26,000 (2016) to 46,000 by 2041 and from the Wollondilly from 16,000 (2016) to 39,000 by 2041.
- Releasing the capacity of Port Kembla: The Illawarra's rail network reaches capacity in 2036 (according to Transport for NSW) and after 2041 (*now estimated at 2048*) the planned container terminal at Port Kembla will add 9,300 additional train paths to the network and a further 1.6 million road trips.

UOW supports the need for a rail connection between the Illawarra and western Sydney to meet the needs of our students and to ensure continued economic growth and connection to the growing metropolis to the west.

Yours sincerely

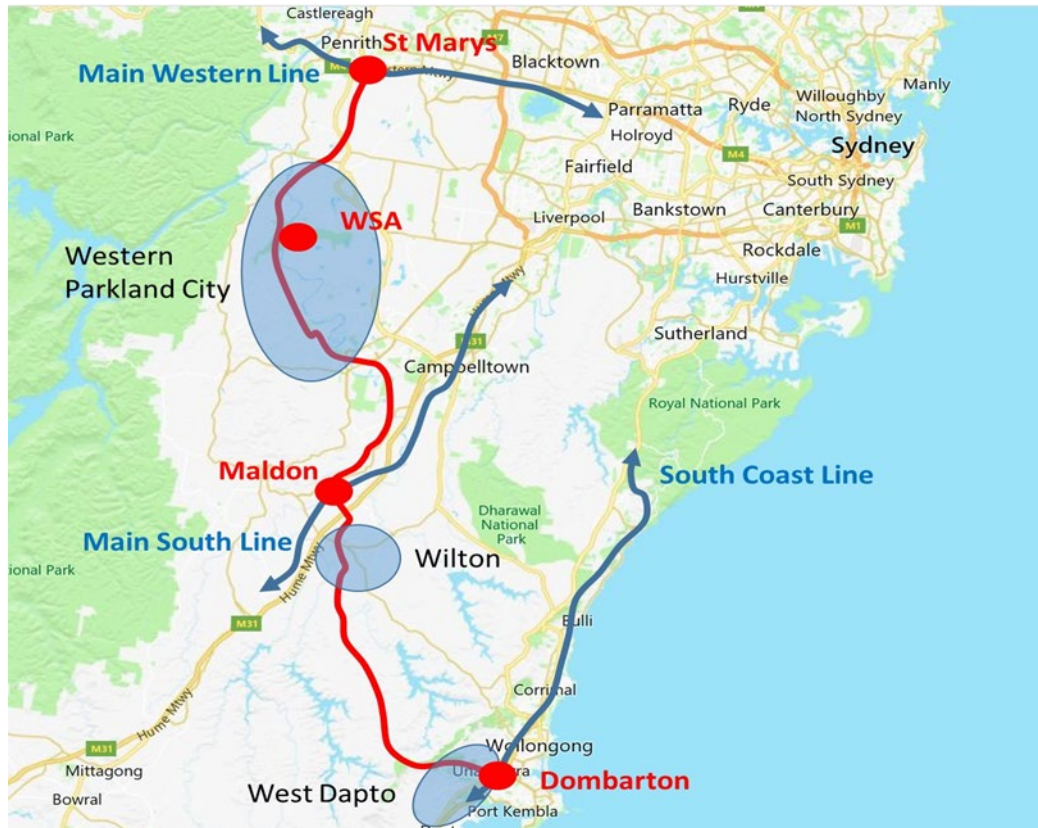


Professor David Currow

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Sustainable Futures)

## Appendix

Figure 1: Proposed SWIRL-St Marys corridor, joining West Dapto, Wilton and Western Parkland growth areas.



South West Illawarra Rail Link (SWIRL) – October 2020

<https://documents.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@eis/documents/doc/uow268091.pdf>

SMART Infrastructure Facility submission to the NSW Government DRAFT  
Freight and Ports Plan – March 2018

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2018/039%20-%20SMART%20Infrastructure%20Facility%20-%20University%20of%20Wollongong.pdf>

Upgrading rail connectivity between Illawarra and Sydney – August 2017

[https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/transport/freight/freight-supply-chain-submissions/Rail\\_Research.pdf](https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/transport/freight/freight-supply-chain-submissions/Rail_Research.pdf)