

## **IPWEA (NSW) and the Roads & Transport Directorate**

### **Draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan Submission**

#### **Executive Summary**

To summarise the points contained in this submission, IPWEA (NSW) through its Roads & Transport Directorate draws attention to the following issues:

- The regional view is that capital works are only being carried out in the Metropolitan Areas – only “business as usual” is being provided for the remainder of the state. The Final Plan needs to address this perception.
- The provision of an efficient transport link between the central west and Sydney has not been addressed. The final Plan should establish milestones and a timeline for this connection.
- The Report does not include an adequate assessment of the potential for improvements to transport infrastructure outside the Sydney metropolitan area, including how this can drive economic growth and decentralisation and aid in reducing conflict between freight movements and traffic congestion within Sydney.
- The State Government should make submission to the Nation Building program to fund assessment of load carrying capacity of bridges on local and regional roads to cater for productivity vehicles.
- The State Government, through RMS, must renew its commitment to funding of the Local Government Road Safety Programme in NSW.
- The Report does not consider the allocation of seed funding to encourage the direction of resources towards the maintenance and renewal of existing regional infrastructure;
- There is concern that the push to reorganise the contracting by councils of maintenance on State roads may have serious consequences on local employment in regional areas. A framework for progressing RMCCs should be included in the Plan.

IPWEA (NSW) and the Roads & Transport Directorate appreciate this opportunity to have input into the Draft NSW Long Term Master Planning Process and would value any opportunity to provide any additional details arising from the above submission or to be involved in the future development and implementation of the Plan’s outcomes.



Institute of  
Public Works  
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# IPWEA (NSW) ROADS & TRANSPORT DIRECTORATE

26 October 2012

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Dear Sir / Madam,

## **Draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan Submission**

### **Introduction**

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) is a not for profit, membership based, professional organisation representing engineers and others involved in the provision of public works and services predominantly in the local government sphere.

The Roads & Transport Directorate has been set up by IPWEA (NSW) in conjunction with the Local Government and Shires Associations to provide support to its members working in local government across the state. It is supported financially by membership contributions from Local Councils in NSW.

### **Background**

The Roads & Transport Directorate has been set up to meet the demand from members of IPWEA (NSW) over the past few years to act as a focus for research activities and to provide technical advice.

Its main purpose is to assist Local Government in NSW in the area of road infrastructure and transport related activities by:

- Assisting members in discharging their road management roles in the most effective manner consistent with current legal obligations and the most recent technical practices in the critical area of consistent and cost effective asset management and road safety;
- Assisting the IPWEA (NSW), the Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW, individual Councils and members in lobbying for a higher priority to be placed on road infrastructure provision and maintenance and for a more equitable share of resources and funding; and
- Providing for IPWEA members and Local Government a powerful technical and research resource on transport issues at regional, state and national level. The activities would be, as circumstances dictate, either proactive or reactive to achieve the optimum benefit for the region or state.

The Directorate commenced operation in October 2004 and has been involved in determining the needs of members and developing solutions to meet those needs. Over that period the Directorate has made submissions on a range of issues. Copies of these submissions<sup>1</sup> are available on the website at: [www.roadsdirectorate.org.au](http://www.roadsdirectorate.org.au).

### **Infrastructure Funding for NSW Local Roads – Background Context**

In NSW, Local Governments are “Road Authorities” under the Roads Act, 1993. Local Government has responsibility for 85 percent of the road network and this portion of the road network accounts for over 50 percent of road accidents.

In 2005 and 2008 the Roads & Transport Directorate of the IPWEA NSW Division commissioned a Road Asset Benchmarking Project to provide a snapshot of the current reported condition of Regional and Local Roads in NSW, an estimate of the shortfall in funding necessary to bring them to a satisfactory condition and specific recommendations about rectification of the problems identified.

In May 2011 the Roads & Transport Directorate released a further set of reports containing the results of the 2010 Road Asset Benchmarking Project.<sup>2</sup>

The conclusions of the 2010<sup>3</sup> report are summarised as follows:

*Present funding to meet existing service levels for NSW regional and local roads and bridges is 45% of the life cycle costs, a reduction from 57% in 2007/08. Current level of service with current level of expenditure is not sustainable.*

*Councils may be facing a large and increasing risk exposure at present and in the future. These risks include:*

- *the condition of roads and bridges infrastructure will decline,*
- *potential increase in personal injury and legal claims,*
- *road life cycle expenditure ‘savings’ will be passed onto road users through higher transportation operating costs,*
- *funding will not be available to renew ageing road and bridge assets,*
- *councils will not be able to provide services needed by communities in medium-long term.*
- 

*Renewal costs are being transferred to the next generation.*

*Asset consumption as reported by depreciation expense is understating the assessment of asset consumption by local road asset managers by up to 65%.*

Local road assets are estimated to have a renewal cost in excess of \$41.15billion and that asset renewal is substantially less than current asset consumption. The life cycle costs for road assets is estimated at \$1.329billion per annum with expenditure of \$696million per annum leaving a funding gap of \$633million per annum. (Data provided by 142 out of the 152 NSW Councils). On a pro rata basis the funding gap for all councils is \$677million.

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<sup>1</sup> Copies of submissions are available at:

<http://www.ipwea.org.au/RoadsTransportDirectorate/AboutRD/Submissions/>

<sup>2</sup> 2006, 2008, 2010 Asset Benchmarking Reports are available at:

<http://www.ipwea.org.au/RoadsTransportDirectorate/AboutRD/AssetBenchmarkingProject/>

<sup>3</sup> 2010 Road Asset Benchmarking Report is available at:

<http://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/IPWEA/c7e19de0-08d5-47b7-ac3f-c198b11cd969/UploadedImages/Asset%20Benchmarking%20Project/Road%20Benchmarking%20Report%20010.pdf>

The point of providing this information again is to reinforce Local Government's position as the road authority for 150,000km of Regional and Local Roads, but with an ever decreasing resource base.

### **Previous Submission**

Further background on the general infrastructure funding issues confronting Local Government are contained in our original April 2012 submission and will not be repeated in this submission.

### **Some General Observations**

Members of the Roads & Transport Directorate have made the following general comments on the *Draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan* :

The Draft Plan does not adequately cover regional issues;

The Draft Plan does not include priorities or timelines, particularly in relation to regional issues;

- The regional view is that capital works are only being carried out in the Metropolitan Areas – only “business as usual” is being provided for the remainder of the state;
- The provision of an efficient transport link between the central west and Sydney has not been addressed;
- The Report does not include an adequate assessment of the potential for improvements to transport infrastructure outside the Sydney metropolitan area, including how this can drive economic growth and decentralisation and aid in reducing conflict between freight movements and traffic congestion within Sydney;
- The Report does not consider the allocation of seed funding to encourage the direction of resources towards the maintenance and renewal of existing regional infrastructure;
- There is concern that the push to reorganise the contracting by councils of maintenance on State roads may have serious consequences on local employment in regional areas.

### **Detailed Comments**

The following sections contain comments on specific items within the Draft Plan. These are set out by page reference and on a chapter by chapter basis.

#### **Executive Summary**

(p9) • *Integrating modes to meet customer needs by matching the world on integrated ticketing systems and supporting seamless interchange.* – Does this extend to regional areas? Is it a state wide integration proposed?

(p9) • *Providing essential access for regional NSW by providing better cross regional links, improved service levels and choice, and more reliable and safe travel.* – This does not appear to cover areas west of the Blue Mountains. Clarification is required.

(p10) Reference is made to the **Light Rail Strategic Plan**. It appears that this plan will override the Draft Transport Master Plan. This is the wrong way round. It is assumed that this Plan will provide the framework for any Light Rail proposals. This aspect requires clarification.

#### **Introduction**

(p15) *\$5 billion to build and maintain critical road and maritime infrastructure, including*

*\$2.2 billion for new roads and \$1.3 billion for road maintenance – This does not include the shortfall of \$680 million each year to maintain the regional and local road network in its present condition.*

*(p20) The State Infrastructure Strategy will provide advice to Government on the State's infrastructure needs for the next 20 years. It will inform Government decision making for investment in critical infrastructure. – Again this does not include any reference to the Regional and Local Road Network.*

## **Chapter 1**

*(p28) NSW has other significant industry sectors: in particular, our agriculture sector contributes a large share of Australia's total production in areas such as wool, beef, wheat, fruit, rice, oilseeds and vegetables. – Yet there are no specific proposals to improve freight networks between the central west and Sydney.*

*(p29) In particular, more efficient and reliable supply chains across multiple transport modes (road, rail and sea) will be critical to productivity growth in our heavy industries and manufacturing sector. – However there is no discussion in relation to coastal shipping anywhere in the Plan. Even if the discussion is that this mode is insignificant there needs to be a statement to that effect.*

*(p35) Regional freight networks will address constraints, meet growing demand and support increased regional productivity while meeting customer needs.*

*In remote parts of the State, such as the far west, smooth and safe roads and strong freight connections will generate new opportunities and revitalise disadvantaged communities.*

*Transport improvements will ensure that our regions have the strength and capacity to meet new challenges and, in turn, offer more opportunities to people, businesses and communities living in regional NSW. These statements are not supported by specific actions or commitments within the Plan.*

*(p38) In 2010, over one million people aged 65 years and older lived in NSW, with the highest proportion living in the Mid North Coast, Central Coast, and Northern Rivers regions. With the proportion of people aged over 65 years to increase in the next 20 years, dependence on public transport and community transport services is likely to increase as people's independent mobility decreases. Public and community transport access in areas with ageing populations will be critical to supporting independence for those over 65. This does not consider the use of mobility scooters (Gophers) by increasing numbers of the ageing population. These vehicles are not cycles or motor vehicles, they use roads and footpaths, they aren't registered and no license is required. Particularly in regional areas there needs to be planning to accommodate them so that they continue to operate without putting users at risk.*

## **Chapter 2**

*(p42) Align transport and land use plans to meet customers' needs. This draft Long Term Transport Master Plan integrates transport planning with land use planning across the transport network. The first step in this approach involves the identification of transport corridors. – Care needs to be taken that the links between these corridors and the farm, feed lot, industrial area are not forgotten or we will continue to have "last mile" issues.*

## **Chapter 3**

(p59) The Chapter Summary sets out the transport challenges being faced and a list of actions to be taken. This refers specifically to Sydney and does not suggest that similar initiatives might extend to regional areas west of the Dividing Range. What is the vision in this respect?

(p64) *A public transport customer survey of 20,000 people in 2011 showed that 32 percent of rail passengers are dissatisfied with parking at rail stations. Customer dissatisfaction with car and bicycle parking at rail stations, particularly in outer urban areas, was also raised through the consultation process for the Long Term Transport Master Plan. Opportunities exist to increase park and ride, drop off points and bike lockers or racks, particularly at new stations. This is an absolutely critical requirement if the community is to be enticed to embrace public transport. The same is true of transport to regional centers.*

## **Chapter 4**

This chapter contains some detailed data and provides the outline of some possible solutions for the identified corridors in Sydney.

(p104) *We will do this by:*

- *Accommodating land use, growth and urban renewal and ensuring land use policies make a positive impact on congestion*
- *Taking steps to manage demand that encompasses road priority measures, demand-responsive technology, better customer information, and pricing*
- *Managing congestion on roads by encouraging the use of public transport, through
  - *Developing an integrated, fast, and reliable bus network*
  - *Improving public transport interchanges**
- *Employing a coherent, whole-of-network planning strategy through the Strategic Transit Network.*

These principles are critical in generating solutions but the Plan does not go into sufficient detail to be of use. In addition, there are no commitments to when any of these elements are to be implemented.

(p117) *The absence of a heavy rail link from the CBD places pressure on the bus network to meet the Specialised Precinct's increasing need for a high capacity, reliable and fast transport service to the CBD and beyond. While bus priority measures have been implemented on this corridor, services still experience delays due to interaction with other traffic. – There needs to be an assessment of the interaction between buses and light rail and the capacity of heavy rail against light rail for this precinct. The implementation of light rail in this area may lead to buses being uneconomic across part of the network. This assessment should be included in this Plan.*

(p118) *The growing volumes of freight moving through the Port make the maintenance of efficient links between the precinct, the CBD and the Global Economic Corridor one of our most important transport challenges – not just for Sydney, but for NSW and the national economy. The Plan does not provide a definitive solution to this problem.*

(p123) *4.6.4 Walking is an important transport mode – We fully support this statement and the supporting sections.*

(p131) *Better park and ride facilities at rail interchanges have the potential to increase public transport patronage by making public transport a more attractive option for one or more legs of the journey to work. Through the Transport Access Program, we will commence construction of nine new commuter car parks in the next two years, providing more than 1,200 additional parking spaces. In the medium to long term, we will make more investments*

*to improve parking for public transport customers.* - As mentioned earlier we fully support this principle. Implementation will require integration with Land Use Planning and a commitment from individual Councils to support the approach.

(p137) *4.7.3 Completing critical missing links in Sydney's motorway network* - We fully support the recommended actions within this section as a means of improving freight access and removing the existing Motorway bottlenecks.

(p141) *Bells Line of Road and Castlereagh Freeway* – *These are potential long term projects to strengthen connections of Sydney's motorway network to regional NSW.* – We consider this recommendation to be inadequate. Planning and design for this project should be committed to under the Plan.

## **Chapter 5**

(p179) *The passenger rail service charges a station access fee, resulting in a premium ticket price for passenger rail to Sydney Airport that may encourage substitution with car or taxi travel. For a 6.7 km train trip to the domestic airport, a passenger pays \$15 (single) or \$23 (return).* We agree that the fare structure needs to be reviewed if passengers to the Airport are to be encouraged to use public transport.

(p184) *We will work with local councils to drive better transport and land use outcomes, focusing on those issues that influence public transport mode share, and access and congestion outcomes including walking infrastructure, cycling links and parking provision and control. As a first step, we will engage Regional Organisations of Councils and individual councils to agree to a governance and coordination mechanism that will align State and local government strategic plans.* This is a critical undertaking if this Plan is to be successful at the Regional and Local Road Network levels.

(p192) *We will finalise a Precinct Action Plan for Port Botany and Sydney Airport to address capacity constraints, a growing passenger and freight task, and surface access challenges caused by competing demands on the road and rail networks leading to and surrounding the precinct.* This Action Plan is critical to ensure that Port Botany functions at peak efficiency whilst minimising the impact on surrounding residents. The development of this Precinct Plan in conjunction with the local community and councils is a critical element in the management of the State's freight task.

(p196) *5.9 Protecting Greater Sydney's transport corridors* – We strongly support this recommendation. The disposal of existing corridors for short term gain may prevent appropriate transport solutions in the future.

## **Chapter 6**

(p199) *Initiatives to move regional freight more efficiently, including a Bridges for the Bush program to replace and upgrade bridges to address constraints on High Mass Limit (HML) routes.* We applaud this initiative but suggest that this is too little too late. Local government is responsible for 9,289 bridges (including 2,034 timber bridges) on the Regional and Local Road Network. These bridges are frequently the cause of “last mile” restrictions.

(p199) *Working in partnership with local councils to identify important rural roads for freight.* – We would suggest that industry and freight operators must also be involved in this process.

(p200) *Deliver better transport links to and within the growing centres of Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast. They will need faster and more efficient transport links to Sydney, better public transport connections and less congestion on major roads. We don't consider this to be regional NSW.*

(p211) *There are also around 3,000 km of disused rail lines and corridors across NSW where trains no longer operate. It is essential that these corridors be retained to provide additional transport options for the future. They might be used as regional cycle ways in the interim.*

(p214) *For most of the past decade, patronage has been declining: from 2.2 million passengers in 2001-2 to a low of 1.55 million in 2007-08, before reviving to 1.9 million in 2010-11. Regional rail customers report that services regularly run late and that infrequent services and slow travel times make the network a less attractive alternative to car travel. A return to declining patronage will affect the viability of regional rail services. Is patronage a function of the level of service provided? Improved service might then be expected to result in an increase in patronage.*

(p216) *The NSW Government has set performance standards for the regional road network based on the smoothness of roads to support ride quality. While 91 percent of the State road network meets these standards, a considerable effort will be required to reach our target of having 93 percent of the network at or above these standards (see Section 8.4.1). Getting local roads maintained by local councils up to the same standard is an even bigger exercise, with regionally based councils receiving funding in excess of \$600 million each year to maintain and upgrade these roads. It is unclear what the \$600 million figure includes, but the figure appears to be greater than the funding provided.*

(p219) *Make our regional roads safer – A new Road Safety Strategy will ensure that we reduce the severity and number of crashes on regional roads, with a corresponding decrease in deaths and serious injuries. There is no detail of what might be included in such a strategy or how it might be funded. There is no capacity within Local Government to fund an additional road safety initiative on top of its existing commitments. It should be noted that IPWEA has had a long term commitment in conjunction with RMS in fostering the Local Government Road Safety Programme in NSW. IPWEA is continuing to provide technical support to local Road Safety Officers, although the future of this programme is in doubt.*

(p220) *The NSW Government is assisting the Australian Government with the High Speed Rail study. The NSW Government supports the initiative to select a high speed rail corridor between Brisbane and Melbourne. Once the corridor has been identified we will agree the best approach to protecting the corridor. A future project would need to be supported by an integrated approach to land use and transport planning, including to adjoining transport services and networks. This is in addition to the Inland Rail Link between Melbourne and Brisbane (Freight centered) mentioned elsewhere in the Plan. Are both being supported?*

(p224) *Improve and strengthen community transport. We fully support this action, particularly in regional areas. Part of this action needs to be the development of a sustainable funding model which maximises community benefit.*

(p225) *Improving freight access has high economic benefit. Roads and Maritime Services has assessed the bridges on State, regional and local roads and identified and prioritised the constrained bridges. Currently 249 bridges have been assessed as unsuitable for HML vehicles. On State roads 152 of the 249 bridges with restrictions; 70 of these are located outside the Sydney metropolitan area. These structures either require strengthening or*



*replacement with a new structure to meet the demands of HPVs.* As stated earlier, Local government is responsible for 9,289 bridges (including 2,034 timber bridges) on the Regional and Local Road Network. These bridges are frequently the cause of “last mile” restrictions. Bridge capacity and condition will be the cornerstone of permitting improvements to transport efficiencies on regional and local roads. For many of the 9,289 bridges on these roads their ability to carry higher loads is unknown.

The State Government needs to make submissions to the Australian government's Nation Building program to fund qualified and experienced practitioners to undertake an initial assessment of the capacity of bridges on local and regional roads. This project should be undertaken under the supervision of NSW Roads and Maritime Services and have included in the brief building the capacity of Local Government.

IPWEA(NSW) has prepared an assessment of how such a programme could be developed and delivered. This assessment is attached to this submission as Appendix A.

*(p227) The final Long Term Transport Master Plan will be supported by dedicated Regional Transport Plans for each of NSW's ten regions. Details of the transport challenges and solutions for each region will be set out in these Plans. Specific strategies are also being developed to improve regional and interstate connections: a NSW Roads Strategy, a Country Passenger Rail Services Strategy and a Major Airports Plan. More detail on these plans would be useful.*

*(p230) The Bridges for the Bush program identifies two bridges for replacement: Tulludunna Bridge on the Kamilaroi Highway at Wee Waa and the Gunnedah rail bridge on the Oxley Highway at Gunnedah.*

*We will work with and assist the Gunnedah Shire Council to also replace the New Street Bridge over the rail line at Gunnedah.*

What about the other 9,000 bridges managed by local councils?

## **Chapter 7**

*(p273) Work with councils and industry on intermodal terminal development in regions*

*We will engage regional councils on planning issues around the development of intermodal facilities in industrial precincts, and adjoining land, road and rail access to proposed sites.*

*We will promote best practice terminal development, including on noise mitigation and heavy vehicle access.*

*We will work with councils and the private sector to identify future sites, preserve land where required and work with proponents to design facilities (including future proofing) on a case by case basis.*

We fully support this approach to improve and develop freight hubs, particularly in regional NSW.

## **Chapter 8**

*(p279) A 10 year Road Safety Strategy to reduce the road toll and improve safety for all road users* We fully support the development of this strategy.

*(p285) Many passengers with a disability continue to experience long waiting times for a taxi, making it hard for them to participate in aspects of community life. This is a particular problem in regional NSW.*

*(p288) NSW experiences more natural disasters than any other Australian state and the risk of these disasters is expected to increase. Severe storms, floods and bushfires are the most*

*costly disasters, with other hazards posed by tropical cyclones, earthquakes and landslides. The conditions attached to the funding of Emergency Relief Funding need to be amended to recognise the question of betterment where appropriate. Funding provided in the past has essentially been for replacement of like with like which does not provide for building in resilience.*

*(p293) Making sure that we have the means and ability to maintain our transport infrastructure is a significant challenge for NSW in the years ahead. This needs to include the Regional and Local Road Network as well.*

*(p301) Transport for NSW is updating the NSW Disability Access Plan, reflecting broader transport portfolio responsibilities and whole of government directions under the National Disability Strategy NSW Implementation Plan and the requirements of the Australian Government Disability Discrimination Act. The Plan will be integrated into all relevant aspects of the Long Term Transport Master Plan initiatives and the supporting modal strategies. This is a major issue for Local Government also, particularly in relation to providing accessible bus stops on regional and local roads.*

*(p307) Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure will work with local councils across Sydney to prepare a comprehensive new Metropolitan Parking Policy. Web support the development of a new parking Policy and offer our expertise in this area to assist in the process.*

## **Chapter 9**

We have noted the summaries contained in this Chapter.

## **Chapter 10**

Local Government's funding position is clearly set out in the Road Asset Benchmarking Project data referenced on Page 2 of this submission.

In summary, Local Government has a funding gap of \$677 million – that is funding available is \$677 million less than the level of funding required to keep the regional and local road networks in their current condition.

There is clearly a need to identify new sources of funding to upgrade freight routes and to implement safety measures across the 150,000km of the network.

## **Chapter 11**

*(p335) More detailed regional, precinct, modal and interchange delivery plans Local Government needs to be involved in development of these delivery plans.*

*(p335) Continued collaboration with Regional Organisations of Councils and other stakeholders to develop detailed area plans such as regional transport strategies, city access plans and precinct plans, and with the Australian Government on transport issues of national significance – We fully support this action.*

## **Chapter 12**

We have noted the feedback summarised in this Chapter.

## **Summary**

To summarise the points contained in this submission, IPWEA (NSW) through its Roads & Transport Directorate draws attention to the following issues:

- The regional view is that capital works are only being carried out in the Metropolitan Areas – only “business as usual” is being provided for the remainder of the state. The Final Plan needs to address this perception.
- The provision of an efficient transport link between the central west and Sydney has not been addressed. The final Plan should establish milestones and a timeline for this connection.
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For further information in relation to the submission please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on:



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# **Appendix A**

## **Bridge Load Carrying Capacity Assessment**

# LOAD CARRYING CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

