



The Secretary  
Department of Transport and Regional Services  
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Canberra ACT 2601  
Email: [corridorstrategies@dotars.gov.au](mailto:corridorstrategies@dotars.gov.au)

29 May 2007

**Re: Sydney-Brisbane Corridor Strategy**

Dear Sir / Madam,

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.

This submission has been prepared by the Institute's NSW Division, IPWEA (NSW), on behalf of its members working in the 152 local councils in this State.

**Background**

Local Government in NSW has management responsibility for around 80% of the total road network. Councils maintain a total of 141,959 km of regional and local roads having a replacement value of \$30.8 billion.<sup>1</sup>

While councils do not control and manage the National or State Road Networks they do have responsibility for management of the regional and local road networks which provide the road links to the transport terminals and local distribution centres.

Local Government is also responsible for land use planning at the local (LEP) and regional (REP) levels. This locally focussed planning is an essential element in making sure that transport routes are both efficient and effective.

**IPWEA (NSW) Views**

IPWEA (NSW) is fully supportive of the intent of the Sydney – Brisbane Corridor Strategy. Identification of the growth of the transport task and development of strategies to meet this demand are essential for the future sustainability of local communities. The remainder of this submission will briefly outline some of the local issues that need to be addressed in conjunction with this strategy and suggest some avenues for participation by councils in implementing the approach.

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<sup>1</sup> IPWEA (NSW) Roads & Transport Directorate *Road Asset Benchmarking Project* September 2006

## **Rail Connections**

Over the past decade the proportion of rail passenger and freight movements in the Sydney – Brisbane corridor has been in decline. This decrease has been taken up by an increase in bus and heavy vehicle movements over the same period. The strategy Report concludes that *for the foreseeable future, the majority of the freight growth will need to be moved by road* (p24). This will have a twofold effect on the local road network. Firstly, an increase in heavy vehicles will add considerably to total traffic flows and have an adverse impact on local amenity and general road safety. Secondly, the increase in heavy vehicles will substantially increasing axle loadings (Equivalent Standard Axle (ESA)) on local roads resulting in considerably reduced pavement lives.

IPWEA (NSW) supports the proposed short term improvements to the rail corridor as a means of reducing the number of heavy vehicles using both the coastal and inland routes

## **Asset Management**

The recent Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government (Allan Enquiry) has driven home to Local Government the need for long term financial plans supported by long term asset management plans. The State Auditor General has reached a similar conclusion in relation to the State Road System in NSW. These views are supported by the deficiencies contained in the Strategy.

Roughness is used in the Strategy document to provide an indication of the condition of the road network. While roughness is a good indicator of pavements that are at or near the end of their service lives, it does not always provide a complete picture of structural soundness or otherwise. This is particularly important in assessing the possible implications of the introduction of HML and PBS vehicles on the network.

IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the development of a strategic focus for the corridor and suggests that this approach should include the development of detailed road and rail asset management plans to ensure that adequate funding is available to meet the transport task in future years.

## **The Local Road Network**

The effective operation of the road component of the Sydney – Brisbane corridor requires that access between freight origin / destinations and the corridor be provided over the local / regional road system. The North Coast in general is experiencing a rapid growth in population, producing an increased demand for goods and services and an increase in local traffic volumes. This in turn creates an increased transport demand which form part of the threefold increase predicted by 2030. As detailed in the Strategy Report, the corridor road system passes through a number of significant townships resulting in a number of unsatisfactory outcomes. These same issues are of greater concern to local councils in relation to the local road network.

In summary, the issues of concern to councils arising from the increasing freight task are:

1. Increased traffic volumes resulting in increased local traffic conflicts and congestion.

2. A higher proportion of heavy vehicles causing increased damage to road pavements.
3. Higher axle loadings causing increased damage to road pavements.
4. Increased noise, vehicle exhaust and traffic congestion together cause a reduction in local amenity.
5. Increased vehicle volumes combined with an increase in heavy vehicles create a range of local safety issues resulting in an increase in accident rates.
6. Local access needs create additional safety issues as traffic volumes increase.

Councils are already being stretched financially and are unable to meet the funding gap for maintenance of their local road networks. The expected increase in the freight task without additional funding being made available for maintenance of the local road network will create a further barrier to the efficiency of the Sydney – Brisbane Corridor.

### **Pavement Loadings**

The need to meet the future increased freight task will lead to an increase on local / regional road pavements resulting in a decrease in the length of pavement life. This will occur irrespective of whether GML loadings are maintained (more trips), HML is introduced (a decrease in dynamic loading compensating for an increase in payload with less trips) or PBS is introduced (bigger payloads on more axles). There will be a corresponding decrease in pavement life across the local road network. This will occur without any avenue available to councils to meet the increased cost to the local community.

Consideration needs to be given to developing an equitable funding mechanism to meet the increased local road maintenance costs being borne by local government as a result of increased freight movement.

### **Land Use Planning**

A number of the issues identified in the corridor report point to the need for closer links to be established between local and regional land use planning and state and national transport planning. If land use planning at the local level does not take account of national transport proposals then it will be difficult to address the safety and amenity issues of concern to Local Government. In order to achieve this outcome Local Government must become involved in the strategic transport planning process through a comprehensive consultative process.

### **Conclusion**

IPWEA (NSW) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Sydney – Brisbane Corridor Strategy and raises the following Local Government issues for consideration:

1. Identification of the growth of the transport task and development of strategies to meet this demand are essential for the future sustainability of local communities

2. IPWEA (NSW) supports the proposed short term improvements to the rail corridor as a means of reducing the number of heavy vehicles using both the coastal and inland routes.
3. IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the development of a strategic focus for the Sydney – Brisbane corridor and suggests that this approach should include the development of detailed road and rail asset management plans to insure that adequate funding is available to meet the transport task in future years.
4. Councils are already being stretched financially and are unable to meet the funding gap for maintenance of their local road networks. The expected increase in the freight task without additional funding being made available for maintenance of the local road network will create a further barrier to the efficiency of the Sydney – Brisbane Corridor.
5. An equitable funding mechanism needs to be developed to meet the increased local road maintenance costs being borne by local government as a result of increased freight movement.
6. Local Government must be engaged in the strategic transport planning function through a comprehensive consultative process.

IPWEA (NSW) would like to thank DoTARS for the opportunity to comment on the Sydney – Brisbane Corridor Strategy. Further information on this submission can be obtained from the principal contacts for this submission:

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For further information in relation to the submission please do not hesitate to contact either Mick or myself

Yours faithfully



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