



The Secretary
Department of Transport and Regional Services
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601
Email: corridorstrategies@dotars.gov.au

29 May 2007

Re: Sydney Urban 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.¹

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) View

IPWEA (NSW) is fully supportive of the intent of the Sydney Urban 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 identified need to improve the rail system in conjunction with improvements to commuter services is considered to be an important aspect of the Urban Corridor Strategy. 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.

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

Rail Connections

The summary of short term priorities on page v includes:

- Improve road and rail links from Port Botany and Sydney Airport to Western Sydney
- Enhance landside port capability and freight distribution
- Manage growth of rail freight and passenger services on the shared network and facilitate separation between the two
- Undertake planning initiatives to facilitate the efficient operation of intermodal terminals in Sydney

IPWEA (NSW) fully supports these priorities and suggests that the improvement of public transport services should be added to the list. Improved public transport integrated with land use planning will reduce congestion during the peak periods. This will enable the existing transport assets to provide an enhanced freight / transport service.

IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the proposed priority being given to rail link improvements, including both freight and passenger services. The priority to the improvement of road and rail links between Port Botany and Sydney airport to Western Sydney is supported as a critical element of the strategy.

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.

The strategy does not specifically deal with the asset management issues inherent in the strategy except to list as a challenge (p 28) *Condition of road pavements and their ability to cater for the expected growth in traffic and for higher productivity freight vehicles. Poor pavement condition increases transport costs and adversely affects efficiency.*

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 service potential and 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 Urban Corridor requires that access between freight origin / destinations and the corridor be provided over the local / regional road system. The impact of these access links on local communities is recognised in the Strategy (p29):

- *Appropriate community and social guidelines about addressing the adverse social and environmental impacts of road and rail traffic, especially noise, air pollution, greenhouse emissions, severance and visual intrusion.*
- *Ensuring that all levels of government and owner-operators of private toll roads and rail terminals work together in a coordinated way to manage congestion and development of the transport network.*

These are extremely important issues for Local Government across the whole of the Metropolitan Area.

The other issue of concern to Local Government is the inappropriate use of the local road system as a result of congestion on the designated freight routes. The Mayor of the City of Botany Bay in his Mayoral Column in the *Southern Courier* on 29th May 2007 states:

At last week's Council meeting I raised the concern Councillors and I have over inaction from the RTA when it comes to B Doubles going down roads and streets where they are not authorised to travel. The RTA lays down a number of roads and streets where B Doubles can operate and where they can't. Council tries to ensure that the big trucks don't go where they shouldn't and create a nuisance for residents. But we get more than a little peeved when we report breaches to the RTA and they fob us off. In the last year, Council has reported 59 B Double breaches to the RTA and we've seen no action at all. We even provide photographic evidence but still nothing. We try to protect the interest of residents in keeping these big trucks off local streets and we look to the RTA for support. If there is a clear breach of the rules then the RTA must act. They have their inspectors out all the time, driving around our streets but I'd rather see follow through on breaches of the rules rather than RTA inspectors in utes. Council resolved for me to take this issue up with the Minister for Roads and, hopefully, he will get some RTA action.

All councils across the Sydney Region would have experienced similar use of their 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 Urban 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 Urban 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) fully supports these priorities and suggests that the improvement of public transport services should be added to the list, since improved public transport integrated with land use planning will reduce congestion during the peak periods.
3. IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the proposed priority being given to rail link improvements, including both freight and passenger services. The priority to the

improvement of road and rail links between Port Botany and Sydney airport to Western Sydney is supported as a critical element of the strategy.

4. IPWEA (NSW) fully supports the development of a strategic focus for the Sydney Urban 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.
5. 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 Urban Corridor.
6. 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.
7. 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 Urban Corridor Strategy. Further information on this submission can be obtained from the principal contacts for this submission:

Mick Savage – Manager IPWEA (NSW) Roads and Transport Directorate

Telephone: 8267 3000

Mobile: 0418 808 085

Fax: 9283 5255

Email: msavage@ipwea.org.au

Mark Turner - Executive Manager IPWEA (NSW)

Telephone: 8267 3011

Mobile: 0418 971 704

Fax: 9283 5255

Email: mturner@ipwea.org.au

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

Yours faithfully



Mark Turner
Executive Manager
IPWEA (NSW)