

Kyogle Council

Draft Submission to the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan

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Background and Discussion

The length of roads in NSW, and the branch of government responsible for them, is as follows;

- 4,323km National Highways funded by the Australian Govt.
- 20,993km State Highways and other roads funded by the NSW Govt.
- 18,231km Regional Roads with shared funding Councils and NSW Govt.
- 145,565km Local Roads funded by Councils

Ref: Page 61 NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan Discussion Paper, Transport for NSW, Feb 2012

Local Government is responsible for the vast majority of roads within NSW, more than five times the length of roads maintained by the NSW Government. Many regional Councils are also under contract to maintain the State Highway network through the Routine Maintenance Council Contract (RMCC) system managed by the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS). The maintenance of public roads and streets is the primary role that Councils play in transport infrastructure.

Councils have proven over the last 100+ years that Local Government is the most efficient and effective agency when it comes to identifying, planning, constructing and maintaining roads and streets, particularly in regional and rural areas. However, for a number of reasons, Local Government is under ever increasing financial strain, and there exists a significant backlog of works across the local and regional road networks. This is in addition to the increasing demands on the road system that require road standards to improve in many areas, again at additional cost to Councils. In regional and rural areas, the road network is the primary, and often only, form of transport available to the vast majority of the community.

Whilst it is appreciated that the primary focus of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan is on the needs of Sydney, it is important to recognise the dependency of the communities in regional and rural areas on their State, Regional and Local road networks, and the Councils that maintain them. Kyogle Council hope that the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan will recognise this, and identify ways to work closely with Councils in regional areas to deliver more projects, and expanded programs for the non-metropolitan road networks. There is a genuine opportunity to address the growth pressures on the metropolitan areas, as well as the population decline in many rural and regional areas, by improving the transport infrastructure in regional NSW, so that there is better access to transport of freight to the ports of Sydney and Brisbane. Providing an efficient and reliable transport network in these areas, will provide economic opportunities by encouraging industries to relocate out of the metropolitan areas and into the regions, creating local job opportunities and an economic boost to regional NSW at the same time.

Kyogle Council has been working closely with other stakeholders in the region in relation to transport issues, particularly those that address issues across the NSW and QLD border. The key aspects of the proposals to address these interstate issues are contained in the Trans Regional Amalgamated Infrastructure Network TRAIN project documentation, which is supported by State and Federal MPs, as well as 7 NSW Councils and 3 QLD Councils, amongst others. Project information can be viewed by following the link;

Existing Transport Programs for Inclusion in Master Plan

The following existing transport programs should continue, and be expanded or modified wherever possible to provide additional funding for on-ground works;

- Routine Maintenance Council Contracts
- Regional Road Block Grants
- Regional Roads Repair Program
- Regional Roads Timber Bridge Replacement Program
- Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and Cycleway funding

- State and Federal Black Spot Funding
- The Federal Roads to Recovery Program (Partnership role between three tiers of Govt.)
- Road/Rail Level Crossings Improvement Program

New Transport Programs for Inclusion in Master Plan

The following transport programs are needed and are best delivered by Local Government;

- State Govt. funding for maintenance and upgrades to roads and bridges that form part of;
 - approved school bus routes to provide safe routes to schools, and improved bus stops, shelters, turning areas, education and awareness, and warning signage for rural school bus services across regional NSW
 - haulage routes for timber products from State Forests and managed plantations, note that this could be funded by implementing haulage contributions under the Plantations and Reafforestation Act that the NSW Govt has so far failed to implement.
 - haulage routes from regionally significant extractive and mineral resources
- Local Road improvement funding of a similar nature to the Australian Governments Roads to Recovery program which has only limited administrative oversight

The following administrative programs are needed to reduce the overall costs associated with transport;

- implement national licensing, insurance and registration systems as a matter of priority
- move towards a national system of road design standards and maintenance and construction specifications
- provide additional funding for Routine Maintenance Council Contracts in regional areas
- review of the role of the RMS, with a view to providing additional funds for on-ground works through Local Government with reductions in administration costs

Projects of State Significance

The following projects in the area are considered of State Significance;

- The Summerland Way;
 - Second bridge over the Clarence River at Grafton suitable for b-doubles
 - East of Mount Lindesay deviation north of Kyogle to provide a route suitable for b-doubles from Grafton to join the Mount Lindesay Highway in QLD.
 - Heavy vehicle bypasses for Casino and Kyogle
- The Bruxner Highway
 - Replacement bridge over the Clarence River at Tabulam suitable for b-doubles
- The Mount Lindesay Road;
 - Upgrade to a route suitable for b-doubles from Warwick to the Summerland Way near Woodenbong
 - Reclassification from a Regional Road to a State Road
- Railways
 - Build the Cunningham rail link to connect the Darling Downs to the Port of Brisbane via Warwick, Legume, Woodenbong and Rathdowney
 - Multimodal interchanges at Casino and Bromelton
 - Direct connection between the ports of Sydney and Brisbane

Projects of Regional Significance

The following projects in the area are considered of Regional Significance;

- Completion of a Regional Integrated Transport Plan
- The Bruxner Highway
 - Realignment of the Mallanganee Range section between Tabulam and Casino, and/or provision of overtaking lanes
- Connection to the QLD passenger rail system via the Casino to Murwillumbah rail corridor
- Brisbane to Northern Rivers commuter train services