

## **INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Organisation:** Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils  
**Name:** Mr Stephen Glen  
**Position:** Acting General Manager  
**Date Received:** 17/05/2012



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Shire  
Council  
CENTRAL COAST



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whilst serving for today*

Mr Andrew Gee MP  
Parliament of NSW  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

[stateregional@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:stateregional@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

**Attention: Committee Chair**

Dear Mr Gee

**INQUIRY INTO INTER-REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT  
Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (CCROC) Submission**

CCROC welcomes the opportunity to make a submission in response to the invitation for submissions to the above Inquiry.

CCROC is a strong supporter of the development of an integrated transport system that is designed around the needs and expectations of the customer and supports regional development and tourism.

We believe that the ability to deliver integrated transport systems will be a key enabler to realise economic success in the future.

Future planning for inter-regional public transport should provide for an effective transport system that supports the Vision for Sydney and the Regions of NSW.

With over a quarter of the workforce travelling outside the region to work, very low percentage of public transport usage and a very high car dependency, the Central Coast urgently needs a transport network that matches its growth in population and supports its Vision for the future.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Council's Transport Planner, Mr Steven Green, on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Stephen Glen  
**Acting General Manager**



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## **Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (CCROC)**

**Submission to the**

**Inquiry into Inter-Regional Public Transport**

## Foreword

The Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (CCROC) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the inquiry into inter-regional public transport. We are keen to provide feedback on how we believe regional public transport can better serve the needs of the New South Wales regions.

CCROC is a strong supporter of the development of an integrated transport system that is designed around the needs and expectations of the customer.

We believe that the ability to deliver integrated transport systems will be a key enabler to realise economic success in the future.

CCROC argues that customers of the transport system, including Sydney's transport system, are both local and regional. For that reason, future planning for transport should provide for an effective transport system that supports the Vision for Sydney as well as for the Regions of NSW.

Strategically located on the coast north of Sydney, the Central Coast urban region has a population of approximately 299,000, making it the third largest urban area in New South Wales and the ninth largest urban area in Australia. Additionally, the region has a projected population increase of 26% for the period of 2010-2031, one of the highest in the state.

With over a quarter of the workforce travelling outside the region to work, a very low percentage of public transport usage and a very high car dependency, the Central Coast urgently needs a inter-regional public transport network that matches its growth in population and supports its Vision for the future.

## Terms of Reference

### ***Comments provided in relation to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:***

#### ***a) How Country Link services can be improved;***

##### **CCROC comments:**

1. Identify opportunities to reduce overall journey times. This may include:
  - Investment in infrastructure to provide sections of quality track capable of handling trains running at higher speeds. (Similar to international standards);
  - Sections of dedicated tracks or priority to avoid sharing with slower freight operators;
  - Selective re-signalising to permit higher speeds on single tracks and doubling tracks of critical sections;
  - "Passing lanes" can also be used as "overtaking lanes" where double track cannot be reasonably provided throughout;
  - Investigate the implementation of available modern diesel designs including a tilting mechanism that enables increased speed on regular rail tracks. Tilting trains are designed to counteract the discomfort caused by centrifugal force. It is understood that modern trains with tilting mechanisms have substantially reduced travel times for the Brisbane-Cairns trip.
2. Identify opportunities to integrate regional bus and taxi service connections with Country Link services.
3. Identify opportunities to provide timetables and fares that will attract users (this may require subsidy) and a new travel pass for overseas visitors.
4. Support the High Speed Rail (HSR) project between Sydney and Brisbane that would significantly improve Country Link services.
5. Identify opportunities of improving onboard services including:
  - Opportunities to provide entertainment devices similar to those used on aeroplanes (games/films/TV) to be made available to passengers.
  - Opportunities to provide Wi-Fi wireless internet access, battery charging and holding facilities for smart phones, tablets and laptop computers.



#### ***b) How network linkages between Country Link train and coach services can be improved;***

##### **CCROC comments:**

**Upgrade of Transport Interchanges & Access:** Transport interchanges can bring together passengers from different kinds of public transport such as regional buses, Country Link trains and commuter trains, as well as from park-and-ride facilities and active transport modes.

In order to enable Central Coast customers to move quickly from one connection to another, transport interchange upgrades and access improvements are required. The Gosford and Wyong Interchanges should be identified for upgrading to cater for the additional bus services now running through the interchanges and potential improvements as a result of the NSW Transport Masterplan and linkages with Country Link services.

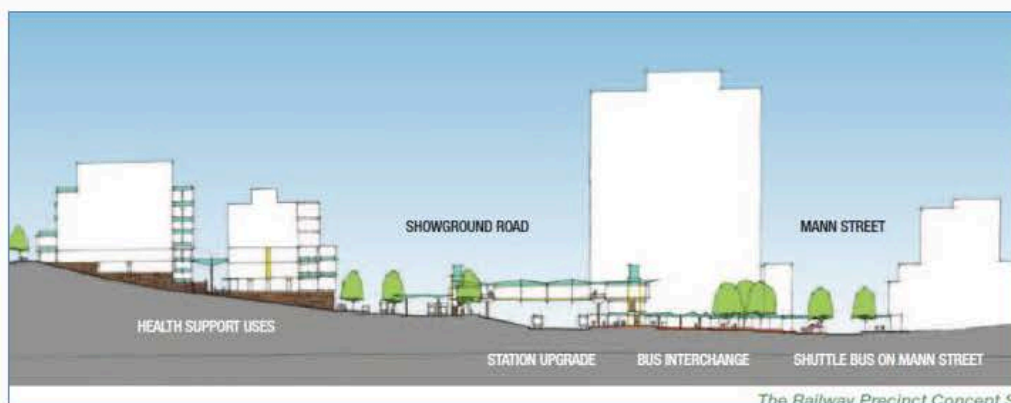




The interchanges appear to have become outdated as they lack capacity for buses and clarity for commuters and tourists arriving by public transport, foot and bike or seeking taxis or buses. Access improvements to transport interchanges should include pedestrian and cyclist facilities to address conflict with cars and buses.

Network linkage upgrades on Central Coast Major transport interchanges between Country Link train and coach services also reinforce the objectives for future land use and tourism for the Central Coast. It can be an important factor to improve network linkages, supporting tourism and the forecasted population and employment growth around the Gosford Regional City.

As proposed in the Gosford City Centre Master plan (see Attachment A), the interchange upgrade should consider better platform access and greater vertical movements between the Health and City Core Precincts and stimulate urban renewal of the regional city "Railway Precinct".



Gosford City Centre Masterplan: The Railway Precinct  
Attachment A: Gosford City Centre Masterplan.pdf

### c) *The potential for Country Link services to carry light freight;*

#### **CCROC comments:**

The potential for Country Link services to carry freight is supported. There is a belief that more freight could be taken from the roads on the Sydney – Central Coast - Brisbane corridor if transit times and costs were cut and the freight operations were reliable.

Previously, there has been a "Goods Yard" operating at Wyong.

**d) how Country Link can be better utilised to increase tourism in New South Wales;**

**CCROC comments:**

Investigate the feasibility of introducing a Country Link **Travel Pass** for NSW similar to that used by Japan Rail called the “JR Pass”. (For more details see [www.railplus.com.au/japan-by-rail/](http://www.railplus.com.au/japan-by-rail/))

On a recent holiday trip to Japan, a Council officer was able to use the same JR pass on all available transport modes and operators. Transport modes included: Bullet Train trips (Tokyo – Kyoto and other daily trips), regional trains, metro lines, bus and ferry.

Tourists travelling to Japan can purchase a JR Pass on the internet beforehand, for unlimited travel on Japan’s public transport.

When compared to Australia, current travel passes in NSW only cover train journeys for Country Link, Great Southern Rail and Queensland Rail however, are not integrated with other transport modes such as local trains, light rail, ferries and bus services. In Australia the tourist has to find out how and where to purchase additional tickets for each stage of their journey.



**Rail Passes currently available in Australia**

If a similar Integrated **Travel Pass** were developed in NSW then Overseas Visitors would have the opportunity to better utilise Country Link services arriving and departing Australia from Sydney Airport. For tourists who do not speak English then a Travel Pass would make their visit to Sydney more enjoyable as public transport would be easier for them to use.

A Travel Pass would have the following benefits:

- stimulate travel and tourism throughout the NSW Country Link network (including existing trips to Melbourne and Brisbane) and be integrated to other NSW transport operators.
- It could be more flexible with time based purchases (seven-day pass or fourteen-day pass, etc) providing the overseas visitor unlimited use of all transport services during their stay.
- Potential to increase patronage and better utilise any spare capacity of the Country link network and public transport network.
- Passes can be targeted at overseas tourists who would be happy to travel during non-peak periods when there is usually spare capacity in the transport network.

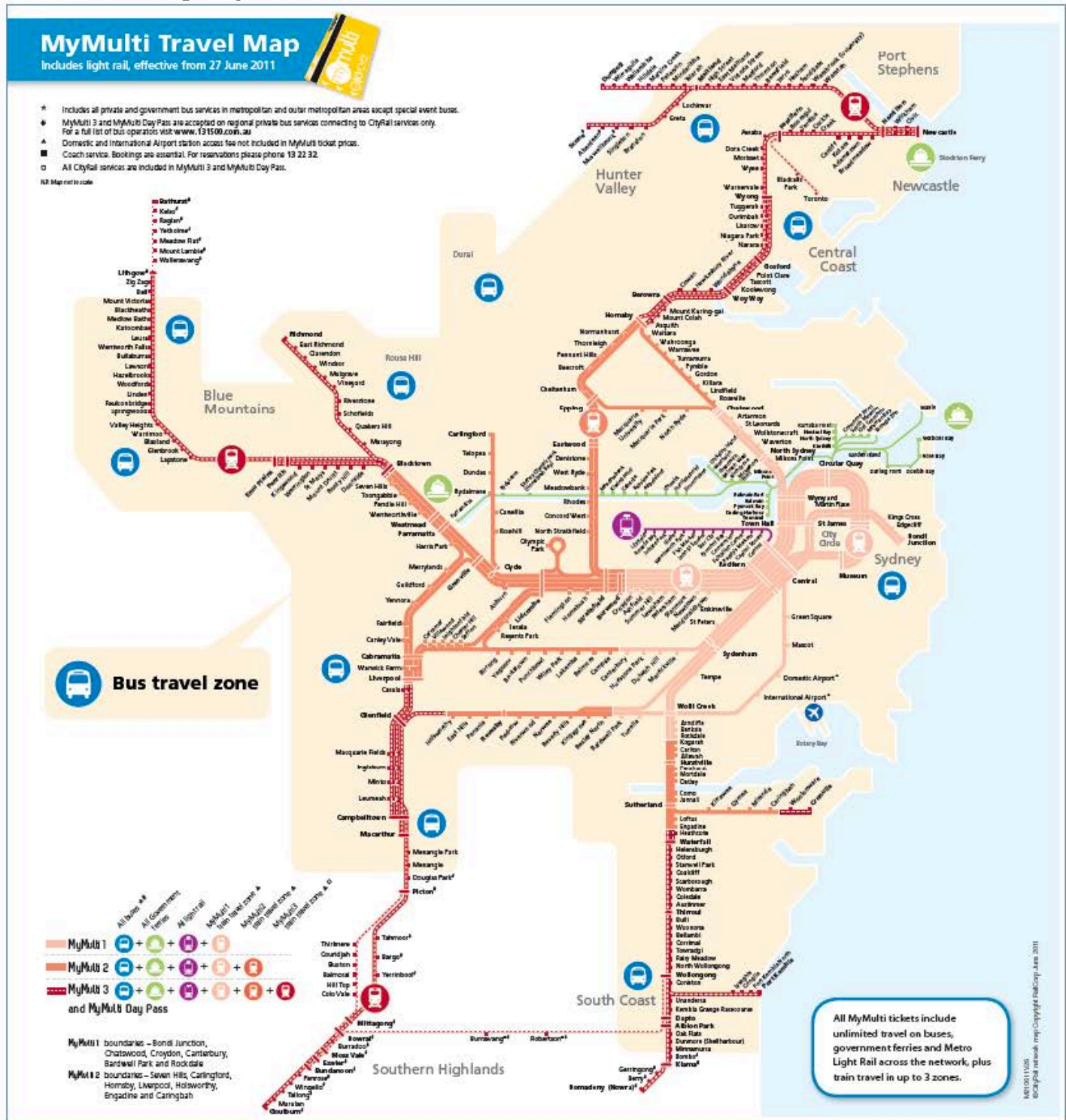


If introduced a NSW travel Pass could offered at a discount price to encourage patronage. Current ticket prices are provided below for the MyMulti ticket 3 and the Country Link Pass\*.

E.g. MyMulti3 cost: **Weekly \$60.00 (Fortnight \$120.00) & Monthly \$232.00**  
Country Link Pass\*: **Fortnight from \$217.80 & Monthly from \$250.80**

\* (Backtracker Pass, see list of existing travel Passes)

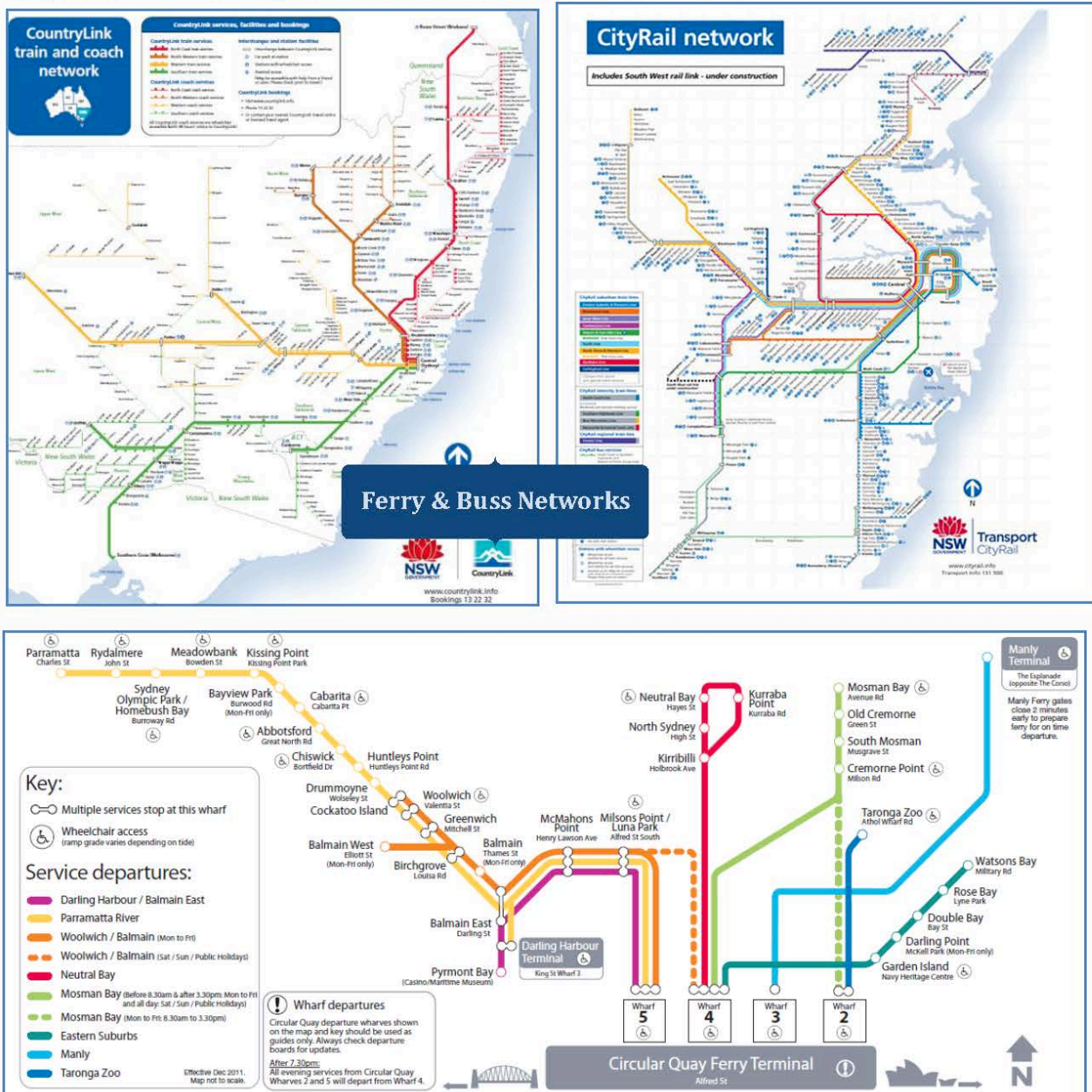
Existing MyMulti3 tickets provide unlimited travel for the period covered by the ticket on trains, buses, light rail and government ferry services. However they exclude the Country Link service that is also managed by the NSW Government.



If introduced, a NSW **Travel Pass** would be valid for unlimited travel on the major transport modes on the following lines:

1. Train (Country Link & City Rail networks)
2. Bus (Sydney Bus) and Light Rail.
3. Ferry

**Proposed NSW Country Link Travel Pass valid for travel on:**



## Develop walking and cycling attractions

Many international visitors appreciate cycling in their own countries and would be attracted to any walking and cycling opportunities on their visit to Australia. In this regard Country Link could also allow, within its ticket range, packages that promote walking and cycling opportunities along scenic sections of the magnificent NSW East Coast Cycleway. A good example would be a cycleway link between Gosford and Wyong Country Link stations where there are several kilometres of appealing waterfront cycle ways already developed.

The various cycling sections along the NSW coast could be rated from easy to more difficult. The Country Link Service could let bicycle (walking also) groups and/or individuals carry their own



bicycles on trains, or hire them at strategic locations along the coast. Associated bicycle parking, hiring and servicing facilities should be developed at stations. A consistent signposting scheme showing route number and distance to the next destination should be developed for the entire length.

Develop a range of walking and cycling links between various stations along to coast that will promote cycling and Country Link services. Allow Country link pass holders free access to local train services so they have the option to use the nearest train station for access to the next Country Link station.

Adequate bicycle parking facilities should be provided at stations and on trains to encourage greater patronage.

***e) How the amount of inter-regional travel undertaken by public transport can be increased;***

**CCROC comments:**

The following initiatives are seen by CCROC as an opportunity to increase the inter-regional travel undertaken using public transport within the Central Coast and neighbouring regions:

**1. Initiative 1: Integrate walking and cycling facilities into all modes of transport.**

The Draft Gosford Bike Strategy 2011 suggests that bicycle carriage be promoted on rail, bus and ferry services in a way that does not inconvenience mobility-impaired passengers.

Provide bike racks on selected bus routes. Bike racks are well suited to lower density cities with good cycling facilities – like Gosford (and Wyong).

Provide First class end-of-trip facilities for cyclists and walkers should be key features at all major stations.

Provide ready access to public bicycle hire facilities to provide passengers with more choice and flexibility.

**2. Initiative 1: Express Rail Services to Sydney**

Upgrade the rail services to Sydney to improve passenger travel times and comfort. This remains a pressing need to attract more people to use public transport for the commute to work. Express train services with limited stops and a tilting mechanism from the Central Coast Transport Interchanges provide an opportunity to enhance the customer experience of public transport by providing the following:

- Reasonable travel time
- Comfort (sufficient seating, air conditioning)
- Cleanliness
- Reliability

**3. Initiative 2: Bus services Improvement & Integration with Rail**

Local bus services can play an important role in delivering integrated transport services between the Central Coast, the Newcastle Region and the Sydney Region.

They can improve connectivity to transport interchanges on the Central Coast, in particular in the Gosford Regional Interchange, and be part of an integrated public transport system for journeys to work.

Bus service enhancements are needed to increase service patronage and improve the relative attractiveness of bus travel compared to car trips. This is particularly relevant in the Central Coast, as the bus transport network has the capacity to accommodate growth. Bus service data indicates a very low Bus Services Patronage on the Central Coast.



#### 4. **Initiative 3: Upgrade of Transport Interchanges & Access**

(As mentioned in Terms of Reference: b)

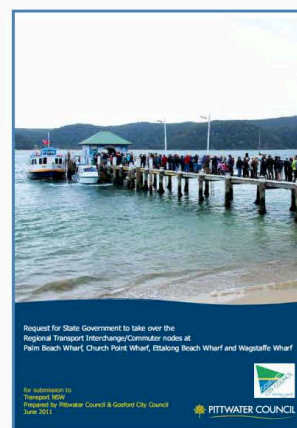
#### 5. **Initiative 4: Inter-regional Ferry Service**

(Across the Hawkesbury River linking the Central Coast and the Northern Beaches)

Improved ferry connectivity across the Hawkesbury River was included as one of the key infrastructure priorities for the region and has the formal support of Regional Development Australia Central Coast (RDACC).

In 2011, Pittwater Council and Gosford City Council prepared a regional ferry submission to Transport NSW (**See Attachment B**).

The submission primarily consists of handing over this regionally significant transport infrastructure and improvements of the Ettalong to Palm Beach (Central Coast-Northern Beaches) ferry services to the state government.

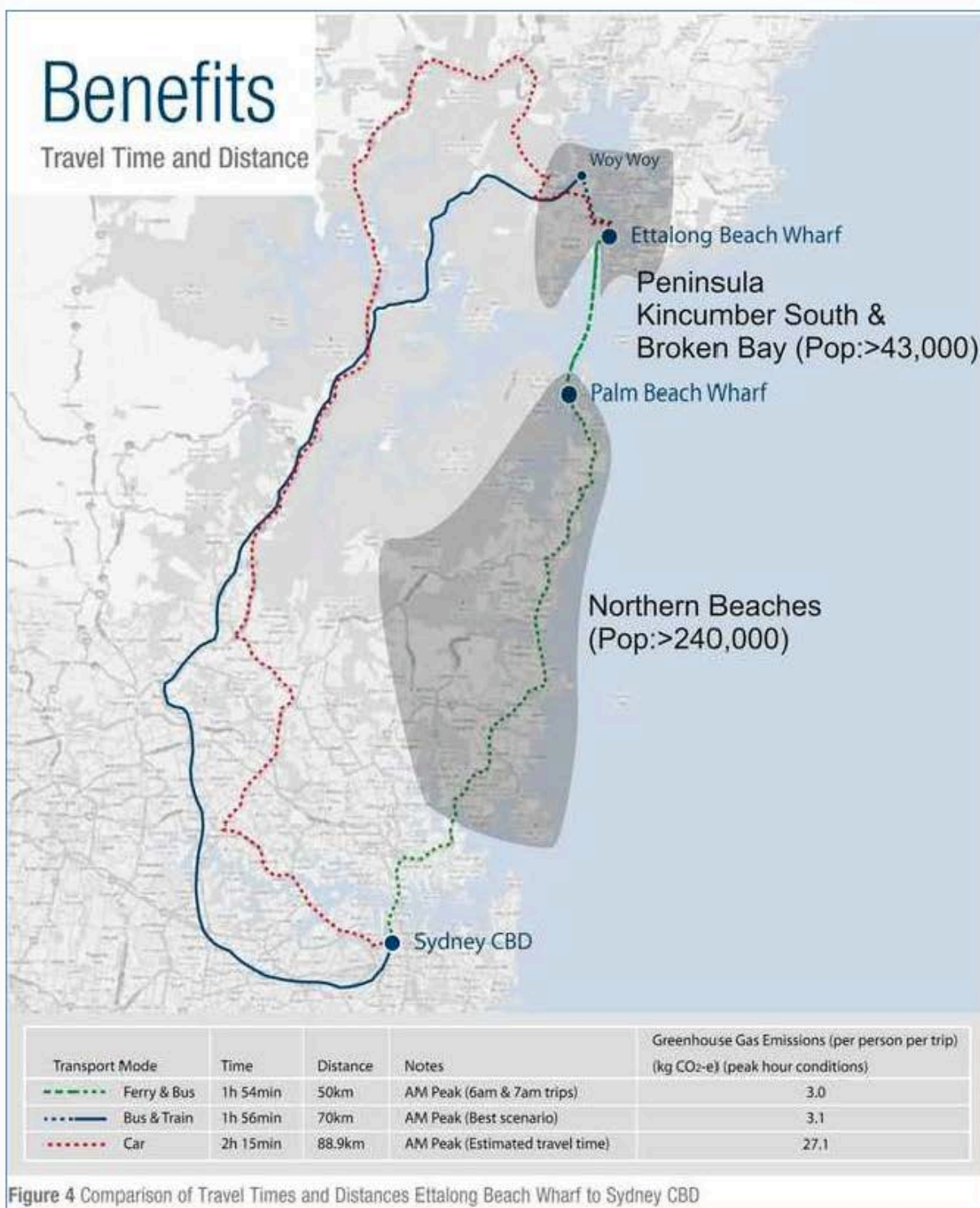


The submission proposes better integration of ferry services with the existing bus services across the Hawkesbury River.

#### Opportunities:

- Increase inter-regional travel (Central Coast-Northern Beaches) and tourism;
- State government takeover of these strategically important transport nodes at Palm Beach and Ettalong;
- Provision of an alternative connection to the Central Coast as a link should the F3 be out of action;
- Integration with existing public transport services including MyZone tickets;
- Integration of potential Northern Beaches Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services and ferry services between Ettalong and Palm Beach.

*Low patronage of Central Coast Bus Services*



## 6. Initiative 5: Support the High Speed Rail Plan

The High Speed Rail (HSR) infrastructure has the potential to deliver significant improvement to the quality of life of Central Coast residents and visitors.

The Australian Government has committed to a strategic study on the implementation of high speed rail on the east coast of Australia.

The study is looking at potential routes from Brisbane to Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, as well as the economic viability of such a network. It predicts that the Newcastle, Central Coast



and Sydney trip could be seeing around 15 million passengers a year. Five million of these would be commuters

**f) The extent to which regional transport networks are integrated and how they can be better integrated**

**CCROC comments:**

CCROC argues that regional transport networks within the Central Coast can be better integrated. These include Regional Road Network, Regional Bus Network, Rail Network, Ferry Network and the Cycleway/Pedestrian Network.

Opportunities exist for better integration of these transport networks, as follows;

- **Interchange Upgrades:** As mentioned in *Terms of Reference: b) (Central Coast Regional Transport Interchange Upgrades)* and *Terms of Reference: c). Item 4 (Regional Wharves Interchange handover and upgrade)*
- **Timetable Integration:** Integration of Train/Bus timetables at regional transport interchanges and Ferry/Bus timetables at regional Wharves Interchanges.
- **Ticketing Integration:** Investigate inclusion of the Ettalong to Palm Beach Regional Ferry services to MyZone tickets, investigate the creation of MyZone for the Central Coast and the new Country Link Travel Pass a mentioned in *Terms of Reference: d)*
- **Inter-Regional Road Network Improvements:**  
Provide F3 links to the M2 and M7 :

**F3-M2 'Type A' Corridor**

Design and construct a freeway grade link between the end of the F3 at Wahroonga to the M2 Motorway.

**F3-M7 Link 'Type C' Corridor**

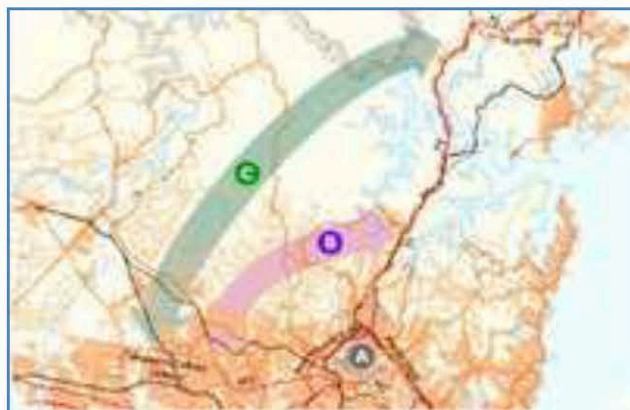
Preserve corridor for an alternative northern route from the Sydney Orbital, to include a new crossing of the Hawkesbury River and linking with the F3 near Kariong.

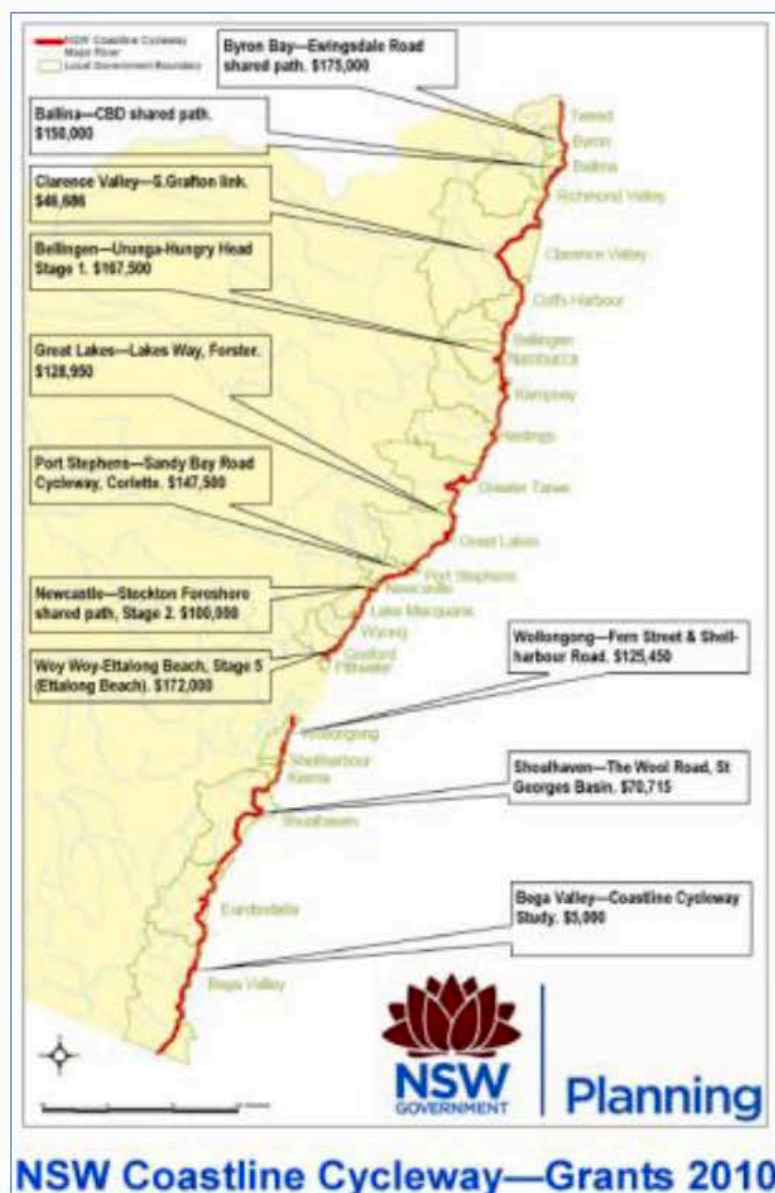
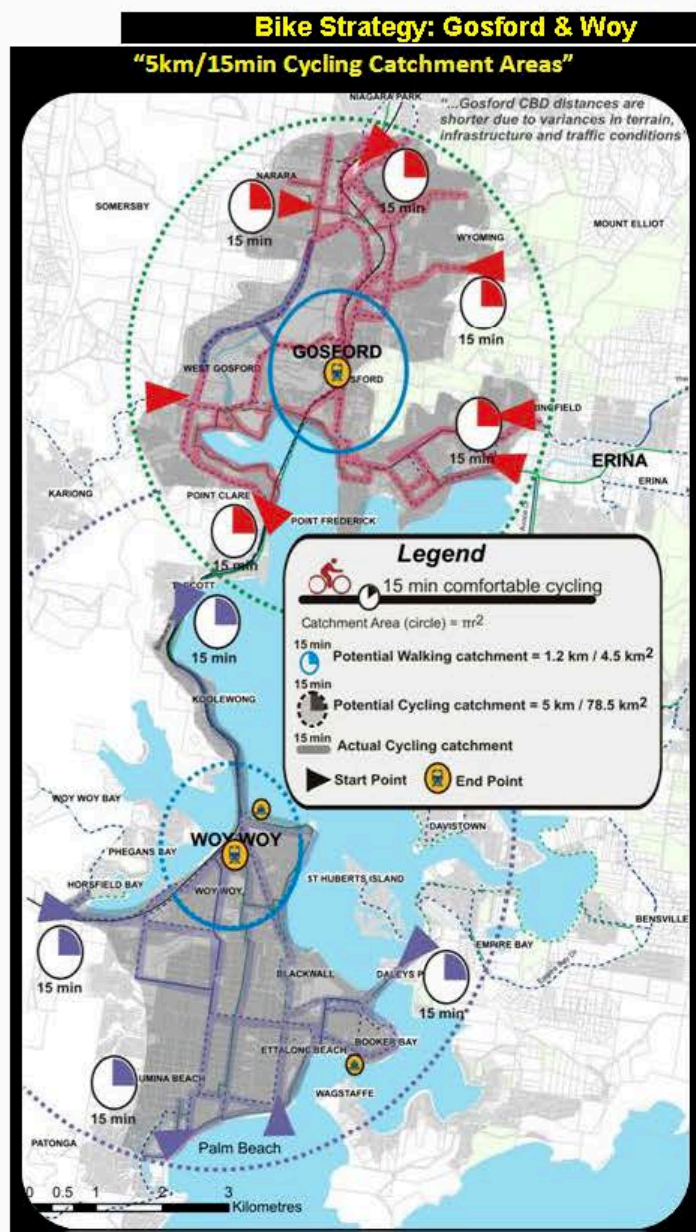
- **Regional Cycleway Network Improvements:**

**Gosford Bike Strategy:** Consistent with the NSW

2021 commitments for cycling, the Strategy aims at completing the missing links within the cycleway networks that connect to the city centres, waterfront areas and transport interchanges of Gosford and Woy Woy. It also comprises a broad commitment to increase the cycleway network with 66km of On & Off Road cycleways in its network and another 195km planned.

**NSW Coastline Cycleway Grants Program:** Provides grants to non-metropolitan coastal Councils to develop and construct sections of the defined NSW Coastline Cycleway route.





**g) The role local councils can play in improving inter-regional public transportation networks; and**

#### **CCROC comments:**

Local Councils and Regional organisation of Councils can play an important role in improving inter-regional transportation networks by:

- Identifying opportunities for improving inter-regional public transport; These include opportunities identified in this submission;
- Supporting and encouraging the use of public transport in lieu of the private car. A good bus service servicing rail passengers is essential;
- Developing plans, strategies and policies that encourage an increased mode share of public transport.
- Councils could assist to develop and maintain the walking and cycleway links between stations and their signage.



***h) The type of buses and trains that will be required for the provision of regional passenger services in the future***

**CCROC comments:**

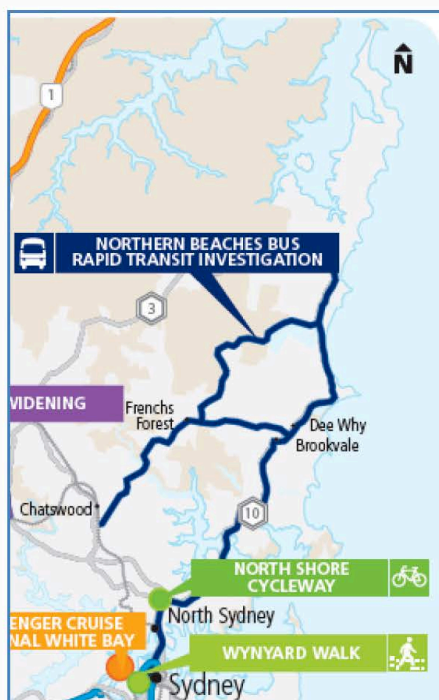
- (Short Term) Investigate the implementation of an Electric Tilt train as an opportunity to reduce the overall journey time on Sydney-Central Coast-Newcastle trips due to high demand for commuter trips. The tilt mechanism enables increased speed on existing regular rail tracks and can reduce the Gosford-Hornsby trip by approximately 20 minutes.
- (Long Term) Support the federal government's high speed trains project to encourage more patronage on regional rail services (competitive price is required);
- (Short Term) Regional passenger services on the Central Coast can be provided by high quality ferry services linking Ettalong to Palm Beach (Central Coast-Northern Beaches) in about 15 minutes.



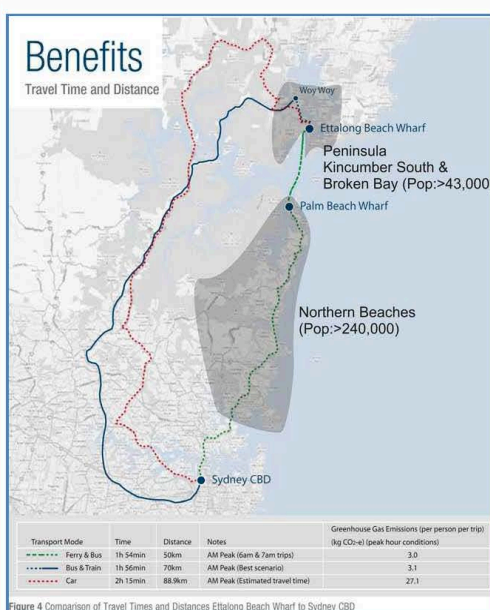
As feasibility investigations are underway into Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to serve Sydney's Northern Beaches, these could be integrated with a high quality ferry service, and present an opportunity for faster trips from the Peninsula to the Northern Beaches, Sydney and Chatswood.

- The Draft Gosford Bike Strategy 2011 suggests that bicycle carriage be promoted on rail, bus and ferry services in a way that does not inconvenience mobility-impaired passengers.

**Future Bus Services  
Northern Beaches**



**Ferry Service  
Northern Beaches-Peninsula**



**Existing Bus Services  
Peninsula**

