

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: Lake Macquarie City Council

Date Received: 2 February 2021



2 February 2021

Mr Justin Clancy MP
Chair, Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and
Regional Development
(submitted online)

Dear Mr Clancy

Subject: Staff submission - Inquiry into the inland rail project and regional NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development's Inquiry into the Inland Rail Project and regional NSW. This submission has been developed by staff from Lake Macquarie City Council.

Inland Rail Project

Council staff support the Inland Rail Project, recognising that a secure and efficient freight network is critical to managing efficient supply chains. The Project provides diverse employment opportunities in regional communities, making them more resilient and attractive locations to live, work and visit.

Council staff suggest the Committee explore the concept of a local industry participation policy/plan for significant infrastructure projects such as the Inland Rail Project. There is a tremendous opportunity to create local jobs during construction and operation when delivering city-changing projects, such as the Inland Rail Project. Additionally, these projects can help build ongoing capability that can be called upon to deliver other infrastructure projects.

The opportunity for local industry participation could include:

- education and pre-employment activities that may assist local individuals and companies to be involved in the delivery of rail services in NSW
- education and pre-employment activities that may assist disadvantaged groups in gaining work opportunities through the delivery of rail services and infrastructure projects in NSW
- any form of support to benefit local industry and individuals (e.g. supply chain)
- any form of support to benefit small to medium enterprises (building a wealth of knowledge in local businesses), and
- measures for the economic and social advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in regional NSW.

Our Ref: F2019/00235/12 Your Ref:

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Lower Hunter Freight Rail Bypass

Another rail project in NSW offering city-changing opportunities similar to the Inland Rail Project is the Lower Hunter Freight Rail Bypass. Council staff have received regular advice from Transport for NSW officials that the Lower Hunter Freight Rail Bypass corridor would soon be placed on public exhibition. Unfortunately, the corridor has not yet been publicly exhibited.

The existing Main North Railway Line services coal freight travelling to the Port of Newcastle, interstate freight travelling from Sydney and Melbourne to Brisbane, and intrastate freight and passenger trains. Line congestion and the priority given to passenger trains on shared parts of the rail network mean that freight movement's efficiency and cost-effectiveness is reduced in the Lower Hunter region in and around Newcastle. Congestion is affecting bulk freight destined for the Port of Newcastle and containerised and general freight being transported on the east coast freight rail network linking Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

The Lower Hunter Freight Rail Bypass is a freight rail line separating most freight and passenger rail services on the congested area between Fassifern and Newcastle. The Bypass has many benefits, including:

- improved public amenity on the existing passenger rail line, and therefore urban densification around existing railway stations
- ability to use existing passenger rail line as the spine of a rapid public transport network (hub and spoke model)
- future-proofing for climate change (rail transport is one of the most energy-efficient modes of transport producing five times less greenhouse gas emissions per kilometre than that of car transport¹)
- improved access to the multiple ports, and
- providing a more resilient freight backbone (COVID-19 has reminded us of the importance of a secure and efficient freight supply chain).

The Freight Bypass is identified in the NSW Government's 2018-2023 *Freight and Ports Plan*, the *State Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038*, and was listed as a 'high priority initiative' in Infrastructure Australia's 2016 and 2017 Infrastructure Priority Lists.

Council staff request the Committee seek clarity from the NSW Government regarding the Lower Hunter Freight Bypass's progress. The ongoing ambiguity over the future of the Bypass is slowing considerable economic development within the Lower Hunter.

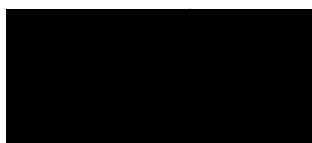
Responsibility for infrastructure to support connectivity and economic development is shared across all levels of government and is critical to the Lower Hunter's success now and into the future. Council staff would welcome the opportunity to work with the

¹ <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/environment-and-safety/sydney-trains-environment-and-sustainability/why-rail-travel-a#:~:text=Did%20you%20know%20that%20rail,than%20that%20of%20car%20transport.&text=This%202.6%25%20includes%20both%20passenger,passenger%20rail%20contributes%20even%20less.>

NSW Government on the delivery of major infrastructure projects and local industry participation planning.

Should you require any further information regarding this submission, please contact Council's Government Relations and Policy Advisor, Dan Hughes, on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Morven Cameron
Chief Executive Officer