

On behalf of the Bexley Chamber of Commerce, I wish to make a submission to the Inquiry on Port Infrastructure in NSW.

As well as the issues of the degradation of Botany Bay and its environments, the Bexley Chamber of Commerce is particularly concerned with the transport implications of any activity at Port Botany.

When Port Botany was established, without any corresponding transport infrastructure, the residents of suburbs adjacent to the main transport route from Port Botany to the western suburbs and the Hume Highway experienced an increasing burden of noise and pollution from the heavy vehicles using these routes. The suburb of Bexley was particularly affected because the popular Forest Road/Stoney Creek Road route runs through the middle of the suburb. The Bexley Shopping Centre has suffered enormously, with the noise and pollution of the semi-trailers and other heavy vehicles driving customers away and having a very adverse effect on an important community facility.

When the M5 East was opened two years ago, the volume of heavy traffic dropped dramatically. With a generous injection of funds from the Minister for Transport, and the assistance of Rockdale City Council, a number of beautification and safety projects have been completed for the shopping centre which have helped to begin a revitalisation of the shopping centre. Unfortunately, traffic numbers have slowly, but noticeably, increased over the past two years. Because Forest Road/Stoney Creek Road is the alternative route whenever the M5 East is partially or completely blocked, we frequently experience the days of old whenever there is a problem with the M5 East or the tunnel.

Whatever plans are developed to increase the use of the railways for the movement of goods, past history has proved that road transport will increase enormously. One method of minimising the impact of increased traffic would be to implement the Bexley Bypass plan. This has been put on hold since the opening of the M5 East has reduced the volume of heavy traffic, and in fact the RTA would like to lift the road reservation which is an integral part of the plan. The Bexley Chamber of Commerce suggests that lifting the road reservation would be a short-sighted action, and should not be considered until the transport implications of any expansion of Port Botany have been thoroughly considered.

In conclusion, there should be no further development at Port Botany until the associated transport implications have been addressed fully. There should not be a repeat of the situation where a facility which generates high volumes of traffic is built with the associated transport infrastructure waiting for 20 years for a solution.