

West Wallsend Planning District Precinct Committee

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The Director,
Standing Committee on State development,
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000.

Dear Director,

I write on behalf of the West Wallsend Planning District Planning Committee (WWPDPC) with a submission concerning the recent notice seeking submissions into Port Infrastructure in NSW.

West Wallsend and the nearby local communities of Seahampton, Holmesville, Barnsley and Killingworth are situated close to the northern end of the F3 freeway. Indeed noise from the traffic is a considerable source of annoyance to many residents who live close to the freeway.

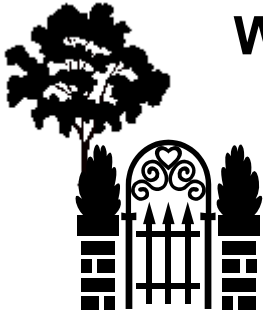
With the closure of the BHP steel-making plant on the Hunter River and the subsequent demolition of much of the steel infrastructure a container terminal has been mooted as the main option for the site. With the harbour available and rail facilities available it is a prime site for such a development.

In October the Premier of NSW Bob Carr announced that Port Jackson would be closed to container shipping when leases and options for the present wharves expired in some 10 to 15 years time. This announcement meant that the Port of Newcastle became a prime candidate for further development.

Reports circulated that the port could handle up to one million containers per year when fully developed in the next decade or two. Comments reported by local spokespeople for the port corporation indicated that it might be expected that up to 30% of containers could be moved by road transport with the remaining 70% by rail.

In crude figures one million containers per year translates to approximately 2700 to 2800 containers per day. On the basis of a 30/70 split this equates to approximately 700 extra truck movements onto the Industrial Highway near the port with flow on extra traffic moving onto the F3 and subsequently moving past the communities that the WWPDPC represent.

For rail this 70% equates to ***ten, two hundred container trains*** onto the present 19th century designed rail infrastructure, which is presently struggling to cope with the present traffic



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demands on the rail system from both coal trains and passenger traffic. Recent announcements have indicated that an additional \$200 million will need to be spent in renovating the present lines just to handle the present coal tonnage requirements. With the intended coal mining in the Mandalong area on the Central Coast the numbers of coal trains to the port will increase quite substantially.

For the local region there are a number of implications for the residents described in this report along the fringes of the F3 freeway. The 700 extra truck movements per day (30 per hour) equates to;

- Greatly increased noise pollution
- Greatly increased air pollution
- Increased numbers of accidents on local roads leading off the F3 to the port. Indeed it may be that the savings on accident costs would pay for much of the infrastructure involved in a total rail system.

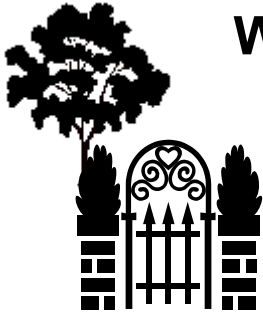
Assuming that most of the containers will have additional distance to travel to their final destination into or from the Sydney basin then there will be a deal of additional diesel that will be consumed in performing this task. Indeed this will equate to possibly hundreds of thousands of tonnes of carbon dioxide additional into the atmosphere.

While in this submission it has been assumed that the containers will, in a majority of cases traverse to Sydney, a percentage will be bound to other destinations, as it is unlikely that ships will use other ports with their port charges in order to unload small container numbers. This has implications for the rail system both locally and for further intrastate and interstate routes.

The WWPDPDC makes the following recommendations to your committee, premised that a lead-time of 10 to 15 years is available to ensure that quality improvements, perhaps costing billion of dollars are in place to ameliorate deleterious environmental effects.

The recommendations are:

- (1) That all containers are moved into and out of the port by **RAIL**.
- (2) That a dedicated freight line be constructed between Fassifern and Hexham. This line to be WEST of Mt. Sugarloaf using the Richmond Vale- Hexham rail corridor across the Hexham wetlands. It is noted that no rail corridor has yet been identified for this line. This must be rectified urgently.
- (3) That a third rail line be constructed between Fassifern and at least Wyong, with the concurrent elimination of several infamous bends on this line.
- (4) That the dual track on the northwest rail line through the Hunter Valley be extended to at least Scone, preferably Wingen, to allow coal mine expansion mooted to avoid road transport.
- (5) That the Ardglen Tunnel project be fast-tracked and completed expeditiously to allow intermodal terminals to be developed in regional towns to allow freight containers to be transported to the Newcastle Port. Intermodal terminals be constructed or expanded at Moree, Narrabri, Gunnedah, Werris Creek, Tamworth and Armidale/GlenInnes.
- (6) That the rail line between Moree and Boggabilla be re-opened and the standard gauge line be completed through Goondiwindi to Brisbane. This would enable freight to move from Brisbane to Melbourne without moving through Sydney.
- (7) That the present rail line through Wallangarra be re-opened and standard gauge completed to Brisbane.



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- (8) That the rail line from Mt Russell to Moree be re-opened
- (9) That the single track be made dual track on the North Coast line to at least Gloucester. This would allow separation of coal freight from passenger trains.
- (10) That all instrumentalities and corporations, both government and non-government, be required to calculate the extra CO₂ expelled with the relocation of the container port to Newcastle. The development then be required to rehabilitate degraded land needed and plant native trees that would sequester at least twice the CO₂ emitted by the port project on an annual basis.

The WWPDPDC is concerned that short-term ill considered planning will be availed and the opportunity to allow for decent environmental, social and traffic outcomes will be discarded in the rush to short term expedient outcomes. ***This must not be allowed to happen!*** The committees' attention is drawn to the CSIRO paper presented to the UN conference in Milan last Thursday by Minister Rod Kemp. Access to the paper was not available at the time of writing. Copies will be made public early in the New Year, and should be ***required reading*** by committee members and its findings incorporated in any recommendations that the committee may adopt.

The recommendations as outlined will ensure the creation of employment associated with the port development but will also ensure that the wealth created by the move can be shared by the broader regional and rural communities that depend on the Newcastle Port for their livelihood. It will also minimise the additional carbon dioxide output if rail transport is used to carry all the freight to the container terminal.

The local community represented by this organization is not opposed in principle to the rationalisation of the number of container ports. It is however determined to ensure that short-term expedient solutions are not forced upon the West Wallsend community. The sincerity of the government will be tested in this exercise. The committee's attention is drawn to an article "An even more sunburnt country-thanks to global warming" by Premier Bob Carr (SMH 22/08/03)

A failure to deliver on greenhouse efficiency in this infrastructure planning will clearly brand the government as simply self-serving expedient hypocrites.

Thank you for the opportunity for our group to forward our views for consideration in the committee deliberations.

Yours faithfully,

Janet Heemskerk
WWPDPC Secretary.