

4 January 2011

Community and Corporate

Reference No: F05049 - 10/198330

Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link Feasibility Study
Nation Building Infrastructure Investment Division
Department of Infrastructure and Transport
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

Subject: Submission – Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link

Thank you for the opportunity for the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) to comment on the *Maldon to Dombarton rail Link Feasibility Study*. The Council strongly supports the need for this link which has enormous potential to achieve a range of significant freight improvements, economic, environmental and social outcomes.

The information contained in this submission relates to the review of the following documents:

- *Maldon – Dombarton Rail Line Feasibility Study for the Port Kembla Port Corporation, July 2007, by Connell Hatch; and*
- *The Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link Feasibility Study Issues paper, November 2010.*

The issue of road freight movements in the Blue Mountains is highly contentious and requires careful management to secure the highest possible standards of road safety and amenity for all road users and residents alike. The Council continues to advocate for an increased use of rail freight to transport bulk products such as coal, gravel and fuel.

The Blue Mountains City Council submission Maldon to Dombarton rail Link Feasibility Study is enclosed for your consideration.

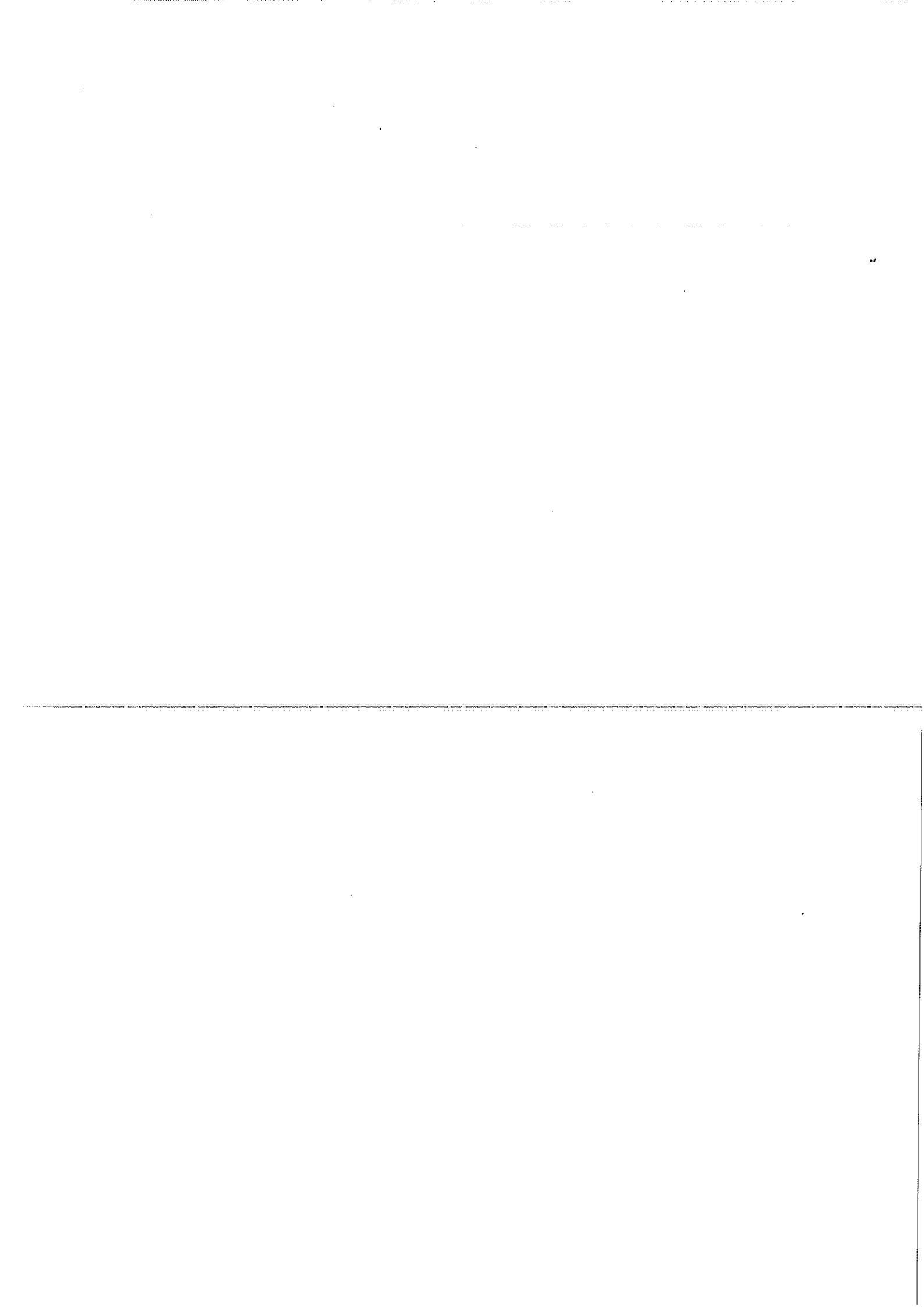
If you require any further information on this matter then please contact Glenn Sherlock on (02) 4780-5692 or gsherlock@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Yours faithfully



ANDY TURNER

Manager City Planning



Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link Feasibility Study
Blue Mountains City Council Submission
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Blue Mountains City Council wishes to present the following points for consideration, as part of the feasibility study for this project.

In November 2000, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) was incorporated on the World Heritage List. The Greater Blue Mountains Area covers a total area of about one million hectares of mostly forested landscape on a sandstone plateau, 60 to 180 kilometres inland from central Sydney (inland from Wollongong to Newcastle). The City of Blue Mountains has a population of 77,000 and is one of only two cities in the world that is wholly contained within a designated World Heritage Area.

The City's location within a World Heritage Area places responsibilities on the community, the Council and other agencies to ensure that impacts of urban development are carefully managed and that the internationally recognised values of this natural environment are protected. The Blue Mountains attracts millions of visitors from throughout the world to its magnificent environment, making it one of the top five tourist destinations in Australia. It is the only World Heritage Area in Australia readily accessible by public transport from a major capital and Sydney airport, the main point of entry for most international visitors to Australia.

The Blue Mountains serves as a bridge between Sydney and central western NSW with the main transport corridors for road and rail located on the central ridgeline across the City and the Bells Line of Road. These two roads provide the only direct vehicular connection between Sydney and the Central West. These transport corridors place pressures and impacts on the local Blue Mountains community and the natural environment and yet they also provide essential links for the Blue Mountains community, allowing access to local services along these routes and to employment and specialist services outside the City.

The completion of the 35km long Maldon –Dombarton line would provide a vital link between Maldon on the ARTC's main south line and Dombarton at the foothills of the Illawarra plateau, only 15km from Port Kembla along an existing double track. Once completed this will ultimately join the Illawarra to the Macarthur/Southern Highlands rail lines and service. Another key advantage for this link is that significant site construction, design and detailed research has already been completed.

By far the greatest volume of freight that would utilise the Maldon – Dombarton line would be export coal traffic, the majority of which is from Wallerawang. Once completed it will see a more favourable separation of freight and passenger traffic between Sydney and the Illawarra region whilst reducing congestion on the Illawarra south coast line resulting in improved passenger service and capacity and reliability for the Illawarra region. These same benefits will also be realised across the Blue Mountains network.

Other Potential Benefits:

- assist in delivering overall efficiencies in freight distribution and intermodal networks in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region which would improve both Sydney's and NSW's economic competitive advantage;
- support regional economic development by improving efficiencies in the transport of freight, particular bulk products;

- reducing truck movements and in turn reduce fuel cost for transport, greenhouse gas emissions, improving road safety conditions and reducing the impact of freight vehicles;
- result in more favourable separation of freight and passenger services on the Blue Mountains and Illawarra / South Coast networks;
- result in more passenger service capacity and reliability;
- providing a long term option for future passenger transport between South West Sydney and the Illawarra;
- bring to fruition a project that has received millions of dollars of investment without any outcome to date.

It is clear from the Maldon – Dombarton Rail Line Feasibility Study and the Department of Infrastructure and Transport Issues Paper that this rail line is a missing link in the State's freight infrastructure and is needed to ensure the long term growth of NSW and in particular its commodity exports.

The current re-working of the Metropolitan and Transport plans provides further opportunity to advocate for the establishment of improved rail freight infrastructure into and within the Sydney basin. It is considered essential, that the objective of securing a long term resolution to the issues of transferring freight from the road to rail would be achieved by continuing to lobby the appropriate state and federal agencies.