



Maldon to Dombarton Rail Line Feasibility Study Issues Paper  
Australia. Department of Infrastructure and Transport  
Nation Building Infrastructure Investment Division  
GPO Box 594  
Canberra ACT 2601

10 December 2010

### **Submission to the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Line Feasibility Study Issues Paper**

This submission is made on behalf of the Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC).

MACROC considers the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line as vital to the growth of South West Sydney as a business and freight hub and has been closely monitoring developments on the proposed completion of the line since 2007.

The Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line Pre-feasibility Study, released on 8 July, 2009 found that completing the rail line between Maldon and Port Kembla via Dombarton had long-term economic merit. The study found the line had the potential to provide a strategic alternative to the current Moss Vale-Unanderra and Illawarra lines for freight trains; to support Port Kembla's rapidly expanding commercial activities; and generate considerable employment within the local construction industry. The report also found that new intermodal freight corridors serving South West Sydney industrial areas may be required by 2020 due to rail and road congestion and that an improved rail linkage to South West Sydney would represent a freight opportunity for Port Kembla. The Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line, concluded the consultants, "could become the critical link in a Port Kembla-base container supply chain to handle forecast growth in demand for the Greater Sydney region".

Following the recommendations of the Pre-Feasibility Study consultants ACIL Tasman have been engaged by the Government to conduct a feasibility study to further assess the feasibility of the line, examine the current and future demand for the line, determine the most appropriate alignment and technical requirements to meet expected demand and provide a detailed costing for completion of the line. Importantly they are also required to examine and cost "the implications of not pursuing the project".

MACROC understands that a Project Steering Committee chaired by the Department of Infrastructure and Transport, as well as a Project Reference Group whose members include key stakeholders, have discussed many of the issues raised in the Issues Paper. Cr Judith Hannan from Wollondilly Shire Council and member of the MACROC Board is a member of the Project Reference Group and has been providing regular updates to the Board on the progress of the study.

MACROC supports the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line believing that it would deliver the following regional benefits:

- Increase Sydney and South West Sydney's economic competitiveness;
- Improve freight transport efficiency;
- Assist in the economic development of Port Kembla;
- Reduce truck movements on the F6, the Hume Highway, Appin Road and Picton Road providing positive benefit in terms of reduction of fuel costs for transport, improved road safety conditions and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions;
- Provide support for potential employment land development in South West Sydney; and
- Improve passenger rail service by separating freight and rail traffic, particularly between Sydney and the Illawarra.

The key questions identified in the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Line Feasibility Study Issues Paper are:

- Demand (coal; grain; other bulk freight; containers; cars);
- Capacity (rail; road);
- Environmental and heritage issues;
- Cost-benefit, financial, employment and funding analysis.

MACROC would like to make the following comments:

### **Road and Rail Capacity**

The main roads affected by freight to and from Port Kembla are Appin Road, Picton Road and Mt Ousley. These roads currently carry a high volume of traffic with a mix of cars, light commercial vehicles, trucks carrying general freight and trucks carrying commodities, mainly cement and coal (the coal comes from mines not serviced by rail).

Appin and Picton Roads both experience an unacceptable number of motor vehicle accidents each year. The accident incidence is compounded by the fact that a large number of Provisional Drivers use these roads, as many young people from Macarthur travel by car to the University of Wollongong.

The Port Kembla motor vehicle shipping facility has also impacted on vehicle movements on Picton Road and the Hume Highway and if vehicles could be moved by rail it would reduce much of the road congestion.

The Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line would provide an advantage for freight to be able to bypass the Sydney Metropolitan Road Network so it could continue to move during commuter passenger peak periods.

By carrying current and future freight the Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line would provide a beneficial separation of freight and passenger traffic between Sydney and the Illawarra region reducing congestion on the Illawarra South Coast Line.

### **Environmental and Heritage Issues**

The potential the Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line has to relieve the pressure on existing roads also has tangible benefits for road safety and for the environment. Freight trains do cause emissions and accidents however at a much lower rate than trucks.

In terms of environmental impact it is important to note that the land on which the line would be built has been reserved for a railway corridor. MACROC is aware that there have been significant changes to the legal framework around environmental assessment and MACROC would support further environmental assessment before commencement of construction. Also part of the rail corridor now falls within the Sydney Water Catchment Metropolitan Special Area and the implications of this would need to be considered.

### **Economic Benefit to South West Sydney**

MACROC considers the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line as vital to the growth of South West Sydney as a business and freight hub. South West Sydney is targeted in the State Government's Sydney Metropolitan Strategy as an area for substantial population growth as well as growth in employment opportunities and the region would benefit enormously from a completed Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line that would reduce congestion, delay and cost to industry.

Completion of the line would also improve the connectivity of the freight rail network with existing and proposed intermodals at Enfield, Eastern Creek, Moorebank, Minto, Ingleburn, Moss Vale and Wollondilly.

## **Externalities**

MacroC also would like to stress the importance of placing a financial value on externalities such as road maintenance, reduced costs associated with traffic accidents, reduced greenhouse emissions and other forms of pollution. Clearly attributing a financial value to such matters is fundamental to any financial assessment of the project

Thank you for providing the opportunity to make a submission on the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Line Feasibility Study Issues Paper. MACROC supports the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line which it believes will provide a range of significant benefits to the Macarthur region.

**Prepared by the Executive Officer on behalf of MACROC  
10 December 2010**