

Neighbourhood Forum 5
Wollongong's Heartland

**Coniston, Figtree, Gwynneville, Keiraville,
Mangerton, Mount Keira, Mount St Thomas,
North Wollongong, West Wollongong,
Wollongong City.**

SUBMISSION RE Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link Feasibility Study
FROM Wollongong Neighbourhood Forum 5

To MaldonDombarton@infrastructure.gov.au

Neighbourhood Forum 5 operates under the auspices of Wollongong City Council. This forum has previously conveyed to Council, and the NSW Government, its objections to sustained high levels of road haulage of coal. For some years, these have been over 5 million tonnes per annum. Now our highways have car carriers moving cars from Port Kembla to Sydney to contend with.

At its meeting of 1 December 2010, Neighbourhood Forum 5 resolved to respond to the call for comments on the Maldon-Dombarton feasibility Study into the line by strongly supporting its construction because:

- a it would substantially reduce truck numbers on the roads;
- b enhance road capacity;
- c enhance rail capacity;
- d open up new sources of export through Port Kembla; and,
- e its potential to allow for passenger train movements.

In addition, Neighbourhood Forum 5 resolved to seek a representative from the University of Wollongong being placed on the project reference group.

Additional comment follow.

At its meeting of 5 May 2010, Neighbourhood Forum 5 resolved to make a submission in response to an Environmental Assessment objecting to both the concept of further expansion of Port Kembla Harbour before a commitment has been made to complete the Maldon Dombarton rail link, and to the scope of the proposed Stage 1 reclamation and operations.

The June 2010 Submissions Report includes comment by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority that for even Stage 1 Port Kembla outer harbour traffic volumes (bulk, general and limited containers) if the predicted rail mode share could not be achieved, there would be likely "... *unacceptable impacts to road safety and traffic efficiency as well as environmental issues such as amenity, noise and air quality.*"

The August 4 meeting of Neighbourhood Forum 5 also expressed its objection to any proposal to have Stage 1 of Port Kembla Outer Harbour operating without any clear statement of support from the NSW Government for completion of the Maldon Dombarton rail link.

The proposal at present puts too much reliance on the Unanderra Moss Vale line, or use of more heavy trucks on public roads, to move new bulk and bulk break cargo to and from Port Kembla. The reliance on the Unanderra Moss Vale line noted in both the Environmental Assessment Report, and defended in the Submissions Report, is due to the somewhat congested nature of the Sydney Wollongong Port Kembla line, which is already subject to extensive curfews on freight train movements.

Given the extra length involved in using the Unanderra Moss Vale line and its steep grades, those consigning bulk and non bulk freight are more likely to choose road freight. However, main roads such as the Picton Road, the Appin Road, the Mt Ousley Road and the F6 Road already have too many heavy trucks.

The remedy would be both completion of the Maldon Dombarton railway and a quota on the number of heavy trucks. This is with a view of turning the number for use of rail noted in the Environmental Assessment into reality as opposed to aspirational targets (such as for cars to Port Kembla).

Accordingly NF5 has requested:

- 1) An indication of NSW Government support for completion of the Maldon Dombarton railway
- 2) Clear limits on the tonnages of bulk and break bulk freight that can be moved to and from Port Kembla Outer Harbour, and also the Inner Harbour.
- 3) The commitments and due dates for getting some car imports through Port Kembla and onto rail. Our understanding is that commitment was 20 per cent by the end of 2010.

Neighbourhood Forum 5 notes that the current issues paper in Section 4.5 on page 8 deals with cars. It is of concern that this section does not even mention that the commitment to have 20 per cent of cars by December 2010. This omission should be rectified.

Neighbourhood Forum 5 notes the terms of reference (Attachment 5) for the current study and notes that although there is a focus on freight, passenger trains do not appear to be excluded from consideration. It is also our understanding that the pre-feasibility study commented on passenger trains, noting their potential in several places (eg Table 4 and other comment on page 28 where it was stated that diesel passenger rail cars, such as those currently used for between Kiama and Bomaderry).

Accordingly, Neighbourhood Forum 5 requests that passenger trains be put back into the study.

In respect to the question on page 10 *Would the Moss Vale line be a satisfactory alternative route to Port Kembla if the Illawarra line became congested?* Neighbourhood Forum 5 suggests that the additional length of haulage plus the severe speed weight restrictions on the descent (max 40 km/h), it is not a satisfactory alternative.

Finally Neighbourhood Forum 5 note that issues of Climate Change and the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions are 'on the agenda' but oddly enough do not appear to rate a mention in the issues paper. Yet, the terms of reference 4 e) note economic costs and benefits derived from environmental costs or benefits, including but not limited to impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. Given that the study looks out to 2030, oil vulnerability should also be addressed in assessing the benefits of completing the railway, with the fact that rail haulage of freight is about three times more energy efficient than road transport, and, has electrification as a future option.

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission,

yours faithfully

David Winterbottom
Secretary