

PORT KEMBLA POLLUTION MEETING

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16th December 2010

Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link Feasibility Study
Dept of Infrastructure and Transport
Email: MaldonDombarton@infrastructure.gov.au

Submission for Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link Feasibility Study

Dear Sir/Madam

Residents attending the community-based Port Kembla Pollution Meeting wish to have input into the above. However we as ordinary people find it difficult to work in a professional way and sincerely hope that you will consider this when receiving this submission.

We urge the Federal Government to urgently act to implement the completion of the above infrastructure.

The Illawarra coast strip with its seaport of Port Kembla is a geographically restricted area. With the ocean to the East and the Great Dividing Range, with its flora and fauna, running down the Western boundary we are left in a rather unique position. The recent expansion of Port Kembla Inner Harbour combined with the future uses that will evolve in the [near] future from the expansion of the Outer Harbour will substantially mount pressure on both road and rail transport corridors. An example of this bottleneck transport problem can be seen around the nearby ports of Sydney Harbour and Port Botany and they both have a huge basin area that surrounds them.

The current Illawarra-Sydney rail system is currently inadequate and has been for many years now. Many people are forced to commute daily to and from Sydney for work and from our memberships' experiences the current system often fails to get them to and from their employment. As well as the inconvenience to commuters **the heavy use of the Illawarra Line by both passenger and freight trains is considered to be 'a disaster waiting to happen'**.

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Providing an open forum for local community, industry and relevant government agencies to work co-operatively reducing levels of pollution that impact on the health and comfort of the community.

The road access to and from Illawarra is restricted by the limited road capacity of Bulli Pass and Mount Ousley Road to the north and Macquarie Pass to the south and west. **These three road corridors are frequently blocked by heavy transport accidents and breakdowns.**

The new cars now being transported by road from the port are only one of the added uses clogging further our already clogged transport corridors. We were recently given a presentation for Cement Australia who have plans in progress right now that will put an estimated **extra 232 B-double-26 tonne trucks onto the roads to Sydney each day.** This was stated to be considered as “minimal impact”.

The death toll on the Picton Road corridor has been horrific.

The **huge trucks on Macquarie Pass frequently have car safety being compromised** on bends on the narrow roadway or the Pass being completely blocked by these huge trucks becoming ‘stuck’ on the hairpin bends until assistance can get there to help them maneuver around then sharp bends.

We are constantly told that where possible the freight from our growing port will be removed from our roads systems to the rail system whilst neither system as they now stand can sustain the growth. The road transport corridors from the port area are ‘advised’ but are not ‘enforceable’ thus putting a burden on many local residential roads that are unsuitable for the removal of the sea cargo from the harbour precinct.

We are told that the Federal vision is to develop a freight rail corridor through western NSW between the ports at Melbourne and Brisbane. The right planning and infrastructure could make Port Kembla Harbour an integral part of that grand vision. To incorporate the use of Port Kembla Harbour into that vision would require the completion of the Maldon-Dombarton rail link.

Stephen O’Donnell, the chairman of the Australasian Railway Association, when he was guest speaker at the National Press Club address on ABC television on 16 February 2005, spoke about the vision to build a major rail freight corridor to service the needs of eastern Australian industries. He expressed how transport of freight by rail has safety, environmental and economic advantages. Rail freight is 30 times safer than road as one freight train can carry the load of 450 semi trailers. Rail freight saves one million tonnes of greenhouse gases a year and it would be even more beneficial for an area that is already polluted from heavy industry. It is the way of the future!

Employment is another aspect that would benefit our community greatly if this infrastructure project goes ahead along with our harbour expansions.

We feel that the establishment of designated freight corridors is a matter of urgent attention and that the completion of the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link would be of great benefit to our local community as well as to the greater community.

Yours sincerely
Port Kembla Pollution Meeting
per Helen Hamilton (Acting Secretary)