

SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY INC.



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The Director
Infrastructure Australia
GPO Box 594
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Dear Sir

Submission to Maldon Dombarton Feasibility Issues Paper

The South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc (SEATS) aims to stimulate and facilitate investment in transport infrastructure in south eastern New South Wales, eastern Victoria and the ACT Region. Members of SEATS include local government, regional development organizations, government agencies, regional industry and academics. The SEATS region is in a triangle to the east of a line linking the NSW City of Wollongong to the north, the Victorian City of Greater Dandenong to the south and the Cooma, Bombala, Tumut and Tumbarumba areas, the ACT and Yass, Goulburn and Crookwell to the west.

Earlier this year, SEATS decided to advocate a number of priority projects which will have regional benefits consistent with our vision which is to ensure that South East Australia has an effective integrated transport network that stimulates the Region's economy and enhances the community.

One of the projects we decided to support as a priority project is the expansion of Port Kembla.

The potential for use of Maldon Dombarton rail line is, in our opinion, integral to the success and future use of Port Kembla.

In deciding to support Port Kembla, SEATS recognised the potential to use Port Kembla for coal export. It would appear that, once maximum capacity is reached, the only option available to coal exporters is to transport coal to the port by rail. WE have accepted advice that current projections are that within five years road receipt of coal will be close to capacity which will mean that rail freight transport is an absolute necessity.

We have accepted advice a significant movement of coal freight from the Illawarra line to Maldon Dombarton which will assist with separating passenger and freight traffic. This aim is important as it will significantly improve and enhance the community liveability.

It appears that the Port Kembla Coal Terminal is undertaking a feasibility study to upgrade to provide for growth of existing mines. The need for rail infrastructure to enable this upgrade to proceed is paramount.

One of the issues raised by the Roads and Traffic Authority of New South Wales when they made comment on the Outer Harbour development is that there needs to be the assurance that there is sufficient rail capability and capacity to meet the growing needs of the port. The RTA has argued that the road/rail split as proposed in the Environmental Assessment for the Outer Harbour needs to be enforced and we accept that this can only be achieved with the Maldon Dombarton line being available.

SEATS supports the Port Kembla Corporation contention that the Maldon Dombarton line has a fourfold effect:

- “1. Provides capacity to existing rail users to minimise queuing and operational costs and allows better development planning.
2. Provides a capacity for new industries to be established and for a transport modal shift from road to rail where viable to do so.
3. Provides an alternative and more direct route for connection to the main Sydney-Melbourne line and to the Sydney catchment intermodals at Meadowbank and Enfield.
4. Provides environmental and quality of life benefits to the broader community specifically to residences next to the Illawarra line.”

SEATS is aware that Port Kembla is the incoming port for vehicles coming in to New South Wales. We believe that two organisations have signed a Letter of Intent to permit Enfield to be used for receipt of cars. Movement of cars by rail freight using Maldon Dombarton is a significant benefit to the community and to the vehicle industry.

We believe that Port Kembla Port Corporation will encourage the future movement of cars by rail and the Maldon Dombarton line will provide a more direct route.

SEATS is convinced that the Maldon Dombarton line will provide the best solution to meet the long term needs of rail infrastructure users whether they are passenger users or freight movement users.

Port Kembla is likely to be used as an overflow container facility to service regional New South Wales. The Maldon Dombarton rail line will provide exporters with easy access to the port. This use of Port Kembla will relieve some of the pressure on Port Botany which is reaching capacity and has many community liveability issues to overcome.

The Maldon Dombarton line will enable current and prospective port users to review their transport options. They should be encouraged to use rail and the Maldon Dombarton rail link will assist in making decisions consistent with the need to reduce the road freight task in and out of the port.

SEATS is pleased to support the submission made by the Port Kembla Port Corporation on this issue.

Yours faithfully,



Chris Vardon OAM
Chief Executive Officer