



South Coast Labour Council
Fred Moore House
Lowden Square
Wollongong NSW 2500

17 December 2010

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

Submission Regarding Maldon to Dombarton Feasibility Study Issues Paper

I write in behalf of the South Coast Labour Council, the peak body representing 29 affiliated unions in the region from Helensburgh, south of Sydney through to the Victorian border, incorporating the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Far South Coast along with the Southern Highlands and adjoining tablelands in the west. The Labour Council's Secretary is also a member of the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link Feasibility Study Reference Group.

The steel, mining and transport industries have historically formed the backbone of the region's economy and despite restructuring in those sectors they continue to play a critical role in the employment of our people and the development of our region.

Given the nature of our regional economy and its industrial base, the geographic position of our leading city, Wollongong and the sea port - Port Kembla, the development of our region has historically relied and continues to be dependent on our ability to move people and goods in and out of the Illawarra.

On this basis, It would be difficult to overstate the significance of infrastructure that:

- Enhances the existing freight capacity of the region
- Allows Port Kembla to expand with confidence and continue to attract investment for this purpose
- Alleviates the stresses on both the road network and Illawarra rail line which currently shoulder the burden of increased commuter and freight traffic
- Connects the Illawarra, one of Australia's most significant industrial region's with the North - South freight corridor connecting Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane
- Allows for the sustainable growth of freight movements by alleviating pressure on Sydney's ports which are expected to reach their capacity within the next 15 years

December 17, 2010

The South Coast Labour Council submits that the Maldon Dombarton rail link is the only project 'on the table' that addresses these issues substantially in order to meet the increasing needs of our region and the national economy.

We also submit that:

1. The sunken funds in this project and value of work already undertaken to date must be clearly identified in real and comparable terms and considered in the study's cost benefit analysis when addressing the costs associated with completing this project.
2. The total cost of constructing an alternative rail pass through the escarpment must also be considered in the cost benefit analysis in terms of comparing a 'do nothing' now scenario with a 'pay substantially more' scenario in the future.
3. The cost of constructing an alternate passenger rail line in lieu of the Maldon Dombarton or similar freight line and/or substantial upgrades to the existing line must be factored into the cost benefit analysis along with the increasing cost of maintenance and upgrading of the region's road network as a direct result of increasing road freight movements.
4. The productivity gains for the region's commuting workforce (one of the largest in the nation) and their employers must be factored in to any cost benefit analysis addressing the completion of the Maldon Dombarton which would substantially decouple the passenger and freight functions of the existing Illawarra rail line.
5. The study should anticipate Federal legislative changes and the introduction of a carbon price and clearly input real dollar values into the cost benefit analysis with a range of alternative scenarios regarding the impact of these likely changes.

Whilst a more detailed submission will be lodged when we receive the draft findings of the study, the Labour Council supports the submissions of our affiliated unions and that of other organizations such as the PKPC, RDA Illawarra and IBC which have argued strongly in favour of the feasibility of completing the Maldon Dombarton link and the merits of this project.

Sincerely,



Arthur Rorris
Secretary