

**Submission to the
DRAFT NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan**

Introduction

This submission is in response to the Draft NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan and should be considered in conjunction with the earlier Regional Development Australia Illawarra (RDAI) response to the discussion paper at the end of April, 2012. Comments in this submission are additional increments to that document. RDAI's comments are as follows:

Lacks Bold Vision or Public Policy Context

The safe and efficient movement of passengers and goods is but one of a number of lenses through which to view the task of co-creating a long term transport plan. There is a need to provide a coherent paradigm to frame the plan that acknowledges broader policy imperatives. These include regional social and economic development, carbon abatement targets, sustainability issues associated with a shift from vehicle dependence and the catalyst role of transport in building communities. The Draft Plan does not appear to adequately address its objective to support regional development "by improving accessibility to jobs, services and people".

Innovation in Transport Planning

Rather than linear projections of demographic impacts, a more innovative multi-dimensional approach could focus on enhancing the liveability of communities through transport infrastructure. A place-making approach would see transport enabling access to education, employment, health and recreation services and contribute to the age-friendliness of public spaces. Inter-governmental financial relations, liaison with the private sector for Public Private Partnerships and regional engagement in governance arrangements are facilitations that need to be considered in a Master Plan.

Sequenced Transport Development

The Draft Plan does not propose an indicative schedule for the rollout of major initiatives with any precision. For consistency, it may be useful to adopt the timeline of the recently released "First Things First" NSW Infrastructure Plan (Short 0-5 years, Medium 5-10 years, Long 10-20 years). Some initiatives will be key enablers of other transport enhancements and so should be scheduled earlier. Clear boundaries for transport corridors can indicate capabilities for future potential investment and development.

Reducing Social Disadvantage: A More Equitable Approach

The Draft could have included some analysis of projected social impacts of transport improvements, demonstrating social benefit and affordability. In this respect there could be more support shown for community transport (p284) and an enhancement of bus service links (aspirations on p199 acknowledged). The Plan insufficiently addresses how this objective can be met "by improving access to goods, services and employment and education opportunities".

The Transport Master Plan needs to consider accessible transport options for disadvantaged low Social Economic Status (SES) areas in the Illawarra to enable participation in employment and access to services. On many occasions RDAI has consulted with regional human services agencies and received feedback on inadequate and inefficient timetabling and inter-modal connections. Restrictions on Home and Community Care (HACC) target group criteria leaves service gaps for transport-disadvantaged groups like parents with babies and young children wanting to access playgroups, services and shopping. Those with disabilities or mental health issues also fall outside HACC provision and so face transport challenges. Further consultation is needed regarding reform of motor vehicle registration that disadvantages unemployed people who can only afford older cars. Provision of a free shuttle loop around Lake Illawarra and adjacent areas was suggested in the earlier response to the Discussion Paper and we again strong support this initiative.

Load Shift from Private Car to Public Transport

To meet the needs for affordability and reduction in carbon emissions, transport planning must aggressively pursue initiatives to shift even a small portion of current private vehicle use to public transport mass transit options. The current bus service system, dominated as it is by school routes, lacks the flexibility to create a viable alternative to car travel. Inter-modal ticketing may encourage choices in favour of public transport over private vehicles.

This region has made strident claims over a long period to shift freight loads from road to rail, for which construction of the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link is necessary. Broadly accepted predictions of greatly expanded freight transport demands make this mode shift urgent.

Faster Transit Times between Wollongong and Sydney

One response to the need to shift mode preferences from private vehicle to public transport is to decrease commuting times between Wollongong and Sydney. Consideration should be given to a manageable access corridor to allow Wollongong to be a destination point in a High Speed Rail development, in addition to urgently upgrading the existing rail infrastructure on the Sydney – Wollongong coastal route.

Modelling and Data

The work completed for the Draft Plan to arrive at conclusions is not referenced so it is not clear how robust are comments on outcomes and anticipated impacts. In addition to the glossary provided, it would therefore be useful to have sources acknowledged. I would reiterate here that the Illawarra has the capacity to conduct modelling and simulations and that this data will be vital for developing a regional plan.

Regional Transport Plans & Priorities

The Draft Plan acknowledges the specific needs of the Illawarra region (pp206-7). However, the answers (p235) appear to rely on the later development of regional plans. Several of the road upgrades are already in the development pipeline so are not new initiatives, though necessary improvements nonetheless. RDAI looks forward to participating in the deliberations for an Illawarra-specific plan.

The Draft Plan has grasped some major challenges for the City of Wollongong (p 207), the solutions to which can only be determined through an integrated regional planning process. Inter-

suburban connections remain to be addressed as fully for the regions as they have been for the Sydney metropolitan area.

Priorities for the Illawarra region include the Maldon to Dombarton Rail Link, faster Wollongong to Sydney rail journeys and integrated bus services linking with other modes to employment lands and services. These must feature in subsequent regional plans to be developed within the context of the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan.

In preparation for our annual Regional Leaders Summit, RDAI is conducting for the month of October, an online infrastructure priorities survey; preliminary results indicate the transport related infrastructure developments most favoured by respondents are a faster rail link to Sydney, the F6 extension to Sydney and the Maldon-Dombarton Rail Link (not in priority order).

Conclusion

The foregoing comments are offered as suggested improvements to that Plan. RDAI's vision for long term transport capability, as stated in our earlier submission, is a sustainable, integrated, multi-modal network developed, implemented and managed through collaboration between federal, state and local government agencies, supporting regional economic development and social equity while protecting our environment.

Yours sincerely

Natalie

Natalie Burroughs
CEO

26 October 2012