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Minister for Transport and Infrastructure
Minister for Roads and Maritime Services
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Future Transport 2056 – Draft Strategy

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Illawarra is pleased to provide this submission on the draft Future Transport 2056 Strategy and the Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan.

It is our view that Wollongong should be deemed a 'Global Gateway' in the Future Transport 2056 strategy. There are two reasons for this perspective:

1. Western Sydney's industrial growth, both in and around Badgerys Creek Airport, will create additional demand for freight connectivity between Western Sydney and the Port of Port Kembla, and
2. Residential growth is largest in the South/West of Sydney in the Greater Macarthur Priority Growth Area, where 35,000 houses will be developed within a 30 minute drive from Wollongong.

A **Global Gateway** is defined as a *City that provides state level services and facilities to support a broad population catchment while also having international connections through their airport and/or port.* It is clearly evident that Wollongong is a Global Gateway as it provides vital access to the Port of Port Kembla and is proximate to a large residential growth area in Macarthur.

However, this Global Gateway status has not as yet been determined for Wollongong, see Figure 4, Regional NSW Transport Network (Appendix 1).

Freight Connectivity between Western Sydney and Wollongong:

The Port of Port Kembla is an economic asset of national significance, critical to the future economic growth and development of NSW. Port Kembla is currently underutilised and has capacity for growth. NSW Ports have deemed "**Port Kembla as the NSW port of growth**". It will continue to be NSW's largest motor vehicle import hub and bulk grain export port, while catering for a

growing range of dry bulk, bulk liquid and general cargo. Port Kembla will also be home to NSW second container port.”

Port Kembla is a deep-water harbour surrounded by large parcels of employment generating industrial land. The growth of the Port of Port Kembla could be realised through greater transport connectivity to Sydney and Western Sydney. It is primarily for this reason that Wollongong should be deemed a ‘Global Gateway’.

The Illawarra Business Chamber’s study by PWC [Linking the Illawarra, Improving the region’s Transport Connectivity](#) identified the Illawarra’s transport connectivity score to be 25-30% lower than Australian benchmarked regions, see table below.

Table ES 1: Illawarra connectivity scores

Connectivity attribute	External			Internal				Total
	Wollongong e Sutherland	Wollongong e Ingleburn	Wollongong e Sydney CBD	Shellharbour e Sydney CBD	Wollongong e Shellharbour	Wollongong e Nowra	Wollongong e Berrara	
Road coverage	4.1	3.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.3	2.8	3.7
Rail coverage	3.0		3.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0	3.0
Freight rail coverage		1.0						1.0
Network Coverage	4.6	2.0	4.5	3.5	3.5	2.2	2.4	3.6
Road speed (passenger)	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	1.7
Road speed (freight)		2.0						2.0
Public transport speed	3.0		3.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	2.0	2.8
Public transport quality	4.3		4.3	3.0	2.8	2.0	2.5	3.1
Service Quality	3.1	1.3	2.8	2.0	2.6	3.0	2.2	2.2
Weighted Scores	2.9	1.8	2.7	2.1	2.4	2.1	1.8	2.4

Source: PwC analysis and estimates

The Chamber expressed concern over the cost and time taken to move people and freight and emphasized that connectivity is a key facet of regional competitiveness. The cost of accessing jobs and trading opportunities was estimated to become \$690 million by 2031.

However, the true cost of not providing timely and efficient transport infrastructure would be beyond the Illawarra’s economic impact and extend to substantial economic opportunity costs to Western Sydney, regional Australia and NSW as a whole.

The Australian Government has identified the Sydney to Wollongong rail corridor as a key strategic rail corridor where there would be significant benefit in providing faster commuting times and a more reliable rail service.

Illawarra First and the SMART Infrastructure Facility, University of Wollongong, released a detailed report examining the cost and benefits of a new rail link, referred to as the South West Illawarra Rail Link (SWIRL), along with upgrades to the existing South Coast Line. SWIRL would complete and electrify the

Maldon-Dombarton Line (35kms), together with electrification of a small section of the Moss Vale-Unanderra Line (7kms). The SWIRL would provide a critical passenger and freight service, creating a vital transport connection between the Illawarra and Sydney.

Conservative estimates contained in the report [Upgrading rail connectivity between the Illawarra and Sydney](#) indicate SWIRL would deliver an additional \$2.6 billion in Gross Regional Product and 1,100 new jobs for the region at a benefit-cost ratio of 1.13. The investment would also reduce congestion on connecting road infrastructure, assist in accommodating expected population growth, improve freight productivity and provide an important alternative rail connection to the ageing South Coast Line, which was built in the 19th Century, and is a serious impediment to employment, growth and regional investment.

In addition to these assessments, the decision to proceed with Badgerys Creek airport provides further economic and social benefits that have not been estimated in the SWIRL report and which did not exist when Maldon-Dombarton was originally conceived. The most significant of these is the growth of Western Sydney residential areas, and specifically the the Greater Macarthur Priority Growth Area, where 35,000 houses will be developed within a 30 minute drive from Wollongong.

It is also noted that the Illawarra Regional Airport, located in Shellharbour, has recently recommenced passenger services and could be an integral link that supports the Global Gateway connections. The uptake of passenger flights from the airport have exceeded expectations, with nearly 3,000 passengers flying out of the airport in the first month of operation.

The NSW Government plan for the region ([NSW Planning & Environment: Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan, November 2015, p16](#)) notes that Illawarra's proximity to Sydney provides good opportunities for infrastructure-led growth. In addition to benefits of growth and employment in the region, 'these investments would also deliver significant economic and employment benefits to Sydney'. The Regional Plan identifies inter-regional transport infrastructure that supports growth as:

- Improvements to rail travel times between Sydney and Wollongong
- Extension of the M1 Princes Motorway from Waterfall to Alexandria
- Completion of the Maldon to Dombarton freight line; and
- Duplication of Picton Road in the long term.

A regional consortium endorsed the top three of these infrastructure priorities at the end of 2014 (['Advancing Infrastructure in the Illawarra'](#)) in its response to the NSW Government's Rebuilding NSW Discussion Paper.

The Draft Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan, *Figure 20: Illawarra Shoalhaven initiatives for investigation* (see Appendix 2) outlines the timelines for infrastructure investigation and commitments. RDA Illawarra contends that these timelines are too distant and will not enable economic opportunities to be realised effectively. Badgerys Creek airport is due for completion in 2026, however the vital infrastructure of Maldon to Dombarton (or SWIRL) will not be investigated until well after the completion of the airport "*Figure 20 - Maldon to Dombarton railway line which will be investigated in the next 10-20 years subject to Business Case development*".

RDA Illawarra contend that the Maldon to Dombarton railway line (and/or SWIRL) needs to be investigated now.

We believe that the 'Hub and Spoke' network, radiating from Cities and Centres, is commendable. However, Wollongong needs to also be a 'hub' location, given both the Wollongong's close proximity to the city of Sydney, Western Sydney's residential and airport growth, as well as freight connectivity through the Port of Port Kembla.

We contend that under the Future Transport 2056 strategy Wollongong should not be deemed a Satellite City. However, should the NSW Government determine Wollongong remains a 'Satellite City', then we would urge the NSW Government to have a target of a 60 minute commute from satellite cities to capital cities, ie from Wollongong to Sydney.

We would be happy to bring life to this submission and meet you or with Transport for NSW representatives to provide more detailed research and analysis to support our submission. Please contact me directly should you wish to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



Debra Murphy
Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 1



Figure 4: Regional NSW transport network

Appendix 2

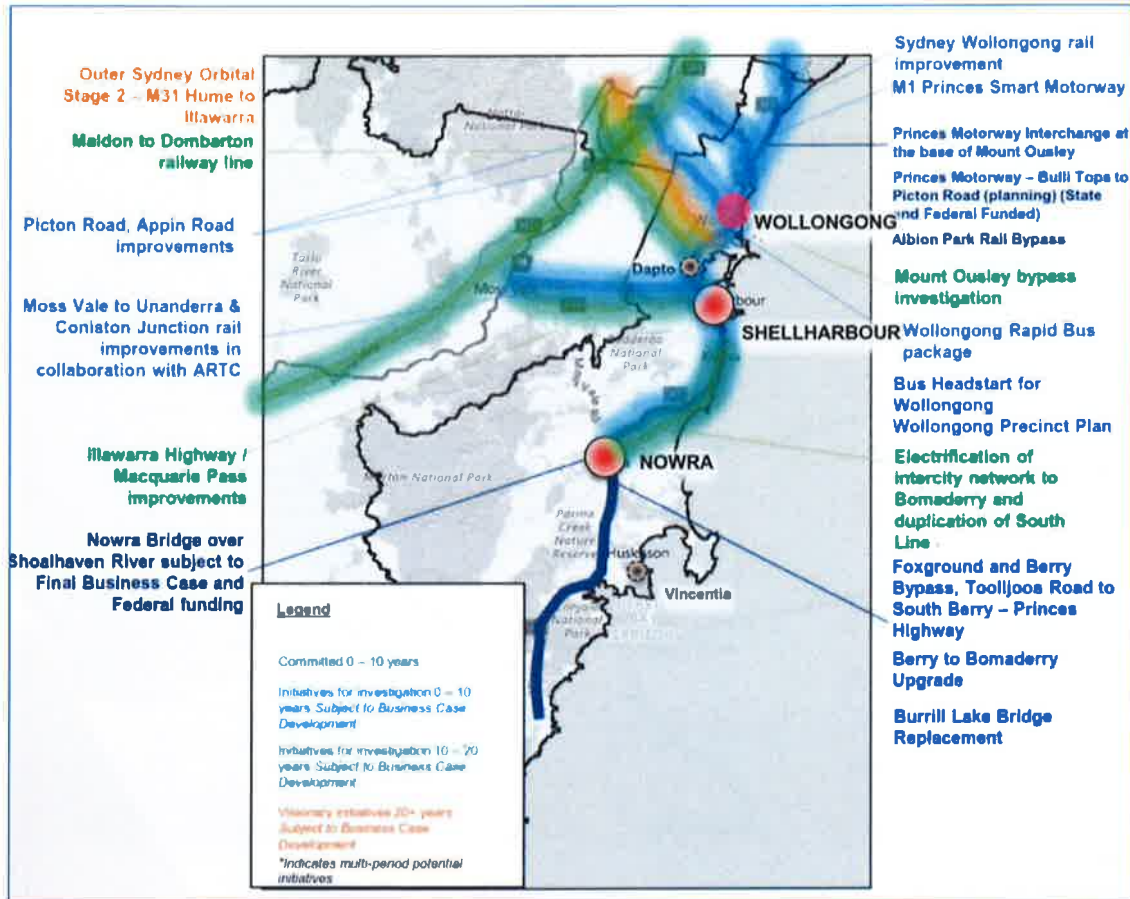


Figure 20: Illawarra Shoalhaven initiatives for investigation