

29 April 2011

Community and Corporate

Reference No: F06006 - 11/31809

The Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP
Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and
Local Government
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Albanese,

Subject: Submission – Draft National Land Freight Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity for the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) to comment on the *Draft National Land Freight Strategy*. The Council strongly supports the need for a national, integrated and multimodal transport system which has potential to achieve a range of significant freight improvements, together with economic, environmental and social outcomes.

The information contained in this submission relates to the review of the following document:

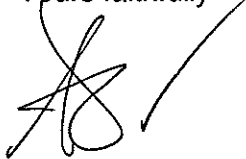
- *National Land Freight Strategy – Discussion Paper, February 2011.*

The issue of road freight movement in the Blue Mountains is highly contentious and requires careful management to secure the highest possible standards of road safety and amenity for all road users and residents alike. The Council continues to advocate for an increased use of rail freight, particularly to transport bulk products such as coal, gravel and fuel.

The Blue Mountains City Council submission on the *Draft National Land Freight Strategy* is enclosed for your consideration.

If you require any further information on this matter then please contact Glenn Sherlock on (02) 4780-5692 or gsherlock@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Yours faithfully



ANDY TURNER

Manager City Planning



Draft National Land Freight Strategy
Blue Mountains City Council Submission
Date: 27 April 2011

Blue Mountains City Council wishes to present the following points for consideration as part of consultation process for this strategy.

In November 2000, the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) was incorporated on the World Heritage List. The Greater Blue Mountains Area covers a total area of about one million hectares of mostly forested landscape on a sandstone plateau, 60 to 180 kilometres inland from central Sydney (inland from Wollongong to Newcastle). The City of Blue Mountains has a population of 77,000 and is one of only two cities in the world that is wholly contained within a designated World Heritage Area.

The City's location within a World Heritage Area places responsibilities on the community, the Council and other agencies to ensure that impacts of urban development are carefully managed and that the internationally recognised values of this natural environment are protected. The Blue Mountains attracts millions of visitors from throughout the world to its magnificent environment, making it one of the top five tourist destinations in Australia. It is the only World Heritage Area in Australia readily accessible by public transport from a major capital and Sydney airport, the main point of entry for most international visitors to Australia.

The Blue Mountains serves as a bridge between Sydney and Central Western NSW with the main transport corridors for road and rail located on the central ridgeline across the City and the Bells Line of Road. These two roads provide the only direct vehicular connection between Sydney and the Central West. These transport corridors place pressures and impacts on the local Blue Mountains community and the natural environment and yet they also provide essential links for the Blue Mountains community, allowing access to local services along their routes and to employment and specialist services outside the City.

Negative Impacts from the *Draft Strategy*

- The Council is highly concerned that the strategy does not adequately address the transport infrastructure identified with 'last mile' access on the local road network. Whilst the strategy does refer to this as 'the inability to drive a truck the full length of the freight journey' it does not recognize the importance that local government plays as part of the overall logistics chain and it should be considered within this overall transport perspective. This omission has a significant negative impact on residential amenity and the viability of local businesses. The RTA and the Local Government Shire Association have identified and acknowledge this issue as a major concern in NSW and are taking steps to address the issue by establishing the Last Mile Access Sub-committee;
- Increased freight movements by rail and road across the mountains onto an already congested network that is struggling to meet current demands without commensurate improvements in infrastructure to be identified;
- Introduction of larger mass/ high productivity vehicles onto the Great Western Highway are currently restricted (further consultation/engagement is required of the local level to understand the full implications of such a change); and
- Increased impacts on residential amenity.

Positive Impacts from the *Draft Strategy*

- The Council strongly supports the principal that freight should 'pay its way', at least on major routes through the direct charging of heavy vehicles;
- Assist in delivering overall efficiencies in freight distribution and intermodal networks in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region which would improve both Sydney's, NSW's and the National economic competitive advantage;
- Support regional economic development by improving efficiencies in the transport of freight, particularly bulk products;
- Integrated network for freight;
- Reducing truck movements and in turn reduce fuel cost for transport, greenhouse gas emissions, improving road safety conditions and reducing the impact of freight vehicles;
- Establishment of separate freight corridors which would result in more favourable separation of freight and passenger services on the Blue Mountains and Illawarra / South Coast networks; and
- Result in more passenger service capacity and reliability.

The *Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036* provides further supporting evidence for the establishment of improved road and rail freight infrastructure into and within the Sydney basin. It is considered essential, that the objective of securing a long term resolution to the issues of transferring freight from the road to rail would be achieved by continuing to lobby the appropriate state and federal agencies.

It is clear from the Draft *National Land Freight Strategy* that this strategy is needed to ensure the long term growth of the nation, in particular its commodity exports.