



18 December 2019

The Hon. Rob Stokes MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

By email: office@stokes.minister.nsw.gov.au

My dear Minister,

I write to make a submission in relation to the exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Sydney Gateway Road Project (the Project). As you would be aware, the Roads and Maritime Services and the Sydney Airport Corporation propose to build a new direct road connection from the Sydney motorway network at the St Peters Interchange to Sydney Airport, and in the direction of Port Botany.

The Gateway project arises out of the need to connect the Airport, and more importantly the Port to the M4 and M5, in order to provide for heavy vehicle movements to and from the Port. You would recall that this was the justification for the WestConnex project, of which the Gateway was originally a part until it was excised in 2017.

Indeed, it was arguably the most crucial element of the project, which provides the freight link from the major economic centres at Port Botany and Kingsford-Smith Airport to the motorway network, the object and intention of Westconnex.

While the Gateway will indeed provide improved access to Sydney Airport from the motorway network, it still fails to improve connections to Port Botany, with motorway traffic to be simply dumped at Qantas Drive to proceed to the Port via General Holmes Drive and Foreshore Road.

The efficient movement of freight, which is the lifeblood of economic activity, relies upon adequate transport infrastructure. There is probably no more significant economic precinct in NSW than the Sydney Airport and Port Botany area, excepting perhaps the Sydney CBD.

With this in mind, I draw your attention to the particular matter of freight access ramps for the Cooks River Intermodal Terminal, which were proposed as part of the project in its early stages but which were removed by the Roads and Maritime Services earlier this year. Those ramps are not to be included in the Gateway.

By way of background, the Cooks River Intermodal Terminal (the Terminal) is the largest empty container facility in Australia. While the total freight task for Port Botany is projected to double by 2036, from 14 million tonnes per annum in 2016 to 25 million tonnes per annum, and the total freight task of *empty* containers from Port Botany is predicted to reach 2.9 million per annum, equivalent to today's *total* freight task.

80% of this freight task is presently carried by road, and even the most optimistic scenarios for freight rail movements means that at minimum 60% of all freight task will continue to be moved by road. Necessarily, all empty containers are moved by road. This will place enormous pressure on the road network around the Airport and Port.

The Gateway will pass through the Terminal, and will in fact require acquisition of land from that area which is estimated to reduce Sydney's empty container storage capacity by 27%. The commensurate impact of the projected increase in empty container movements, and the loss of storage capacity, means that the freight industry will need to more efficiently utilise and process empty containers.

The removal of those Canal Road off-ramps from the project would require heavy vehicles to instead utilise the local road network to access the Port and the Intermodal Terminal. Conservatively, this would generate 1600 additional heavy vehicle movements a day between the Qube Holdings site on Canal Road and Port Botany, and up to 3000 vehicle movements a day when other freight operations in the area are taken into consideration.

This would run counter to the objectives of both Westconnex, to improve freight access to the motorway network, and the Gateway project, to reduce traffic congestion in and around the Airport and Port precinct and remove heavy vehicles from local roads.

Encouraging extra heavy vehicles onto already congested roads will reduce the overall performance of the local road network, heighten risks to other road users, as well as the many pedestrians in the very dense mixed use Mascot station precinct, through which the existing heavy vehicle route passes. Already, residents and workers in the Mascot station precinct are alarmed at the volume of heavy traffic which passes through Mascot via Ricketty Street, Canal Road, Kent Road, Coward Street, and Bourke Street.

A number of freight and transport industry groups have indicated to me their very grave concerns about these matters, if the access ramps to the Gateway at Canal Road are not reinstated in the design.

I am aware that industry has engaged, at its own cost, consultants to design a solution that would deliver direct freight access to and from the Gateway at the Cooks River Intermodal Terminal, as well as a direct rail "turn-out" which would allow increased freight movement to and from Port Botany by rail.

I am urging you to consider, if approval for the project is given, conditions that require the construction of those ramps and provision of space for a rail turn-out. At the very least, land should be required to be reserved and dedicated for these purposes, should those ramps not be built concurrent with the construction of the Gateway itself.

Would you kindly consider these matters and provide me with a written response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Ron Hoenig MP
Member for Heffron