



ABN 19 949 536 343

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Freight Branch team

NSW Government

Freight@transport.nsw.gov.au

23 October 2024

Re: Recommendations to inform the Freight Policy Reform Program.

The ten Councils of the Hunter Joint Organisation (JO) welcome the additional opportunity provided by Transport for NSW to provide a second submission to the review of the Freight Policy Reform Program.

Member Councils of the Hunter JO who support these recommendations include:

- Cessnock City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- City of Newcastle
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council

Submission:

Our second submission aims to address one question:

'Are there other port policy matters that are essential for NSW Government to include in its plan for freight in NSW?'

The Freight Reform Taskforce should review its freight recommendations to align with the broader policies of [Commonwealth](#) and [NSW Governments' Net Zero policy commitments](#), particularly those of the NSW Government to support communities reliant on the coal industry to secure their long-term economic future as the global demand for coal declines, considering the significant economic and logistical changes this will bring. Current recommendations included in the Freight Policy Reform Program appear to have been made in isolation from these broader policy objectives, and as such, miss the transformative opportunities available for mining affected regions such as the Hunter, where improved freight planning, logistics and infrastructure have the potential to substantially contribute to the region's economic evolution.

As outlined in the [NSW Government Future Jobs and Investment Authority](#) Issues Paper, the transition to net zero will affect approximately 15,000 jobs in coal mining and 37,000 jobs in the supply chain in the Hunter region alone. As these jobs reduce over time, it is crucial for government policies and investment to align across agencies in order to actively support overall NSW and Federal Government policy objectives for the economic transformation of coal affected regions.



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We appreciate the recommendations have removed Port Kembla as the next Port to be developed by Government. However, the current recommendations don't fully support the growth of Port of Newcastle either, with your advice limiting Government support for additional infrastructure to assist their economic diversification away from coal exports.

The recommendations also make no mention of Newcastle Airport and it's potential to be included as part of the air-freight value chain, to stimulate business growth and local jobs in a region undergoing an economic transformation as part of NSW Government commitment to net zero.

We also note the strategic importance of the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor (Hexham-Fassifern bypass) which appears to have been deprioritised by the Review Panel in their interim report. This will be incredibly important for the Hunter region if we are to take on more of the state's freight task.

It follows that the JO strongly emphasises the importance of considering effective linkages to the Lower Hunter Freight Corridor when planning a dedicated rail freight network in Metropolitan Sydney.

We also wish to highlight that the Hunter has an abundance of industrial land, which provides it with a significant competitive advantage that the State Government should consider when looking to make investment decisions.

Our recommendations include:

1. **Collaborative Policy Development:** Ensure that state and federal policies are aligned and mutually supportive. This collaborative approach will help create a cohesive strategy that addresses both the economic and transport challenges facing NSW, while also contributing to broader State Government policy objectives for the economic transformation of coal affected regions like the Hunter.
2. **Planning:** Long-term strategic planning involving all relevant parties, including state and federal governments, must focus on integrating the Port of Newcastle and Newcastle Airport into the national logistics framework. In addition, the NSW government should consider a fast-track approval process for the Port of Newcastle's major expansion plans given the importance of these projects to the regional economy undergoing a transition to net zero.
3. **Road upgrades for REZ freight:** Prioritise upgrades to the Hunter road network that will be tasked with transporting 80% of NSW's wind and solar freight componentry to the state's Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) in regional NSW

By addressing these areas, the NSW Government can create a robust, future-proof freight plan that supports both NSW and Commonwealth policies to transition to net zero, and to support regional communities reliant on the coal industry to secure their long-term economic transformation.



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We encourage you to consider our recommendations in determining the focus and scope of the current review process and would welcome further engagement given the enormous significance of these priorities for the Hunter region and NSW more broadly.

Should you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact Kim Carland, Advocacy and Government Relations Lead, kimc@hunterjo.com.au or 0460 034 614

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. P. Wilson".

Steve Wilson
Director (Executive Officer)
Hunter Joint Organisation

<https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/freight-policy-reform-program>