



# SUPPORTING

the Great South West

*Submission to Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government*

## Introduction

This brief has been prepared to report to the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government on the development of the Great South West region, a concept which will aid the integration of freight transport networks within southern Queensland and northern New South Wales.

## Purpose

The purpose of this submission is to inform the Parliamentary Committee on the opportunity of the Great South West and how it will support coastal shipping.

## The Great South West Concept Overview

The Great South West Growth Corridor (the Great South West) comprises a network of transport infrastructure and key freight hubs that will facilitate the development of Queensland's south-west growth corridor and support the integration of the area with surrounding regions and the wider national framework.

The Great South West represents a region originating at Logan in the south east region of Queensland and reaching to Warwick in the west, Lismore in the east and Coffs Harbour in the south (Figure 1). It incorporates a number of Local Government Areas across southern Queensland and northern New South Wales, including Logan City Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Southern Downs Regional Council, Tweed Shire Council, Lismore City Council, Tenterfield Shire Council, Clarence Valley Shire Council, Kyogle Shire Council, Richmond Valley Shire Council and Coffs Harbour City Council.

Facilitating the growth of the Great South West will ensure an integrated freight transport network which is environmentally, logistically and financially sustainable; and provide efficient linkages between key freight hubs. It is underpinned by key infrastructure projects, namely the Bromelton State Development Area, Summerland Way and the Cunningham Rail Link.

Development of the Great South West will be achieved through the coordination and input of key stakeholders including Local, State and Federal Government, land holders, property developers and key transport logistics operators.

## The Great South West and Coastal Shipping

Australia relies on sea transport for 99 per cent of our exports. A substantial proportion of our domestic freight also depends on coastal shipping.

As identified in the Committee's report on the Inquiry into the Integration of Regional Rail and Road Networks and their Interface with Ports, the coastal shipping industry, like road and rail, is moving increasing amounts of freight. However, it now ranks third in terms of market share of the domestic freight task, as distributors have increasingly opted for the greater timeliness and reliability of road – and to a lesser extent – rail services.

At present, sea freight represents only 9 per cent of the modal share along the North-South Corridor between Melbourne and Brisbane. Forecasts for this route indicate that coastal shipping will continue to lose freight to other modes. Despite these predictions, the North-South Rail Corridor Study (Ernst and Young on behalf of the Department of Transport and Regional Services) acknowledged that the expected freight increases in the region justify some consideration of coastal shipping.

It is important to also recognise that major multi modal transport nodes with integrated transport linkages to Australia's productive regions and direct links (road and rail) to Australia's ports will play an important role in

supporting and enhancing the long term viability of coastal shipping.

Historically, Acacia Ridge has provided the multi modal facilities supporting the Port of Brisbane however Acacia Ridge Multi-Modal Node will reach capacity in 8 years.

It is therefore increasingly recognised that Bromelton (to be declared a State Development Area by the Queensland Government) will play an emerging role in accommodating the future growth in the distribution and transfer of freight for south east Queensland.

Located on the Brisbane to Sydney Rail Line, Bromelton will provide direct rail linkages into the Port of Brisbane. Furthermore with the upgrading of the Summerland Way, Bromelton affords easy road transport access to northern New South Wales, thereby connecting these rural productive regions and affording direct access through Bromelton to the Port of Brisbane.

An emerging issue is the role and requirement of the inland rail and the need for a direct rail connection between Melbourne and Brisbane. The Great South West provides the opportunity to establish this missing link along the Cunningham Transport Corridor which would provide direct rail access between the inland rail and the Port of Brisbane.

Additionally the establishment of the Cunningham Transport Corridor would also assist and facilitate the movement of grains from Southern Queensland productive rural regions.

Consequently, the development of the Great South West will facilitate the promotion of coastal shipping along the eastern seaboard through more efficient and integrated freight networks.

## Stakeholders Supporting the Great South West

The following provides a brief appraisal of organisations that are supporting the establishment of the Great South West and recognise its role in sustaining and enhancing coastal shipping.

## Tre Developments Warwick Industrial

Tre Developments Warwick Industrial is among a number of developers with significant land holdings within the Great South West region, particularly Warwick and Greater Flagstone (see Figure 1, Map Reference 1 and 2). The proposed developments for these areas require the fluid and timely transfer of goods to and from key locations within south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales including the Port of Brisbane and Bromelton. Transport and logistics infrastructure is essential for the effective and efficient delivery of such developments. As such, Tre Developments Warwick Industrial and their counterparts hold a vested interest in seeing the growth and integration of Great South West occur promptly and proficiently.

## Queensland Police – Warwick

With 25% of the traffic flow through Warwick represented by heavy vehicles (1,500 heavy vehicles per day) and 74 road accidents so far this year within the area, Warwick police see benefits in the development of proposed infrastructure within the Great South West. These include:

- Heavy vehicles would be consolidated into one area, making it easier to monitor and control;
- The development of a railway link would result in less long distance haulage, in turn contributing to less driver fatigue within the trucking industry;
- Heavy vehicles would be diverted from major roads and given a designated route;
- The transport industry would be have greater centralisation; and
- Traffic congestion on Brisbane roads would be improved and less heavy vehicles would be on the roads during peak hours.

## Wickham Freight Lines

Servicing several large clients, specifically Big W whose distribution centre is located in Warwick (see Figure 1, Map Reference 1), Wickham Freight Lines provides a freight connection between the Darling Downs of South East Queensland and the Northern Rivers and Central Coast areas of New South Wales. At present, the most direct route for the organisation is via Killarney border to Summerland Way road from Killarney to Kyogle via Woodenbong.

Repairs relating to surface, grade and direction of the Summerland Way are required for Wickham Freight Lines to continue using this route. If repairs aren't carried out to the road shortly, Wickham Freight Lines will be forced to take an alternate route, via the New England, Bruxner and Gwydir Highways. This would result in significant longer trips and financial losses for the company. Additional kilometres travelled incurred by taking an alternate route are estimated to be 282,957 kilometres per annum. This represents a high number of truck movements and results in associated social and environmental costs as well as economic costs to the business which are calculated to be \$3,290,963.25 per annum. The business is estimated to contribute around \$4,000,000 to the local economy per annum.

## Big W

Warwick (see Figure 1, Map Reference 1) provides the centre of operations for Big W and services approximately 80 stores from Sydney to Cairns. The distribution centre receives between 1200 and 1500 pallets of stock and dispatches between 800 and 1200 pallets of stock each day representing the movement of 3-4 million dollars worth of product per day. In addition, the centre employs around 350 staff.

The Big W operations at Warwick rely heavily on the movement of products via freight. This includes the wider freight network of road, rail and coastal shipping. The development of the Great South West would ensure the improvement of existing freight connections as well as the realisation of new links, providing for greater business efficiency for Big W.

## Condamine Fabricators

Responsible for the manufacture of trailers, chassis, mine equipment and other stainless steel products, Condamine Fabricators (see Figure 1, Map Reference 5) require the import of steel to create their products and in turn export many of their products via coastal shipping to locations within Australia and the Pacific Region including New Zealand and New Guinea. As a result, they require direct access to the Port of Brisbane in order to facilitate the movement of goods to and from the port. Accordingly, Condamine Fabricators are calling for the upgrade and installation of transport infrastructure including the upgrade of Summerland Way and the development of the Cunningham Rail Link.

## Northern Cooperative Meat Company

The Northern Cooperative Meat Company's meat processing operations represent a significant portion of the wider industry operations with the company's Casino (see Figure 1, Map Reference 4) plant being the third largest bovine processing facility on a single site in Australia. In addition to bovine and porcine processing, the operations also include a hide tannery. Around 900 staff are employed at the plant.

Sourcing approximately 40% of its supplies from the Darling Downs area of Queensland, the most direct road link for the NCMC through this area is via the Mt. Lindesay Highway and Summerland Way through Warwick, Killarney, Legume, Woodenbong, Kyogle and on to Casino. However, due to the need for repairs to these roads, livestock transport companies are currently using longer alternative routes to avoid stock damage. As such, the NCMC would be directly benefitted through the development of the Great South West as would economic progress within the region.

## Kyogle Grain Supplies

Primarily concerned with the movement of bulk and cereal grains between the Darling Downs in southern Queensland to the Northern Rivers

region of New South Wales, the operations of Kyogle Grain Supplies (see Figure 1, Map Reference 3) see around 3 500 truck movements a year along the Mt. Lindesay Highway and Summerland Way.

Taking this information into consideration, Kyogle Grain Supplies represents another industry body which would benefit from the upgrade of the Mt. Lindesay Highway and Summerland Way as part of the Great South West growth initiative.

### Forest Enterprises Australia

Forest Enterprises Australia Ltd (FEA) is a leading forestry and forest products business operating in the agribusiness sector. FEA manufactures and markets sawn timber and wood fibre products to local and world markets. By 30 June 2008 FEA will have 30,000ha of hardwood plantations located within 150km radius of Casino. This will increase to around 60,000ha by 2010. This will generate 1,000,000 tonnes of logs per annum by 2014 to be delivered to a processing facility which will be located between Casino and Kyogle (see Figure 1, Map Reference 3 and 4) on the Summerland Way with access to the main Brisbane-Sydney rail. Products will require transport to a number of domestic and international export locations.

As such, infrastructure of the capacity & capability to cater for this activity will be essential to the economics of this investment. Consequently FEA will benefit highly from the upgrade of road and rail connections within the Great South West, primarily a direct access route to the Port of Brisbane, given their need for shipping exports.

### Frasers Livestock Transport

With operations based in Warwick (see Figure 1, Map Reference 1), Frasers Livestock Transport utilises Summerland Way and the Mt. Lindesay Highway to move products between key locations throughout Queensland and New South Wales. The livestock industry represents one which relies heavily on coastal shipping for exports and imports. The development of the Great South West would

enable the movement of livestock between points of origin within southern Queensland and northern New South Wales and the Port of Brisbane.

In addition, Frasers Livestock Transport estimate that if Summerland Way and the Mt. Lindesay Highway improved to accommodate B-Double freight trucks, the number of round trips made by their company along this important road link would be reduced from around 300 to approximately 100 per year. This would result in significant environmental savings.

### Downs to Rivers Action Committee

The Downs to Rivers Action Committee (DTRAC) acts on behalf of industry operators within the Darling Downs and Northern Rivers area in an attempt to improve existing freight connections and facilitate the introduction of new links.

DTRAC has long advocated the development of transport infrastructure links within the Great South West region, primarily the upgrade and improvement of Summerland Way and the Mt. Lindesay Highway.

### A Need for Commitment and Vision

The Federal Government plays a leading role in the investment of the Nations freight networks. It is recognised that Coastal Shipping will continue to play an important role in the movement of freight. The Federal Government needs to also recognise that for Coastal Shipping to be competitive it needs direct links to the nation's major multi modal facilities. Bromelton and the Great South West provides this opportunity that will ensure freight can be moved efficient and competitive from Australia's productive regions, the Port of Brisbane and Coastal Shipping.

# SUPPORTING THE GREAT SOUTH WEST

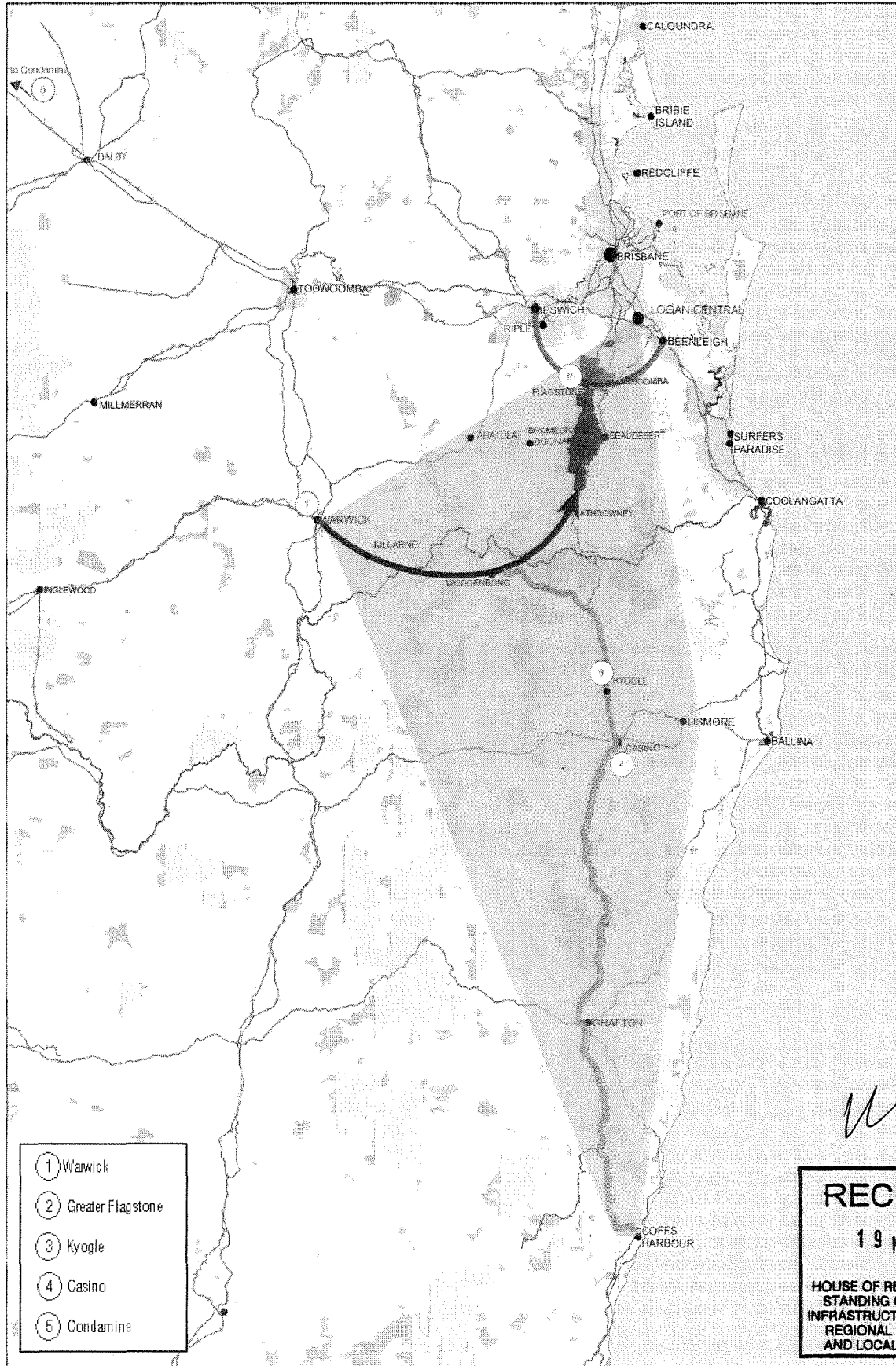


Figure 1 – The Great South West