13 May 2005

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Transport and Regional Services
Room R1 121
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Attention: Mr Tas Luttrell

Dear Sir

SUBMISSION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL SERVICES: INQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRATION OF REGIONAL RAIL AND ROAD FREIGHT TRANSPORT AND THEIR INTERFACE WITH PORT

The following comments are provided in response to the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry by the Southern Regional Organisation of Councils (SouthROC) which includes the local government areas of Gold Coast City, Logan City, Redland Shire, and Beaudesert Shire in South East Queensland and Tweed Shire in northern New South Wales.

The SouthROC region has a current population of more than 910,000 and a projected population in 20 years of more than 1.25 million. The Port of Brisbane is the major port facility for South East Queensland and the Northern Rivers region in New South Wales.

1. ROLE OF REGIONAL ARTERIAL ROAD AND RAIL NETWORK IN THE NATIONAL FREIGHT TRANSPORT TASK

The potential for regionally significant industrial areas such as the Yatala Industrial Estate, the Gold Coast Marine Precinct (GCMP), Crestmead and Bromelton to take part in significant export earning activities is impacted by access limitations to the Port of Brisbane.

Major manufacturers such as Carlton United Brewery (largest in Australia) and Riviera Boat Building (Australia's largest exporter of large scale leisure craft) are heavily reliant on access to the port for the transport of their goods to export markets. These companies access the port via the Pacific Motorway/Gateway Arterial Road.

Bromelton, located approximately 7 km west of Beaudesert, provides the most accessible opportunity for an extensive Multi-Modal Logistics Area (MMLA) in the SouthROC region and in South East Queensland, south of Acacia Ridge.

Bromelton is positioned and supported by significant transport and freight corridors, including the national, state and regionally significant national standard gauge railway line for freight movement operations with further potential to develop regional links with the State-controlled road network.

The Queensland Government, through the South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP) and Infrastructure Plan (SEQIPP) has been investigating the feasibility of a western corridor transport route from Ebenezer to Yatala. In further exploring the opportunities provided by Bromelton, the Beaudesert Shire Council has been examining potential and compatible road transport corridors in and around Bromelton, which would serve to provide:

1. A major north-south road link through Bromelton, which would also serve as a by-pass to Beaudesert town centre for the anticipated road freight traffic, which would emanate from a functioning Bromelton MMLA;
2. Provide an initiate a road segment along the proposed 'Summerland Way'; and
3. A link to the north with either the Mt. Lindesay Highway and/or the western corridor route (mentioned above) through to the Port of Brisbane etc.

Bromelton is positioned as the southernmost industrial/logistics node along the national standard gauge railway corridor and has the capability of being integrated with both existing and potential major arterial road networks and the Port of Brisbane. A Multi-Modal Logistics Area (MMLA) at Bromelton has the potential to maximise the comparative advantage of the Southern Region of South East Queensland by:

- lowering business costs and providing a logistical advantage;
- shortening the supply chain; and
- allowing for the efficient transportation of goods interstate and intrastate.

2. RELATIONSHIP AND COORDINATION BETWEEN ROAD AND RAIL NETWORK AND THEIR CONNECTIVITY TO PORTS.

The Bromelton area is considered to be the most logical gateway to the SEQ Region for the receipt and distribution of goods, which are bound to and from the Australia TradeCoast. The Bromelton area and the national standard gauge railway corridor possess strategic advantages, which will assist the region in distinguishing itself from other areas of trade and industry by significantly enhancing the attractiveness of doing business in the area.

3. POLICIES AND MEASURES REQUIRED TO ASSIST IN ACHIEVING GREATER EFFICIENCY IN THE AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT NETWORK WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO;

3.1 Land transport access to ports

There is a critical need to improve the transportation of freight originating from and transhipping the region given the current state of

arterial road connections to the Brisbane Port and the lack of integration with freight rail infrastructure.

Traffic volumes on the existing road connection are growing at a rate which will see critical sections of the road at capacity within 5 years. This is exacerbated by the lack of separation between commuter and freight movement on the road network generating delays and longer trip times for both domestic and industrial traffic. Any major stoppages on this road connection leaves freight stranded without alternative routes to the port facilities.

Investigations need to be undertaken into more efficient management of freight movement through urban areas, including the location of inter-modal freight nodes and the development of connecting local government road networks.

3.2 Capacity and operation of major ports

No comment

3.3 Movement of bulk export commodities, such as grain & coal

No comment

3.4 Role of intermodal freight hubs in regional areas

Other inter-modal modal options include the Gold Coast Airport which will have the infrastructure and capacity to cater for long-distance international routes in the near future. There is minimal freight carried through Gold Coast Airport at present, due to lack of suitable wide-body aircraft, lack of suitable international routes, and lack of suitable freight product. Future infrastructure will cater for freight movement through the airport which can be integrated with other regional freight modes.

There is also potential for pipelines to carry selected freight (eg petroleum products) from the refineries in Brisbane to a central distribution depot on the Gold Coast, thus avoiding the use of the high speed Motorway network by tanker vehicles. Such an initiative would need the support of Government and petroleum companies.

3.5 Opportunities to achieve greater efficiency in the use of existing infrastructure

While the TOR of this inquiry relates to road and rail links, there may be some scope to investigate the development of a water based freight links between Gold Coast City and Port of Brisbane via the existing waterways of southern Moreton Bay and Gold Coast Broadwater areas.

3.6 Possible advantage for the use of intelligent tracking technology

No comment

4. ROLE OF THE THREE LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN PROVIDING AND MAINTAINING THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT NETWORK

Integration of Land use planning and Infrastructure Provision.

Poor management of freight movement through urban areas presents major problems for local communities and ultimately the efficiency of freight movement.

Local Government has a key role in planning for and managing land use change and infrastructure provision. As such Local Government plays an important role in ensuring the effective integration of land use and freight corridors through maximising the advantages of industrial land and infrastructure location and minimising the negative impacts of freight movement on urban amenity.

This is secured through:

- Effective and efficient location of industrial areas to maximise freight routes,
- The location of intermodal freight nodes and the development of connecting local government road network, and
- Minimisng the negative impacts of freight movement on residential land uses and environmental values.

Freight Corridor Planning - Long Term

Freight Corridor Planning should be undertaken over a long time frame of 20 - 50 years and where opportunities are identified all three (3) levels of government need to take action to identify, secure and protect these corridors.

Integration of Pricing and Regulatory mechanisms to minimise negative impacts and achieve improved efficiencies.

Integrated and strategic application of pricing and regulatory mechanisms between levels of government is also required. For example, tolls on the Logan and Gateway Motorways are directing freight trucks onto local roads which results in negative impacts on residential areas and inefficient use of motorways.

Maximise effective & efficiency of corridors - better long term planning

SouthROC experiences the problems which arise as a result conflict between commuter and freight movement on both rail and road networks. For example there are no freight rail services to Yatala, a large industrial area on the Gold Coast Rail line and Flagstone which is developing as a significant residential community which is only serviced by freight rail.

In the context of roads the M1 is under pressure from the incompatibility of freight movement and private vehicle movement on nationally strategic corridor thereby reducing the effectiveness of all movements.

It is considered that the solution is effective corridor planning to separate movement where necessary but within the same corridor. For example, large corridors to allow both freight and passenger services, freight specific lanes.

Yours faithfully

Kim Campbell
SOUTHROC COORDINATOR