

Submission for Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041

The Draft Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan 2041 is a far reaching document with significant impact on the region and such a plan is commended. It needs to reconcile conflicting needs and some of these are mentioned. However, there are significant disconnects and short-sighted assumptions in this plan and in the Princes Highway Roadmap 2040.

This submission addresses potential conflicts between housing supply in the Nowra Bomaderry area, Objective 18, and protecting major freight networks, Objective 27. Given the lead time for major road projects, the need to plan for a road bypass of Nowra/Bomaderry as part of both this regional plan and the Princes Highway strategy is essential to meet the needs for freight networks and avoid conflict with residential areas.

References:

Princes Highway Roadmap 2040 <https://princeshighway.nsw.gov.au/tfnsw/phu/roadmap2040>

Nowra Bridge Project FAQ How will the Nowra Bridge Project improve traffic flow?

<https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/nowra-bridges-shoalhaven-river/frequently-asked-questions.html>

Objective 18: Provide housing supply in the right locations

Unlock housing supply through infrastructure planning and coordination

Nowra-Bomaderry offers long-term capacity of 9,600 new dwellings with the current focus on the Moss Vale Road precincts. Other smaller urban release areas such as Redgum Ridge, Shell Heights and Bayswood at Vincentia will contribute to housing supply.

Objective 27: Protect major freight networks (p78)

Future planning should protect the freight network from potential encroachment by the expansion of residential areas...

Some areas identified for housing supply in Objective 18: conflict with areas previously identified for a Nowra bypass. These housing areas need to be reconciled with freight and private transport network needs.

There is already significant congestion through the Nowra-Bomaderry urban area during parts of any given weekday. This is exacerbated by holiday traffic. The Preferred Option Report for the Nowra Bridge Project states that this area experiences some of the highest average traffic volumes with holiday periods experiencing up to 50% increase in volume. Holiday traffic occurs over a significant proportion of the year, much of it through traffic from the Illawarra and Sydney areas to holiday destinations in the Bay and Basin area and further south. The Nowra Bridge project provides relief at the Illaroo Rd and Bridge Rd intersections, but bottlenecks outside the project area will continue to constrain capacity to current levels.

The Nowra Bridge project documentation states that the project will provide for transport needs till 2046. The need for a highway overpass at Jervis Bay Road, and bypass at Milton-Ulladulla underscores that capacity through the large number of roundabouts and traffic lights on the same route through the Nowra Bomaderry urban area will NOT be adequate for the next 25 years. It is

acknowledged that this will be a high cost project, but that means the planning and development process will take longer before the project is built. This plan needs to, at least, identify and reserve a corridor for this bypass to avoid future conflict from encroachment by the expansion of residential areas.

It is notable that, the Vision Map on p9 identifies a need for “Improved connectivity” north of the Nowra-Bomaderry Growth Area, where a grade separated dual carriageway is already complete or nearing completion, and to the south, but these routes are not connected. The overall capacity of the highway through the Nowra-Bomaderry urban area is already constrained by the large number of traffic lights and roundabouts through the urban area and planning is needed to increase this capacity within the lifetime of this Regional Plan.

Summary

In summary, the Nowra Bridge project, while valuable for a number of reasons, is only a stop-gap measure since there is already significant congestion through the Nowra-Bomaderry urban area which is constrained by the road network outside the project area.

I submit that an increase in the overall capacity will be required within the life of this plan. Given the likely cost, constraints and planning lead time for increased north-south capacity, a traffic and transport strategy for the major freight network bypassing the main Nowra-Bomaderry urban area should be included in this Regional Plan.

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