

Progress In Rail Reform Productivity Commission  
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## SUBMISSION THE PROGRESS IN RAIL REFORM PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

The principal interest of the Association is in bulk freight, though adequate availability of passenger services is also an issue for the Association's member Councils.

The policy of the association on bulk transport of minerals and mining related goods is for all such goods to be transported by rail in preference to road transport.

This policy calls for the construction of rail loops to all new mines where the mine is within accessible distance of a rail line.

To avoid duplication of infrastructure, where there are a number of mines in close proximity, such rail loops would preferably be multi-user facilities. Cost sharing arrangements between mines would have to be worked out at an early stage.

The benefits of putting minerals onto rail (particularly coal):

less damage to local, state and federal roads, thus less infrastructure maintenance and reconstruction costs for all levels of government;

Increase in road safety,

better local amenity for residents and visitors on mine haul routes. (Less dust, less noise, safer roads for motorists, roads remain in better condition longer);

The Association has identified some impediments to encouraging mining companies to transport minerals by rail in specific areas in New South Wales.

In the South - the Maldon Dombarton - railway should be completed to alleviate the heavy truck traffic to and from Wollongong. Apart from servicing the coal industry, it would provide an alternate route to the Wollongong Port for many other bulk goods.

In the west - the connection of the existing rail lines at Mudgee and Ulan to provide an alternate route for bulk freight to go to the Port of Newcastle rather than having to go over the Blue Mountains, along an already congested passenger and freight route.

In the North -

- then the construction of a rail tunnel through the Liverpool Range to allow for greater tonnages to be freighted from the north west of the state of New South Wales to the port;

- or the construction of an alternate route to skirt the Liverpool Range, to achieve the same purpose,

Apart from encouraging the use of rail for bulk minerals, an easy, cheaper route to the North west could encourage the freight of hazardous goods by rail, to remove such traffic from having to use roads through country towns thus reducing one more danger on the roads!

(The ability to haul more tonnage per train, would reduce the freight cost for coal and other produce from the North west. At present, communities and mining companies are in the position of having to lobby the state government for freight reduction during times of economic distress).

- the construction of a dual rail line from Lidell to Grasstree.

In the Sydney metropolitan area - a by-pass to the Chullora freight route is critical. The inadequacies of the present system were demonstrated during the period of the Royal Easter Show in 1998 at the Homebush facilities.

For the two weeks or so of the Easter Show, rail freight going to Sydney or **Wollongong** was held up to allow for the passenger Easter traffic to the Show.

With the upcoming Olympics and increasing use of the Homebush facilities for other major functions, the hold up to freight rail will be increasingly unacceptable.

A viable alternative to freight travelling south to Wollongong would be the proposed freight line which diverts *from* the main western metropolitan rail line at St Marys and avoids the Chullora/Homebush area altogether.

The privatisation of certain sections of the freight rail service may be beneficial to encourage the use of rail freight as an alternative to road haulage. However, privatisation must not result in any reduction in passenger services, an adequate passenger service must be maintained.