



NSW Government freight plan to increase freight on rail, ease congestion

Thursday 31 May 2007

NSW Premier Morris Iemma today announced key details of the Government's plans to increase rail freight from Port Botany, slash heavy vehicle movements in the area by up to 300 trucks a day and relieve road congestion.

"The freight plan I am announcing today will help deliver one of my Government's most important economic initiatives," Mr Iemma said.

"Port Botany is a vital piece of infrastructure and we're making a \$500 million investment to expand its capacity.

"In 2005/06 trade through Port Botany was worth more than \$40 billion dollars – that figure is expected to double in the next 20 years.

"It is an economic imperative for our state that we can accommodate that growth by breaking open a potential bottleneck by moving freight by rail to new facilities more conveniently located to major road and rail routes," Mr Iemma said.

"Trade is the lifeblood of our economy and we need to make an investment now to keep our economy moving," Mr Iemma said.

The NSW Government's Freight Initiative endorses plans to:

- Establish new freight terminals at Enfield and, subject to discussions with the Commonwealth, at Moorebank;
- Achieve a target of 40% of freight carried by rail which will reduce the number of truck movements on key arterial roads by approximately one million truck movements per year; and
- Reduce truck movements around Port Botany and inner metropolitan suburbs by up to 300 per day.

"Most of this freight is going from the Port to Western Sydney – everything from computer games to paint to gourmet foods - so if we don't act now to increase rail freight movements, we will see more heavy trucks on our roads and more congestion," Mr Iemma said.

Mr Iemma said assessment of the Enfield site owned by Sydney Ports Corporation would now resume and would undergo careful planning considerations.

Transport Minister John Watkins said Enfield was on the Port Botany Goods Line, which meant containers could be moved by rail without entering the passenger rail network.

"Sydney Ports estimates the facility would result in an estimated 300 fewer truck movements a day around the Airport, Port Botany and Marrickville and a 1000 tonne a year reduction in carbon dioxide emissions."

Mr Watkins said the Freight Infrastructure Advisory Board (FIAB) report commissioned by the Government identified a site at Moorebank in Sydney's south west, owned by the Commonwealth, as being suitable for a second such freight terminal.

"We're working with the Commonwealth Government – which is ultimately responsible for the national freight rail network – to examine the site at Moorebank," Mr Watkins said.

"A joint Working Group is being formed to explore the planning issues and likely stages of development, if the necessary planning approvals are given.

"The group should report back to both Governments later this year."

Mr Watkins said the NSW Government had also committed substantial funds to the Southern Sydney Freight Line, which was to be constructed by the Federal Australian Rail Track Corporation.

"The NSW Minister for Planning approved that Commonwealth project in December 2006 and it is scheduled for completion in mid-2009," Mr Watkins said.

The new terminals would supplement the existing Camellia, Leightonfield, Yennora and Minto facilities that will reach capacity by 2012, or even sooner if rail mode share starts to increase, and would create new local employment opportunities."

Ports Minister Joe Tripodi said the announcement will ensure Sydney's reputation as a competitive and reliable Port continues

"Port Botany handles a third of Australia's container traffic and generates \$1.5 billion a year in economic activity," Mr Tripodi said.

"The State Government has already approved an expansion for Port Botany expected to deliver 9,000 new jobs to NSW and boost the State's economy by \$16 billion over the next 20 years - an \$800 million per year injection into the NSW economy," Mr Tripodi said.

Mr Watkins said the freight issue in metropolitan Sydney was not confined to rail.

"Given the nature of the freight task, the greater proportion of freight traffic accessing the Port Botany/Airport precinct will continue to use roads."

"The Government is therefore also planning to better manage road freight movements across metropolitan Sydney," Mr Watkins said.

The Government has broadly endorsed the FIAB recommendations. The Government's response to the FIAB report is available on the Ministry of Transport website at: <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/>