

Response to the
Western Sydney Corridors Program
Bells Line of Road Castlereagh Connection

June 2018



CENTRAL NSW
COUNCILS



Centroc's Mission is to be recognised as the lead organisation advocating on agreed regional positions and priorities for Central NSW whilst providing a forum for facilitating regional co-operation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources; effectively nurturing sustainable investment and infrastructure development.

www.centroc.com.au

1 June 2018

Reference jm:jb 180601
Enquiries: Ms J Bennett: 0428 690 935

The Hon Melinda Pavey
Minister Freight, Roads and Ports
Transport for NSW
18 Lee Street
Chippendale NSW 2008

Dear Minister,

Re: Bells Line of Road Castlereagh Connection

Central NSW Councils (Centroc) represents over 200,000 people covering an area of more than 50, 000 sq kms comprising the Local Government Areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Hilltops, Lachlan, Lithgow, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Upper Lachlan, Weddin, and Central Tablelands Water.

It is about the same size as Tasmania with half the population and a similar GDP. Centroc's vision is to be recognised as vital to the sustainable future of NSW and Australia.

Its mission is to be recognised as the lead organisation advocating on agreed regional positions and priorities for Central NSW whilst providing a forum for facilitating regional cooperation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources.

The Centroc Board is made up of the 28 Mayors and General Managers of its member Councils who determine priority for the region. These priorities are then progressed via sponsoring Councils. For more advice on Centroc programming and priorities, please go to our website <http://www.centroc.com.au/>

This region has a long and strong reputation as leaders in collaboration and on 24 May became the first Joint Organisation in NSW to hold its inaugural meeting.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the consultation of the Castlereagh Corridor M7 to Kurrajong. The Board met 24 May 2018 in Parliament House in Sydney and resolved to lodge a submission in line with existing policy and to request that members also lodge submissions taking into consideration the concerns of Western Sydney.

The Board is acutely aware of the challenges of the communities of Western Sydney and respectful of their needs. Representing the communities of Central NSW we do not have a view on the specifics of the corridor alignment only that a corridor needs to be secured for a future safe swift link between Sydney and Central NSW.

It is Board policy to support a corridor M7 to Kurrajong. Recognising the concerns being expressed in Western Sydney on the departure from the 1951 alignment, this region see the 1951 corridor as satisfactory where it extends through to Kurrajong.

Centroc members are staunch supporters of a future safe, swift link between Sydney and Central NSW. Over 13 kilos of publically funded plans costing millions of dollars have been expended to identify one potential solution – a future upgrade generally along the Bells Line alignment. For Sydney as a global city to be connected to the west so that a safe, swift route with lower carbon emissions can be affected, a road solution that is not just to persist with upgrades to the Great Western Highway is required.

A safe swift link between Sydney, Central NSW and then further west provides a good fit with State priorities including:

- Growing the regions
- A Decade of Decentralisation
- Increasing business investment in rural and regional NSW
- Growing NSW GDP
- Increasing tourist bed nights
- Maintaining and investing in infrastructure
- Improving health outcomes for regional communities
- Reducing congestion in Sydney
- Leveraging inland rail
- Leveraging the Badgerys Creek Aerotropolis
- Providing flood relief access for the communities of Western Sydney

Building on the strategic work undertaken in 2012 are the following:

- The Bells Line/Outer Sydney Orbital Corridor has been identified by Infrastructure Australia in its July 2017 Corridor Protection report as the highest priority in the nation;
- In July 2015 The Bells Line of Road – Castlereagh Connection, The Outer Sydney Orbital and the South West Rail Link Extension were three of the 19 major transport corridors identified across Sydney for preservation for future transport use; and
- The Bells Line of Road – Castlereagh Connection (BLoR - CC) was recognised as a corridor to provide a connection from Kurrajong to Sydney’s motorway network, and provide an alternate route across the Blue Mountains. Preservation of a corridor for BLoR – CC was a recommendation of the Bells Line of Road Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan.

“Corridor protection can deliver substantial benefits for individual jurisdictions and the nation”

(<http://infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/policy-publications/publications/files/CorridorProtection.pdf>)

The Great Western Highway and Bells Line of Road are "High Risk" roads which our residents must traverse to access Sydney for health, education, business and family purposes. Work undertaken during the Bells Line Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan process had the communities of Western Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Central NSW talking to one another on a blog. The conversation was all about road

safety and given an aspiration of the Future Transport 2056 Plan is zero trauma, work will need to continue to separate freight by trucks from other road users through the Blue Mountains.

Tourism in the region, primarily a car based industry, is being severely impacted by the congestion along the Great Western Highway. The Central West NSW Transport Needs Study 2010 identified tourism as the third largest industry in the region.

Central NSW is facing both a competitive disadvantage of escalating proportions and a transport route to and from our capital city and ports which is dangerous. The route deficiencies have been identified numerous times and it is therefore important that there be a bias for action.

If you require further information or clarification on comments in this submission please contact Ms Jenny Bennett, Executive Officer, at jenny.bennett@centroc.com.au or on 0428 690 935.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'a. J. Medcalf', written in a cursive style.

Cr John Medcalf

Chair

Central NSW Councils (Centroc)