



Ref: DW

20 May 2013



The Chair
Select Committee on Regional Development
ACT Legislative Assembly
Canberra ACT 2601

By email: brian.lloyd@parliament.act.gov.au

A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE	
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Dear Ms Berry

Regional Development

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Select Committee in regard to ACT's relationship with the region, and the invitation to appear at the public hearing at the Assembly on 23 May 2013.

Our submission is organised around the terms of reference of the Committee, and presented as issues or ideas to progress, with a suggested action:

- a) Economic development (including tourism and transport)

The relationship of ACT and the south coast is not only founded on tourism, but on the holiday home real estate market, and access to tertiary health, retail and education:

Domestic tourism generates over 2million visitors and \$500m to the south coast economy, much of which is weekend/short trip travel to and from ACT

- o *Action: survey leisure travel movements between ACT and coast by route*

Up to 30% of properties on the south coast are held by owners outside the local government area, up to half of which are registered with ACT addresses. The associated housing market is influenced by the ACT property market, the confidence in APS job security, and impending public servant retirements

- o *Action: survey non-resident owners of intention to retire or hold property as investment or holiday home purposes*

Anecdotally, many of those in ACT desire work or residence on the south coast, but commuter distance or telecoms or APS employment rules make that unviable. With the advent of NBN on south coast and ACT, the ability to telecommute may challenge conventional work practice, and access to higher level education and health, in turn potentially shifting some housing and office stock demand from ACT to south coast

- o *Action: investigate potential service, business or function capable of relocation to minimise cost of infrastructure and land expansion in ACT, and optimise existing stocks on south coast*

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With that potential tourism and work choice, comes the heightened ACT-led expectation of services and facilities on south coast. In many cases, the initial decision to relocate is reversed when the often lower standards of retail, health and recreation are realised, sometimes causing dislocation costs to family and business

- *Action: survey the type and timescale of decisions of ACT and south coast residents and business to relocate, to assist service/infrastructure planning*

Accordingly, the movement between ACT and south coast residents, visitors and freight are likely to escalate. The ease of private transport, or access to public transport, may influence the frequency and scale of those movements. Around 50 cruiseships a year are anticipated into Eden Port, with land-based tour packages along the south coast and into snowy mountains and ACT proposed.

Council has prepared Eden Port and Merimbula Airport masterplans for their development to attract and accommodate visitor, recreation and freight growth.

With reference to the attached schematic, the south coast and ACT hold strategic transport, visitor and freight advantages in the south east –

- ✓ ACT has air, road, rail access to capital cities
- ✓ South coast has air, sea, road access to capital cities
- ✓ Travel times between south coast and ACT ~ 2-2.5hrs
- ✓ Canberra airport as hub to south coast

Freight from ACT to Sydney and Melbourne by road takes > 3 hrs and is subject to congestion and intermodal double handling. If bulk freight was aggregated and/or containerised through Eden Port, then those supply chain delays and costs could be eased. To progress that thinking, collaborative advocacy and planning should pursue:

- ≈ Conversion of east/west corridors (Snowy Mountains and Kings Highways) to B-Double standard, enabling direct access to B Triple/HPV Hume corridor
- ≈ Development of Eden Port for freight and cruiseship access
- ≈ Development of Merimbula Airport leisure and business air travel to Canberra
- ≈ The maintenance of the east/west corridors (Snowy Mountains and Kings Highways)

- *Action: ACT government and south coast councils collaboratively plan and lobby government, tourism bodies and transport operators to utilise east-west corridors, and Eden and Canberra as transport hubs*

b) Coordination of service planning and delivery (including health and education)

NSW government is revising its service delivery models and proposes decentralisation into regions such as south coast. While the south coast has peak holiday season pressure on networks, services and facilities, the remainder of the year often has the utilisation of those facilities at sub-optimal levels. Conversely, it is understood the ACT systems strain under the pressure of sustained development and population growth, year round.

Recent planning at NSW and local government level, promote the philosophy that residents and visitors should not need to travel more than 2 hours to tertiary health and education services. At a regional scale, that proposition would place the ACT as the pre-eminent hub for those services, to many communities.

It is also understood cross-border relationships between NSW and ACT are under review in relation to health and education services. Many of the tertiary services available in ACT are duplicated in Queanbeyan for example, with no discernible travel or trauma disadvantage should NSW residents access ACT services and facilities under improved state agreements. By treating ACT health as a hub within the NSW region, the placement of ACT rehabilitation or palliative care on the south coast for example, or referral of specialist procedures to new south coast and private hospitals, may reduce strain on ACT services, assist recuperation, and minimise dislocation.

ANU and Canberra Universities are exploring opportunities to specialise with campuses on the south coast, such as medical/health training at the new South East Regional Hospital at Bega, and marine research at Eden. The transitioning of students from capital cities into regional areas such as the south coast, is understood to increase the likelihood of those students setting up practice in the regions, and thus capable of supporting ACT visiting or relocating residents.

- *Action: ACT government and south coast councils collaboratively plan and lobby for the appropriate siting and sizing of health and education infrastructure between surrounding regional centres and ACT*

c) Collaborative procurement

Many NSW councils already collaborate through joint planning, advocacy, and procurement. The ACT and surrounding councils previously collaborated in those matters through the Regional Leaders Forum, in areas such as environment reporting, ageing in place and water conservation.

Most councils access pre-approved suppliers and contracts under state or local government procurements panels. Perhaps that access may be opened to ACT government to improve scale and scope.

Many of the materials and resources are available in the region, often used for civil construction and maintenance for example. By aggregating, those suppliers could scale and build business to the ACT and region, including the storage and harvest of raw and waste materials.

- *Action: ACT government and regional councils collaboratively plan for bulk purchases and contract agreements as a group, or through access to NSW and LGP contracts*
- *Action: the resource base of suppliers in ACT and region be mapped and published for access by the group*

d) Environmental and conservation matters

As outlined earlier, the Regional Leaders Forum previously collaborated with surrounding councils in environment reporting and water conservation. Much of that work revolved around research, analysis, reporting and education at a landscape or catchment scale – in recognition that natural resource issues cross all boundaries. That collaboration enabled access to university and technology expertise possibly not affordable without the scale of the ACT and regional areas combining effort and resources.

At NSW government level, a 'locational leadership group' comprising executives of key state agencies and local government are working on compiling asset, property, resource and landscape data, and placing that information into spatial/geocoded context for access and analysis held on a secure platform in Cloud.

Collaborating with those agencies, the ACT may provide and glean information that may assist better alignment of natural resource and asset management across borders. Utilising change detection mapping as remote sensing for example, may assist identifying landscapes at risk or damaged from fire, weed and dumping, or the extent to which landscapes have regenerated following investment in weed control, revegetation, reforestation, habitat connection and the like.

- *Action: ACT government and regional councils work together in the production of state of environment reporting, catchment planning and reporting*
- *Action: ACT government and regional councils work with NSW Locational Leadership Group in the procurement of technology and provision of spatial and extant data to improve landscape and asset planning and monitoring*

e) Other matters

The NSW local government and planning sectors are under reform. The number of local authorities surrounding ACT are likely to reduce, while those remaining are likely to be placed into 'county councils' to plan and manage matters such as economic development, land use planning, catchment management, water and waste management. Already, many General Managers of councils are engaged at RDA or ROC level.

That bodes for a different approach to local government working with ACT in those areas, in recognition that the *ACT influences or relies upon, the region for economic, resource and recreation activity.*

There should be opportunities to rethink the aggregation or redistribution of public services and facilities within reach of ACT, but more to expand the Canberra plus 1 (commuter-focussed) strategy, to a Canberra plus 2+ (freight/recreation/facility-focussed) strategy.

We're here to help.

Yours faithfully



Cr Bill Taylor

Mayor



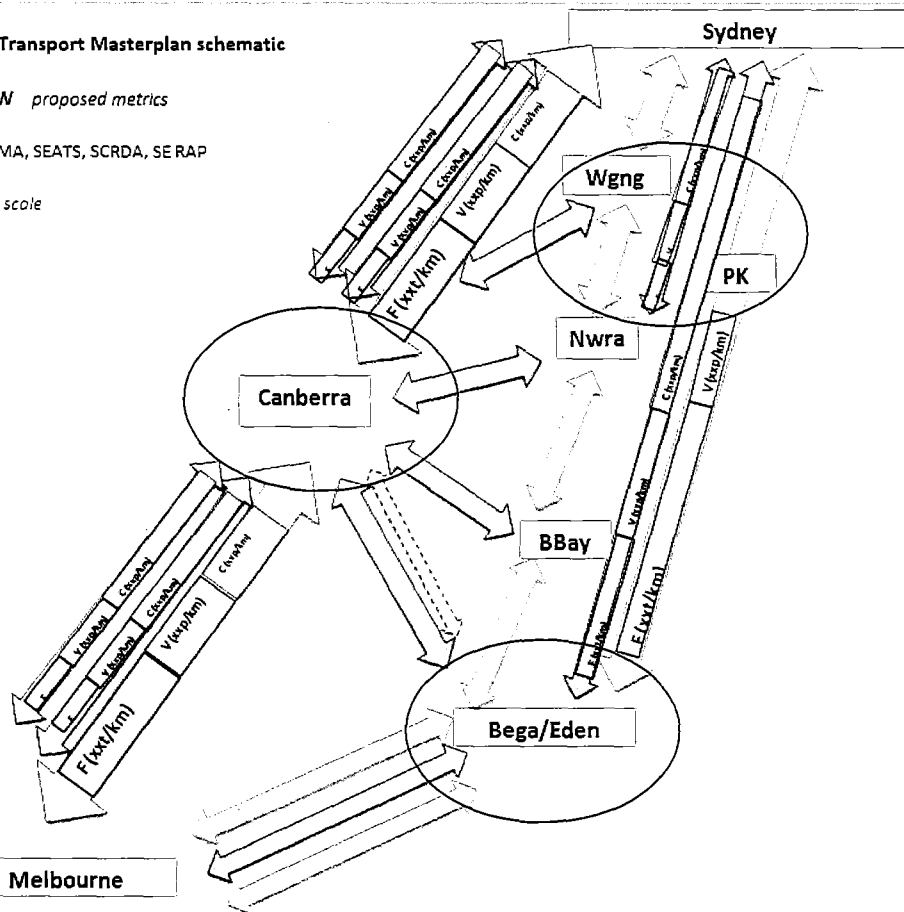
Bega Valley Shire Council

NSW Transport Masterplan schematic

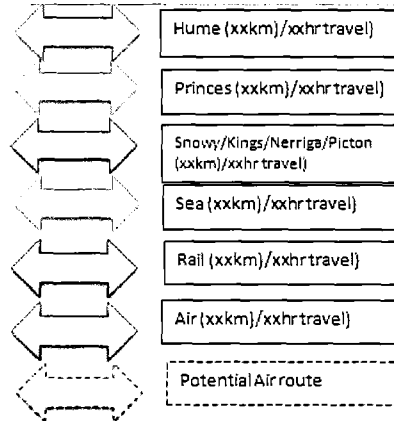
SENSW proposed metrics

cc; NRMA, SEATS, SCRDA, SE RAP

Not to scale



Legend (width of arrow = volume, length = distance)



Metrics per route/type

- Freight (tonnes per km)
- Visitor (pax per km)
- Commuter (pax per km)
- Trauma (accidents/km)
- M&R (\$/km)
- CO2 (tonnes/km)

