

How freight drives us to unsustainable outcomes in Sydney

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Sydney airport moves more than 50% (in value) of Australia's freight and Port Botany is predicted to increase container movements from around 1.2million to 3 million within 15 years. The growth for containers comes in around 8% per annum. The population of Sydney, itself is growing at around 0.8% (well down from the 1.2% average of the Olympics days & well below Melbourne at 1.3% and Brisbane at 2.3% - even so the news hasn't filtered through because the figure of 1,000(1.2%) a week is still being sprouted by Carr and Knowles, possibly in an attempt to talk up the real estate?) As Sustainability educators we should be concerned that container growth in imports runs at 10 times the population growth. Even allowing for some of this being moved out of Sydney it is still at an unsustainable rate and at an unsustainable costs given the pollution and subsequent health impacts. Read the scenario below - it appears we all become peripheral to the real business of moving containers to warehouses, goods to westfields, and shortly after the garbage to Goulburn.

Cabinet documents say a new Sydney Freight Management Act will be required, with the law having "sufficient... scope to enable the possible future introduction of a metropolitan road freight vehicle pricing and demand management regime to influence desired route, mode and travel time". New truck and rail facilities will need to be built at Enfield capable of shifting 300,000 containers a year - with a separate freight line next to the western or southern lines supporting deliveries to a transfer station in the city's outer suburbs, leaked cabinet papers show. The rail lines would be at the centre of a \$2 billion transport upgrade, which could include the building of a road tunnel from Port Botany to the M4 East, near Burwood, and an expansion of lanes on the M5 freeway to Campbelltown.

Other roads near the airport would also need to be improved and consideration is being given to a tunnel between the port and King Georges Road, "Which would replicate the current M5 route" to help the city cope with horrific projections for truck-traffic rises.

But that would still see truck trips doubling to nearly 2 million container movements a year raising the prospect of long traffic jams inside the tunnels along the M5 East corridor. The papers suggest that with half of Sydney's extra industrial space in the next five years becoming available along the M7 corridor between Seven Hills and Casula - and two-thirds of that being devoted to warehouse space - "the existing terminals will become increasingly remote from the distribution and warehousing clusters and end industrial markets". The Enfield terminal would be linked by either a new southern freight-only line from Macarthur - already touted in Federal Government plans as a \$192 million transport necessity - or a similar western branch line. These lines would connect to an outer suburb transfer station, at Ropes Creek or Holsworthy, depending on whether the southern or western lines were supported.

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