

Plenty to gain by moving Botany container facility

The Port Botany container terminal should be moved to Newcastle, writes **Greg Cameron**.

ALL the talk is about reforming Sydney Airport but another solution to local traffic problems is staring the NSW government in the face – get rid of Port Botany container terminal.

Major improvements to air, rail and road transportation in Sydney will be gained by relocating the terminal to the Port of Newcastle.

Aircraft noise over Sydney would be removed by lengthening the short north-south parallel runway into Botany Bay and building a new east-west runway into the container terminal site so that all flight paths occur over Botany Bay.

Rail services for passengers would be optimised by removing freight from Sydney's rail network.

Container trucks would be removed from Sydney's roads by railing all containers from a new container terminal at the Port of Newcastle to a new intermodal terminal at Eastern Creek using a new rail freight bypass of outer western Sydney, between the Port of Newcastle and Glenfield.

Freight trains would be removed from Newcastle. Freight for northern NSW would be railed to an intermodal terminal west of Newcastle.

Warehousing at Eastern Creek would enable containers to be packed and unpacked so that goods are trucked without the container.

Instead of trucking freight into Sydney, freight would be railed to the intermodal terminal at Eastern Creek and then trucked to the final destination.

All of these improvements are made possible by relocating Port Botany container terminal operations to the Port of Newcastle.

The NSW government would keep \$6.8 billion raised recently from selling leases to ports Botany, Kembla and Newcastle. The lessees would profit from participating in the new infrastructure projects, as well as earning the respect of the people of NSW for allowing the improvements to occur.

Alternatively, the lessees and the



OPTIMISE: The area where the Port Botany container terminal is has better uses.

NSW government can prevent the improvements.

In 2012, the NSW and Australian governments' joint study on aviation capacity in the Sydney region found that Sydney Airport could not be expanded due to land constraints. The evaluation excluded the Port Botany container terminal site.

Sydney Airport's 2438-metre north-south parallel runway is too short, but it can be extended to 4000 metres into Botany Bay. This caters for long-wheel-base aircraft, which are quieter, more fuel efficient and carry more passengers than the aircraft they replace.

The 2530-metre east-west cross runway is also too short. When weather prevents the use of the dual parallel runway system, the capacity is limited to a maximum of around 55 movements per hour – well below the current demand during substantial periods of the day. A second east-west cross runway 4000 metres long can be built from Botany Bay into the container terminal site.

Removing aircraft noise over residential areas alone justifies relocating the container terminal to Newcastle.

It is understood that Transport for NSW is unable to accommodate rail freight in the government's proposed improvements to the passenger rail network, particularly for the new "metro-style" trains. Optimising the rail network for passenger services by removing freight alone justifies relocating the container terminal to Newcastle.

Removing freight from the rail network would require cancelling the proposed Moorebank intermodal terminal project. Cancelling this project is an advantage because there is insufficient rail freight capacity between Port Botany and Western Sydney, even for the current volume of container movements.

The NSW government wants to increase the number of containers moved by rail. This makes it essential to build a new intermodal terminal at Eastern Creek, which in turn requires the Western Sydney freight line to be built, at a cost of \$1 billion.

But if railing more containers involves increasing the size of the proposed Moorebank intermodal terminal, then the NSW and Australian governments are obliged to declare their intentions now.

Eastern Creek is closer to the main demand areas for freight than Moorebank and has ample land available for warehousing, transport connections and industrial development. It makes sense to rail 100 per cent of containers between the Port of Newcastle and Eastern Creek.

A new container terminal can be built immediately at the Port of Newcastle. This terminal would service northern NSW until completion of the rail freight bypass line and the transfer of operations from Port Botany. In the interim, containers would be railed between Port Botany and Eastern Creek using the southern section of the bypass line, between Glenfield and Eastern Creek. There would be no requirement for intermodal terminals at Enfield and Minto.

These initiatives are commercially viable and are a major improvement on the NSW government's current plan.

Greg Cameron is a public affairs consultant specialising in regional economic development. He was BHP's public affairs manager in Newcastle from 1994 to 1999

Train termination out of step with times

The world has realised the value of inner-city rail, writes **Graeme Tychsen**.

IN arguing the case for ending trains, Newcastle MP Tim Owen has pointed to London, of its disparate train termini, and saying that people must change. Trains were not ended, or removed, to do this. Rather, trains started as private operations, with each operator jealous of its territory. So each operator had its own terminus. For efficient travel, London has to pay this never-ending price. This was not planned.

Folly for the modern age, which includes Australia's ageing demographics and hands-free IT-based conduct of business proceeding as people get about. In a day and age calling for efficiency, London's eternal loss is exactly what is planned for Newcastle.

Newcastle trains terminate at a commanding heritage station, at the heart of the most densely rich destination of the land, of a peerless blend of natural and created amenity, with the backdrop of a working port, as a major centre, second largest of the state, seventh of the country, of the powerhouse region of Australia, the area within a 300-kilometre radius of Sydney.

Incidentally, Sydney inadvertently sold itself short thinking the centre would be around Broadway, where the immovable Central Station was built, but the CBD was drawn towards the harbour, requiring the city circle, and then the eastern suburbs line in 1979!

International standards mean trains of populous regions are part of the backbone of transport. In 2014 trains are not being removed from centres, but being returned.

The only argument put for ending trains is "connectivity". The corridor

is largely fenced by buildings and further lengths of the riverfront barricaded by sections of continuous road on the foreshore.

Regardless of trains, direct thoroughfares to the riverfront today are very limited.

For the money and disruption of the cutting, the corridor could be raised and/or lowered, at the 11 points, and the overhead removed for new inter-city trains which could be dual-powered, charging batteries on the main. Maitland services are already self-propelled. Consideration should be given to trams sharing the train tracks, with a lightweight overhead, third rail powered.

In the end road users will pay the price. Roads are congestion sensitive. Yet the attack on seamless travel will see greater use of roads. Road users will pick up the final tab.

As I write this I also point out road congestion is exploding in wider Newcastle, yet not a murmur

from the government. This congestion, on so many local streets, will not end with completion of the bypass, west of the John Hunter Hospital and flying over the link road at Jesmond.

I note that many who support ending trains show thinking only in terms of local transport, not of Newcastle as a major centre of the country's powerhouse region, and its need for direct connection, as part of a robust and resilient transport system, yet to be built.

It would seem to be necessary to point out that transport and urban decisions do reach wide and far.

And so that it is not left in any doubt it is clear that trains are not only not in the way of revitalisation, but are a real part of it, for Newcastle to enjoy its full potential. Ask those places putting trains in, or trying to reintroduce them.

Graeme Tychsen is a Newcastle resident

theherald.com.au

■ Yesterday the *Herald* reported that Knights coach Wayne Bennett would quit as club coach at the end of this season, describing his time at the club as less than ideal.

Bye bye Benno. Thanks for not much, 2013 showed promise but that was not capitalised on this season. Think your methods are a bit old fashioned too. Time to retire I think Wayne, you leave a great record behind but not at the Knights.
Centreman

So will Stoney get first shot at the vacant position?
Baal

Stone 1st grade, Barney under 20s best choices, let's not stuff around
Knows best

Bennett is still a great coach. He just wasn't the right coach for the Knights. Any person cannot be a success everywhere. It was a typical Tinkler "act first think later" decision to bring him here.
Newcastle Bogan

As a season ticket holder and member I am absolutely gutted Wayne is leaving. There is not ONE coach that would have handled this horrendous season any better, I am extremely concerned for the future of my beloved club now. Would have loved Coach Bennett to guide us into a new dynasty without all the distractions. I am feeling very down, this has been such a rotten week which has now gotten much worse.
KOB

fromfacebook

■ Yesterday the *Herald* reported that a company controlled by mogul Kerry Stokes had won approval to develop an industrial park at Tomago.

Well tomago is industrial area after all . . . so why not. But only use Australian nationals workers please if you go ahead
Michelle Hadson

Better upgrade the roads first. Sandgate, Hexam, Tomago, Williamtown all terrible at peak work start/knock-off times and holidays are worse.
Jay-Dee Gummibear

HEZ is still empty. Who is going to fill all the space?
Tim Duggan

Another speedway would be good
Joel Wilks

onlinepoll

■ Today's question
Has the Wayne Bennett era been a success for the Newcastle Knights?

■ Yesterday's result
Are you confident the state government will have the new Maitland area hospital built with its stated five-year deadline?

