

1 December 2017

TRANSPORT NSW

### **Submission on Future Transport 2056**

RDA Orana would like to thank the Department of Transport for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Future Transport 2056 Plans.

The Orana region stretches across the Central West and Western region of NSW. The Orana, meaning 'Welcome' in Wiradjuri, it is the largest and most diverse region in the State, covering an area of 25% of NSW. It services a population of over 120,000 people, encompasses 12 Local Government areas, including Cobar, Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett. Our work is guided by the Orana Regional Plan 2013-2016, which was developed in consultation with community, business and local government across the Orana region. Our priorities are

- Economic diversification & sustainability
- Workforce planning & development
- Business investment
- Infrastructure and
- Whole-of-government planning.

With a Gross Regional Product of \$7,145.381 million (AU) and strong, growing key industries including mining, agriculture and government and community services, the region's economy is thriving, though not without challenges, particularly to the west.

RDA Orana has completed a significant freight and logistics study for the region which shows has found that existing freight and logistics networks underpinning the Orana region do not yet constrain regional productive capacity nor impede access to markets. However, the regional freight and logistics network is not without its challenges and impediments.

Parts of the network are variously impacted by poor condition, congestion, inefficient utilisation and access restrictions. These lead to load constraints, slower speeds, less direct routes and increased wear and tear on vehicles, ultimately affecting the efficiency, cost structure and productivity of the freight sector.

The inherent variability of seasonal agricultural production makes predicting freight demands difficult and, combined with the recent consolidation of parts of the network, conspires to place additional pressure on the regional freight network.

The challenges and impediments impacting the regional network have the potential to result in higher freight costs for regional producers and industry, impacting regional competitiveness and profitability, and resulting in higher costs to consumers.

The estimated regional freight task is approximately 27,800 kilotonnes (kT) per annum. This includes all internal, outbound and inbound freight that makes use of the Orana freight road and rail network.

The regional freight task is forecast to grow significantly over the next 20 years to almost 49,000kT per annum by 2035, an increase of 76% over current freight volumes.

The expected increase in the freight task will place additional pressure on parts of the Orana freight network that are already constrained by poor condition, congestion and access. Furthermore, without additional investment, the increased freight task may create new constraints and barriers in the network over time. For example, the bulk of the region's freight task is currently carried by a small number of key road freight corridors including the Newell, Mitchell, Oxley and Golden Highways. The freight task around the regional hub of Dubbo is expected to intensify significantly by 2035, with these key corridors likely to be leaned upon to handle the growth of the freight task.

It is therefore critical that an integrated approach to planning and investing in the Orana regional freight network is adopted by local, state and federal governments with input from businesses producing and moving freight. Failure to adopt such an approach could lead to initiatives simply resulting in a mode shift rather than an improvement in whole-of-network performance.

RDA Orana acknowledges that some consultation has occurred, we express concerns concern that we weren't engaged, particularly as we have spent considerable resources in undertaking a significant freight and logistics report that should inform the regional component of the plan. RDA Orana supports further consultation on the plan before the Future Transport 2056 Plan is adopted by Government.

Should additional information be required RDA Orana's Executive Officer (Megan Dixon) would be pleased to oblige on 02 6885 1488.

Yours Sincerely,

*Megan Dixon*

Megan Dixon  
Executive Officer  
Regional Development Orana