

LOWER HUNTER TRANSPORT NEEDS STUDY BRIEF FOR PROPOSALS

1. Introduction

The Lower Hunter, covering the local government areas of Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton, has an extensive existing freight and commuter road and rail network. It services both population and industries focused on coal, metal, wine, power generation, defence, manufacturing, tourism and retail. The Lower Hunter is one of NSW's most diverse regions and benefits from major regional facilities at the Port of Newcastle, Newcastle Airport, Newcastle City Centre, John Hunter Hospital and University of Newcastle. The natural environment offers attractive coastal, urban and rural lifestyles. Population growth has typically been associated with coastal areas around Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens. In recent years, however, new urban release areas have emerged further up the valley with strong residential growth in the Maitland area. Congestion is emerging on the New England Highway as a result. Good transport links in the Lower Hunter is important for state and national economic development.

The Australian and New South Wales Governments have jointly committed funds for a comprehensive study into the transport needs of the Lower Hunter Region. The study area includes the local government areas of Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton and connections to Newcastle and the F3. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (Department of Infrastructure) and the RTA have been requested to conduct a study, using an independent consultant, into the appropriateness of existing land transport networks in meeting the short and long term transport needs of the Lower Hunter. The study will be submitted to Infrastructure Australia for consideration in its National Infrastructure Audit. It shall identify potential transport proposals capable of being delivered in the short term, as well as a series of strategic initiatives to meet the identified transport needs over the longer term. It is anticipated that the study will identify and assess options to enhance transport connections linking Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton with Newcastle and the F3 to support state and national economic growth.

2. Terms of reference

Terms of reference have been jointly adopted by the Department of Infrastructure and the RTA following community consultation and are attached. This document forms part of the requirements which the interested consultants need to address in their proposals.

3. Study objectives

The study objectives are to:

- Identify passenger and freight land transport needs connecting Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton with Newcastle and the F3 over the next 25 years, having regard to the NSW Department of Planning's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy and other land use studies undertaken and recently released. The study is not to focus on the transport of coal freight or port and airport expansion;
- Review current performance of the land transport networks in the study area and connections to adjacent areas and identify current deficiencies and challenges that may be anticipated in the future;
- Consider the role of major centres with respect to provision of future possible intermodal terminals;

- Identify land transport strategies to meet passenger and freight needs over the next 25-years, particularly links connecting Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton with Newcastle and the F3;
- Identify a list of potential proposals to deliver these strategies and assess the relative benefits of each proposal based on strategic engineering, environmental, economic and cost assessment in meeting the identified long term land use and transport needs of the study area;
- Identify a priority list of proposals capable of being delivered in the short term (say within 5-years), as well as a series of strategic initiatives to meet transport needs over the longer term (say 6 to 25 years); and
- Conduct an independent review of the current estimate (in current dollars and out-turn dollars) for the F3 to Branxton proposal.

4. Study area

The study should consider transport needs in the area that includes the local government areas of Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton and its connections with Newcastle and the F3.

5. Other studies

The study should consider other land use and transport infrastructure studies including but not limited to:

- Draft AusLink Sydney to Brisbane Corridor Strategy;
- Lower Hunter Regional Strategy;
- F3 to Branxton Environmental Assessment and Associated Reports;
- NSW Ports Growth Plan;
- Studies undertaken by the Hunter Valley Research Foundation
- Twice the Task – A Review of Australia’s Freight Transport Tasks; and
- Strategies, studies and plans undertaken by local councils.

6. Traffic Model

The RTA has commissioned a traffic model which covers the study area. It has been developed in TransCad, but is understood to be convertible into other programs such as EMME-2. This traffic model will be available for the purposes of the study.

7. Methodology

In order to fulfil the study objectives and deliver the key outputs an indicative project method, which may be modified and/or refined in consultant submissions, is as follows:

1. Review the existing land transport networks and identify current safety and traffic deficiencies;
2. Review existing and future land use, especially population growth in the study area, and related land transport demands to establish long term land transport. The study, however, is not to focus on the transport of coal freight or port and airport expansion but should consider their impact on passenger services now and into the future;
3. Identify land transport strategies to meet passenger and freight needs over the next 25-years, in particular, the need to improve access connecting Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton with Newcastle and the F3;

4. At a strategic level identify key environmental constraints, including environmentally sensitive areas, and physical constraints in the natural and built environment in providing additional capacity on the land transport system;
5. Identify a list of potential proposals to deliver these strategies and assess the relative benefits of each proposal based on strategic engineering, environmental, economic and cost assessment in meeting the identified long term transport needs of the study area. In particular, traffic conditions should be modelled in future years and the performance of proposals assessed in meeting identified strategies. Consultants will need to draw on the RTA's Cost Estimating Guidelines and RTA's Economic Analysis Manual;
6. Conduct an independent review of the current estimate (in current dollars and out-turn dollars) for the F3 to Branxton proposal;
7. Identify a priority list of proposals capable of being delivered in the short term (say within 5-years), as well as a series of strategic initiatives to meet transport needs over the longer term (say 6 to 25 years) based on economic and environmental considerations with all assumptions to be clearly stated and justified; and
8. Prepare a delivery strategy for the preferred land transport proposals which addresses funding scenarios and possible staging and timing (short and longer term) of the proposals and associated transport network improvements.

8. Meetings

As the consultants progress through the study process they must regularly (at least fortnightly) meet with the Project Manager.

Regular meetings and briefings of the Project Steering Committee will ensure appropriate guidance and governance of the consultants. The Project Steering Committee will be chaired by Department of Infrastructure every month.

Regular meetings and briefings of the Council Reference Group will be held to ensure appropriate input from and liaison with key interest groups.

9. Consultation

The consultants will need to involve a Council Reference Group in the study process. The Council Reference Group will be established to ensure appropriate input to and engagement with key local stakeholders. Members of the Council Reference Group will include the Department of Planning, the Mayors or their representatives of Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton Councils. Further, consultation will include face-to-face consultation with Councils individually to ensure issues are clearly understood.

The consultants will also be required to manage a Community Consultation Program. This will involve identifying and writing to a wide range of stakeholder groups seeking their input at stakeholder workshops focusing on land transport issues in the study area.

Beyond the Council Reference Group and the Community Consultation Program the consultant will need to directly consult with Commonwealth, State, Local Government Agencies and other key stakeholders. Relevant stakeholders include:

- Mayors, or their representatives, of Maitland, Cessnock, Singleton, Newcastle, Wyong, Lake Macquarie, Muswellbrook and Port Stephens Councils
- Link or Sink

- NRMA Motoring Services
- NSW Department of State and Regional Development
- Australian Rail Track Corporation
- Newcastle Port Corporation
- Hunter Economic Development Corporation
- Hunter Regional Organisation of Councils
- Local bus and truck operators
- All local area Business Chambers and the Hunter Business Chamber

Other relevant stakeholders may be identified during the course of the study.

All consultations with Commonwealth, State and Local Government Agencies are to be attended by the Project Manager, unless prior agreement to the contrary is confirmed.

10. Key outputs

The key outputs from the selected consultant will be set out in a Lower Hunter Transport Needs Study Report that:

1. Includes a description and summary of the short and long term land transport needs in the study area;
2. Identifies proposals and strategies to address these land transport needs that consider other broader state-wide and national strategies;
3. Identifies realistic, practical, economic and feasible proposal priorities for road and rail capable of implementation in the short term, as well as more strategic initiatives that will need to be pursued over the longer term;
4. Incorporates all necessary graphs, tables, diagrams and maps to illustrate the issues, findings and recommendations; and
5. Includes a plan (approx 1:50,000 scale) with ortho-rectified photography base layer that shows the location of each proposal, key physical and environmental constraints, and the location of all major and planned developments in the Lower Hunter. The plan shall show the location of major bridges, cuts, fills, tunnels, interchanges and other major features.

Further, the selected consultant will be required to establish and host a study website to ensure stakeholders have access to key reference documents, terms of reference, study brief, study updates and the final report.

11. Timeframe

The study period is approximately four months.

An initial draft report is to be submitted for review on 3 November 2008, with all deliverables completed by 14 November 2008 for submission to Infrastructure Australia.

This is a firm study completion date that can not be negotiated.

The selected consultant team, including any subconsultants, will need to be available to attend an Inception Meeting on Monday 21 July 10am to 12pm at the RTA's Head Office.

12. Consultants submission

The consultant shall submit the following for consideration by the Project Steering Committee in selection of the preferred proposal:

1. Documentation demonstrating a full understanding of the tasks;
2. A detailed methodology for delivering this work including:
 - Detailed scope of the study
 - Method of reporting, presenting findings and consultation
3. A resource plan detailing the project management structure and key personnel involved on each activity, time allocation and hourly rates of nominated staff. Key personnel dedicated to the study for its full term shall be identified, together with their CVs. Details of any sub-contractors proposed for various aspects of the work also need to be provided;
4. Proposed detailed work program including discrete stages of work, milestones and payment schedule. The payment schedule must align with project milestones, listed in the timeline and be consistent with the budget for this project; and
5. Details of any information and/or data required from the Department of Infrastructure, RTA and Ministry of Transport to undertake the tasks.

The consultant should provide five hardcopy versions plus an electronic copy (in a PDF file/s not larger than 5MB each) on CD ROM of their proposals to the Project Manager.

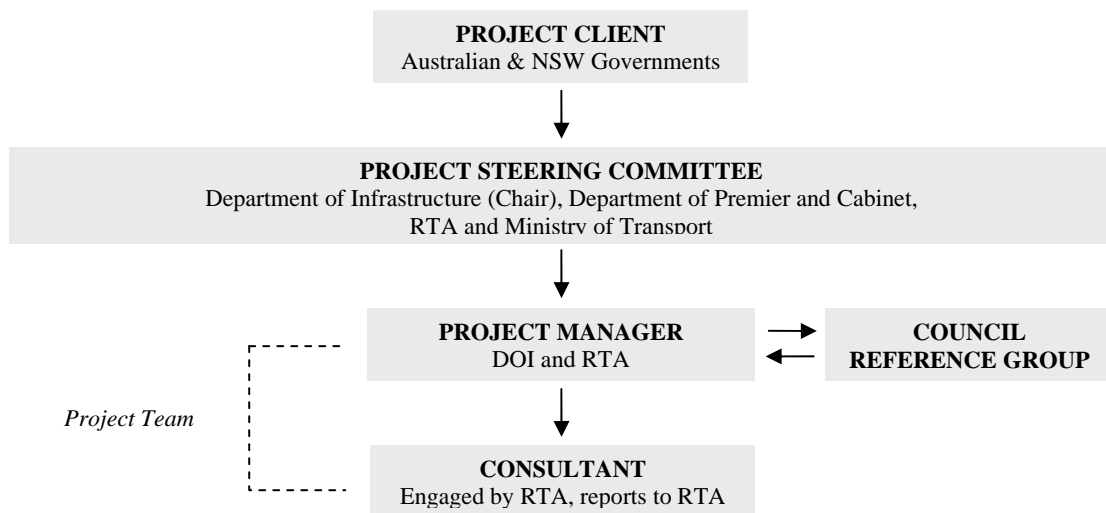
13. Project budget

A maximum budget for this project of \$800,000, including GST, has been set which is the limiting maximum fee for this project. Tenderers are invited to bid within this ceiling.

Submitted price must include all project costs including travel costs and overheads and not exceed \$800,000, including GST.

14. Reporting arrangements

The administrative structure for this project is described in the following diagram.



For the purpose of submission of this brief the client is the RTA. Ms Natalie Camilleri, A/Manager Network and Corridor Planning, is the contact to whom all enquiries about the proposal should be addressed:

Telephone: (02) 9218 6077

Email: Natalie_Camilleri@rta.nsw.gov.au

15. Submission of proposals

Proposals should be submitted in writing by **10:00am on Monday 14 July 2008** via the RTA's Tender Box located at the RTA's Head Office on the Ground Floor, 260 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills. Proposals should be addressed to the RTA's Ms Natalie Camilleri, A/Manager Network and Corridor Planning, Strategic Network Planning Branch.

16. Consultant selection procedure

Upon receipt of submissions, they will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel with representation from the Project Steering Committee against the following criteria:

Criteria	Indicative weights
1. Demonstrated understanding of the brief and methodology	30%
2. Key personnel and technical skills	30%
3. Organisation's capability	10%
4. Recent performance	10%
5. Price	20%