



Coomatown Incorporated trading as
Cooma and Monaro Progress Association ABN 22 717 375 506

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PO Box 1239
Cooma NSW 2630

*Cooma and Monaro Progress Association works to promote the economic
development and social wellbeing of the region*

COOMA AND MONARO PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

CONCEPT PLAN for CANBERRA to EDEN RAILWAY

July 2025

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30 May 2024

COOMA AND MONARO PROGRESS ASSOCIATION CONCEPT PLAN FOR CANBERRA TO EDEN RAILWAY

Submission on NSW FREIGHT POLICY

This submission by Cooma and Monaro Progress Association (CMPA) responds to the Freight Policy Consultation Paper published online by the NSW Government, dated April 2024.

NSW Freight Policy is recommended to include a railway to Eden for inland produce exports.

The four-part *Concept Plan for Canberra to Eden Railway* (C2E), 2018, by economist and engineer Edwin Michell, has been grown from the beginning by CMPA. During this growth, CMPA has had fruitful meetings with the ACT Government, encouraging consultation with the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council, and strong support from the Snowy Monaro Regional Council.

The recommended export railway now includes the NSW Government's design from Yass to the northern border of ACT, as incorporated in the Commonwealth Railways design report, 1969, for Canberra to Yass railway (C2Y). The report, digitised and released 2023 by National Archives, includes a gradient maximum of 1 in 75 and where practicable a radius minimum of 800 metres. Details can be adapted for electrification, for double stacked containers on freight trains at a speed of 115 km/hr, and for tilting passenger trains at a speed of 160 km/hr. A diagram indicating the rail route to Eden is appended. CMPA supports as eligible the Fastrack Australia (FA) possible route from the proposed Canberra station near Canberra airport towards Cooma. The support extends to the point where that route would merge with the Canberra (Kingston) end of the C2E line. Thereby C2E would connect smoothly with C2Y. The FA route is shown in their Report, *High Speed Rail for Canberra*, 2023. For Melbourne, C2Y would provide timely access by rail to Canberra. With a high speed railway via Gunning, resilience would be achieved.

For Eden Port a masterplan would also be timely. This should be facilitated by hydrodynamic studies which would have informed modern developments – the Naval and Multipurpose wharf,

the Cruise Ship Terminal, and the Wave Attenuator. The masterplan may include seabed excavation and breakwater works. The NSW South East Regional Plan for 2036 identifies the Port of Eden as: the third deepest natural harbour in the Southern Hemisphere, making it ideal for large vessels.

The railway would relieve congestion on approaches to Port Botany.

Documents substantiating this submission are published, with electronic versions in the State and National libraries. The documents are accessible by: nla.gov.au, scrolling down slightly, and keying in: Cooma and Monaro Progress Association. The documents, also presently in, and in addition downloadable from, coomansw.com.au, are:

- Concept Plan for Canberra to Eden Railway, 2018
- Concept Plan for Canberra to Eden Railway, Part 2 - Preliminary Estimate, 2018
- Concept Plan for Canberra to Eden Railway, Part 3A - Financial Cost / Benefit Analysis, 2018
- Concept Plan for Canberra to Eden Railway, Part 3B - Socio-Economic Cost/Benefit Analysis 2018
- Review of Feasibility Study, 2021 (includes the Study Summary)
- Reviews of Feasibility Study, Edwin Michell, 2021
- Planning Submission, [serving also as a progress record] June 2023
- Economic Evaluation of the Proposed Canberra to Eden Railway, R J Nairn, 2024.

The C2Y design report, 1969, is at:

<https://RecordSearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/AutoSearch.asp?O=I&Number=5508053> pages 18-51.

The C2Y economic evaluation, 1971, is at: https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/report_001.pdf

The Economic Evaluation of C2E by R J Nairn found benefit-to-cost ratios (BCRs) of 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5. The Reviews by Edwin Michell had found a BCR of 1.4. The Feasibility Study had found BCRs of 0.04 and less. While the Study had remained closed, CMPA trusts this submission may be examined, and is cordially ready to provide clarifications by telephone and email.

Acknowledgements: In growing the Concept Plan for C2E, CMPA has used the work of contributors who have fulfilled career roles as follows:

Edwin Michell, engineer, economist, and author

R J Nairn FIEAust, engineer and leading international transport economist

Colin S Mellor MIEAust, engineer and leading international transport economist

Richard Hopkins FIEAust, leading international road and aerodrome engineer

Dale Budd, engineer, political staff chief, and railway specialist

Nicholas Kilpatrick, freight trains manager and metallurgist

Luke Williamson, leading port economist.

RAILWAY LINES IN NEW SOUTH WALES





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2 October 2024

Dr K E Schott AO
Chair, NSW Freight Policy Reform Panel
C/- The Secretary, Transport for NSW
PO Box K659, Haymarket NSW 1240

Dear Dr Schott,

Cooma and Monaro Progress Association (CMPA) cordially provides herewith **a print of each of the eight documents** substantiating CMPA's electronic Freight Policy submission of 30 May 2024; facilitating reference to the printed mode.

CMPA also provides, following, a **preliminary response** after a first reading of the Panel's Interim Directions Paper.

CMPA regrets the necessity to exceed the page limit of submissions in the circumstances: the documents are, by coincidence, on-topic of the Consultations, yet are a six-year initiative by seven specialists. The Policy Reform and the initiative have the same aim: to improve the transport of freight.

The initiative met with resistance beginning in 2019, without reason to deviate from the initiative. Where the initiative deviates from existing policy, that seems not to rule it out of being a reform. It would be remiss of CMPA not to submit this once-in-twenty-years opportunity.

The submission implies reconsideration of the policy that NSW container exports should preferably go through Port Botany. If not on this occasion, reform of the policy might never be considered. A permanent organisation may easily be too busy to seriously consider a radical initiative. For instance: CMPA's Review of the C2E Feasibility Study Report, March 2021:

'6. Freight Catchment Area: Beginning in mid-2019, CMPA were repeatedly informed: "For freight from the inland, the railway does not fit in with existing plans of Transport for NSW and of their country rail agent (John Holland Rail)."

'However, the decision to undertake the Feasibility Study can naturally result in fresh options for that freight. The new railway and the Port of Eden can cooperate in competing successfully with the alternative more congested ports and their approaches.'

Executive Committee:

Neil Brown, Chair
Liz McMahon, Secretary/Treasurer
Geoff Bowland, Senior Civil and Structural Engineer
Matt Grant, Webmaster

Ian Ware, Deputy Chair, CEO APA
Herbert J Field, Senior Marketing Consultant
Richard Hopkins, Rail Plan Coordinator

Since the pandemic, cruise ship visits to Eden have resumed and the number of visits scheduled for 30 October 2024 to 18 May 2025 is 25.

On 25 March 2024, the CEO of Snowy Hydro Limited commended CMPA on its vision of C2E for the region and wished CMPA well in the initiative.

Federal potential

Comparing rail with road: on the eastern seaboard from Melbourne to Brisbane, the national highway programme has now matured. Dual carriageways connect almost the whole length via the Yass-Canberra-Goulburn triangle and Sydney. (The Coffs Harbour bypass remains under construction and some of the Canberra to Yass highway duplication is incomplete.) This programme needed Federal determination from the 1970s. Having successfully concentrated on highways, the Federal Government could now increase concentration on railways. Month by month the national imperative to reduce emissions is gaining acceptance. Line by line, new and improved railways will reduce emissions. State and territory borders are a challenge, but that can be overcome, especially with Federal involvement. They succeeded with the Albury-Wodonga highway bypass in recent years. Five governments needed to accept: two local, two state, and the Commonwealth.

Australia should surely be connected well with the national capital. It was the Federal Government that decided in 1908 to put the capital at Canberra. Given that they now have the prominent financial capacity, and they have provided Canberra airport, and have accepted responsibility for the national highway connections, they could at this time decide to contribute further to rail connections. From Sydney is a high priority. Air passengers can be diverted by improved train speeds that are still less than for high speed trains. From Melbourne is also a priority. Commonwealth Railways, supported by NSW Government Railways, completed the design for the missing link from Melbourne, that is Canberra to Yass (C2Y), in 1969. Australia's population has since doubled, and Canberra's has grown threefold. The design was web-published by National Archives in 2023. It can easily be adapted to yield the same standard as for Inland Rail. It would cater for tilting passenger trains at speeds of up to 160 km/hr and freight trains at up to 115 km/hr. C2Y complements C2E in providing much improved access from the inland for exports. A national railway network would include Inland Rail to Eden via Canberra. (In the past, when classified as a Road of National Importance, for instance to a port, the road though not a state highway would attract national funding. Comparably, Railways of National Importance could be eligible for Federal funding.)

CMPA has discussed with the ACT Government their readiness for connection of C2E with C2Y. This connection is recommended to be further discussed and also with the Commonwealth, facilitating uninterrupted freight from the inland to Eden. Upon high speed rail following in time, for instance via Gunning, the first C2Y will not be wasted: both lines will confer resilience on the network.

CMPA renews cordial readiness for Rail Plan Coordinator Richard Hopkins to appear before the Panel.

Yours faithfully,

for **Cooma and Monaro Progress Association** www.coomansw.com.au

Richard Hopkins FIEAust
Rail Plan Coordinator

Copies, with a print of each of the eight documents to:

Dr Hermione Parsons
Member, NSW Freight Policy Reform Panel
C/- Australian Logistics Council
Suite 53, 23 Norton St Leichardt NSW 2040

Mr Lucio di Bartolomeo
Member, NSW Freight Policy Reform Panel
C/- Ms Bianca Slack-Smith
A/ Executive Director Freight
Regional and Outer Metropolitan Division
Transport for NSW
PO Box K659 Haymarket NSW 1240

The Hon. Jo Haylen, MP
Minister for Transport
GPO Box 5341 Sydney NSW 2001

with a print also of the Submission of 30 May 2024



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22 October 2024

Dr K E Schott AO
Chair, NSW Freight Policy Reform Panel
C/- The Secretary, Transport for NSW

by freight@transport.nsw.gov.au

Dear Dr Schott,

Response to *Interim Directions Paper*

Cooma and Monaro Progress Association (CMPA) refers to its preliminary response by post mail of 2 October 2024 to the Panel's *Interim Directions Paper*, and provides continued response following.

The Canberra to Eden Railway would decentralise exports from the inland, relieving the metropolitan area. The railway would yield natural improved efficiency from rail-and-port combinations competing. Resilience of the freight system would be much improved against interruption in any one rail-to-port chain. The railway would be a worthy contribution to relieving congestion on the road and rail approaches to Port Botany.

The NSW Government's Plan for South East NSW identifies the Port of Eden as ideal for large vessels. The natural harbour there confirms the assumption that the port facilities can be expanded to convey the quantity of exports that the railway can deliver and the quantity of exports by road that can naturally be attracted. Inter-port exports would also be naturally expected from Tasmania.

Regarding the matter of attracting freight ships to Eden: The ships which service Port Botany are not now expected to vary their voyages to service Eden. It would be smaller container ships to begin with. Sea transport is relied on to be competitive. When Snowy Hydro decided that tunnel borers would be imported through Port Kembla, it happened. When the builders of the wind farm between Cooma and Bombala decided that the turbines and towers would be imported through the Port of Eden, it happened.

/Outcomes ...

Executive Committee:

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Liz McMahon, Secretary/Treasurer
Geoff Bowland, Senior Civil and Structural Engineer
Matt Grant, Webmaster

Ian Ware, Deputy Chair, CEO APA
Herbert J Field, Senior Marketing Consultant
Richard Hopkins, Rail Plan Coordinator

Outcomes can be determined by the Government. Where an outcome could otherwise be perverse, government may have a regulatory model as in the Directions 9.2, last paragraph, if industry-led outcomes are unsuccessful. Social and national matters are involved: relieving city congestion and reducing emissions are included.

Regarding the first submission to the Panel sent from the University of Wollongong: on the Sydney to Melbourne railway, CMPA supports: the Hoare deviation between Yass and Cootamundra because it will improve rail freighting between the inland and the recommended Canberra to Eden railway; and the Wentworth deviation between Menangle and Mittagong because it will improve existing and future passenger travel and freighting between the Monaro and Sydney.

CMPA is cordially ready to provide clarifications.

Yours faithfully,

for **Cooma and Monaro Progress Association** www.coomansw.com.au



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Rail Plan Coordinator

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27 February 2025

COOMA AND MONARO PROGRESS ASSOCIATION CONCEPT PLAN FOR CANBERRA TO EDEN RAILWAY

Submission on NSW DRAFT SOUTH EAST and TABLELANDS STRATEGIC REGIONAL INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PLAN

This submission by Cooma and Monaro Progress Association (CMPA) responds to the NSW Draft South East and Tablelands Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan published online in December 2024.

The *Concept Plan for Canberra to Eden Railway* (C2E), 2018, by engineer Edwin Michell is recommended for inclusion in this South East Transport Plan. CMPA has published, developed, and supported C2E in the following documents:

Abbreviated Name	Weblink (in top bar, press double arrow, Presentation Mode)	Year of Publication
Concept Plan	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1543273573/view	2018
Concept Plan Part 2	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1549998015/view	2018
Concept Plan Part 3A	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1549998154/view	2018
Concept Plan Part 3B	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1549998296/view	2018
Review CMPA	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2957843456/view (incl. Exec. Summary of Feasibility Study, 2020)	2021
Reviews Michell	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2981322979/view	2021
Planning Submission	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3178448470/view	2023 June
Evaluation Nairn	https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3339880659/view	2024 May

C2E is further supported in three more documents:

Submission on NSW Freight Policy, 30 May 2024 (includes rail route diagram)

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/Cooma-Monaro-Progress-Association-FPR-redacted-submission-49.pdf>

/Response ...

Response on Freight Interim Directions Paper: preliminary, dated 2 October 2024;
<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/Cooma-and-Monaro-Progress-Association-FPR-Interim-Directions-Paper-first-submission-redacted-ID47.pdf>

continued, dated 22 October 2024.

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/system/files/media/documents/2024/Cooma-and-Monaro-Progress-Association-FPR-Interim-Directions-paper-redacted-submission-ID10.pdf>

The Canberra to Yass railway may be considered by updating the mid-range benefit-to-cost ratio of 0.5 in the Bureau of Transport Economics report of 1971, as well as by considering it as national integration by completing rail access from Victoria to the national capital.

CMPA supports a preliminary deviation design of the railway between Yass and Cootamundra by engineer John Hoare, with extension to Inland Rail near Stockinbingal. This support needs to be referenced further than in two submissions in 2024 in the NSW Freight Policy Program. The first is the first-listed Response from the University of Wollongong on the Consultation Paper. The second is from Rail Futures Institute, Section 6, in Responses to the Interim Directions Paper. The deviation of 80 kilometres between Yass and Cootamundra is foreseen to have general characteristics including a minimum radius of no less than 800 metres and a maximum gradient of no more than one in eighty.

The scope of this submission implies and warrants reconsideration of the policy that NSW container exports should pass through Port Botany. Factors to be considered include decentralization, and relief of congestion on the approaches to Port Botany. Justification has not been seen for the C2E rail plan to be thwarted by the policy.
