

# Rural Lands Issues Paper:

## FREIGHT AND TRANSPORT



CGRC Rural Lands Strategy  
**FREIGHT AND TRANSPORT ISSUES PAPER**  
Finalised October 2018

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# 1. Executive Summary

Transport networks are essential to the movement of goods and services throughout Australia including the Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) area.

These networks have been developed and continue to develop to reflect National State and Regional freight and transport policy as well as the movement of goods and services within regional and local communities. According to the NSW Government, freight volumes across NSW alone are projected to double by 2030 and triple by 2050.

CGRC is within the Riverina Murray region which is recognised for the movement of freight and associated logistics. With primary industries dominating in the region transport infrastructure is essential to efficiently move primary products to markets.

Major freight corridors for road and rail traverse the Riverina Murray region between Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Freight movement each year between NSW and Victoria are estimated to be more than 41 million tonnes. With an additional 6 million tonnes estimated to be moved between NSW and South Australia traversing through the region by road or rail, this places significant pressure on existing infrastructure. Public transport networks in the region rely on existing road and rail infrastructure.

There are a number of constraints with existing infrastructure that impact on improving transport networks including road, rail and air. These constraints contribute to local and regional transport movement issues.

Network and transport corridor strategies are being developed to co-ordinate responses to these issues and are critical to ensure adequate and continued investment into planning for transport and freight. It is essential to ensure the safe movement of goods and service that high infrastructure priorities that have been identified are addressed.

Planned upgrading of existing rail networks, including inland rail, will contribute to the efficient movement of goods and services. Other opportunities directly relying on these transport networks, including tourism and local economic development associated with air transport, could benefit through better planning and investment.

## 2. Introduction

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council is the merged local government area of former Cootamundra and Gundagai Shires. The two towns of Cootamundra and Gundagai are the main population centres with a number of villages and rural communities also serving as residential options. All of these residential areas have strong existing and historical connections to the surrounding rural lands and the architecture and wealth of the towns in particular are directly attributable to the agricultural industry.

The total land area is 398,141.7 hectares, home to 11,141 people (ABS, 2016). Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the largest employment industry, employing 15.3% of employed persons. Manufacturing (which includes agricultural value add industries) is a close second, employing 10.6% of employed persons (Census Time Series Profile, 2011).

In 2011 the combined value of agricultural commodities produced from the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Local Government Area was \$103 million, however this figure does not capture other agricultural outputs such as agritourism, local markets, events and so on.

Figure 1: CGRC LGA



## Rural Lands Strategy Background

The merger of Gundagai Shire Council and Cootamundra Shire Council as Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council has stimulated the need for new planning instruments and policies; in particular a Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan which cover the regional council area. A strategy to deal specifically with the rural lands of CGRC is proposed which aims to analyse agricultural trends and opportunities for the area. This strategy will help to update mapping for the new Local Environmental Plan while also providing rational and reasoning for zoning and minimum lot sizes in rural areas.

Rural land is often neglected from a planning perspective due to more pressing planning needs in larger centres, however agricultural land often has a disproportionate impact on residential and economic activity when compared to development in a town, with intensive feedlots, quarries, landfills, etc. Furthermore, agricultural uses themselves such as piggeries, vineyards, feedlots and so on have a long-term impact on the use and viability of the site and surrounding lands. Through the strategic planning process, controls and principles of development can be placed on agricultural land to ensure the viability of the land into perpetuity as well as providing opportunities for emerging and new agricultural enterprises to establish in the area.

The two former shires have varied terrain and soil quality which makes formulating one course of action or plan for rural land difficult. However, this should be viewed as an opportunity which makes Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council more attractive and marketable to residents, visitors and prospective residents as a wide variation of agricultural pursuits can be explored in this single local government area.

It is Council's intention that the Rural Lands Strategy serves not only as a land use planning document, but as a plan for economic success and growth through the shared identity of agriculture. This leverages off what Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council does best (agriculture), connections to logistic hubs and routes as well as capitalising on changing recreation and tourism trends.

## Purpose of the Issues Papers

The issue papers are integral to the success of the Rural Lands Strategy as they are background documents based on research and science; analysing trends elsewhere and juxtaposing this with the situation within Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council.

There are ten issue papers which will be produced, with the community having shaped not only the overarching theme of each paper, but the community has identified a number of existing constraints and opportunities to be investigated. Based on the findings of the issue papers and workshops during the “listening” phase, a directions paper will be produced which will list key directions for the Rural Lands Strategy.

Figure 2: Key Stages of the Development of the Issues Papers





## 3. Freight and Transport Issues Paper

Freight and transport links are essential to the safe and efficient movement of goods.

This Issues Paper examines, specifically to the Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council area, transport linkages and associated freight operations. This includes reviewing the current policy, study and transport planning frameworks that help to identify historical trends and current linkages, priorities and options to improve existing infrastructure. In that context road, rail, air and other transport infrastructure and networks relevant to the Council area and region are detailed.

This Issues Paper documents the current constraints and highlights future opportunities for freight and transport that directly and/or indirectly impact on the Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council area.

### 3.1 Key freight and transport definitions

There are a number of key definitions and concepts that are critical to the understanding of the current freight and transport environment. The following definitions and concepts are used and referred to within this Issues Paper.

#### **What is freight and transport?**

The following widely used definition of freight and transport is adopted in this Issues Paper.

*To take or carry (people or goods) in bulk from one place to another by means of a truck (or heavy vehicle), train, aircraft, or ship*

#### **What is a Restricted Access Vehicle?**

The national law and regulations prescribe the mass and dimension requirements for heavy vehicles and there are two key types of heavy vehicle:

##### General access vehicle

These are vehicles that comply with mass and dimension limits and do not require a notice or permit to operate on the road network. These vehicles have general access to the road network unless the road is sign-posted otherwise.

##### Restricted Access Vehicle (RAV)

RAV Class 1, 2 or 3 vehicles that operate under a permit and vehicles operating under higher mass limits (HML) that can generally only access certain parts of the road network (ie travelling on approved routes).

Examples of RAVs include:

- Special purpose vehicles, including agricultural machinery and mobile cranes (Class 1);
- B-doubles and road trains (Class 2);
- Combinations carrying large indivisible oversize or over mass loads (Class 1);
- Combinations longer than 19m (Class 2);
- vehicles higher than 4.3m (Class 2);
- buses (other than an articulated bus) between 12.5m and 14.5m long (Class 2);
- Performance-Based Standards (PBS) vehicles (Class 2); and
- Truck and dog trailer combinations (Class 3).

Refer to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator website, searching for Classes of heavy vehicles in the Heavy Vehicle National Law, for more information about RAV Class 1, 2 and 3 vehicles.

## 4. Policy, Strategies, Studies and Organisations

This section identifies the relevant transport planning framework that operates at a National, State and Regional level. There are a range of responsibilities and priorities impacting on the delivery of transport and freight across the Council area within each level of this framework. This section also highlights, in chronological order, the relevant studies and strategic policy positions relevant to transport and freight links.

### 4.1 National

#### **Infrastructure Australia**

Infrastructure Australia provides independent research and advice to government and industry on key transport issues in Australia. The body is responsible for determining which nationally significant projects should be on the Infrastructure Priority List.

Currently there are no projects on the Infrastructure Priority List that are located within the CGRC LGA. However, the Inland Rail project was listed by Infrastructure Australia in 2016 and this project is discussed in more detail later in this document. It should be noted that high speed rail is also supported by Infrastructure Australia, although this project is no longer listed on the Infrastructure Priority List.

#### **National Key Freight Routes**

There were several key freight routes adopted by the Transport and Infrastructure Council (TIC) in 2014 that pass through the CGRC LGA. These routes are nationally significant for the movement of road and rail freight across Australia.

For road freight, the Hume Highway connects Melbourne to Sydney, carrying over 10,000<sup>1</sup> vehicles per day, two-way in 2018. Through the CGRC LGA, the Hume Highway connects with the Snowy Mountain Highway, Tumut-Gundagai Road (Gocup Road), Gundagai-Grong Grong Road (Canola Way) and the Coolac-Cootamundra Road (Muttama Road).

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<sup>1</sup> According to the RMS Traffic Volume Viewer webpage for the Hume Hwy, 340m South of Annie Pyers Drive, Gundagai

For rail freight, the Main South railway line carries both passenger and freight services between Sydney and Albury (and on to Melbourne). At Cootamundra there is a freight only rail connection to Temora (Lake Cargelligo branch line), with a further connection from Stockinbingal that connects on to Parkes (Stockinbingal-Parkes line).

The proposed Inland Rail project is also included by the TIC on maps showing the key freight routes through NSW and this project is discussed in more detail later in this document.

### **National Road Safety Strategy 2011 – 2020**

The National Road Safety Strategy represents a commitment from the federal, state and territory governments to an agreed set of national road safety goals, objectives and action priorities. The strategy sets out a range of high-level goals to drive national road safety performance to the end of 2020.

The key priority actions for 2018 – 2020 are:

1. Review speed limits on high risk regional and remote roads, in consultation with the community;
2. Target infrastructure funding towards safety-focused initiatives to reduce trauma on regional roads;
3. Implement safety treatments to reduce trauma from crashes at urban intersections;
4. Increase deployment of Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) in both heavy and light vehicles;
5. Increase roadside drug testing significantly in all states and territories;
6. Reduce speed limits to 40km/h or lower in pedestrian and cyclist places;
7. Increase deployment of point-to-point and mobile cameras to achieve safe travel on Australia's road network;
8. Improve heavy vehicle safety through improvements to licensing arrangements and fatigue laws; and
9. Increase the market uptake of safer new and used vehicles and emerging vehicle technologies with high safety benefits.

Many of these actions will be relevant to the CGRC LGA.

## **National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy**

On 18 May 2018, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Transport and Infrastructure Council agreed a framework for developing a 20-year national Freight and Supply Chain Strategy (the Strategy). An integrated national approach making it faster, easier, and less expensive to move goods will help increase the competitiveness of Australian businesses and our standard of living.

The Strategy will build on the outcomes of the 54 recommended priorities for action across five critical action areas of the Inquiry into National Freight and Supply Chain Priorities. Many of these actions will be relevant to the CGRC LGA.

## **Inland Regional Rail (2017)**

The Inland Rail will provide an enhanced link between Melbourne and Brisbane, the planned route is about 1,700km of which 1,047km is in NSW. It will require 475 kilometres of upgrades to existing tracks and 399 kilometres of new tracks in NSW.

In 2017 the Australian Government made a budget commitment to the full delivery of the Inland Rail project. The Inland Rail project is the largest freight rail infrastructure project in Australia, with early works to start this year (2018) and is expected to be operational in 2024 – 2025.

In the CGRC LGA, construction of the inland rail will involve:

- Illabo to Stockinbingal: Approximately 37km of new track - this new track will reduce the route distance by 30km and avoid the Bethungra Spiral (which is located to the south of the CGRC LGA boundary);
- Stockinbingal to Parkes: Approximately 169km of existing track – the track has already been upgraded in this section by the Australian Rail Track Corporation, but additional works will be undertaken to accommodate double stacking for containers; and
- Olympic Highway will provide a transport link to the proposed Wagga Wagga rail hub.

## **National Heavy Vehicle Regulator**

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) was established in 2013 as Australia's independent regulator for all vehicles over 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass.

For example, heavy vehicles include:

- Semi-trailers;
- B-double freight trucks;
- Road trains;

- Passenger buses;
- Vehicle transporters;
- Livestock and other agricultural vehicles; and
- Mobile cranes and other special purpose vehicles.

The NHVR has a direct relationship with more than:

- 40,000 road freight businesses;
- 900,000 vehicles;
- 500 road managers (including State Road Authorities); and
- 1,000 authorised officers (including State Road Authorities).

Some state road transport authorities and other government agencies deliver various frontline services on behalf of the NHVR.

## 4.2 NSW State

### **NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (2012)**

In 2012 the NSW Government released the Long-Term Transport Master Plan to outline the vision for the state's infrastructure, freight and transport services.

The plan was adopted to guide the NSW state's transport developments, progress and decisions for the future. The master plan will now be supported by the NSW Future Transport 2056 Strategy.

### **NSW Road Safety 2012 – 2021 Strategy (2012)**

The NSW Road Safety Strategy explains how the NSW Government plans to improve road safety for the community and plans to make our roads the safest in the country to achieve this by 2021.

The strategy has a target to reduce annual deaths and serious injuries by at least 30% by 2021, with highlights that include:

- Continue and expand targeted safety works via the NSW Safer Roads program;
- Elevate road safety across the design, construction and maintenance of the road network;
- Address serious injury trends and post-crash care and response;
- Increase involvement with local government;

- Focus on high-risk road users, including pedestrians, bicycle riders, motorcyclists, younger and older road users;
- Highlight the need for greater respect and improved interactions among road users;
- enforce road rules to ensure compliant and safe road users;
- Promote safer vehicles and better safety standards;
- Improve community involvement in road safety;
- Explore road safety technologies to reduce road trauma; and
- Develop specific strategies to target key road user groups.

### **NSW Freight and Ports Strategy (2013)**

The Freight and Ports Strategy was developed to improve freight transport network efficiency and plan for the expansion of NSW ports, roads and the rail network to cater for growth, while balancing the needs of the community and environment.

With the volume of freight on the NSW transport network forecast to nearly double over the next 20 years to 800 million tonnes each year, the NSW Freight and Ports Strategy is a critical long-term road map.

### **NSW State Priorities (2015)**

In September 2015, NSW Premier Mike Baird unveiled 30 priorities to grow the economy, deliver infrastructure, protect the vulnerable, and improve health, education and public services across NSW.

These priorities set the agenda for the NSW Government Sector over the coming years. Some of the priorities are related to freight and transport, either directly or indirectly, as follows:

- Premier's Priorities
  - Creating jobs
  - Building infrastructure
  - Keeping our environment clean
  - Improving Government services
  
- State Priorities
  - Making it easier to start a business
  - Encouraging business investment
  - Accelerating major project assessment
  - Ensuring on-time running of public transport

- Reducing road fatalities
- Improving road travel reliability

### **NSW Future Transport 2056 Strategy (2016)**

The NSW Future Transport 2056 Strategy is an overarching strategy, supported by a suite of plans to achieve a 40-year vision for our transport system. The strategy will focus on driving new and emerging technologies to supporting the ways transport is delivered and improve services to create a better transport system.

The NSW Future Transport 2056 Strategy has six state-wide outcomes, however there are also ten regional NSW focused outcomes that link directly to the state-wide outcomes (refer Table 1).

Table 1: Future Transport 2056 regional NSW transport customer outcomes

<b>Future Transport State-wide outcomes</b>	<b>Regional NSW Customer Outcomes</b>
<u>Customer Focused</u> Convenient and responsive to customer needs	1. Flexible services are an integral part of the transport system helping to deliver reliability. 2. A transport system that adapts to and embraces new technology.
<u>Successful Places</u> Sustaining and enhancing the liveability of our places	3. The appropriate movement and place balance is established enabling people and goods to move efficiently through the network whilst ensuring local access and vibrant places. 4. Supporting centres with appropriate transport services and infrastructure.
<u>A Strong Economy</u> Connecting people and places in the growing city	5. Changes in land use, population and demand, including seasonal changes are served by the transport system. 6. Economic development is enabled by regional transport services and infrastructure.
<u>Safety and Performance</u> Safely, efficiently and reliably moving people and goods	7. A safe transport system for every customer with zero deaths or serious injuries on the network by 2056. 8. A transport system that is resilient to significant weather events including floods, fog and bush fires.
<u>Accessible Services</u> Accessible for all customers	9. Accessibility to employment and services such as health, education, retail and cultural activities within Regional Cities and Centres.
<u>Sustainability</u> Makes the best use of available resources and assets	10. Customers enjoy improved connectivity, integrated services and better use of capacity.

Source: Future Transport 2056



### **Draft NSW Freight and Ports Plan (2017)**

The Draft Freight and Ports Plan is one of the issue-specific Plans that forms part of and supports the Transport for NSW's Future Transport 2056 Strategy and will provide direction to business and industry for managing and investing in freight into the future.

This Plan aligns closely with the State Infrastructure Strategy, Future Transport 2056 Strategy, Regional Services and Infrastructure Plans and other issue-specific/place-based plans.

### **Draft NSW Tourism and Transport Plan (2017)**

The Draft Tourism and Transportation Plan is one of the issue-specific Plans that forms part of and supports the Transport for NSW's Future Transport 2056 Strategy.

The plan is a vision for how transport can better support the growth of tourism in New South Wales over the next 40 years. It is a 'Supporting Plan' in the Future Transport suite.

### **NSW State Infrastructure 2018 – 2038 Strategy (2018)**

The NSW State Infrastructure Strategy 2018 – 2038 brings together all the major long-term infrastructure plans that have been adopted since 2010.

The strategy sets out the NSW Government's priorities for the next 20 years, and combined with the Future Transport Strategy 2056, the Greater Sydney Region Plan and the Regional Development Framework, brings together infrastructure investment and land-use planning for the NSW cities and regions.

### **Infrastructure NSW: Infrastructure Strategy 2018 to 2038 (2018)**

Infrastructure NSW has developed a 20-year Strategy that sets out independent advice on the current state of NSW's infrastructure and the needs and priorities over the next 20 years. The Infrastructure Strategy (2018 – 2038) looks beyond the current projects and identifies policies and strategies needed to provide the infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing population and a growing economy.

### **Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan (2018)**

The Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan is one of a series of strategies and plans supporting the Future Transport Strategy. This plan sets the outcomes for regional NSW for the movement of people and freight to meet customer needs and deliver responsive, innovative services.

This Plan will define the network required to achieve the service outcomes for Regional NSW.

## 4.3 Regional

### **Albury to Cowra Corridor Study (2010)**

The Albury to Cowra corridor, serviced by the Olympic Highway, connects Albury on the Victorian border to Cowra in the mid-west of New South Wales. It passes through the major regional towns of Wagga Wagga, Junee, Cootamundra and Young.

The strategy was developed by RMS, assessing road safety, traffic, asset management, land use and development along the corridor and identified:

- Corridor-specific objectives that support RMS's broader road network objectives;
- Key transport demands in the corridor, and the consequential transport roles of the Olympic Highway;
- The performance of the transport infrastructure in serving the needs of the corridor;
- Key transport demands that are likely to be placed on the corridor over the next 25 years; and
- Current and future challenges in meeting the corridor-specific objectives, and RMS's strategies to meet these challenges.

The strategy adopts a 25-year time frame to guide RMS's long-term management of the Albury to Cowra corridor in line with RMS's stated objectives.

### **Murray-Murrumbidgee Regional Transport Plan (2013)**

Announced in 2013, the Murray-Murrumbidgee Regional Transport Plan provides a blueprint for the future and a strategic direction for the delivery of major projects over the next 20 years. Projects within the CGRC LGA included:

- \$1,046,000 for the replacement of Gobarralong Bridge, Gundagai; and
- \$350,000 for sealing of Sutton's Lane (3.2km), part of the over-height vehicle detour to the Olympic Highway in Cootamundra Shire.

### **Containerised Cargo Demand Assessment - Riverina and South West Slopes and Plains (2014)**

Transport for NSW commissioned this study to investigate the demand for transporting containerised cargo in regional NSW. The aim was to:

- Define the demand for containerised cargo over time;

- Identify existing and potential future contestable flows of containerised cargo;
- Identify existing intermodal terminals in the cargo catchment, potential new competing terminals, and define the impacts of these potential terminals on transport behaviour; and
- Identify potential economic benefits in the study area arising from the development of intermodal terminals.

Although the assessment was undertaken before the CGRC amalgamated (with Cootamundra listed in Region 1 and Gundagai listed in Region 2) the report did identify the importance of the inter modal freight terminal at Cootamundra for the movement of timber and paper products.

### **REROC Regional Freight Transport Plan (2018)**

The Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC) is a voluntary association of nine general purpose Councils and two water county Councils located in the eastern Riverina region of NSW.

In 2016 REROC completed an investigation into the freight infrastructure network from a regional perspective. It has since been updated in 2018. The plan identifies significant constraints impacting on the delivery of freight solutions in the region (refer to Section 8 of this report for a list of the outstanding constraints).

The implementation of integrated transport solutions for the region was an overriding goal of the plan and to that end REROC has reviewed both the rail and road transport networks that service the eastern Riverina region.

### **Tumut to Hume Corridor Study (2016)**

The strategy sets out the NSW Government's 20-year plan to manage and guide the development of Gocup Road and the Snowy Mountains Highway from Tumut to the Hume Highway.

Investment priorities for the Tumut to Hume Highway corridor include:

- Road widening, road strengthening, straightening curves, providing overtaking lanes and safety improvements under the Gocup Road \$70 million program of works funded by the NSW Government Regional Freight Pinch Point and Safety Program under Restart NSW;
- Addressing current and emerging crash cluster locations on both the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road;
- Road widening, road strengthening, straightening curves, providing overtaking lanes and safety improvements on the Snowy Mountains Highway;

- Improving active transport infrastructure for local communities; and
- Investigating opportunities for future road realignment, overtaking opportunities and heavy vehicle rest areas.

### **Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036 (2017)**

The Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036 is a 20-year blueprint for the future of the Riverina Murray. The Riverina Murray region in 2036 will be a diversified economy founded on Australia’s food bowl, iconic waterways and a strong network of vibrant and connected communities.

The plan will deliver for the region through four goals:

- A growing and diverse economy;
- A healthy environment with pristine waterways;
- Efficient transport and infrastructure networks; and
- Strong, connected and healthy communities.

From Goal Three and related to Freight and Transport in the CGRC are the following Directions and relevant actions:

- Direction 17: Transform the region into the eastern seaboard’s freight and logistics hub:
  - Strategically locate freight and logistics hubs to support further industry development.
  - Support the ongoing performance of existing freight and logistics facilities.
  - Protect freight and logistics facilities from the encroachment of inappropriate land uses.
  - Target opportunities for new freight and logistics facilities in areas that maximise the use of available industrial land, access to transport and specific labour market requirements.
- Direction 18: Enhance road and rail freight links
  - Identify the regional freight network.
  - Prioritise projects that address impediments to the regional freight network to improve capacity and opportunities in the network.
  - Assess the viability of local bypasses and identify and protect future bypass corridors in strategies.
  - Identify, coordinate and prioritise the delivery of local and regional road projects that help support the regional freight network.
  - Protect freight and transport corridors from the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

- Direction 19: Support and protect ongoing access to air travel
  - Protect airports from the encroachment of incompatible development.
  - Support the continued allocation of 20 per cent of flight slots at Sydney Airport to regional NSW services and seek a greater allocation in peak periods.
  
- Direction 20: Identify and protect future transport corridors
  - Work with the Australian Government to finalise planning, engineering design and assessment of the Melbourne–Brisbane Inland Rail Corridor.
  - Work with the Australian Government to plan for future high-speed rail corridors in the region.

**Forestry Corporation: Softwood Plantation Division Forestry Management Plan (2016)**

The following broad strategies are used to minimise the risks associated with road building and maintenance:

- Identifying future network requirements and any major new construction of roads that may be necessary through the tactical and strategic planning processes and incorporating these into annual schedules of work;
- Providing and maintaining a road network to assist with fire suppression and management; and
- Ensuring the workforce is trained, competent and accredited where require developing, implementing and monitoring conformance with operational plans for road works.

# 5. Freight and Transport in CGRC

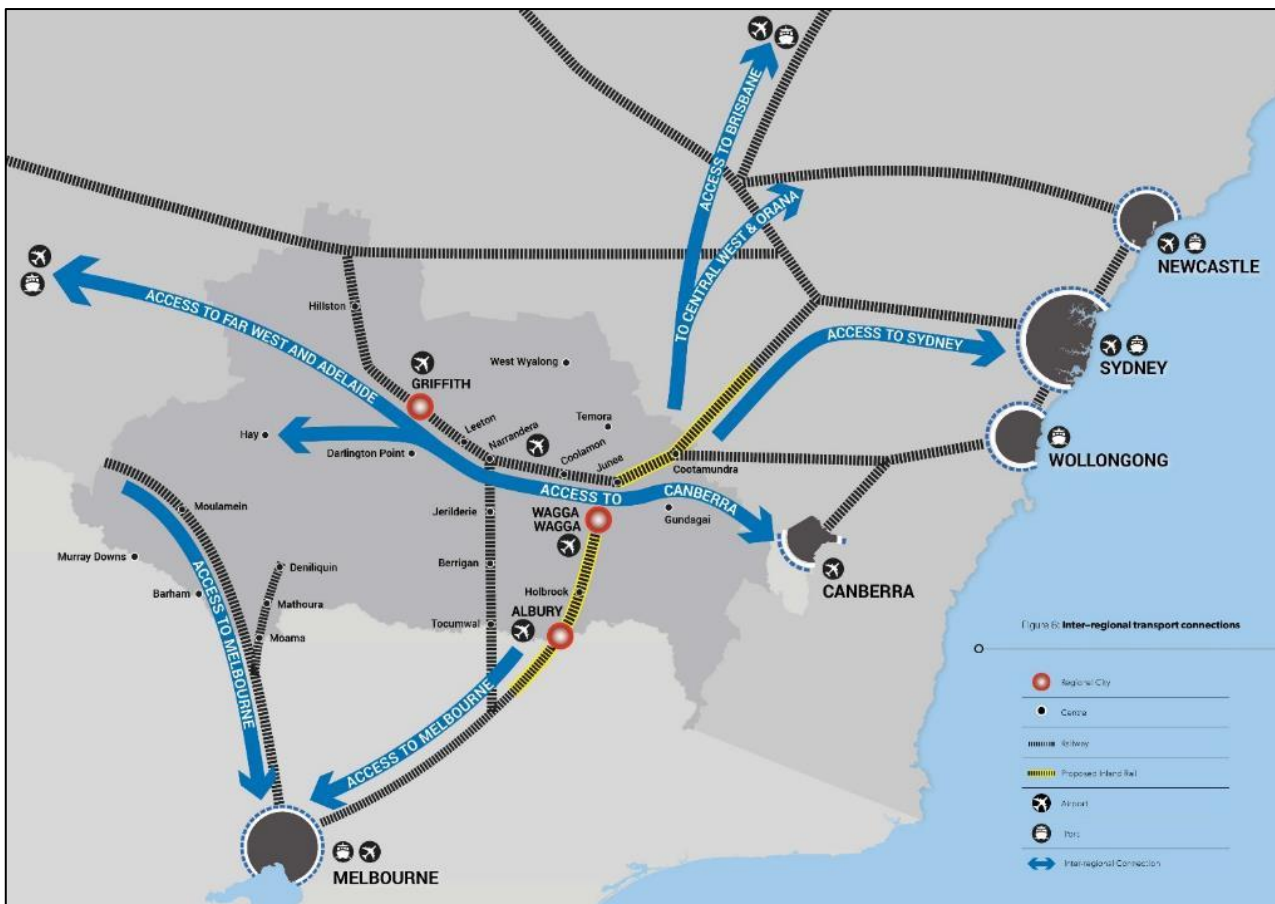
## 5.1 Scale and Value

The Riverina Murray Region is a significant location for freight and logistics, and the CRGC is located within the region. Agriculture is a dominant industry in the region which relies heavily on transport infrastructure to efficiently move products, such as, beef, grain, manufactured food, paper and softwood from plantations to markets.

Major freight corridors pass through the region between Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane for both road and rail (Refer to Figure 3). The freight movement between NSW and Victoria annually is estimated to be more than 41 million tonnes. A further 6 million tonnes are estimated to be moved between NSW and South Australia, with the majority traversing through the region by either road or rail.

According to the NSW Government, freight volumes across NSW are projected to double by 2030 and triple by 2050, which will add significant pressure on existing road and rail infrastructure.

Figure 3: Inter-regional transport connections



Source: Riverina-Murray Plan 2017

## 5.2 Freight and Transport Routes and Nodes

The following maps show the major freight transport routes for commodities and their modal points within the CGRC LGA.

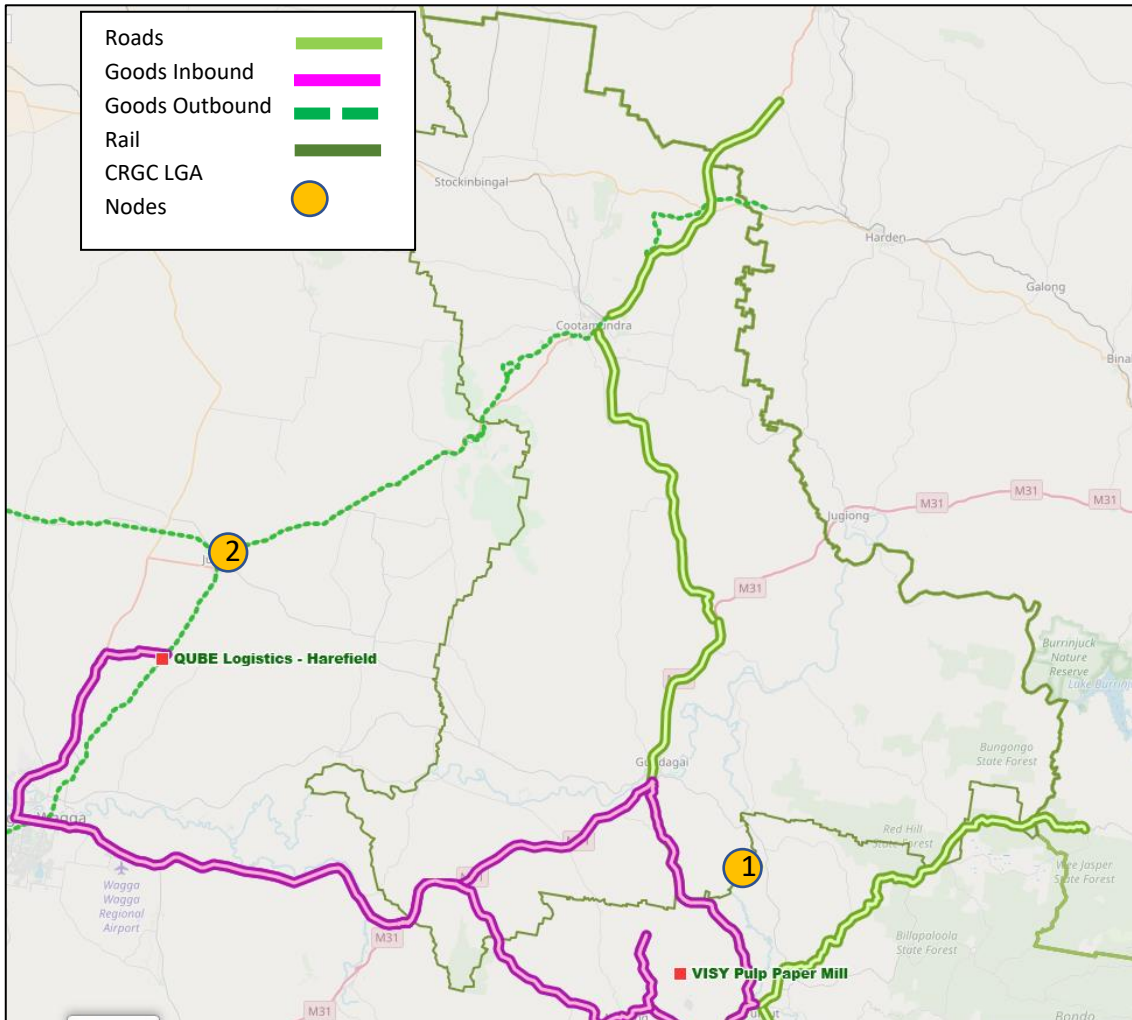
### Major Livestock Routes

Figure 4: Major Livestock Routes



## Major Timber Freight Routes

Figure 5: Major Timber Freight Routes

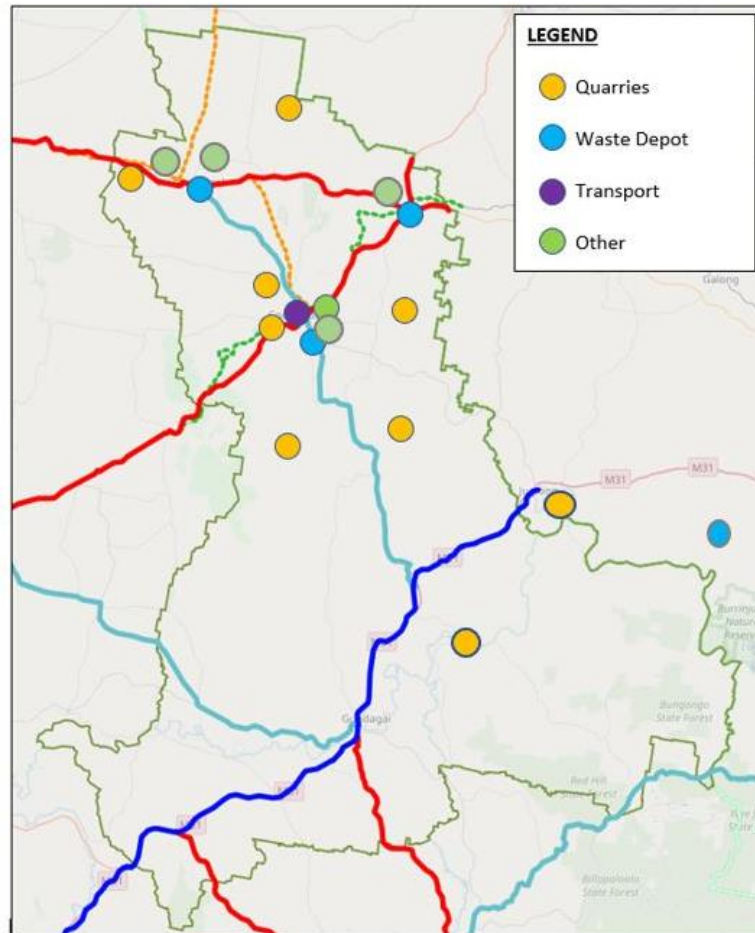


1. Pulp and Paper Mill, Tumut (adjoining Snowy Valleys Shire)
2. QUBE Logistics, Harefield (adjoining Junee Shire)

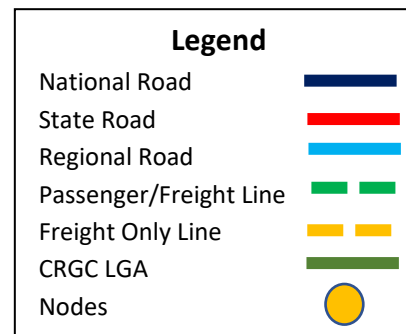


## Other Modal Points

Figure 6: Other Modal Points



- **Quarries**
  - Several located around Cootamundra
  - Quarries in Gundagai and Jugiong
  - Cootamundra (Millbrae Business Group)
- **Waste Depot**
  - Cootamundra (including Transfer Station)
  - Wallendbeen
  - Stockinbingal
- **Transport (Cootamundra)**
  - Aerodrome
  - Rail-coach interchange
  - Pacific Rail
  - Sutherlands Transport
  - Scotts Transport
- **Other**
  - Cootamundra oilseeds
  - GrainFlow Stockinbingal
  - GrainCorp Wallendbeen, Cootamundra and Stockinbingal



## 5.3 Public Transport Notes

The following includes the public transport options within the CGRC LGA.

### **By Coach:**

NSW Train Link operates coach services within the region, with Cootamundra acting as a hub for cross regional services.

Services operate between Cootamundra and:

- Queanbeyan;
- Mildura;
- Dubbo;
- Bathurst;
- Condobolin; and
- Tumbarumba.

NSW Train Link also operate coach services from Gundagai with coaches to:

- Bathurst;
- Canberra;
- Parkes;
- Tumbarumba; and
- Wagga Wagga.

Firefly Express and Greyhound coaches travelling between Melbourne and Sydney also stop in Gundagai, near the tourist information centre on Sheridan Street.

### **By Train:**

NSW Train Link regional rail services operate between Sydney and Melbourne, stopping at Cootamundra.

# 6. Existing Road Transport Network

## 6.1 Roads

### National Roads

National roads are funded and maintained by the Federal Government.

#### Hume Highway (RMS<sup>2</sup> Road Number: HW2/National Route Number: M31)

The Hume Highway is an 840km (approximately 70km within CGRC) four lane two-way divided road, one of Australia's major national highways (particularly for freight) connecting Melbourne with Sydney. The highway is now fully duplicated between the outskirts of Melbourne and Sydney since the completion of the Holbrook Bypass in 2013.

### State Roads

State roads are funded and maintained by the NSW Government.

#### Burley Griffin Way (RMS Road Number: MR84/State Route Number: B94)

The Burley Griffin Way is a 289km (approximately 42km within CGRC) two lane two-way rural road providing a major link between the towns of Griffith (to the west) and Yass (to the east), and then further north by the Hume Highway, to Sydney and beyond. Economically, the Burley Griffin Way provides a link between the agricultural produce of the western Riverina and Murrumbidgee regions (including the CGRC) and markets such as Sydney. This region is one of the richest agricultural areas in Australia, hence, trucks make up a significant proportion of traffic using the road.

#### Gocup Road (RMS Road Number: MR279 Local Road Name: Tumut-Gundagai Road)

Gocup Road is a 31km (approximately 14km within CGRC) two lane two-way rural road from the Snowy Mountains Highway at Tumut to the Hume Highway at Gundagai. The road provides a key link for timber and agricultural distribution between Tumut (which includes the pulp and paper mills), the National Parks and the Snowy Mountains to the east with the Hume Highway.

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<sup>2</sup> RMS = Roads and Maritime Services (NSW)

### Olympic Highway (RMS Road Number: MR78/State Route Number: A41)

The Olympic Highway is a 318km (approximately 42km within CGRC) two lane two-way road servicing rural communities and links the Hume Highway (at Albury) with the Mid-Western Highway (at Cowra). The highway also provides part of an alternate road link between Sydney and Albury via Bathurst and Cowra as well as servicing Wagga Wagga, linking with the Sturt Highway (a key freight route link to South Australia).

For much of the route the highway follows the Main South Rail line. With changes to how grain is stored (mostly now on farm), many branch rail lines have closed, and the grain is now being transported by road to major receival points as opposed to the branch line silos. Furthermore, the highway has experienced an increase in use by logging trucks due to the Tumut Mill sourcing logs from the Bathurst/Oberon region.

### Snowy Mountains Highway (RMS Road Number: HW4/State Route Number: B72)

The Snowy Mountains Highway is a 333km (approximately 8km within CGRC) two lane two-way road (in two sections) connecting the Hume Highway to the Princes Highway (north of Bega) and the NSW south coast.

The highway is rarely travelled from end to end, however sections carry significant volumes, particularly around Tumut and the paper and pulp mills. The road is very mountainous in parts with poor vertical and horizontal alignments with limited overtaking opportunities.

### **Regional Roads**

Regional roads are funded by the NSW Government and maintained by the Regional Council.

### Gundagai-Grong Grong Road (RMS Road Number: MR243/Local Road Name: Gundagai Road/Nangus Road)

The Gundagai-Grong Grong Road is a 148km (approximately 3km within CGRC) two lane two-way road connecting the Hume Highway (at Gundagai) to the Newell Highway (at Grong Grong).

### Cootamundra-Stockinbingal Road (RMS Road Number: MR235 / Local Road Name: Stockinbingal Road)

The Cootamundra-Stockinbingal Road is a 20km (all within CGRC) two lane two-way road connecting the Burley Griffin Way (at Stockinbingal) to the Olympic Highway (at Cootamundra).

## Coolac-Cootamundra Road (RMS Road Number: MR87 / Local Road Name: Muttama Road/Gundagai Road)

The Coolac-Cootamundra Road is a 40km (all within CGRC) two lane two-way road connecting the Hume Highway (at Coolac) to the Olympic Highway (at Cootamundra). As with the Olympic Highway, the road has experienced an increase in use by logging trucks due to the Tumut Mill sourcing logs from the Bathurst/Oberon region.

### **Local Roads**

Local roads are funded and maintained by the Regional Council and include:

- Dirnaseer Road (part of the Cootamundra high vehicle detour route);
- Sutton Lane (part of the Cootamundra high vehicle detour route); and
- Gobarralong-Adjungbilly Road (connecting to the Hume Highway at Pettit).

## **6.2 Rail**

### **Passenger and Freight Railway lines**

#### **Main South Line**

The Main South line connects Sydney's Central station with Albury (at the Victorian border) and then Melbourne via the North East Rail Line.

Much of the rail freight traffic that travels through NSW traverses this line. In addition, the line carries passenger trains. Within the CGRC LGA there is a passenger station and major rail hub at Cootamundra, including the Sutherlands Transport intermodal hub and the Cootamundra Oilseeds facility.

#### **Freight Railway lines**

##### **Lake Cargelligo Branch**

The Lake Cargelligo branch services the main wheat area of the NSW's central west. It starts at the major rail hub of Cootamundra, on the Main South Line and extends north and west through the towns of Stockinbingal, Temora and West Wyalong to the terminus at Lake Cargelligo.

### Stockinbingal-Parkes Line

The Stockinbingal-Parkes line provides a major north south cross-country link between the Main South and Main Western lines. It is used particularly for east-west freight trains to avoid the difficulties of crossing the Blue Mountains to the west of Sydney.

The Stockinbingal-Parkes line will form part of the Federal Government's 1,700km route that will link Melbourne to Brisbane via Regional Victoria, NSW and Queensland, known as the Inland Rail.

### Closed Railway lines

#### Tumut Branch

The Tumut branch runs from Cootamundra to the mountain town of Tumut in the adjoining Snowy Valleys Shire. From Cootamundra to Gundagai, it follows the Muttama Creek valley to the Murrumbidgee River. From Gundagai, the line crosses the river and heads along the Adelong and Califat creeks to Gilmore and then to the terminus at Tumut.

The line was abandoned in 1984 when sections near Cootamundra were damaged by floods. In 1988 the Mountain High Railway operated tourist trips on a section near Tumut, but this only lasted for a couple years.

## 6.3 Air

### Airports

#### Cootamundra Aerodrome

The Cootamundra aerodrome has two runways (one sealed/one unsealed) with a weight limit of 5700kg, which applies to both. This weight limit will restrict use to light passenger/commercial aircraft only and will also limit freight opportunities.

According to the Australian Airports Association (AAA), airports across the entire national aviation infrastructure network are categorised into seven tiers. Cootamundra aerodrome would be classified as a Tier 6 facility; a regional airport without regular passenger transport services (general aviation operations only).

The closest passenger and freight operation airports to Cootamundra are as follows:

- Wagga Wagga airport (domestic flights, freight handling, maintenance and pilot training facilities) – approximately 80km away;
- The Aerodrome Cootamundra provides minor freight/mail services;

- Canberra airport (international and domestic flights, freight handling facilities) – approximately 120km away; and
- Orange airport (domestic flights, freight handling, aero club and flight training facilities) – approximately 180km away.

Air transport is generally used for moving high value and time-sensitive goods. The volume of freight transported by air is small when compared to road and rail.

## 7. Key Constraints

There are a number of constraints to freight and transport movement that have been identified in and around the Region. These are summarised in the following tables:

### Restricted Access Vehicle Approvals

Table 2 General information for restricted access vehicles

Road	Location
Road Train Routes	None
Higher Mass Limit (HML) Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National and State Roads – Approved</li> <li>▪ Regional: only Coolac – Cootamundra Road</li> <li>▪ Local – No</li> </ul>
B-Doubles Routes	<p>Former Cootamundra Shire area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Weight restrictions on selected roads and restrictions in urban area of Cootamundra)</li> </ul> <p>Former Gundagai Shire area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No blanket approval, by permit only.</li> </ul>
High Vehicle Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Approved, but concentrated in the former Gundagai Shire area.</li> <li>▪ Olympic Highway: 4.6m restriction at the Gap Crossing (rail over bridge) on the southern approach to Cootamundra.</li> </ul>
PBS Routes (Level 1 and 2A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hume Highway – approved</li> <li>▪ Olympic Highway – approved (except through Cootamundra for PBS 2A)</li> <li>▪ Heavy vehicle by-pass through Cootamundra via Campbell, Hovell, Harpley and Sutton Streets must be used.</li> <li>▪ Burley Griffith Way – Approved</li> <li>▪ Snowy Mountains Highway – Approved</li> <li>▪ Gocup Road - Approved</li> </ul>

Source: RMS website



Table 3: Restricted Structures – Bridges

Road	Location
Hume Highway	Canola Way/Murrumbidgee River - Sheahan Bridge (northbound)
Burley Griffin Way	Hibernia Stover Bland Creek at Stockinbingal (BN6494) Main South Railway at Wallendbeen (BN6486)
Olympic Highway	Main South Railway near Wallendbeen (BN6431) Connaughtmans Creek at Wallendbeen (BN6432) Main South Railway at Cootamundra (BN6435) Cootamundry Creek No1 at Gap Crossing (BN6441)
Prince Alfred Drive	Murrumbidgee River at Gundagai (BN6637) - Prince Alfred Bridge

Source: RMS Website

Table 4: Restricted Structure – Rail Level Crossings

Road	Location
Burley Griffin Way	West Street, Stockinbingal (LXM ID: 204)
Olympic Highway	Parker Street, Cootamundra (LXM ID: 1528) north east of Bethungra (LXM ID: 600)
Local Roads	There are several crossings (mainly passive) within the CGRC

Source: RMS Website

Table 5: Restricted Routes

Road	Location
Burley Griffin Way	between Fitzroy Street Binalong and Cootamundra - Stockinbingal Road Stockinbingal
Gocup Road	from Eagle Street, South Gundagai to Snowy Mountains Highway, Tumut
Grahamstown Road	between Gundagai Road, Tumblong and Mount Horeb Road, Mount Horeb

Source: RMS Website

## 7.1 Road

The constraints for the road network have been ranked (High/Medium/Low) in order of priority. In determining the ranking the following factors were considered:

- Safety;
- Level of road (National/State/Regional/Local); and
- Road Traffic Volumes.

Table 6: National Road Constraints

NATIONAL ROADS			
Road	Location	Constraint	Ranking
Hume Highway (M31) (RMS: HW2)	Sheahan Bridge (northbound) at Gundagai	Not approved for A-Doubles with mass restrictions to HML 68.5t. Could result in A-Double operators looking to State and Regional roads as an alternative route.	<b>HIGH</b>

Sources: REROC/RMS/Transport for NSW

Table 7: State Road Constraints

STATE ROADS			
Road	Location	Constraint	Ranking
Olympic Highway (A41) RMS: MR78)	Burley Griffin Way Roundabout at Wallendbeen	Restricts oversize vehicles & PBS 2B configurations.	<b>MEDIUM</b>
Burley Griffin Way (B94) (RMS: MR84)	Olympic Highway Roundabout at Wallendbeen (same as Olympic Highway item above).		
	The causeway between Temora and Wallendbeen.	Road subject to flooding due to several small cross culverts, which results in road closures.	<b>MEDIUM</b>

Road	Location	Constraint	Ranking
Snowy Mountains Highway (B72) (RMS: HW4)	Adelong to Hume Highway (25 – 30km) length approximately	Limited overtaking opportunities. Restrictions on heavy vehicles to and from the Pulp and Paper Mills. No travel through Adelong between 10pm and 7am results in a detour via Gocup Road, adding an extra hour to travel times in each direction.	MEDIUM
Gocup Road (RMS: MR279)	The Tumut to Hume Corridor Study (2016) identified constraints.	RMS advised that the project is on track to be completed by June 2019. The funded works will address the existing constraints on the Gocup Road. However, the constraints identified for the Snowy Mountains Highway have not received funding commitment and a construction schedule yet.	HIGH

Sources: REROC/RMS/Transport for NSW

Table 8: Regional Road Constraints

REGIONAL ROADS			
Road	Location	Constraint	Ranking
Gundagai-Grong Grong Road (RMS: MR243) (Local road name: Nangus Road)	Nangus to Gundagai.	Not approved for B-Double Approval only under permit	LOW
	Jubilee Bridge (at the CGRC boundary, over Billabong Creek).	Not assessed for HML	LOW
Cootamundra-Stockinbingal Road (RMS: MR235) (Local road name: Cootamundra Road)	Bridge over Lagoon Creek (at Nioka).	Not assessed for HML	LOW
Coolac-Cootamundra	HML Route Approval	HML route approval is granted within the former	LOW

Road (RMS: MR87) (Local road name: Muttama Road)		Cootamundra Shire boundary only. RMS advised that they require advice from CGRC to confirm status for full length.	
	Cowcumbra Street intersection	Requires strengthening and widening (including realignment and turn lanes) Complete.	<b>LOW</b>
	Cullinga Creek Causeway.	Road subject to flooding due to several small cross culverts, which results in road closures.	<b>LOW</b>
	Muttama Creek Causeway.		

Sources: RERO/RMS/Transport for NSW

Table 9: Local Road Constraints

<b>LOCAL ROADS</b>			
<b>Road</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Constraint</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Dirnaseer Road	Dirnaseer Road Railway Bridge (part of the Cootamundra High Vehicle detour).	Not assessed for HML	<b>MEDIUM</b>
Sutton Lane	Sutton Lane Bridge (Salt Clay Creek). (part of the Cootamundra High Vehicle detour).	Width of bridge restricts travel to single vehicles at all time. Complete	<b>MEDIUM</b>
Adjungbilly Road	Route length.	Insufficient road width to support use by HML vehicles. Project Underway to widen road width to be completed in 2020.	<b>LOW</b>

Sources: RERO/RMS/Transport for NSW

## 7.2 Rail

The constraints for rail have been ranked (High/Medium/Low) in order of priority. In determining the ranking, the following factors were considered:

- Safety;
- Level of road (National/State/Regional/Local); and
- Road Traffic Volumes.

Table 10: Railway Underpass/Bridge Constraints

Underpasses/Bridges			
Road	Location	Constraint	Ranking
Main South Railway Line	The Gap Bridge Underpass at Cootamundra (Olympic Highway).	Restricted height limit of 4.5m This creates an 8km detour for high vehicles around the Cootamundra township. There is also a risk of collision of vehicles with the underpass which could lead to disruptions to rail services.	<b>HIGH</b>
	Main South Line Overpass at Wallendbeen (Olympic Highway and Burley Griffin Way).	Restricts oversize vehicles and performance-based standards vehicles (PBS 2B configurations)	<b>MEDIUM</b>

Sources: REROC/RMS/Transport for NSW

Table 11: Railway Level Crossing Constraints

Railway level crossings			
Road	Location	Constraint	Ranking
Main South Railway Line	The crossing is northeast of Bethungra on the Olympic Highway.	There are sharp bends on the approaches to the railway level crossings in a 100km/h zone. There is a risk of roll over by heavy vehicles.	<b>HIGH</b>

Sources: REROC/RMS/Transport for NSW

Table 12: Railway – Other Constraints

Other issues			
Road	Location	Constraint	Ranking
Main South Railway Line	Olympic Highway intersection at Back Brawlin Road.	There is insufficient distance between the highway and the level crossing for B-Doubles to stop clear of the railway line.	<b>MEDIUM</b>

Sources: RERO/RMS/Transport for NSW

## 7.3 Air

The Cootamundra Airport currently has no passenger services that operate from this facility, however there is some minor freight services.

# 8. Opportunities

## 8.1 General

There are several opportunities for freight and transport movement that have been identified in and around the Region. These are summarised in this section.

## 8.2 Road

### Corridor Studies

Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) are progressively preparing network and corridor strategies to cover every State road in NSW. According to the RMS website, this is:

*“a response to the challenge of how to best manage and plan for transport infrastructure to maximise benefits for our customers. These strategies set a 20-year planning framework, which brings together road safety, traffic efficiency and asset management activities, together with policy in relation to freight access.”*

In the CGRC LGA the following strategies have been completed:

- **Albury to Cowra Corridor Strategy (2010)** – addressing the Olympic Highway; and
- **Tumut to Hume Highway Corridor Strategy (2016)** - addressing the Snowy Mountains Highway and Gocup Road.

Discussions have recently been held between CGRC and the RMS to further develop strategies for the Burley Griffin way and Olympic Highway.

After the strategies were completed, the Olympic Highway and Gocup Road secured significant investment to improve freight efficiency and road safety. The Olympic Highway upgrades were delivered in stages between 2012 and 2017. Gocup Road upgrades, according to RMS, are due for completion by mid-2019. Funding of the upgrades identified for the Snowy Mountains Highway have yet to be announced.

The completion of a corridor strategy for the Burley Griffin Way is necessary so that a coordinated approach can be developed to bring this important link for the CGRC up to appropriate standards for safe and efficient freight traffic movements.

## **Service Centres**

### Hume Highway

The Hume Highway has several service centres located between Albury and Sydney along with many rest areas. In recent years, since the completion of the duplication of the Hume Highway (including town bypasses) RMS has been progressively upgrading rest areas through funding opportunities with the Federal Government's Heavy Vehicle Safety Productivity Program (HVSPP).

However, there may be an opportunity for a new commercial service centre at a location within the CGRC LGA. The section of the Hume Highway that bypasses Coolac could be one such location for a service station/roadhouse to be developed.

### Tourism Routes

Riverina Tourism's website has a section on trails that includes (relevant to the CGRC):

- Burley Griffin Way trail

*"Canberra and Griffith are intrinsically linked by Walter Burley Griffin's inspiring town planning. Discover the Riverina's charming towns along the Way."*

Another of the trails listed on the website is the Canola Trail, which spans three regional council LGAs and has its own dedicated website. There may be opportunities within the CGRC LGA to work with Riverina Tourism to promote other trails of significance.

### Rail Trail (Walking and Cycling)

Within the Riverina region there are a number of proposed Rail Trails including within the Riverina Highlands Rail Trail in Wagga City and adjoining Snowy Valleys Council area. Work has commenced on the Tumbarumba to Rosewood section in August 2018.

Listed on the Rail Trails Australia website, as a 'possible' trail, is the Murrumbidgee Valley Rail Trail (known as the disused Tumut and Kunama Branch rail line). The website describes the Tumut line as a 104km long branch of the Main South Line, branching southwards from it at Cootamundra and heading to the town of Tumut. The line served the towns of Tumut and Gundagai, where the line crosses the Murrumbidgee River with a large iron girder bridge and wooden viaduct. Villages on the line included Brawlin, Muttama, Coolac, and Tumbalong. The Kunama railway line is a small 35km branch of the Tumut line, branching from it at Gilmore, 5km southwest of Tumut, passing through the town of Batlow before ending in Kunama. The branch connection faced towards Tumut.



The full length could ultimately be considered, however, smaller lengths, like the section between Tumblong and Coolac (via Gundagai) could be developed first. Consideration of regional linkages may be subject to further investigation and engagement.

## 8.3 Rail

### Reopening the Tumut Branch Line

In 2015/16 Transport for NSW released a request for tender to ascertain private sector interest in restoring and operating /maintaining the 104 km Tumut branch line on a commercially sustainable basis without State funding. This would have the potential to remove some freight off the roads (possibly Gocup Road) and onto rail. Although three tenders were received, Transport for NSW did not award the tender.

### New Intermodal Freight Terminals

According to a report on containerised cargo demand in the Riverina and South West Slopes and Plains by PWC, there are multiple proposed terminals in Cootamundra, as follows:

- Visy has proposed to build a terminal on the Cootamundra-Tumut line. This would require restoring a section of the line, the development of an 800-metre siding, and heavy vehicle access from the rear of the site;
- VSuthern has proposed to build a terminal directly adjacent to the Main South line; and
- TfNSW is examining potential at Nash's Lane, Cootamundra and at Coolac that will utilise the currently non-operational Cootamundra to Tumut Rail Line.

There may also be opportunities for new terminals at Stockinbingal with the proposed Inland Rail project, which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

### Inland Rail

As discussed earlier in this report, the Inland Rail between Melbourne and Brisbane will require new rail infrastructure to be constructed through the CGRC LGA, including upgrades to existing infrastructure as follows:

- Illabo to Stockinbingal: approximately 37km of new track - this new track will reduce route length by 30km and avoid the Bethungra Spiral (which is located to the south of the CGRC LGA boundary); and
- Stockinbingal to Parkes: approximately 169km of existing track - the track has already been upgraded in this section by the Australian Rail Track Corporation, but additional works will be undertaken to accommodate double stacking for containers.

The project also includes upgrading the Main South Railway line to the south of Illabo to increase the clearance from the railway line to allow for double stacking of containers. There are a number of road over rail and pedestrian over rail structures that will need to be replaced, or the track lowered, to provide the increased clearance, as well as several new rail crossings (including Burley Griffin Way at Stockinbingal).

Cootamundra has developed as a major rail hub due to its location on the junction of the Main South Line connecting to other routes through central and western NSW. With the onset of the new Inland Rail line, Stockinbingal could develop into an equivalent major rail hub and associated commercial developments (like intermodal hub/s) although it is more likely that the main hub will be in Wagga Wagga.

### **High Speed Rail**

A high-speed rail passenger network connecting Melbourne to Brisbane through Sydney, Canberra and other regional centres along the east coast was studied between 2010 and 2013 by the Federal Government. The study identified that Wagga Wagga would be the location of a station on the high-speed rail for south west NSW, with the alignment of the new rail line passing through the CGRC LGA to the south of Cootamundra.

Since the Federal Government's reports were completed, a private consortium called Consolidated Land and Rail Australia (CLARA) has proposed an alternative option for high speed rail between Melbourne and Sydney (as shown in Figure 7).

Figure 7: CLARA High Speed Rail Route



There are no details as to the location of Site 4 on the route, however this could be within the CGRC LGA. The CLARA plan involves the development of new population centres that will fund the construction of the rail network and CLARA has been successful in securing Federal Government funding to commence a business model for the first stage of the route, from Melbourne to Shepparton (in Victoria).

## 8.4 Air

### Cootamundra Aerodrome

The Cootamundra aerodrome has some existing commercial businesses operating from the site, however more opportunities may be available, including (but not limited to):

- Pilot training;
- Aircraft maintenance;
- Aircraft refurbishment and painting;
- Pilot supplies; and
- Airplane storage.

Increasing financial costs to fund safety requirements is one aspect that has been linked to the closure of many regional airports. Furthermore, in general freight is becoming overly competitive, with regional centres losing out on existing services.

It is recommended that a strategic review of the facility should be undertaken to identify what opportunities are viable for the Cootamundra aerodrome.

## 9. Summary of Findings

The Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council could benefit from the implementation of two new nationally significant rail infrastructure projects and opportunities with tourism that include:

- The Inland Rail project between Melbourne and Brisbane will require new rail infrastructure to be constructed through the CGRC LGA as well as upgrades to existing infrastructure. This could provide the opportunity for new road/rail intermodal terminals and associated developments;
- The high-speed rail passenger network connecting Melbourne to Brisbane through Sydney, Canberra and other regional centres along the east coast could also benefit the region through the development of a new population centre within the CGRC LGA; and
- Other opportunities for the CGRC include the possibility of increasing tourism in the LGA through the implementation of new infrastructure, like a rail trail between Tumblong and Coolac (via Gundagai), or through the publicising of new tourist trails/routes.

As identified in this report there are still some significant constraints for the safe and efficient passage of freight transport through the CGRC LGA. Moving forward some of the high priorities include:

- The Hume Highway, Sheahan Bridge (northbound) at Gundagai, needs to be upgraded to allow A-Doubles to travel northbound (over the old bridge) as they do southbound over the new bridge;
- The Gocup Road component of the Tumut to Hume corridor study works is due for completion in June 2019. The remaining works identified for the Snowy Mountains Highway also needs a funding commitment;
- The road underpass at Cootamundra (The Gap Rail Bridge - Main South Railway line/Olympic Highway) has a height restriction of 4.5m, resulting in an 8km detour for tall vehicles around Cootamundra. There is also a risk of collision of vehicles with the underpass which could lead to disruptions to rail services; and
- The Olympic Highway approaches to the railway level crossing, northeast of Bethungra, has sharp bends and is located within a 100km/h zone. There is a risk of roll over by heavy vehicles.

# 10. References

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<sup>3</sup> REROC = Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils  
CGRC Freight and Transport Issues Paper