

Draft Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan

March 2022



**CENTRAL NSW
JOINT ORGANISATION**

Bathurst
Blayney
Cabonne
Cowra
Forbes
Lachlan
Oberon
Orange
Parkes
Weddin



Chair Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor, Cabonne Council

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Central West and Orana Transport Plan
Transport for NSW
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To whom it may concern,

Re: Submission to the Draft Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan

Local Government Regional Joint Organisations (JOs) were proclaimed in May 2018 under the NSW Local Government Act 1993. The Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) represents over 200,000 people covering an area of more than 50,000sq kms comprising the Local Government Areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Lachlan, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Weddin, and Central Tablelands Water.

Tasked with intergovernmental cooperation, leadership and prioritisation, JOs have consulted with their stakeholders to identify key strategic regional priorities. Please go to the CNSWJO website at <https://www.centraljo.nsw.gov.au> for more information.

Firstly, the region welcomes the continued commitment by the NSW government to transport planning. The following high-level observations are made:

1. Reflection should be provided in this plan on the past plans. What has been implemented, what has changed in the intervening period and what has been excluded from this plan that was in previous iterations?
2. Where there are “long- term” *investigation* initiatives, what are the steps that need to be taken in this 5-year period, to ensure that the ten year “long term” does not get pushed out every five years or worse, becomes “never?”
3. Regarding implementation, it is recommended that governance be put in place that aligns with the Central NSW Regional Integrated Transport Group administered by TfNSW from the Parkes Office. In this way the Plan will be truly alive and connected into the communities in region.
4. Regarding the timeframes – it would appear that anything not in planning or underway at this time becomes a long-term initiative for *investigation*. This is not long-term planning for the future, especially where there is no reference to when investigation might start.

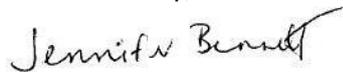
The Central NSW JO speaks for over 157,000 people covering an area of more than 47,000sq kms comprising of Bathurst, Blayney, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Lachlan, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, and Weddin.

Particular attention is drawn to the long-term solution for a safe swift link between Central NSW and Sydney which is completely missing from this plan. These are referenced in existing TfNSW Future Transport Services and Infrastructure Plan but missing from the plan for the Central West. The opportunity is for the Central West and Orana Regional Transport Plan to articulate the steps in the next five years towards this longer-term thinking given implementation of the Services and Infrastructure Plan was in 2018. Please see [Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan 1.pdf](#) page 121 items 30 and 31.

Councils in the region will provide their individual advice however the feedback from discussion in region and endorsed by the Central NSW JO Board is summarised in the attached table.

Please contact me on 0428 690 935 for more information.

Yours sincerely,



Jennifer Bennett

Executive Officer

Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO)

DRAFT CENTRAL WEST & ORANA REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN – Specific commentary

| Page | Issue | Comment |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 01 and throughout the document | NSW Common Planning Assumptions | <p>Unfortunately for the communities of NSW the significant spend on strategy in region using population data that has historically proved wrong and in the current socio-economic climate is wildly wrong - has serious implications for government investment in region. For example, investment in infrastructure such as schools and hospitals will not be fit for purpose for the actual population growth. This leads to a consistent, serious and substantial waste of public money; beyond the waste of money on the plans themselves. Uneconomical, inefficient or ineffective use of resources, resulting in a serious and substantial loss of public funds also leads to a loss of public confidence with its corollary political fall-out.</p> <p>At the very least scenario planning for alternative population numbers should be considered. This should be informed by lived experience in region including construction, the Parkes SAP, the Renewable Energy Zone and the migration from cities to regional Australia.</p> |
| 07 | 1.2 | <p>This region has been engaged as a stakeholder on this plan since early 2019. The region’s early contributions and engagement have either been lost, overlooked or duplicated during the machinery of government changes in the TfNSW. This has led to misunderstandings, over promise and under delivery.</p> |
| 07 | 1.3 | <p>Noting that the priorities for Orana & Central West are different - Orana being the Golden Highway and Central West being the Great Western Highway.</p> <p>The pattern of settlement, transport linkages, productivity, proximity to ports, Sydney and Canberra are very different for the Central West and Orana. Importantly, the collegiate relationships in the Central West, the support provided to the State through the JO and the governance arrangements in this region offer the opportunity for better consultation, a better plan and better implementation. Too often the Central West is swept into the “rest of the West” and the potential for leveraging the opportunity is lost.</p> <p>Regarding the subregions identified in the plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The pattern of settlement in Central NSW does not lend itself to a hub and spoke approach. Rather it is a network with its own oddities and opportunities. For example the communities of Orange and Bathurst and so proximal and the transport opportunities are overlooked when they are included in different subregions. The transport task of Cowra is a particular omission in this approach. The region provided feedback all the way through the consultation period in this regard and was ignored. |

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| | | <p>2. That the communities of Central West form three of the Subregions while Dubbo to the north and west forms the fourth reflects how important it is to treat the Central West separately from the Orana.</p> <p>3. The NSW Government has directed that State agencies work in the planning region boundaries as described. Therefore, the plan should have advice for the Central West and Orana that is distinct reflecting their differing needs.</p> |
| 11 | 2.1.1, para 3. | <p>Central NSW Councils strongly refute the prediction that areas outside Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst will decline in population. All lgas in Central NSW are experiencing growing pains including skills and workforce shortages, despite the Government continuous forecast of demise. These predictions are harmful and inaccurate. Furthermore, Government services are based on these predictions, which serve to be self-fulfilling prophecies, as government services are withdrawn on the prediction of declining populations.</p> <p>The irony that TfNSW is working on the impacts of growth in population on the eastern side of the region as a result of the anticipated work on the Great Western Highway between Lithgow and Katoomba is not lost on the CNSWJO Board. The Plan ought reflect at least the growth assumptions made in the TfNSW forward program.</p> |
| 13 | 2.1.1, figure 1. | <p>See advice in the box above.</p> <p>Examples of other State agencies, including TfNSW are at odds with these common planning assumptions for example: https://shared-drupal-s3fs.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/master-test/fapub_pdf/A+Parks/Parkes+SAP+-+Community+and+Social+Infrastructure+Assessment.pdf</p> <p>Population impacts of the Parkes SAP see p 31.</p> <p>There is the work commissioned by DPE in the WRI Region Shapers' Report showing just the impacts of construction in the Central West/Orana region will require 64,000 new jobs.</p> <p>Finally there is the work TfNSW is doing itself on population impacts on the eastern part of the region as a result of the work on the GWH.</p> |
| 15 | 2.1.3 | <p>The Central West is the only region in NSW with no expressway into Sydney. Although there has been considerable expenditure through the Blue Mountains, there is still conflicts with local traffic, and maximum speeds of 80kph, creating a disincentive to use this route. There has been massive expenditure committed to the Great Western Highway and the route remains slow and congested. Greater attention should be given to the Bells Line of Road (BLoR) where the only commentary is that overtaking lanes will be planned in the next ten years.</p> |

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| 19 | 2.1.5 | It is essential to establish fast-charging stations for electric vehicles to encourage uptake. |
| 23 | 3.1 | The focus on regional centres loses the importance of the broader fabric of the pattern of settlement. |
| 24 | 3.1 | Fast-charging network need to be accelerated in region and close work ought be undertaken with Councils leveraging the best sites where these may be on Council owned land. |
| 25 | Themes: Connected and Productive | Regarding connected, CNSW seeks to have equity with other regions in NSW in terms of access to its capital city. Further this connection will better enable the businesses and visitors from Sydney to access this region. Live work and play does not pick up on the health and education needs of CNSW which require connectivity into Sydney. Regarding productive – again there are significant freight constraints on the east west connection and these need to be outlined and addressed. Otherwise, the themes are broadly supported. |
| 30 | 3.2.1 Objective 2 | Improved rail freight linkages to Sydney from Parkes SAP via Blue Mountains and Stockinbingal is critical to the success of NSW. Without improved rail connectivity to Sydney freight will be drawn to the more efficient routes created by the Inland rail. Consideration should also be given to passenger services on the inland rail route, linking Brisbane to the Indian Pacific or onto Melbourne. Public health transport day-service needs to be created between our smaller villages and their centres where the pattern of settlement across the region. |
| 31 | Typo | Additionally |
| 33 | Support for connection between centres | Where pages are spent addressing the hub and spoke principle, the pattern of settlement in Central NSW lends itself to considerations of “between centres.” It is good that page 33 begins this conversation. More is needed. |
| 35 | Working on the longer | Commentary needs to be made and initiatives identified for work in the next 5 years on a safe swift link between Sydney and Central NSW. |

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| | term solution | |
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| 35 | Priority of the Fast Rail Network for Central NSW | Given the timeframe for the road upgrades between Sydney and Central NSW, faster rail should be expedited for this region. This should be staged to enable early connection in region, for example between Bathurst and Orange. |
| 36 | 3.2.2 | Centre-line separation has been successfully trialed on the Newell. This initiative should be extended to other works across the region, including audio/tactile where appropriate. Advanced train management systems should be deployed to allow motorists and farmers to access online when and where trains are operating. For farmers crossing railway lines which traverse their properties and all other road users this would be an additional safety initiative of consequence. |
| 39 | 3.2.2 Objective 4 | Speed zone guidelines in peri-urban areas (particularly) need to be reviewed. Complaints are often received by Local Government that speed zone posting is not commensurate with the speed zone guide. It is critical that support continues for the regions Road-Safety Officers. |
| 47 | 3.2.3 Objective 9 | Improved train ticketing would benefit customers, such as in Europe where a specific seat can be booked online, so passengers know exactly where they will be seated eg window seat etc. |
| 49 | 3.2.4 Objective 10 | Telehealth has a place but should not be used as a mechanism to reduce access to medical practitioners. Mobile phone access and data speeds needs to be improved across the region. Given the transport constraints in region CNSW should be the capital of transport innovation so our communities have the first opportunity to benefit from innovative solutions. |
| 50 | 3.2.4 Objective 11 | Off road cycleways offer a higher level of safety than using shoulders on roads. There are many potential sites across the region and these should be investigated. |

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| 52 | 3.2.4 Objective 11 | <p>Expanded cycleway networks should not be restricted to Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange, but provided across all regional towns. Active lifestyles is as important in any regional town as regional cities.</p> <p>Not only local government but schools & large businesses/employers should be encouraged to provide end-of-trip bike parking facilities.</p> <p>Before old-rail lines are removed and repurposed for cycleways, the potential to reinstate for passenger/freight rail should be considered.</p> |
| 55 | 3.2.5 Objective 14 | <p>Corridor planning for freight needs to be re-instated into the remit of TfNSW.</p> <p>There are a number of corridors the region would like to work on with TfNSW including the Bells Line, Tablelands Way, Lachlan Valley Way, Mary Gilmore Way, Henry Parkes Way; HML Connectivity to Condobolin.</p> <p>A number of Local Government Areas have opened their entire road network to large High productivity vehicles such as B-Doubles, road-trains etc. The entire western region of NSW is also open access. TfNSW should consider opening all roads west of the Newell Highway to road-trains (or at least B-Doubles). Legislation should be included to pass the obligation of safety onto the operator, as is the case in the western regions of NSW.</p> <p>The Development of Special Activation precincts across NSW is now well advanced. The roads constructed in the precincts are of high-standard and high-function. The efficient operation and maintenance are beyond the financial capability of local government. These roads should be transferred to TfNSW as State significant roads.</p> |
| 59 | Freight blueprint | This region supports the development of a freight blueprint for CNSW. I should be a short term initiative. |
| 60 | 3.2.5 Objective 15 | The longer term solution of a safe swift link at 100k to and from Sydney from the region is missing. |
| 61 | Blayney Demondrille | This region supports the reactivation of the Blayney Demondrille line. |
| 64 | Objective 17 | Flood proofing the Newell ought be mentioned specifically given its impacts. Some commentary on betterment would also be useful. |

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| 65 | Objective 18 | This region has worked with TfNSW on Live Traffic being a one stop shop for all roads and seeks for this work to continue. |
| 67 | Chapter 4 | As previously stated, care needs to be taken planning essential services to regional town based on flawed base information (such as population projections). |
| 71 | 4.3 item 29 | The items listed for investigation in 0-10 years ought have a start date. Those that have carried over from the last two plans ought be listed. It is not good enough to keep pushing the wants of the region into a long term plan iteration after iteration, or worse just drop the region's aspiration altogether. A long term solution for connectivity between Central NSW and Sydney ought be included. |

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