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Media Release

NSW needs to do more to lift rail freight capacity in Greater Sydney

The Australian Logistics Council (ALC) is calling on the NSW Government to re-double its efforts to boost the freight capacity of Sydney's metropolitan rail network following the release of the NSW Auditor-General's Rail Freight and Greater Sydney report this week.

The NSW Auditor General's report is critical of how the NSW Government has managed the rail freight capacity in Greater Sydney to meet current and future freight demand.

ALC CEO Brad Williams said if we are going to meet growing consumer demand, reduce traffic congestion and ensure a sustainable supply chain, we need to see clear accountability including plans and action that will guarantee rail can carry its fair share of the metropolitan freight burden.

"It is a concern that the NSW Auditor General found that state agencies do not have clear strategies or targets in place to boost the freight capacity of its metropolitan rail network and make it more efficient, Mr Williams said.

"In order to meet growing consumer demand and with increasing competition for industrial land, we need to focus on the detailed work to ensure the number of freight train paths are increased within the metropolitan shared rail network."

The report found that two-thirds of all freight in NSW (excluding coal) passes through Greater Sydney and that cargo volume is expected to increase by 48 per cent by 2036, from 194 million tonnes in 2016 to 288 million tonnes. The report has also recognised that the plan to increase the level of freight rail leaving Port Botany to 28 per cent by 2021 has been missed. The report did note that Transport for NSW is concluding a review of the Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and is developing a Freight Rail Strategy, a Port Efficiency Strategy in a Freight Data Strategy during 2022.

"For industry to be given confidence in the policy development process, it is imperative that they are consulted in developing these plans and that a clear implementation outline is made publicly available, Mr Williams said.

"We have a great opportunity to future proof our freight networks but only if we can work collectively to plan and deliver the critical infrastructure and capacity needed to ensure the economic growth of our regions and cities."

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