

### Access to an inland transport corridor

The Bells Line Expressway transport corridor will provide a vital link from Sydney and its ports to the inland transport hub at Parkes, providing access to the inland transport corridors running between Melbourne and Brisbane and west to Perth.



#### Is the location of the NSW city of Parkes strategically significant?

**Answer: Yes**

Parkes sits at the intersection of major rail freight corridors - the east-west rail line to Perth and the planned inland rail line between Melbourne and Brisbane. Alongside this, Parkes is located on the nation's inland motoring corridor, the Newell Highway. Parkes has good access to major ports on the eastern seaboard except for those in Sydney.

The strategic significance of Parkes has been recognised by transporters and by 2005, three key transport operators had established freight terminals there. The Parkes Shire Council has built on the earlier developments by re-zoning land to develop the Parkes National Logistics Hub as the pre-eminent transport hub on the inland corridor (Parkes National Logistics Hub, 2010).

Additionally, the position of Parkes at the eastern edge of the Murray Darling Basin is important.

#### Is the Murray Darling Basin economically significant?

**Answer: Yes**

The Murray Darling Basin, and the efficient transport of produce from it, is a critical component in maintaining Australia's food security. The Basin produces:

- \$15 billion worth of produce annually (39 percent of Australia's total agricultural production); and
  - it contains 65 percent of Australia's irrigated land area and around 40 percent of Australia's farms.
- (Murray Darling Basin Authority, 2009)

The effects of climate change and rising oil prices will have a significant impact on the costs of transport from

the Basin. A restructuring of transport, both in terms of mode and routes taken is likely to be necessary. The Parkes hub will facilitate this restructuring and provide more efficient linkages to the major metropolitan centres. A sample of the produce sourced from the Basin appears in the table below.

Commodity	Percentage of Australian production (*numbers)
Apples	51%
Apricots	68%
Cabbages	20%
Cauliflowers	24%
Cherries	59%
Lemons and Limes	21%
Lettuce	23%
Melons	34%
Nectarines	74%
Olives	77%
Oranges	64%
Peaches	88%
Pears	86%
Pumpkins	27%
Silverbeet and Spinach	23%
Sweetcorn	38%
Tomatoes	60%
Meat cattle*	26%
Sheep*	42%
Pigs*	54%

(Derived from ABS Catalogue No. 7121, 2008-09)

# Bells Line EXPRESSWAY

Is there good access to Sydney from the strategically and economically significant Parkes hub and Murray Darling Basin?

Answer: No

A comparison of transport times from Parkes to various ports along the eastern seaboard suggests that, for the distance traversed, access to Sydney is highly inefficient. The table below presents the comparison.

Port	Rail	Road
Sydney, Port of Botany	8 hours via Blue Mountains 9 hours via Cootamundra	5 hours
Newcastle, Port of Newcastle	10 hours	6 hours
Brisbane, Port of Brisbane	18 hours	11 hours
Melbourne, Port of Melbourne	12 hours	8 hours
Wollongong, Port Kembla	10 hours	5 hours

(Parkes National Logistics Hub, 2010)

## Why is access poor?

- Road freight access to Sydney is difficult as road network constraints affect freight traffic operations over the Blue Mountains (Sinclair Knight Merz, 2009):
- Currently, B-doubles over 19m are not permitted east of Lithgow on the Great Western Highway, and overtaking opportunities are limited; and
- Access to the Bells Line of Road is limited to cars and light and medium commercial vehicles due to the relatively poor horizontal and vertical alignment of the road.  
(Sinclair Knight Merz, 2009)

Rail access to Sydney is considerably less efficient than it should be as a result of track quality, track capacity, bridges and limited passing opportunities as well as congestion issues once the Sydney network is reached.

## How will building the Bells Line Expressway help?

The potential development of the Melbourne-Brisbane inland rail line (planned for 2021) and the associated transport corridor has the potential to change the structure and mode of freight across the eastern seaboard and to the west (Sinclair Knight Merz, 2009).

The Bells Line Expressway will improve transport linkages in three ways:

- By providing a high capacity transport route from Lithgow to Sydney, the Bells Line Expressway will significantly improve transport times and costs from the Parkes hub and the inland transport corridor.
- By providing a better link to Parkes, the Bells Line Expressway could divert much freight traffic from Australia's east coast between Melbourne and Brisbane to the inland transport corridor (WRI, 2005).
- Additionally, by incorporating plans for better rail access to Sydney in the Bells Line Expressway transport corridor, the corridor will be better placed to adapt to future changes in transport needs.

The Bells Line Expressway transport corridor will provide an efficient link between the inland transport corridor and Sydney, and will play a critical role in integrating the economy and regions of the eastern seaboard.



Bells Line Expressway  
PMB 17, Bathurst, NSW 2795  
T: (02) 6333 6257  
[www.bleg.com.au](http://www.bleg.com.au)

Western Research Institute  
C/- Charles Sturt University  
Research Station Drive, Bathurst NSW 2795  
T: (02) 6338 4435 F: (02) 6338 4699  
E: [info@wri.org.au](mailto:info@wri.org.au) [www.wri.org.au](http://www.wri.org.au)



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