

Date

September 2009

Issue

Port facility development in Cockburn Sound.

KIC Position

Kwinana Industries Council (KIC) supports the concept of expanded port facilities in Cockburn sound in principle and has reached this conclusion in consultation with its member companies.

KIC has serious reservations about these expansions, especially concerning the:

- inclusion of livestock handling,
- maintenance of a healthy marine environment,
- effect of the expansions on existing public utility support infrastructure and industry access.

KIC believes that the effective management and future development of port facilities, including bulk handling facilities in Cockburn Sound, are a critical factor in the ongoing success and growth of the KIA and for the wider state economy.

Background

The number of containers passing through the facilities at the Fremantle port is continuing to grow towards capacity, and ultimately that capacity will be reached..

Western Australia is a trading state and without adequate port capacity, the State's economy will not be adequately supported.

Studies have shown that the most appropriate site for additional container handling facilities is from within the northern end of the Kwinana Industrial Area (KIA), in Naval Base, located about 15km south of Fremantle. There are two proposals currently under consideration: a port development at James Point by James Point Pty Ltd, and a proposal by Fremantle Ports for an island and/or land extension immediately to the north of James Point.

Both James Point Pty Ltd and Fremantle Ports are KIC members.

KIC considers there to be three broad issues: Transport, Environment and Land Use.

Transport

All proposals prompt discussion about the need to significantly upgrade heavy vehicle and rail transport corridors in the KIA, particularly relating to the estimated import and export activities.

Fremantle Port's Kwinana Quays proposal identifies the need for the two major points of access to a full port operation. KIC urges that Anketell and Rowley Roads be upgraded to freeway status with high/wide load provision through at least one (preferably Anketell Rd) and dangerous goods access be provided on both.

The recently announced Mundijong Road westward extension from the Kwinana Freeway leading to the southern end of the KIA via Old Mandurah Road is an important linkage which will be heavily utilised by industrial traffic. KIC urges the government to consider a significant upgrade to this new corridor to facilitate the efficient passage of heavy transport to and from the South West.

KIC considers the proposed Intermodal Freight Terminal to be an essential part of the planning for all port facility development.

The northern access to the ports would logically be Rowley Road. This would necessitate a deep cutting into the toe of Mt. Brown. It is suggested the cutting be capped and fill placed over the top, and then revegetated. Essentially this would provide a tunnel which would significantly reduce the visual impact on Mt. Brown

A high quality road and rail transport link to the north (to Kewdale and Welshpool) is seen as a critical link and KIC sees this as a vital aspect of future planning.

Any long term transition from an operating port in Fremantle to a full operating port in Kwinana would need to be carefully planned and managed as container ships will neither deliver nor pick up cargo from two ports in Perth. Thus a seamless transition will be required, and public funding for double infrastructure for a period of time will be required.

Environment

The overall state of Cockburn Sound is "good" with some residual concerns requiring close monitoring in Jervois Bay. Industry has worked hard over the last 15 years to improve its practices and the current clean state of the marine environment is proof of this expenditure of time and effort.

KIC is therefore conscious that there must be a rigorous environmental impact process included within the environmental approval process for planned port developments. KIC is keen to see that steps be included in the planning process which continue the work of KIC member companies to minimise the environmental impact of industrial and related activities on the sensitive marine environment of Cockburn Sound.

All marine environment issues should be carefully studied on a cumulative basis (ie take into account all other proposed and possible developments with a marine aspect). A world's best practice outcome should be the target.

KIC members are also very conscious of the impact of noise, light and odour on surrounding communities. Kwinana Industries operate within a designated buffer zone which is designed to minimise the effect of industry on residences. Many KIC members have installed equipment which means their emissions of noise, dust and odour are lower than regulatory requirements. KIC members are very keen to see port facility expansion take these factors into account to include plans which seek to reduce the emission impact on residential areas.

Land Use

There is a finite amount of land set aside for heavy industrial use within the KIA, and thus what remains must be used for key heavy industry. In the past there were cases of portions of the KIA being allowed to be developed as residential or non-heavy industrial use. This has led to resumption of land and dislocation of communities.

In supporting the overall principle of port expansion, KIC member companies do not want to see future heavy industrial land use restricted by allowing large sections of scarce land within the core industrial area to be used for storage facilities.

In particular, KIC members do not want livestock holding yards to be located within the KIA.

It is expected there may be between one and three livestock ships per week utilising the port if the trade were to be moved from Fremantle. The transport of live sheep from the Port is not supported due to the potential for contamination of Cockburn Sound.

The prospect of quarantine lock downs where an incoming livestock ship brings a disease into the port is of concern to industry. There are several major production facilities and utilities in close proximity and an agricultural quarantine lock down could be very disruptive to production.

There is a concern that unpleasant odours emanating from holding or loading facilities and road transport routes could affect the amenity of residents in the Medina area.

In addition, KIC members do not want container nor imported car holding facilities to be located within the KIA. KIC questions the placement of storage facilities within the KIA because it does not represent the important town planning principle of allocating land to its "highest and best use".

Verve Energy, New Gen and BP will need continuity of salt water cooling water supply from Cockburn Sound. The cooling infrastructure has been in place for years and diffusion of warmed water is not known to create environmental problems. This may change if there is containment of the used cooling water near the discharge point. This issue will need to be considered in the context of the cumulative marine environmental studies.

The Water Corporations new desalination plant draws its source water from within the proposed port area. There may be a water supply quality problem created due to the proximity of shipping.

Reference Material

- Fremantle Ports expansion plans
<http://www.fremantleports.com.au/OuterHarbour.asp>
- Liberal Government Port Proposal
<http://www.kic.org.au/admin/files/Liberal%20Ports%20Concept.pdf>
- James Point Port Pty Ltd proposal
http://www.kwinanaport.com/docs/jjpl_Brochure-Oct%2006.pdf
- Development of an Environmental Protection Policy for Air Quality at Kwinana, EPA (1992).
http://portal.environment.wa.gov.au/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/DOE_ADMIN/POLICY_REPOSITORY/TAB1144266/KWINANA_EPP_1992.PDF
- "Development of an Environmental Protection Policy for air quality in Kwinana"
Environmental Protection Authority, Bulletin 644. September 2008
http://www.epa.wa.gov.au/docs/708_B644.pdf
- Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment 1035/33 James Point, Kwinana - Port Facility
Western Australian Planning Commission
<http://www.wapc.wa.gov.au/Publications/644.aspx>

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