Assessment process starts for the Moorebank intermodal terminal

The NSW Government today confirmed that community and stakeholder consultation was about to commence for a proposed $490 million intermodal terminal on 83-hectares of defence lands at Moorebank.

The Freight Infrastructure Advisory Board, a joint NSW Government-stakeholder committee, in 2005 stated that defence lands at Moorebank were a key component in meeting Sydney’s intermodal capacity needs.

“The NSW Government is targeting a 40 per cent rail mode share of port container freight which will have the benefit of taking container trucks off Sydney’s streets,” said Mr Kelly.

“The proposal has the potential to generate more than 1,700 jobs and be part of a logistical framework for freight transport in a growing city,” he said.

The Sydney Intermodal Terminal Alliance (SIMTA), a consortium made up of Stockland, Qube Logistics and QR National, propose to develop the intermodal logistics facility on the site.

Planning Minister Tony Kelly said the Department of Planning will assess the SIMTA project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

“The size and development type made it a major project of regional and State significance under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act,” Mr Kelly said.

“Major projects provide communities with a very structured, transparent and consultative process,” he said.

“This proposal is now at the very first stage of the overall planning assessment process and there are a number of important steps to come.

This includes:

- The Department working with Liverpool City Council and relevant stakeholders to list the key issues which need to be addressed by SIMTA in its formal application (a Departmental document which is known as the Director-General’s requirements);
- Requiring SIMTA to undertake comprehensive consultation with the community, particularly nearby residents as it develops plans;
- SIMTA developing a proposal to be placed on public exhibition for at least 30 days, after addressing the relevant key issues outlined by the Department;
- Requiring SIMTA to respond to submissions;
- Assessment of the proposal; and then
- Making a final decision
“Community input is a key aspect of the Government’s assessment system for major projects, and all the relevant project documentation will be publicly available shortly,” Mr Kelly said.

The SIMTA proposal is in the form of a concept plan which, if approved, would establish a broad planning framework, to be developed in three stages, and could include:

- A rail link connecting the site to the Southern Sydney Freight Line;
- An intermodal terminal with capacity to handle up to 1 million ‘twenty foot equivalent’ container units per year;
- Warehousing and distribution facilities comprising approximately 300,000 square metres of warehouses with ancillary offices; and
- A freight village of approximately 8,000 square metres of support services such as site management, security offices, driver facilities and convenience retail and business services.

Mr Kelly said that while planning for Sydney’s growth is critically important, the planning process must also consider the concerns of local families about noise, light and traffic impacts.

“The planning process, for example, will investigate the need for buffers between the residents and the commercial sites to protect the amenity of the families of Wattle Grove,” Mr Kelly said.

The site is currently occupied by the Defence National Storage and Distribution Centre, and is adjoined to the west by the Department of Defence’s School of Military Engineering.

In its 2010-11 budget, the Commonwealth Government announced more than $70 million in funding to undertake planning for the School of Military Engineering site, which may also involve a proposal for an intermodal terminal. There is no specific development proposal before the Department on this site.

Both SIMTA and the NSW Government are working closely with the Commonwealth Government to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to the planning of the two sites.

Any future applications for actual construction on the site would need to be generally consistent with the concept plan.

The Department of Planning is currently preparing the Director-General’s requirements for the SIMTA proposal. Once these requirements have been issued to SIMTA, project information will be made available on the Department’s website.