

We've sidetracked container fix

THE political debate is underway in regard to the transport of containers to and from the Port of Newcastle and we need to have a rethink about how we do things and to go back to basic principles.

I believe it is better to ship containers on rail so as to keep the trucks off our highways yet the vision of more rail movements at the two level crossings in Newcastle (Glebe Road and Clyde Street) is not welcome. It is concerning that the government does not see that there is a reasonable answer to this infrastructure problem.

If the rail would leave the port in a northerly direction over Tourle Street and along the Hunter River, and to join the rail corridor beyond the Steel City area, it may be necessary to establish new lines from the river to the main northern line corridor. I do not think this is necessary at least for several years. If the coal trade is to decline, that will create sufficient space on the line to run the containers.

The NSW Parliament has spoken about a freight bypass for the city area, and if they stop talking about it and actually build it then the solution would be staring them in the face. I am feeling compelled to campaign to enter the parliament so that action can commence instead of the endless talk.

We have waited since 1935 to have the Western Newcastle City Bypass (formally called Highway 123) to get to this current stage, and if it is completed by the alleged completion date in 2025 - that will mean that this very short road from Bennetts Green to Sandgate will have taken roughly 90 years to complete from approval in the parliament to actual road use.

The freight rail bypass has been on the table for a number of years and should be out in the open with the community involved in where it will go so that it can be built. We all know it is necessary and an open discussion is the best way forward, not a faceless few putting lines on a map and grinding down people to accept an option. Together we can find a good solution for all if we are honest and open in our discussions.

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Published in the Newcastle Herald 17/11/2022