

Trains do the heavy lifting in plan to expand Port Botany

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TRUCK loads would be shifted to rail for the last few kilometres of trips to Port Botany under a plan to restrict road noise and traffic.

The State Government has promised restrictions and noise audits as part of its controversial Enfield logistics project.

The project is part of a plan to double the amount of rail freight moving to and from Port Botany.

Giving the project the go-ahead will also force the Government to bring forward plans for a doubling of railway capacity in and out of Port Botany, which will involve 24-hour movements from Belfield via Sydenham, to the port, with considerable impact on nearby residents.

In approving the proposal, the Government said it would implement measures to stop trucks using local roads in South Strathfield and Greenacre, along with monitoring dust and noise.

The Mayor of Strathfield, Scott Farlow, said: "I was shocked by the NSW Government's sudden announcement, which indicates that 'Port Enfield' has been given the green light despite no detailed infrastructure assessment, or community consultation and no certain economic benefit for our local community.

"The economic viability of double handling and transporting the containers for such a short distance is questionable."

The Government said volumes moving through Port Botany rose 12 per cent in the 12 months to June, with existing infrastructure reaching capacity.

The surge has also prompted the Government to consider a tunnel from Leichhardt to the port, and a possible freight tunnel parallel to the existing M5 East tunnel.

The chief executive of the NSW Urban Taskforce, Aaron Gardiel, said that since 60 per cent of the freight passing through Port Botany travelled an average 40 kilometres to its destination, the centre at Enfield made sense.