



PRESS RELEASE

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TIME FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL

“The time is right for a major concept study into High Speed Rail in Australia” concluded the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Rail Innovation pre-feasibility report on HSR in the Australian context.

David George, CEO of the CRC for Rail Innovation said: “Factors such as constrained airport capacity, a rising and increasingly urbanised population, maturing technology and an increased focus on reducing transport emissions, indicate that HSR in Australia should now be seriously investigated”.

Average speeds between stations of around 250km/h are now in established operations in Europe. More recently even higher average speeds have been reported in China. Applying such speeds to Australia could reduce Sydney – Melbourne transit time to between 3 and 4 hours and lead to a very significant rail mode share.

From European experience it could reasonably be expected that some 50% of the travellers between Sydney and Melbourne would use a high speed rail link if the journey was less than four hours. For shorter routes such as Sydney – Canberra and Sydney – Newcastle the share of travellers would be much higher.

In particular, the CRC for Rail Innovation report strongly suggested that Sydney airport capacity issues should be considered in conjunction with future HSR options. An HSR could reduce Sydney – Melbourne/Canberra/Gold Coast/Brisbane air patronage and alleviate the need for a second Sydney airport. It could also potentially provide the option of using Canberra and Newcastle airports to increase Sydney’s airport capacity. Based on European experience an HSR would also ensure better overall environmental outcomes as a result as a result of reducing emissions from air and road traffic.

HSR projects have had a transformational and nation building impact on those countries investing in them, by linking cities more closely and acting as a catalyst for regional and national integration. Sydney and Melbourne for example are both world class cities with populations forecast to rise to over 5 million people. It is widely recognised that the air corridor between these two cities is ranked among the top five busiest air routes in the world. This makes it a promising HSR route to change how people travel between these two cities.

In summary the pre-feasibility report concluded that the time is right to carry out an in-depth concept study of High Speed Rail in Australia and that even if HSR doesn’t

go ahead in the immediate future, there should be a move towards corridor preservation to reserve future options. The High Speed Rail (Australian Context) report is available from the CRC for Rail Innovation website at:

<http://www.railcrc.net.au/publications/downloads/R1109-High-Speed-Rail-Australian-ContextFV.pdf>

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