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## High Speed Rail (HSR) Report welcomed by Canberra Business Council

Canberra Business Council today welcomed the release of the CRC for Rail Innovation's Report *'High Speed Rail: Strategic Information for the Australian Context'* (<http://www.railcrc.net.au/publications>) which recommends that a major High Speed Rail (HSR) concept study be undertaken in Australia.

"Canberra Business Council has lobbied for such a study for the past two years", Chris Faulks, CEO of Canberra Business Council said today. "We enthusiastically support the CRC's conclusion that a detailed study is needed into building a HSR network along the east coast of Australia".

Ms Faulks said the Council endorses the suggested focus of the study including market forecasts, estimated benefits and costs, financing options, route and staging options as well as the potential transformational impact of an east coast HSR network on Australian society and the economy.

"A HSR network from Melbourne to Brisbane via Canberra, Sydney and Newcastle has the potential to address increasingly vital national issues such as population growth and congestion in our major cities; environmental pressures and airport and highway congestion. It would also be enormously beneficial in opening up regional Australia."

"Apart from the national benefits, the potential economic benefits to Canberra and the Capital Region are incredibly significant", Ms Faulks said. "As an example, a HSR link between Sydney and Canberra would allow Canberra Airport to act as a supplementary international gateway for both passenger and freight services, relieving congestion at Sydney International Airport."

"Canberra Business Council agrees that the challenges of building a HSR network in Australia are substantial including securing high levels of government support, achieving the right funding model which provides a balance of public and private sector funding, challenges in land acquisition, infrastructure requirements and environmental issues."

"Despite these challenges we are facing a very different situation now from when the last proposal for HSR was considered a decade ago", Chris Faulks said. "The CRC report highlights just how much has changed globally in that time. Apart from environmental changes, there has been exponential growth in HSR with 43 individual HSR lines in operation throughout the world, another 34 under construction and HSR proposals under active consideration in Argentina, Brazil, Britain, Morocco, Poland, Portugal and the United States."

"Canberra Business Council hopes that the CRC report will be considered seriously by all levels of government and that the Federal Government will announce, early this year, a major concept study into the economic, environmental, technological, financial, and social aspects of HSR for Australia."

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