



CANBERRA  
BUSINESS COUNCIL

4 August 2011

## MEDIA RELEASE

### HIGH SPEED RAIL WILL REVITALISE REGIONS

The release today of the first stage of the Federal Government's High Speed Rail Study reinforces Canberra Business Council's long held view that Australia must urgently invest in development of an east coast high speed rail network.

"High speed rail is needed in this country for many reasons," Canberra Business Council (CBC) CEO, Ms Chris Faulks said, "But one of the most powerful arguments for funding this transport infrastructure is the benefits it will deliver to our regional areas.

"I was very pleased to see that the Study released today proposes routes with a number of regional links via Canberra. A recent report by AECOM and Infrastructure Partnerships Australia found a high speed rail network would be 'an important catalyst for regional development and renewal'.

"In countries where this infrastructure is already in place, it has stimulated regional investment, spending and employment growth. High speed rail will encourage business and population migration outside of our major cities.

"This will not only benefit our regions but help reduce congestion in the major urban centres. It is predicted the population of the east coast will be more than 28 million by 2056. Three quarters of these people will live in a major city unless effective transport solutions provide them with viable alternative accommodation and employment options.

"The Study shows that most demand for high speed rail transport will come from outside of the major urban centres, with travel to Canberra, the Gold Coast and regional areas expected to account for 77 per cent of trips.

"The other well-known benefit of high speed rail is a reduction in road and air transport movements and the associated decrease in greenhouse gas emissions.

"Canberra Business Council believes a high speed rail connection between Sydney and Canberra will also delay the need to build a second Sydney airport as Canberra Airport could operate as an overflow airport for both domestic and international flights. This will potentially save billions of dollars in infrastructure spending and help defray the cost of the high speed rail network.

"The next step for the Government is to conduct an in-depth cost-benefit analysis of the identified key corridors.

"CBC urges the Government to ensure that the next phase of this study focuses on the Melbourne-Canberra-Sydney corridor as a priority for development. This route is forecast to have exceptionally high patronage and does not face the same costly topographical barriers as other corridors, which could distort the outcome.

"It is likely that the east coast high speed rail network will have to be developed in stages, so we must ensure that the most cost effective sections are studied and built first to ensure this important project is not delayed any longer."

---

#### Media contact:

**Chris Faulks | CEO | Canberra Business Council | 0421 994 488 | 6247 4199**