

30 August 2011

MEDIA ALERT

HIGH SPEED RAIL FORUM

An east-coast high speed rail network has emerged as the nation's top transport infrastructure priority and the benefits it will deliver to Canberra and the surrounding region are immense, according to Canberra Business Council.

"The Federal Government has recently funded a \$20 million investigation into the viability of an east-coast high speed rail network. The first phase of that study found many reasons why this project should go ahead and no insurmountable hurdles," Canberra Business Council CEO, Chris Faulks said.

"For the first time, this nation-building infrastructure project is on the political agenda. The positive impact an east coast high speed rail network will have in terms of environmental, social and economic outcomes makes it a "must have" for Australia," said Regional Development Australia (ACT) Executive Officer, Robert van Aalst.

"For Canberra and the surrounding areas it will stimulate investment, spending and employment growth and encourage business and population migration to regional Australia and away from the overly congested cities. Ms. Faulks said.

"It will also position Canberra Airport as a viable overflow airport for Sydney, delaying or indeed eliminating the need for a second Sydney Airport." Mr. van Aalst said.

This Thursday the Canberra Business Council and Regional Development Australia (ACT) are hosting a major High Speed Rail Forum. Attendees at the Forum will hear from the Federal Government about its plans for high speed rail in Australia - and receive an overview on the Phase One study - and from an international guest speaker on the benefits achieved and lessons learned by countries that have already developed a high speed rail network.

Guest speakers include:

- Richard Farmer, Department of Infrastructure and Transport, General Manager High Speed Rail; and
- Daniel Freire, Head of Strategic Operations with Spanish High Speed Rail Operator RENFE

"It will be very interesting to hear about the Spanish experience as Spain is currently home to the largest high speed rail network in Europe and the second-longest in the world after China," Ms Faulks said.

For more information or to book a seat visit www.canberrabusinesscouncil.com.au.

Event:	High Speed Rail Forum
Date:	1 September 2011
Time:	12-2pm
Location:	Hotel Realm, Barton

Media are invited to attend this event. Please contact Sharon Sloan on 02 6247 4199 to arrange a seat. Any other queries regarding this event should be directed to Chris Faulks.

Media contact:

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