Press Release

High speed rail to slash Melbourne-Geelong -Dandenong Travel Time

A $15 billion High Speed Rail (HSR) line from Dandenong to Geelong, via Melbourne and Werribee, would reduce travel times to as low as 30 minutes and significantly improve housing affordability and employment opportunities, as distant suburbs become more accessible.

HSR will also be a congestion buster for Melbourne's east-west transport corridor, with initial modelling suggesting it will attract 24,000 trips an hour in peak periods – equivalent to the vehicle capacity of a 12 lane freeway.

The Australian-owned MegaRail consortium has proposed linking Melbourne – Geelong and the Melbourne –Latrobe Valley corridor with a single HSR line, delivering cruising train speeds of 350 km/hr and travel times of 17 minutes between Melbourne (Southern Cross Station) and Geelong, and 13 minutes from Melbourne to Dandenong. Peak hour services would be every 10 minutes.

This compares to current V-line services between Geelong and Dandenong of around one hour and 40 minutes.

16-car trains are proposed to accommodate expected demand, with all passengers seated for comfort, productivity (ability to work whilst commuting) and safety. The consortium has also suggested that magnetic levitation trains such as Shanghai's Transrapid Maglev, with a maximum speed of 500 km/hr, may be an option. The intention is to primarily utilise existing rail corridors.

HSR would be particularly welcome in the Latrobe Valley, which is facing dire employment prospects following the shutdown of brown coal plants. Geelong, forecast to become a Twin City to Melbourne, and the emerging City of Werribee, will benefit from development in the region, particularly the Bellarine Peninsula and the South West Coast

The proposed HSR line would service four of Australia's fastest growing local government areas - Wyndham (Werribee), Cranbourne, Melbourne and Cardinia – averaging 5.2% p.a. population growth. While housing affordability will increase as new outer suburban and regional areas become more accessible, the MegaRail consortium estimates property values between Melbourne and Geelong will also rise by around $7.4 billion.

Environmental benefits are also significant. Compared to other forms of land and air transport, HSR emits 4 kg of CO_2 emissions per 100 passenger kilometres, with 14kg for private cars and 17 kg for planes. Per kiloWatt of energy, HSR carries 170 passengers, versus fast trains 106, commuter trains 90, bus 54, cars 30 and air 20.

The MegaRail consortium includes transport planning firm AWTY Transport Consulting Pty Ltd, Philip Norman and Associates Pty Ltd, Monash University Institute of Rail Technology, RMIT University School of Engineering and others. The bid is part of the Faster Rail Connecting Capital Cities and Orbital Regional Centres initiative, announced in the May Federal Budget.

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