



High Speed Rail Project between Geelong and Dandenong to continue

Work will continue on a proposal to build a high speed rail (HSR) line to connect Dandenong, Melbourne, Werribee and Geelong, despite its unsuccessful bid to obtain a share of \$20 million in proposed funding from the Federal Government.

"We are disappointed but not discouraged," said Jeff Moran, MegaRail Chief Executive Officer. "On the contrary, we have been buoyed by the level of support shown by key stakeholders, including the Cities of Greater Geelong, Wyndham and Greater Dandenong".

"The technical and economic merits of the proposal - cutting travel times from Geelong -Melbourne to 17 minutes and both Werribee-Melbourne and Dandenong-Melbourne to 10 minutes - are particularly convincing, and we are confident of continuing to build strong support. The MegaRail proposal would connect four of the fastest-growing local government areas in Australia, attract up to 24,000 passenger trips per hour - equivalent to the capacity of a 12 lane freeway - and mean up to 200,000 people per day would have their commute reduced by around 75%. It would utilise existing rail corridors and produce a major mode change for people in those areas and elsewhere across Victoria," he said.

"The federal funding on offer was only for a maximum of 50% of the cost to develop a business case, with the remainder to be provided through the proponents, so we will continue to generate funding from other sources. We have an 80 week program ready to deliver the business case."

Mr Moran said a Geelong to Dandenong HSR line would also be a promising first step for a national HSR network, both in terms of passenger numbers and value capture.

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 Aerospace, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering and others.

MegaRail's proposal was one of 10 remaining contenders which made it to the second stage of the tender - the Faster Rail prospectus - run by the Federal Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development.

The three proposals selected to share the available \$20 million funding this week were:

- The NSW Government proposal for Sydney to Newcastle;
- The private sector Consolidated Land and Rail Australia's (CLARA) High Speed Rail proposal for Melbourne to the Greater Shepparton area; and
- The North Coast Connect consortium's proposal for Brisbane and the regions of Moreton Bay and the Sunshine Coast.

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