



ENGINEERS  
AUSTRALIA

# Support for the High Speed Rail Business Case

## A joint statement from the Presidents of Engineers Australia Sydney Division and Newcastle Division

The Engineers Australia Sydney Division and Newcastle Division represent over 33,000 professional engineers across the State of NSW. The Presidents of these two Division have come together to provide their support for the proposed High Speed Rail line from Sydney to Newcastle. We strongly believe that this proposal will bring significant benefits to the environment, economy, community, and the engineering profession both nationally and in NSW.

On behalf of our members, we advocate to all political parties and branches of government to implement this necessary and long overdue project.

Australia's economy has faced two challenges over the past decade that have harmed standard of living and quality of life. The first is the housing crisis, where there are insufficient houses being delivered in capital cities where most job growth has occurred. The second is stagnant productivity growth, which limits our ability to pay incomes that match the rising cost of living.

These problems both require long term investment to resolve. Projects like Sydney to Newcastle High Speed Rail can help correct them. It will expand the area of residential land feasible to commute to Sydney from, increasing the housing supply to this nationally important market. It will reduce commuting travel times for hundreds of thousands of workers, improving productivity.

The project will have significant benefits for the Australian and NSW economies and the greater Sydney region community. It will also bring considerable opportunities for the rail industry in Australia and the engineering profession. This paper outlines some of those benefits.

Having established a world leading technical capability to design and build new rail infrastructure in NSW, the High Speed Rail proposal would ensure an ongoing workload for the pool of highly skilled engineers in the transport sector, as well as providing a strong pipeline of future work to inspire young engineers for a smarter, future proof Australia.

As future extensions of the network expand to link up the other East Coast Capitals and key regional hubs these benefits will be shared by our counterparts representing the professional engineering communities in Queensland, Victoria, and the ACT.

The direct benefits to engineers from the delivery of High Speed Rail are clear, and Engineers Australia would encourage as much of the design, manufacture, and construction of the Rail Infrastructure to be done using skilled Australian based engineers. With a long and proud tradition of both rolling stock and rail infrastructure manufacture, maintenance and operations in both Sydney and Newcastle, our members would welcome any opportunities to contribute to the program.

As part of ensuring the project's legacy Engineers Australia would support the development of technical academies for young engineers and apprentices based on the successful programmes implemented by Sydney Metro and Crossrail in the UK.

As the NSW economy transitions away from a fossil fuel led infrastructure, there will be a requirement for many professional engineers to re-train or to join new industries. High Speed Rail will not only provide direct opportunities for these engineers but also provide the ability to travel quickly between regional and urban destinations which will be crucial to the transition to these new ways of working.

Engineers will be able to easily travel from Newcastle to the new technology precincts at Western Sydney Airport, or from Sydney through to the new renewable energy hubs in the Hunter Valley. High Speed Rail will ensure the ongoing success of the wider engineering profession across the State and facilitate the move to a more sustainable and resilient economy in NSW and along the East Coast.

One of Engineers Australia's current flagship programs is the Climate Smart Engineering conference which is supported by the needs for safe and low emission transport. One of the major challenges in Australia is to facilitate a mode shift in the inefficient and climate unfriendly way that we travel between major cities, relying on personal cars and/or aviation.

Data from Infrastructure Australia in 2022 shows that the M1 Pacific Motorway currently caters for more than 90,000 light and heavy vehicles movements between the Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney each day. High Speed Rail will enable a mode shift from road to rail on the current M1 corridor reducing emissions and improving the safety of travellers. As the network is extended along the East Coast this will significantly reduce the number of flights and associated emissions between some of the heaviest traffic air routes in the world.

High Speed Rail has been demonstrated as a driver for growth of major economies in Europe and is increasing through Asia and the Americas. This brings benefits not only to the towns and cities that High Speed Rail serves but opens entire regions for growth, both as industrial hubs and places to live and call home.

Across Australia we are struggling with the lack of affordable housing in the major cities. Opening up regional towns with High Speed Rail connectivity to other major conurbations will be a kick-starter for growth, new business, and new housing developments. This will provide ongoing opportunities for engineers in the construction and management of this new residential and civil infrastructure.

On behalf of the 33,000 engineers across the State of NSW we would strongly encourage cross party support at both State and Federal level for the High Speed Rail Business Case and we look forward to joining you on the first high speed services on the new railway.

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President Sydney Division

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This Statement been endorsed by the following Engineers Australia Societies:

- Scott Elaurant, National Chair –Transport Australia society (TAs)
- Stratton Killis, National Executive Chair –Railway Technical Society of Australasia (RTSA)