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Geelong Fast Rail to cut times, fuel post pandemic regional boom

New research has confirmed the Geelong Fast Rail project could fuel a new regional boom as it cuts travel times to the CBD and meets Melbourne residents' growing desire to move out of the city after COVID-19.

[A survey of 600 residents across Victoria, NSW and Queensland](#) commissioned by the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) found more Melbourne residents were considering relocating as their work patterns change, and faster rail connections would increase their willingness to make the move.

The Geelong Fast Rail project would also lead to a huge uplift in regional residents using rail to get to the city, as travel times dropped to well under an hour.

The findings were released to accompany the launch of the [ARA's Faster Rail Report](#), which highlighted the value of investment in fast rail and confirmed the benefits Victoria was already enjoying as a result of a strong track record of rail investment..

ARA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said the Geelong Fast Rail was a great example of how faster rail could change how we live, work and support the post pandemic recovery.

"The Geelong Fast Rail project shows just how transformational rail investment can be for Victorian residents," Ms Wilkie said.

"Two thirds (63 per cent) of survey participants told us they would be more likely to move to a regional area if travel times to the city were less than an hour.

"Fast rail will make that a reality for Geelong and unlock new opportunities for regional development and tourism as the state recovers from COVID-19.

"Geelong is just the beginning, with regional Victoria will continue to benefit if the significant rail investment the state has seen in recent years continues."

One in five Melbourne residents surveyed (22 per cent) were likely to consider relocating to the regions after COVID-19, with 41 per cent expecting some of the changes to their work patterns as a result of the pandemic to be permanent.

A third (35 per cent) of Melbourne respondents said faster rail connections would make them more likely to consider a move out of the city.

Geelong residents also threw their support behind faster rail, with 79 per cent of those surveyed saying they would be more likely to use rail if it took the same or less time than their chosen mode of transport.

Most Geelong respondents (93 per cent) believed faster rail would make the region more attractive.

The Faster Rail Report, prepared by Arup, found fast rail to Geelong was expected to deliver travel times as low as 35 minutes, compared to 65 minutes for road.

Regional rail services are a crucial part of Victoria's commuter network, with 58 per cent of travellers on the regional rail network taking the train to and from work.

Ms Wilkie said the report recognised the significant benefits Victoria's Regional Rail Link and Regional Rail Revival programs had delivered to the regions.

"The Victorian Government has recognised that faster, more reliable and more frequent rail services make a real difference to the daily lives of regional residents," Ms Wilkie said.

"While there is still more to do, it is great to see the Victorian Government's continued focus on developing a fast and efficient regional rail network."

The report identified a three step plan to achieve faster rail:

1. Act now to upgrade existing rail lines to deliver faster, more reliable and more frequent services
2. Establish new fast rail lines in the next five to 10 years
3. Prepare for high speed rail in the long term by preserving rail corridors now

ENDS

Further information

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