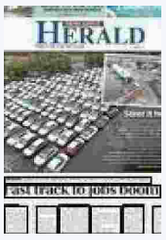
AUTHOR: Matthew Kelly SECTION: GENERAL NEWS ARTICLE TYPE: NEWS ITEM AUDIENCE : 50,000
PAGE: 1 PRINTED SIZE: 402.00cm² REGION: NSW MARKET: Australia ASR: AUD 1,110 WORDS: 597
ITEM ID: 1045826777



14 JAN, 2025
Fast track to jobs boom
Newcastle Herald, Newcastle

CATALYST Sydney-Newcastle high-speed rail the key to massive economic growth and development

Fast track to jobs boom

Matthew Kelly

EXTENDING high-speed rail to the Hunter could trigger an engineering skills boom, the head of the Australasian Railway Association believes.

About half of the 165-kilometre Sydney-Newcastle project is underground.

If the project proceeds, many of those with advanced engineering skills and knowledge previously employed on the Sydney Metro project would probably move to the region.

A local construction and engineering workforce will need to be developed.

ARA chief executive Caroline Wilkie said the Sydney to Newcastle link had the potential to be a major catalyst for economic growth.

"Across Australia we have built a national workforce over recent years with incredible skills and expertise through the development of underground metro rail projects in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne," Ms Wilkie said.

"High-speed rail provides an opportunity to capitalise on this unique and valuable local workforce before it is lost to other projects overseas."

The federal government received the High Speed Rail Authority's business case for the Sydney-Newcastle high-speed rail link just before Christmas.

Infrastructure Australia is reviewing the document.

A 2024 High Speed Rail Authority presentation included a map showing tunnels up to 60 kilometres long passing under Sydney harbour, Sydney's northern suburbs and north to the Central Coast, including beneath the Hawkesbury River and Brisbane Water.

Ms Wilkie said high-speed rail was not just a superior mode of transport but a major catalyst for economic growth.

"Delivering high-speed rail between Newcastle and Sydney - a heavily congested traffic corridor that connects Australia's largest city with NSW's fastest growing region - provides the perfect proof of concept for such a project," she said.

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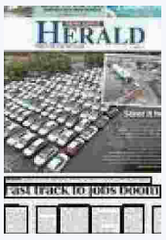

14 JAN, 2025

Fast track to jobs boom

Newcastle Herald, Newcastle

High-speed rail project touted as fast track to new jobs boom

FROM PAGE 1

"It would unlock opportunities for economic and social prosperity that would otherwise be unimaginable - truly defining what game-changing transport infrastructure looks like."

The *Sydney Morning Herald* last week reported modelling done for the previous state Coalition government's fast rail proposal that estimated it would cost between $25 billion and $30 billion, and take 12 years, to build a link from Sydney Olympic Park to Gosford.

Extending the fast rail line to Wyong and Tuggerah was estimated to push the total bill to between $27 billion and $32 billion.

The federal government's high-speed rail plans are more ambitious than the fast rail proposal.

High speed trains would travel at up to 320kmh, compared to 250kmh, and cut the time for a trip from Newcastle to Central Station to an hour.

It is estimated the project would require 12 to 18 tunnel boring machines extracting about 10 million cubic metres of soil which could be used to "revitalise" former mine sites.

The High Speed Rail Authority spokeswoman said its business case confirmed the first stage of high-speed rail (Sydney-Newcastle) would unlock new homes, create new jobs and stimulate the economy," she said.

The federal government has already committed $500 million to plan and protect a high-speed rail corridor between Sydney and Newcastle.

The High Speed Rail Authority opened its Newcastle headquarters on Scott Street late last year.

The office, which is also an information centre, provides an opportunity for people to view potential station and carriage designs as well as a mock-up of a station revealing how it could be integrated into communities.

About 30 staff will be based at the office when it is at full capacity.

Have your say, email letters@newcastleherald.com.au

High-speed trains would cut the time for a trip from Newcastle to Central Station to an hour. Picture supplied

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