

25 November 2019

Committee Secretariat
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission to Inquiry into Options for Financing Faster Rail

Dear Mr John Alexander OAM, MP

The Swinburne University Centre for Urban Transitions is pleased to provide this submission to the Inquiry into Options for Financing Faster Rail conducted by the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities.

The Centre for Urban Transitions leads research in the science of cities and urban sustainability transitions. We do this by using different lenses to investigate the drivers, patterns and pathways of urban futures. These lenses produce systemic, integrative and actionable knowledge on cities and how they transform.

The Centre for Urban Transitions takes a strong interest in faster rail (hereafter high-speed rail) planning because it affords strong opportunities to enhance the social, economic and environmental condition of Australia's cities and regions. This submission takes the point of view that financial arrangements governing network and station area development are central to delivering equitable and sustainable outcomes from high-speed rail and should be designed with the regional planning implications of enhanced accessibility in mind.

This submission provides new evidence of the population growth, industrial restructuring and regional accessibility impacts of high-speed rail to inform the committee's discussions about appropriate financial arrangements. It presents preliminary findings of two research projects that are relevant to the scope of the inquiry, and was prepared by Professor Peter Newton, Research Professor in Sustainable Urbanism at Swinburne University and James Whitten, Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Melbourne.

The first project investigates the relationship between high-speed rail development, population growth and changes to industrial structure for selected corridors in France, Spain and the United Kingdom. City and regional-level census and survey data from each national context are analysed to understand urban and economic change associated with the introduction high-speed rail. The findings of this research provide a reference class of projects to inform the commercial appraisal of high-speed rail plans in Australia.

The second project explores the potential influence of high-speed rail development on the relative locational advantage and economic potential of cities and regions between Sydney and Melbourne. Two scenarios for high-speed rail development are analysed to show how regional accessibility and the potential for urban growth can become quite concentrated, causing some cities and regions to benefit at the expense of others. The findings of this research suggest that financial arrangements governing network and station area development should provide for cross-subsidization of regional public transport networks to promote equitable access to high-speed rail using sustainable transport modes.

The attached document provides a summary of the two investigations.

Your sincerely,

Professor Peter Newton

James Whitten