



# Australia's High Speed Rail

Delivering generations of opportunities for  
Australian regions, cities and communities

April 2026



Australian Government  
High Speed Rail Authority

# Connecting half the country in less than half a day



**MAP LEGEND**

- Newcastle-Sydney connection
- Future potential high speed rail network  
Indicative only

Scan to watch video overview



## Australia's High Speed Rail

Length	Annual passengers 2061	Annual construction jobs (up to 2086)	New housing opportunities	Job creation	Economic benefit
1,800+ km	115 million	22,000 to 49,600	500,000	290,000	\$1.68 trillion



## Contents

Australia's High Speed Rail	6
The High Speed Rail Authority	8
The cost of inaction	10
A network fit for a thriving Australia	11
Newcastle: the birthplace of High Speed Rail in Australia	12
Western Sydney's economic boost	14
Connecting regions to cities	15
More housing opportunities in more places	17
Helping connect Australians	18
Canberra, the future of the national capital	21
A journey on High Speed Rail	22
Better regional, global connections through air sector integration	24
A new approach to delivery	26
Community and stakeholder engagement: a core delivery function	27
Melbourne and Northern Victoria	28
Leveraging global momentum	29
Sustainable and resilient travel	30
Delivering a once-in-a-century infrastructure investment	31
Opportunities for local manufacturing	32
Realising modern methods of construction	34
Supercharging the Sunshine State	36
Guiding delivery principles	38

This artwork, by Mununjali and Kabi Kabi woman Navada Currie, celebrates the proposed High Speed Rail that will take passengers between Newcastle and Sydney. Australia is a vast country with great distances between each of our cities and communities. The railway will traverse the countryside quickly and efficiently, connecting many communities along the way.

The wattle and banksia represent the growth and benefit of the railway being created for many communities, opening up these communities to be easily accessible for more people. They are also a visual nod to the beautiful national parks that surround the area. The blue strokes represent the coastline and the many beautiful waterways. The brown pattern represents the Country that the trains will be travelling across.

The High Speed Rail Authority acknowledges the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to the Elders past and present.

## Shaping Australia's future for generations to come



Welcome aboard Australia's High Speed Rail journey.

High Speed Rail has been talked about in Australia for more than 40 years. After seeing what it's done around the world, it's clear what's possible. And we are delivering on that promise. This is a project that will be delivered over decades, but the work we are starting now will see benefits for generations to come.

High Speed Rail will connect regions, cities and communities – bringing new housing, jobs and economic opportunities. It's about bringing people and places closer together.

Ultimately, a network stretching more than 1,800 kilometres will be able to connect half the country in less than half a day.

The journey starts with Newcastle to Sydney – a trip that currently takes almost three hours, cut to just one hour. That's on dedicated high-speed track, with trains reaching 320 kilometres per hour, delivering 98 per cent on-time reliability.

High Speed Rail will boost productivity in regional areas, making them better-connected than ever before. It takes pressure off capital cities and helps us reach our net-zero commitments while keeping Australia competitive in a rapidly changing world.

There will be more housing options and job opportunities in regional areas. People who live in the regions for a different lifestyle will

be able to get to the big cities quickly for work, entertainment and health appointments.

These are the proven benefits that High Speed Rail has brought to countries around the world for decades. And they are the same benefits that High Speed Rail will bring to Australia.

This blueprint outlines the benefits over generations. It draws on examples from nations like ours where High Speed Rail has transformed regions, cities and economies.

Rail has long been a symbol of ambition in our national story. It has helped build our economy, connect our regions and open doors to opportunity for the last 170 years.

High Speed Rail is the next chapter of that story – unlocking faster connections, cleaner travel and stronger links between families, businesses and communities.

With it comes new industries, new skills and thousands of new jobs – delivering generations of opportunities.

*Catherine King*

**Hon Catherine King MP**

Minister for Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development  
and Local Government

Newcastle: the birthplace of High Speed Rail in Australia.





## Bringing people and places closer together

- Realising the potential of regional Australia and our cities, unlocking new economic opportunities.
- Enabling sustainable and resilient travel, net-zero carbon in operation using 100% renewable electricity.
- Making a big country smaller with significantly reduced travel times, connecting more people to more places.
- Supporting job creation, boosting tourism, attracting investment.
- Providing more housing opportunities in more places.
- Generating opportunities for local manufacturing through driving a decades-long, sustainable pipeline of modern manufacturing hubs to support long-term employment.
- A focus on sovereign capability, strengthening domestic capacity to reduce reliance on international inputs in response to global supply chain disruptions and strategic competition.

# Australia's High Speed Rail

Australia has begun its High Speed Rail journey, with the Newcastle to Sydney connection now in the Development Phase.

A strategic investment, High Speed Rail will transform cities and regions – creating generations of opportunities for Australians.

A future east coast network connecting Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne will create \$1.68 trillion in economic benefits for Australia, unlocking the opportunity for 500,000 new homes and 290,000 new jobs.

High Speed Rail will bring cities, regions and economic zones within reach of one another.

More Australians will be able to live where they want, work where they choose and access opportunities across broader areas.

Learning from our peers around the world, Australia's High Speed Rail will be delivered as a dedicated standalone line and in manageable stages.

As the delivery of Australia's High Speed Rail progresses, productivity and efficiencies will improve through continuous innovation, lessons learned and reduced delivery risk.

Newcastle and Sydney will be connected with world-class trains capable of travelling up to 320km/h.

Rail journeys will be at least twice as fast as today – a trip from Newcastle to Sydney will take about one hour, and it will put Newcastle or Sydney within 30 minutes' reach of the Central Coast.

Over time, the network will expand, connecting more regions and communities. When complete, a journey from Canberra to central Sydney will take around 90 minutes, and it will take just four hours to travel to the centre of Sydney from the central business districts (CBDs) of Brisbane or Melbourne.

Covering a distance of more than 1,800 kilometres, Australia's High Speed Rail will bring people and places closer together.



Artist's impression.

# The High Speed Rail Authority

High Speed Rail is a once-in-a-century opportunity to shape Australia's future.

By 2061, 27 million people and 14 million jobs will be within one-hour distance of High Speed Rail, fundamentally reshaping how the nation connects.

Connecting Australia's east coast will mean a boost in productivity, improving quality of life and increasing access to jobs and services.

The purpose of the High Speed Rail Authority (the Authority) is to develop a nationally integrated High Speed Rail network, helping connect cities and key regional centres, enhancing Australia's long-term rail investment through policy development, national coordination and strategic planning.

Delivering this vision will require strong partnerships.

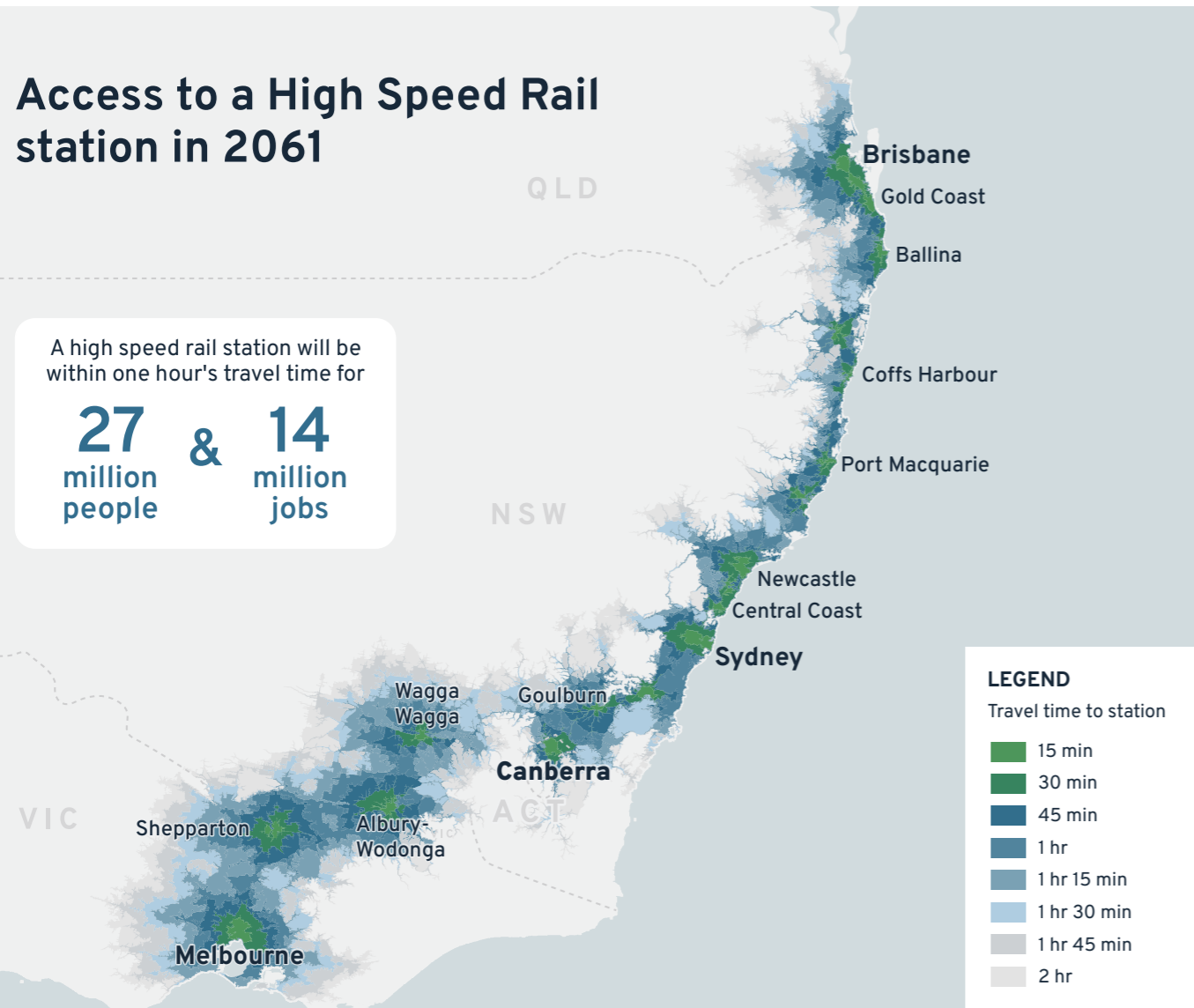
The Authority is working closely with state and territory governments to align planning, infrastructure delivery and strategic outcomes to maximise the benefits of the network.

The Authority is the Australian Government's principal advisor on the development of High Speed Rail. Established in 2023, the Authority is an independent statutory authority and a corporate Commonwealth entity governed by an independent board.

## Access to a High Speed Rail station in 2061

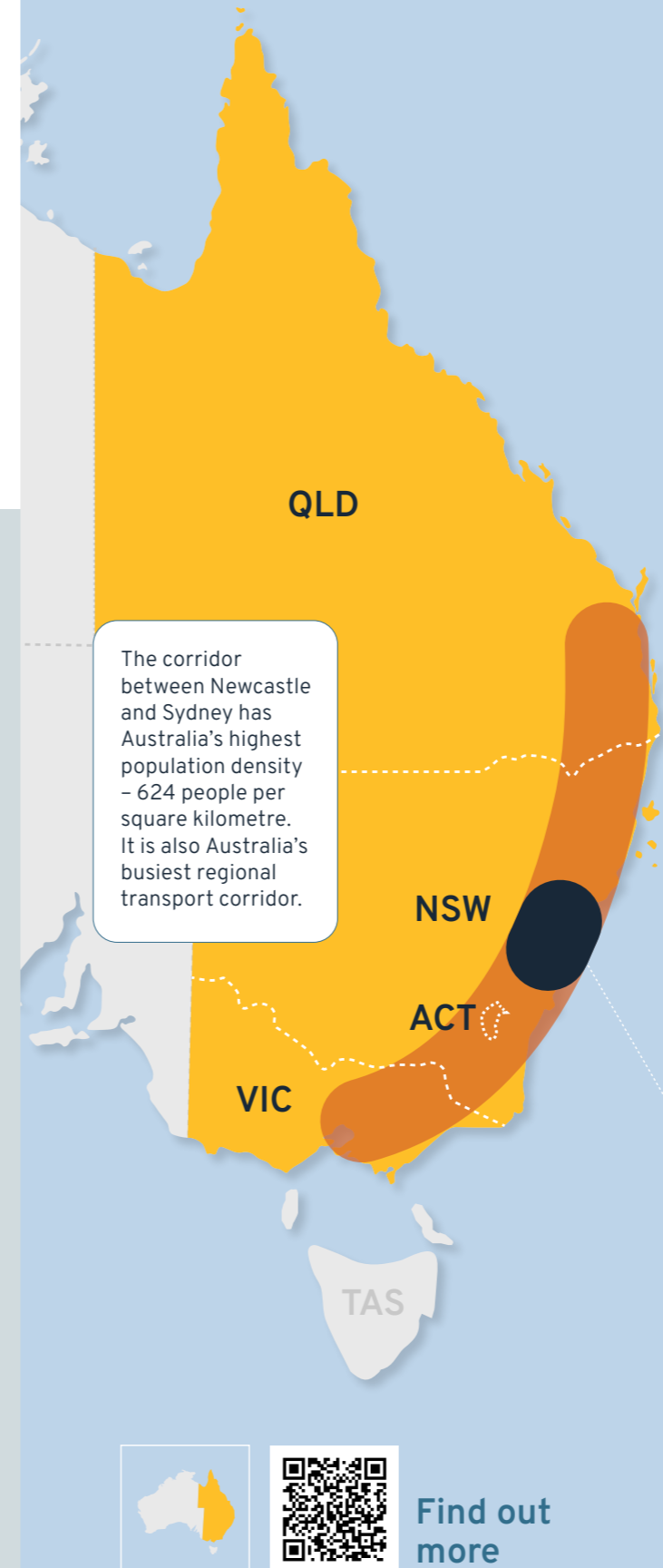
A high speed rail station will be within one hour's travel time for

**27 million people** & **14 million jobs**



# Australia's population challenge

The east coast's population will increase 33% by 2051, or an extra 7 million people.



### East coast Australia

Current population **21.5 million**

2051 population **28.5 million**

**↑ 33%**

**+7 million people**

### East coast corridor

**60%** of Australian population

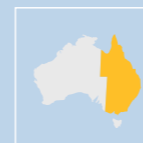
**70%** of Australia's economic activity

**2%** of the land mass

**104** people per square kilometre

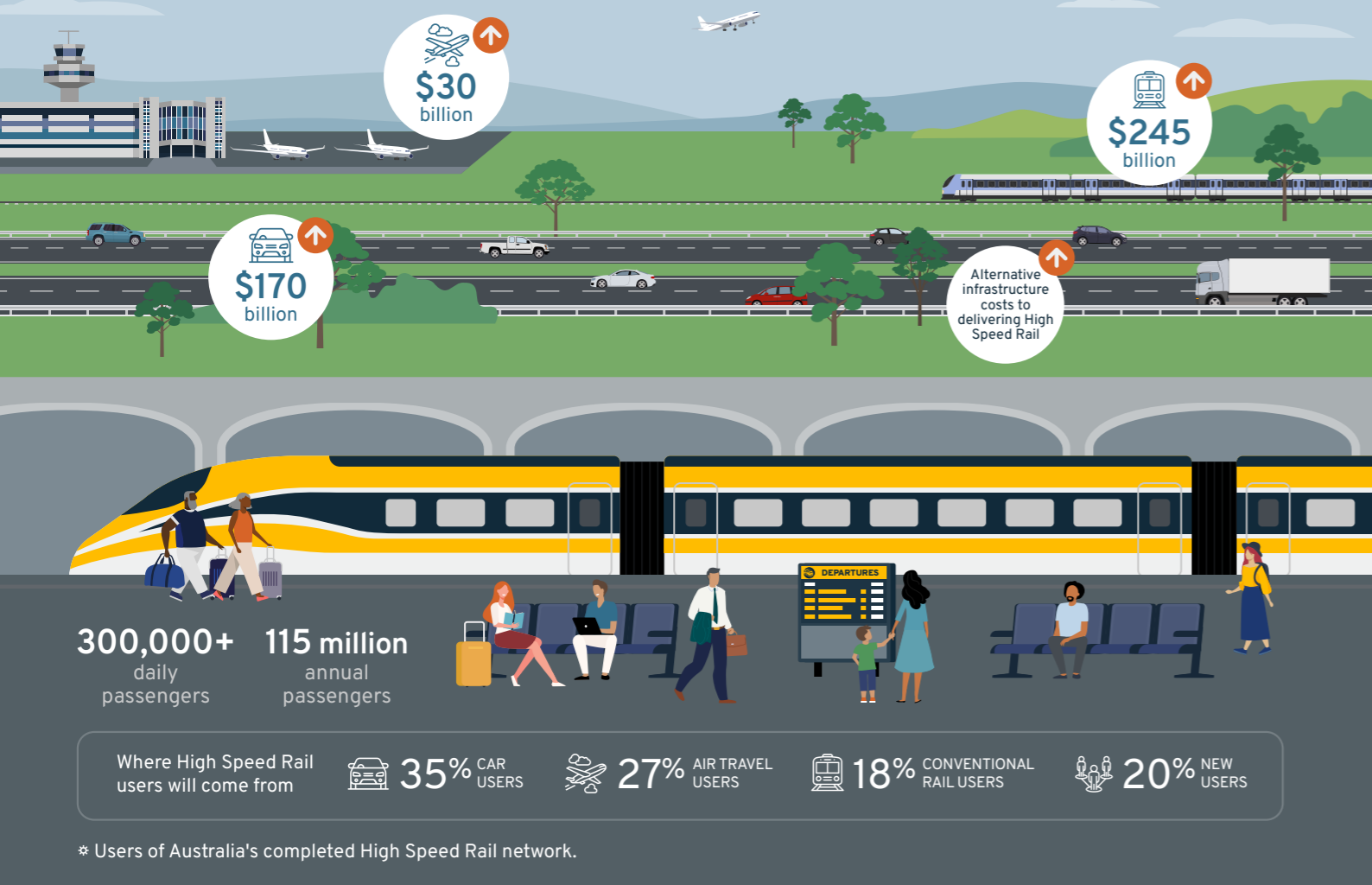
**NEWCASTLE – CENTRAL COAST – SYDNEY**

**624** people per square kilometre



Find out more

# The cost of inaction



Without High Speed Rail, growth in the thriving east coast Corridor will increasingly be stymied by busy airports, congested roads and aging railways – at the same time as demand for long-distance travel between major cities almost triples.

This means more emissions, higher transportation costs, lower productivity and less housing opportunity, leaving Australia worse off and less competitive globally. Alternative infrastructure would also require significant investment and bring substantial disruption to communities, transport users and the environment.

To address future challenges without High Speed Rail, Australia would need major expansions of roads, rail and airports to deliver equivalent capacity. Costs could be up to \$170 billion for long-distance motorway corridors, \$245 billion for conventional rail and \$30 billion for airport infrastructure.

As well as attracting people from air travel, cars and existing rail, High Speed Rail will also encourage new travel by improving connections to jobs, health and education, and supporting more people to live in the regions.



Australia's High Speed Rail network will drive economic growth, boost productivity and accelerate the economic potential of our regions and cities. It will unlock much-needed land for housing, and help distribute jobs more evenly, giving people more choice over where they live, study, work and play.

## Hon Catherine King MP

Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government



# A network fit for a thriving Australia

The east coast corridor is the powerhouse of Australia's economy, home to more than 21 million people and contributing approximately \$1.3 trillion or 70% of gross domestic product.

Its knowledge industries, manufacturing, tourism and production are supported by critical infrastructure such as ports, airports, energy, water and social infrastructure including universities and healthcare facilities.

Stretching from Brisbane to Melbourne, the east coast is a thriving arc of economic vitality and potential. The corridor is evolving in line with global megatrends – urbanisation, technological

advances and a transition to net zero. Integrating the economies of the east coast would unlock significant national and global potential.

This vibrant and evolving corridor, home to 60% of the nation's population, is expected to grow by a third over the next 25 years. While this growth reflects the corridor's potential, it also risks placing greater pressure on infrastructure and services – particularly in the largest cities.

High Speed Rail will play a pivotal role in realising a smarter, more productive and more inclusive future. The network will support future growth, boost productivity and create more housing opportunities. It will help raise living standards in Australia and enhance the nation's role in the global marketplace.

## Boost for tourism sector

High Speed Rail will deliver a \$71 billion boost to Australia's tourism sector with faster travel providing new opportunities for domestic and international visitors.

East coast Australia is expected to attract 79 million domestic and international tourists annually by 2061 and High Speed Rail is forecast to boost this number by a further 18%, driving significant additional tourist expenditure growth.

Accommodation and food sectors along the east coast is expected to grow an extra \$17 billion by 2080 while commercial, residential and industrial developments around station precincts will deliver sustained economic growth.

NSW Hunter Valley.



Bar Beach, Newcastle.

# Newcastle: the birthplace of High Speed Rail in Australia

High Speed Rail connecting Newcastle to Sydney will deliver benefits for both the region and the national economy.

The Newcastle and Hunter Valley region is Australia's biggest regional economy, generating \$73 billion in annual activity.

The region's population is forecast to grow 22% to 1.3 million people by 2051.

The Newcastle to Sydney regional rail corridor is the busiest in Australia with almost 15 million passengers a year, forecast to reach capacity in the early 2040s.

The Central Coast and Newcastle areas currently support more than 420,000 jobs.

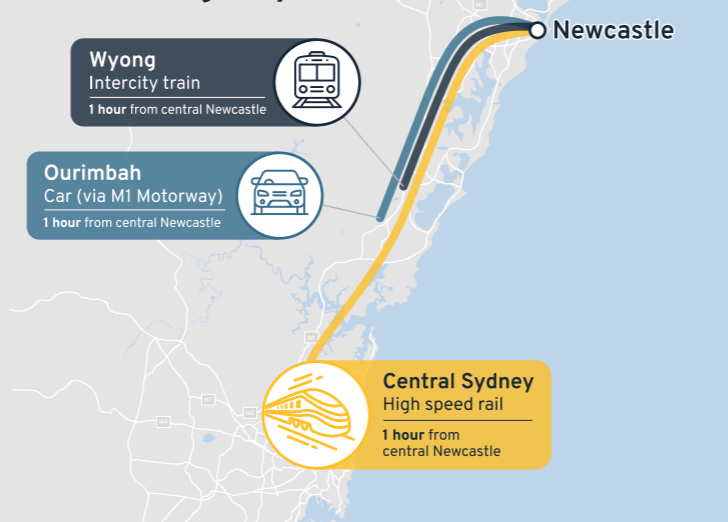
New homes to accommodate growth are expected in major greenfield areas and key centres such as Gosford, Tuggerah/Wyong, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle.

The current Newcastle to Sydney journey time by train and car is about 2.5 hours and road travel is often impacted by traffic.

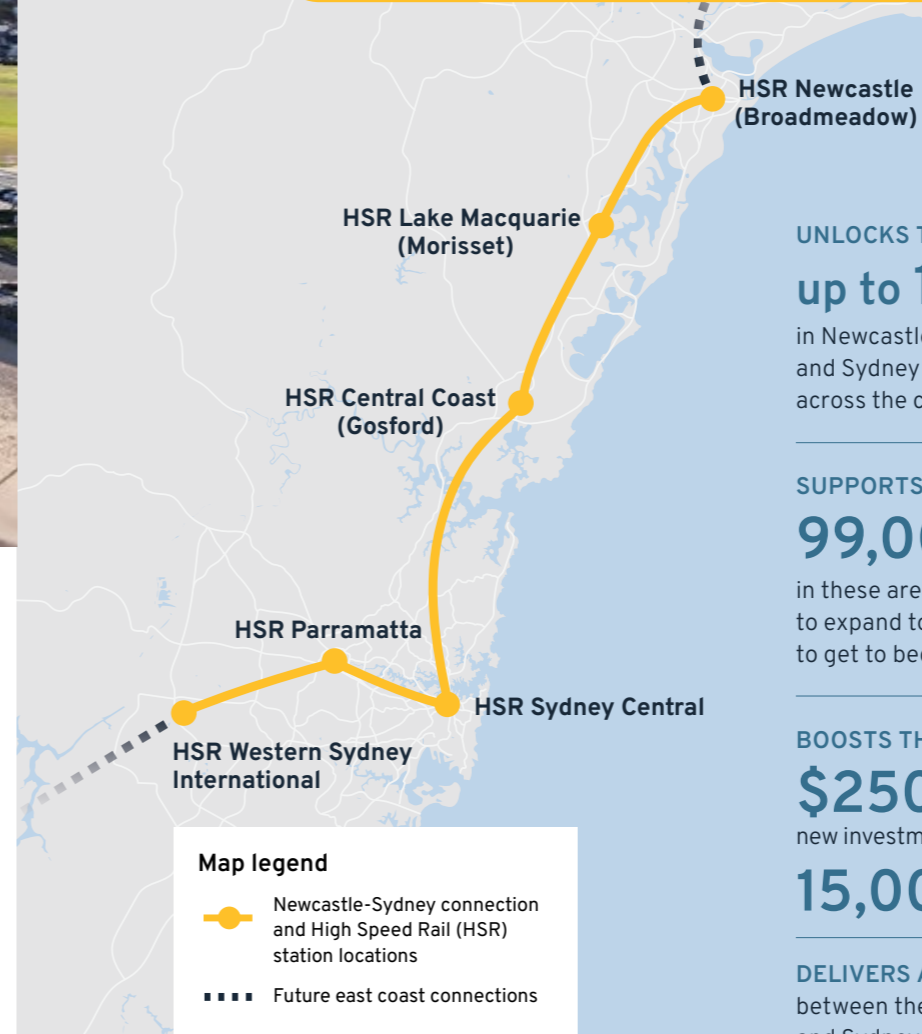
## Why Newcastle to Sydney

- ▶ Existing Newcastle to Sydney railway built in 1880s
- ▶ Busiest regional rail corridor in Australia, moving about **15 million** people a year
- ▶ Forecast to reach capacity in the **early 2040s**
- ▶ **Freight trains** often disrupt passenger services
- ▶ M1 Pacific Motorway – more than **31.5 million** trips annually in Newcastle–Sydney corridor.

## One hour's travel time out of Newcastle gets you this far:



## Connecting Newcastle to Sydney with High Speed Rail



UNLOCKS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR **up to 160,000 new homes** in Newcastle and the Lower Hunter Valley, the Central Coast and Sydney by 2061, and supports a future pipeline of housing across the corridor to relieve housing pressures over time.

SUPPORTS AND ATTRACTS MORE THAN **99,000 new jobs** in these areas by 2061, by encouraging companies to expand to places that are easier for workers to get to because of faster transport.

BOOSTS THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY BY MORE THAN **\$250 billion** by 2086, largely driven by new investment and tourism opportunities, and delivers **15,000** construction jobs a year during project delivery.

DELIVERS A STEP CHANGE IN CONNECTIVITY AND CAPACITY between the Hunter, Newcastle, the Central Coast and Sydney, relieving pressure on road and public transport corridors and delivering **\$12.7 billion** in transport benefits.

## ACCELERATES PROGRESS TOWARDS net-zero commitments

catalysing economic development and legacy around industries such as those providing low carbon concrete and steel to support construction.

## Generates \$16.4 billion

of productivity benefits, including creation of new jobs in new industries, access to higher-paying jobs, more productive commercial land use, investment attraction and more tourism.

Saves more than **86,000 tonnes** of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions and generates \$90 million through shifts from carbon-intensive transport options, laying the foundation for a network that is a cleaner alternative to emissions-intensive air travel.

## Designed with Country

from the outset, providing new opportunities for people to connect, work and visit.





A SPOTLIGHT ON 

# Western Sydney's economic boost

Connecting Western Sydney International Airport to High Speed Rail integrates this fast-growing region into Australia's east coast network, unlocking potential for additional economic growth, job creation and tourism.

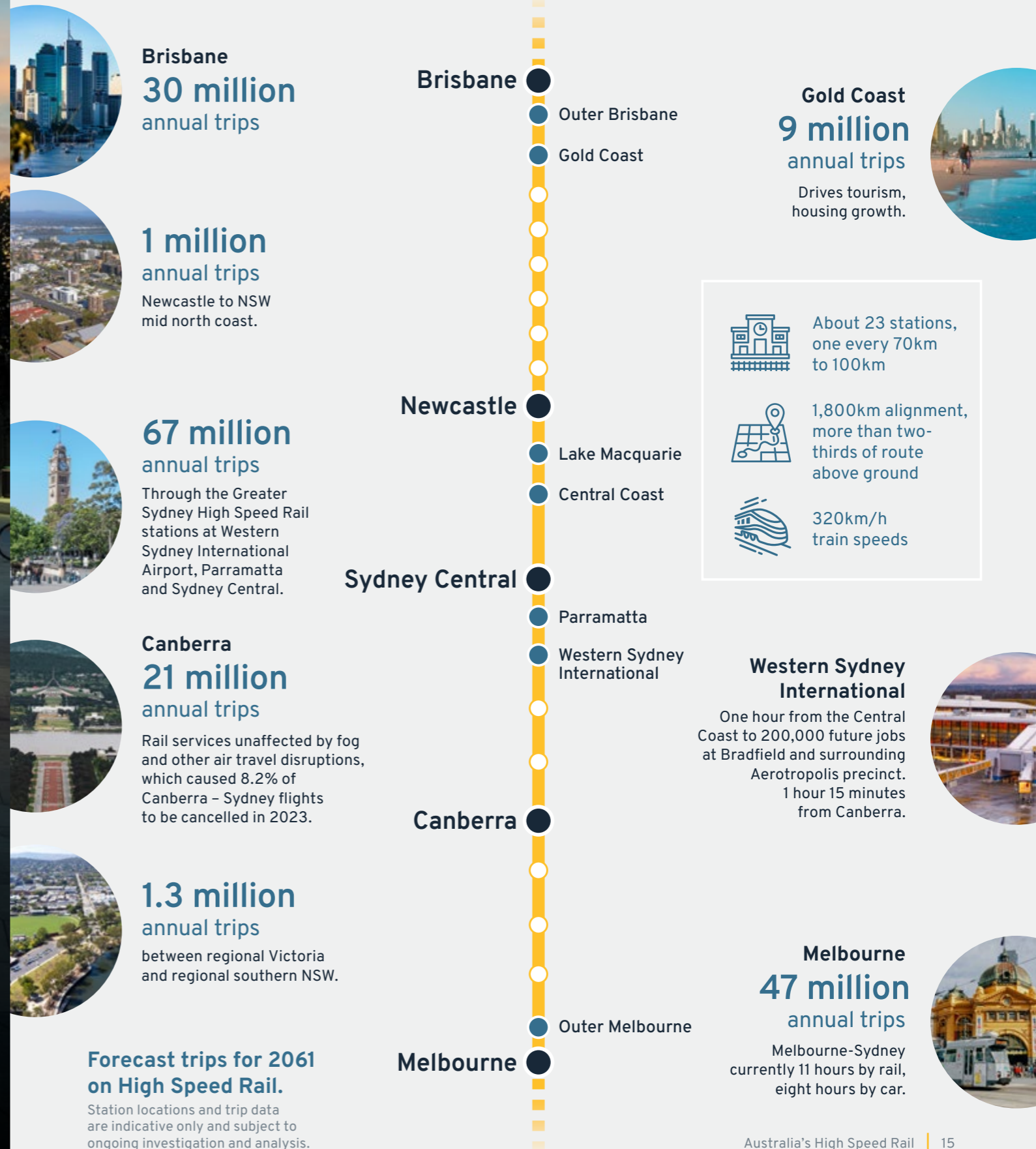
With a journey time of less than one hour, people on the NSW Central Coast would get quick, direct access to 200,000 future jobs at Bradfield and the surrounding Aerotropolis precinct.

The Newcastle-Sydney connection unlocks the full potential of the airport for the Western Sydney economy, creating demand for up to an extra 2.8 million airport customers annually – boosting tourism and international competitiveness.

With significant patronage from the outset, there would be about 53,000 daily trips on the Newcastle-Sydney connection in the early 2040s – almost 17 million a year – increasing to more than 22 million annually in the 2060s.

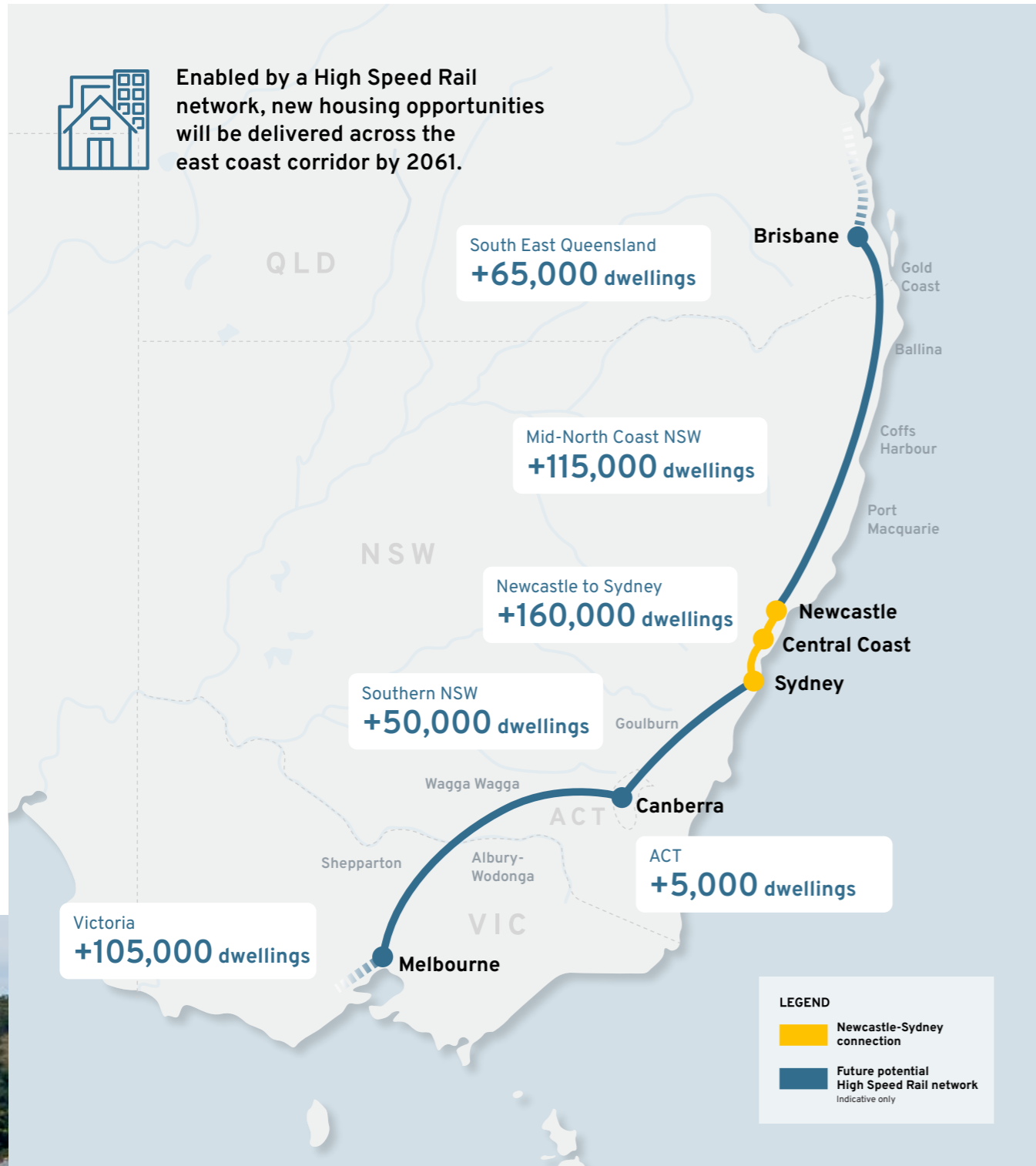
# Connecting regions to cities

In major cities, High Speed Rail stations will be located in or near city centres – these locations are the most connected and accessible and close to jobs, services and attractions. Some cities will have more than one station to optimise coverage and connectivity, as seen in Paris, London and Tokyo. Regional stations will also be centrally located where possible, ensuring strong links to town centres, transport and community hubs. Around 48% of demand will be for travel to, from and between regional centres.





Enabled by a High Speed Rail network, new housing opportunities will be delivered across the east coast corridor by 2061.



# More housing opportunities in more places

High Speed Rail will connect Australians to places across the east coast, strengthening connections between communities.

By unlocking land across the east coast and improving access to growing regional areas, High Speed Rail has the potential to unlock up to 500,000 new homes.

The Newcastle-Sydney connection is expected to unlock up to 160,000 new homes.

High Speed Rail will enhance connectivity, spur urban renewal and help integrate regional centres, unlocking regional potential and fostering growth well beyond the rail corridor.

Regional areas will be able to retain their current populations by providing better access to jobs and services, while at the same time attracting newcomers with affordable living and improved lifestyle options.



## A nation better connected

Major cities, regions and economic zones will be within fast and reliable reach of one another. More Australians will be able to live where they want, work where they choose and access opportunities across broader areas.



## Smarter growth, stronger regions

By reducing travel times between major centres and surrounding regions, High Speed Rail supports more balanced population growth. It can relieve pressure on housing and services in major cities while opening new economic and employment opportunities in regional centres. The result is a more even and resilient pattern of development.



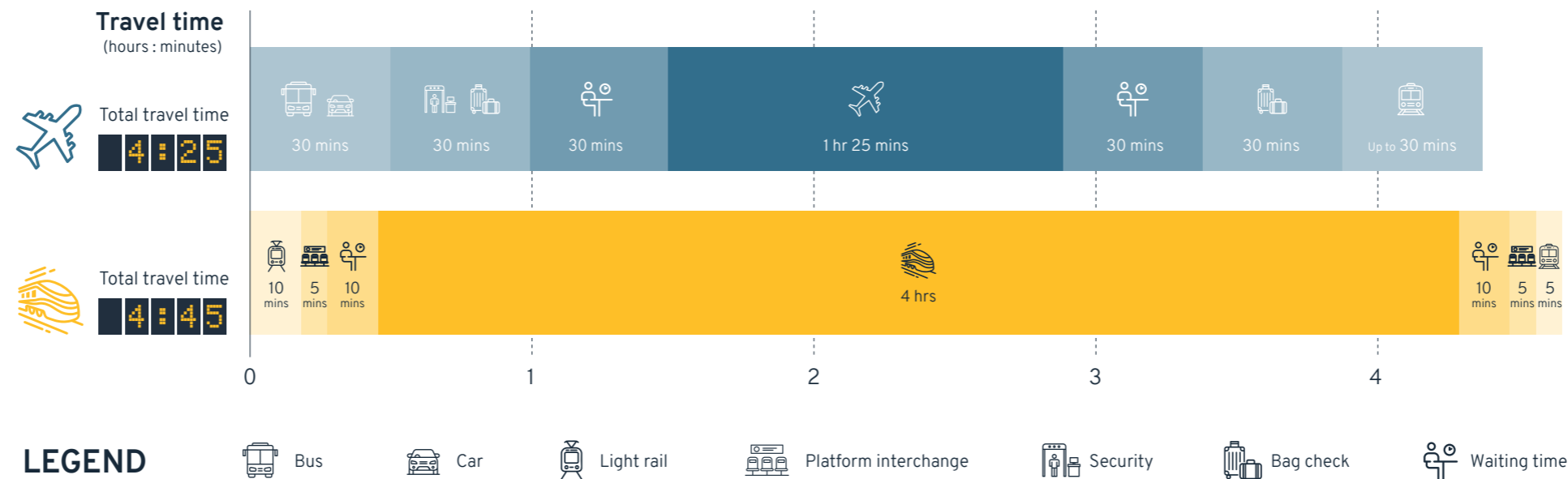
Lake Macquarie.

Globally, High Speed Rail has proven to be a catalyst for reshaping settlement patterns and unlocking housing growth. As travel times decrease, regional living becomes more attractive to more people.

# Helping connect Australians

## Melbourne city centre to Sydney city centre

Door-to-door travel times comparison



High Speed Rail is a transformative investment that will reshape the way Australians work, live and play for generations to come.

By significantly reducing travel times across the east coast, High Speed Rail will help bridge the gap between regional and metropolitan economies.

Currently, the regions and cities of Australia's east coast operate as a series of largely independent economies, which means growth is restricted by the need for people to live and work within the same region.

Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, Australia's leading economic hubs, contribute more than 70% of the nation's gross domestic product through key industries like finance, technology and professional services.

But the concentration of productivity in these areas strains infrastructure, workforce distribution and housing. Meanwhile, regions like Northern Victoria, the Hunter Valley and South East Queensland offer untapped potential with skilled workforces, affordable land and emerging industries.

Our high speed network will be transformational for Australia, providing a contemporary transport option for residents and visitors all along the east coast.

As a convenient and cleaner, greener way to travel, it will attract new demand, as well as modal shift from car and air travel, and contribute to Australia's net-zero emissions commitments.

**Jill Rossouw**  
Chair,  
High Speed Rail Authority

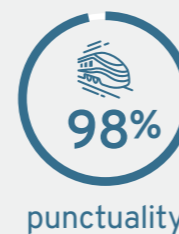


Competitive fares, combined with faster and more reliable journeys, mean High Speed Rail passengers will be able to work more productively on board.

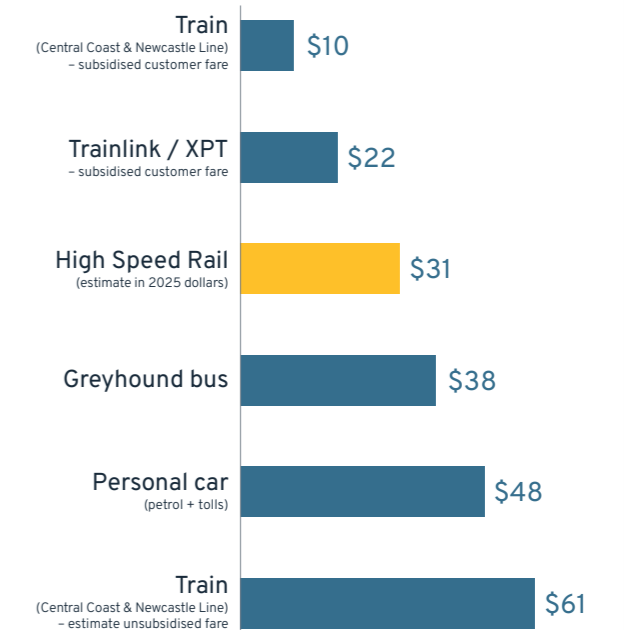
The completed network will be designed to run up to one train every five minutes at peak times, carrying more than 300,000 passengers a day with services from early morning to late night – providing flexibility to meet different customer needs across the day.

An operational model that separates infrastructure management from train services will enable multiple operators to compete and deliver reliable, efficient and financially-sustainable services.

High Speed Rail operating on dedicated lines offers reliability as high as 98%. This is compared to on-time airline performance, currently about 70%.



### Comparing fares and prices between Newcastle and Sydney (2025)



# A reliable future-ready network, delivered in stages

Learning from global experience, High Speed Rail will be delivered as a dedicated standalone network and progressively built in stages. Each stage will deliver immediate benefits while supporting the broader network – improving connectivity and expanding access for more people as the system grows into a national network.

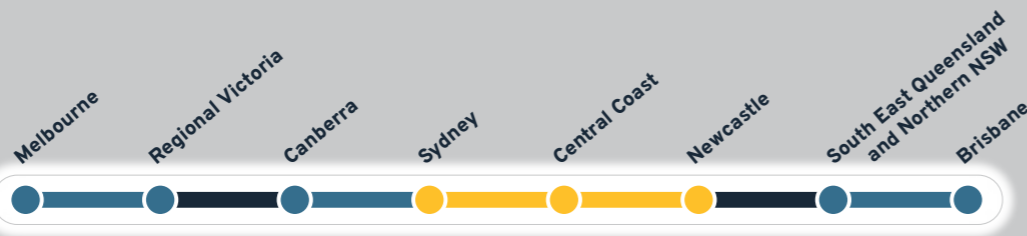
Newcastle to Sydney is the first step in a national network, delivering immediate benefits to this region.



Future stages will connect east coast capitals and regional centres, delivering benefits to each area as individual stages come online.



A new High Speed Rail network will reshape Australia's east coast, delivering benefits to the nation on top of the benefits from each individual section.



## A SPOTLIGHT ON

# Canberra, the future of the national capital

Future stages of High Speed Rail will make travel to and from Canberra faster and more reliable. It will offer a lower-emissions travel alternative and help unlock economic and housing opportunities.

The Canberra region is one of the fastest growing and most productive in Australia with the ACT population projected to grow by more than 70% – from about 450,000 in 2021 to almost 785,000 by 2060.

Canberra is well placed to become an important hub on High Speed Rail. Journey times between Sydney and Canberra are currently about one hour by air,

three and a half hours by car or bus and more than four hours by train. Most people either drive or fly with only 1% choosing to travel by train.

The number of people living between Canberra and Sydney is forecast to grow by 1.5% each year to 2036, increasing pressure on the road network and airports.

Improving rail services will provide more transport options for travellers, improve travel time reliability for rail passengers and reduce pressure on the air corridor.

## CASE STUDY

# Berlin–Leipzig, Germany, 1991–2006

The 190km trip from Berlin to Leipzig was cut from 142 minutes to 70 minutes by the Deutsche Bahn with trains travelling up to 300km/h.

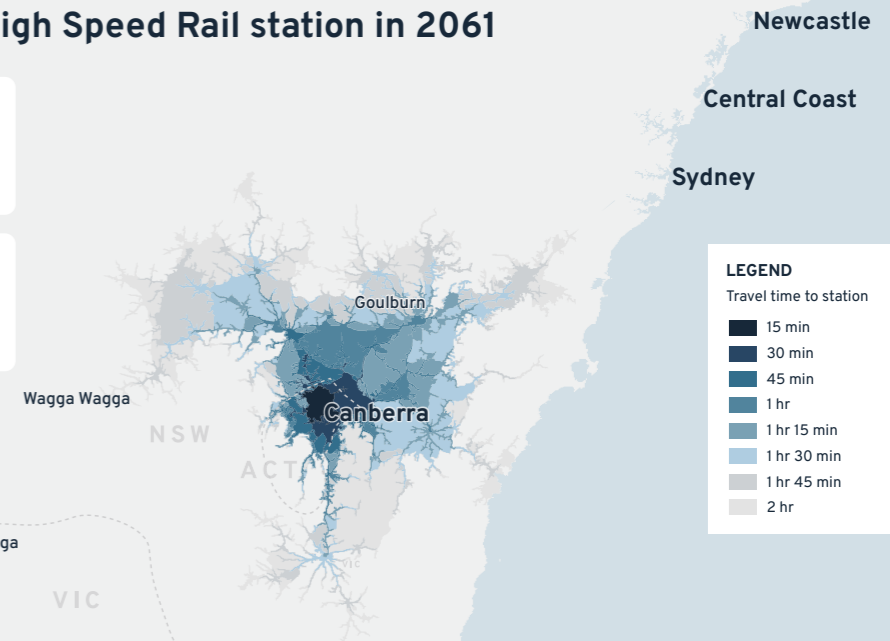
Leipzig's population increased by 100,000 to 580,000, while surrounding regions declined in numbers.

Annual economic growth of 2.2% and jobs growth of 1% outpaced other regions.

New investment flourished in the city, including in manufacturing, with BMW, Porsche, Amazon and DHL moving there.



## Access to the Canberra High Speed Rail station in 2061



# A journey on High Speed Rail

## The trains

Standard Class and Business Class services will be available on High Speed Rail. Australia will use tried-and-tested high speed trains like those used in other countries. Each train will move about 520 seated passengers, comparable to services in Europe and Asia.

## The fares

Fares will be competitive with other travel options. There will be different types of fares for different customer needs.

## Global success

More than 6,500 high speed trains are currently operating on 70,000km of High Speed Rail around the world, with another 30,000km under construction.

## Dedicated passenger service

Operating entirely separately from existing rail networks on dedicated new tracks will ensure services are fast and reliable. High Speed Rail will create more capacity on existing lines for freight movements.



High speed WiFi



Fully accessible



Luggage storage



Quiet zones



Sustainable travel option



Power to charge devices



Food and beverage onboard



Pet friendly areas



## The stations

High Speed Rail stations will be well-connected to other transport options, fully accessible and integrated into surrounding areas.



High speed internet



Food and beverage facilities



Fully accessible, lifts, escalators



Comfortable waiting areas and lounges



Facilities including showers and changerooms

## Future services

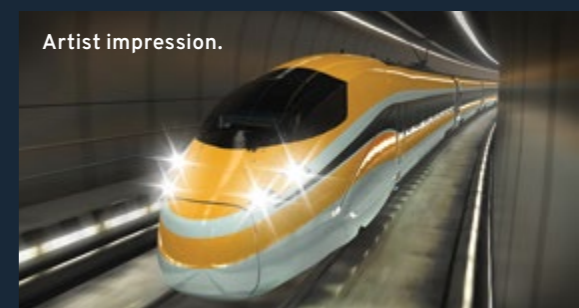
The High Speed Rail network will be designed to operate as a two-tier service model, adapted for Australia's diverse needs and modelled on international best-practice.

### Intercity services:

High speed, long-distance trains will offer express connections between major cities including Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne and cater to travellers who want rapid inter-capital journeys.

### Regional services:

Trains with more stops will serve regional centres and intermediate locations, addressing the broader needs of passengers. This will include services from regional cities to capital cities, and services between regions.



Artist impression.

# Better regional, global connections through air sector integration

High Speed Rail offers a unique opportunity to integrate Australia's major international airports into the national transport network, improving access to global gateways while providing an attractive alternative to short haul flights along the east coast.

In 2024, the air route between Melbourne and Sydney was the fifth busiest domestic route in the world, with 9.6 million seats. By 2061, High Speed Rail can provide a compelling alternative.

Rail services linking the two state capitals could attract millions of air travellers, releasing airlines' limited slot capacity at Melbourne and Sydney airports to higher-revenue long-haul flights.

Destinations like Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania would also benefit from more slot availability.

International experience demonstrates that High Speed Rail holds a competitive advantage over air travel for short to medium-length journeys. Reducing the rail travel time between Paris and London from 2 hours 55 minutes to 2 hours 15 minutes increased High Speed Rail's market share from 65% to 80%.

Over the subsequent decade, flight frequencies on this route dropped from 90 to just 44 per day, with airlines redirecting aviation capacity to other routes.



## CASE STUDY

### Frankfurt Airport's High Speed Rail service

Globally, airports like Frankfurt and Narita have thrived on High Speed Rail access, either directly to the airport or to a nearby integrated hub, enabling seamless transition between rail and air travel.

Rail-air collaboration is increasingly common, with integrated booking systems, code-sharing and alliances such as Eurostar's membership of SkyTeam, highlighting the growing role of High Speed Rail in global connectivity and reducing emissions.

A longstanding partnership between Germany's Deutsche Bahn, Lufthansa and Frankfurt Airport supports seamless air to rail travel, offering passengers efficient and integrated transport options including code sharing arrangements and integration of airline and rail booking systems to allow passengers to purchase combined flight and train tickets in a single step.

## CASE STUDY

### Catalyst for regional economic growth

France's TGV High Speed Rail network has transformed how people live, work and travel across the country, significantly reducing travel times between major cities and regional areas.

One of the most prominent routes, Paris to Lyon, once took up to four hours by conventional train but now takes two hours, creating new opportunities for commuters, businesses and tourists.

People can now work in one city and live in another, boosting regional economies by increasing mobility and access to jobs, services and education.

The Paris to Bordeaux route has reduced travel time from three and a half hours to just over two hours, effectively bringing Bordeaux – a regional city in south-west France – closer to Paris, and facilitating increased business travel, tourism and investment in the region. It has also contributed to economic revitalisation in Bordeaux, attracting new businesses and residents, who are able to easily commute to and from Paris.

France's TGV network exemplifies the staged delivery of a High Speed Rail network. Since launching its first line between Paris and Lyon 1981, the network has expanded to over 2,700 kilometres across six lines.

France is a prime example of how High Speed Rail can transform vast geographies into interconnected, cohesive regions.

Once struggling with industrial decline, the French city of Lille capitalised on TGV and Eurostar High Speed Rail services to develop Euralille, a thriving business hub now home to 14,000 workers.

Global companies like Amazon, Booking.com and IBM relocated their regional headquarters to Lille, drawn in by the affordability of land and access to a large pool of skilled labour.

The influx of businesses into Lille transformed it from a city of economic stagnation to one of growth and generated new higher-skilled jobs, positioning it as a leading centre for green jobs and specialised industries.

Euralille is now the third largest business quarter in France, has the country's second largest student population and has plans for further urban expansion to accommodate the future regional headquarters of the National Centre for Public Sector Training.

The revitalisation of Lille demonstrates the importance of ensuring major infrastructure plans are strategically aligned with complementary urban policies to ensure the best development outcomes.



Artist impression of Standard Class.

## A new approach to delivery

A robust, market-tested delivery strategy, informed by expert analysis and industry engagement, will ensure Australia's High Speed Rail is delivered efficiently and productively. Informed equally by past successes and recent challenges, this new approach will reduce risk and improve certainty on cost estimates.

### A Development Phase: taking the time to plan and prepare

Learning from high-profile mega project challenges, the Newcastle-Sydney connection is now in a detailed Development Phase of about two years. This allows appropriate time to plan and execute a project of this complexity and scale, reduce risks prior to delivery and to lay the groundwork for substantial productivity improvements.

During this period, proponents for a number of packages will participate in an Early Contractor Involvement process to develop a scheme design, appropriate specification and detailed program and budget for delivering the works.

### Packaging and staging that responds to market capacity

The approach to packaging includes a combination of discipline-based and geographical packages designed to align with market capability, reduce

interfaces and provide opportunities for private financing. This approach is specifically designed to mitigate the kinds of market capacity challenges that have emerged in the delivery of previous mega projects and reflects wider global High Speed Rail experience.

The packaging strategy has been configured around a staged delivery approach.

### Procuring effectively and incentivising performance

The procurement model will be tailored to the specific characteristics and risk profile of each individual package. The Authority will adopt a lean and agile structure, supported by a delivery partner to provide project management support and to manage the interfaces between the various packages. A consistent approach to contracting will be adopted across all packages where possible using a Hybrid Incentivised Target Cost approach.



National High Speed Rail Hub, Newcastle.

## Community and stakeholder engagement: a core delivery function

Successful delivery of major infrastructure depends on consistent engagement with communities and stakeholders, building trust and demonstrating transparency.

High Speed Rail will pass through a range of communities, regions and landscapes.

Early and ongoing engagement will be essential to delivering the network in a way that is fair, transparent and locally informed.

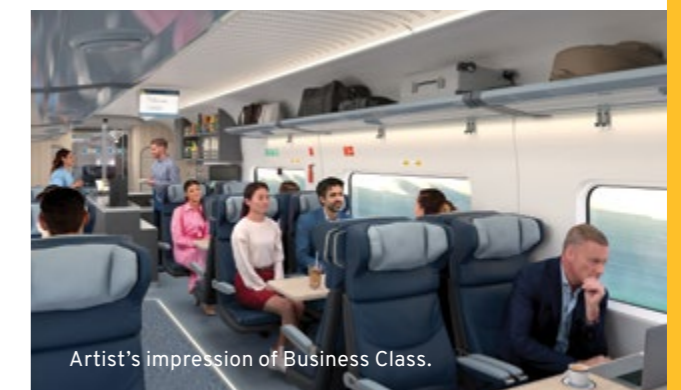
Community feedback and local insights will help shape High Speed Rail, improving outcomes, informing planning decisions and reducing construction risks.

An engagement framework will be developed with First Nations stakeholders, with planning and designing for country incorporated into infrastructure delivery.

In the second half of 2024, the Authority met with more than 5,000 people at almost 90 community events across the Hunter Valley, Newcastle, the Central Coast and Sydney.

Conversations with communities and stakeholders informed the development of the Business Case for the proposed Newcastle to Sydney High Speed Rail connection.

People can find out more about High Speed Rail at the National High Speed Rail Hub, a community information centre opened in central Newcastle in early 2025.



Artist's impression of Business Class.



Melbourne.

**A SPOTLIGHT ON** 

# Melbourne and Northern Victoria

Greater Melbourne is the engine room of Victoria's economy and one of Australia's most globally connected cities.

Home to more than 5.2 million people – over three-quarters of the state's population – the city generates around 80% of Victoria's gross state product.

Its diverse economy spans finance, manufacturing, health, education, logistics, technology and tourism. With a further two million residents expected by 2050, Melbourne is on track to become Australia's largest city, creating increasing pressure on housing, transport and infrastructure.

Future stages of High Speed Rail will reshape how Victoria connects to northern regions, Canberra, Sydney and the rest of the east coast.

A four-hour service to Sydney and a 2.5 hour trip to Canberra will provide a strong alternative to short-haul flights on one of the world's busiest aviation routes.

Faster, more reliable travel will ease pressure on airports, expand trade and tourism flows, and more closely integrate Victoria into the national economy and global markets.

Melbourne's CBD will be the state's High Speed Rail gateway, fully integrated with metropolitan and regional transport. Planning will also consider through-station designs to enable future extensions to Geelong and the western suburbs, strengthening connections with Melbourne's fastest-growing corridors.



Shepparton.

North East Victoria's Hume region is a vital regional economy that complements Melbourne's global role. Valued at \$14.5 billion per annum and home to more than 300,000 people, it supports nearly 115,000 jobs.

Its population is projected to grow well above the state average, creating strong demand for housing, services and infrastructure.

High Speed Rail will transform connectivity between Melbourne, the Hume and major centres along the east coast. Faster journeys will bring Shepparton and Albury-Wodonga, closer to Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney, boosting labour market participation, easing congestion and attracting investment into Victoria's food bowl.

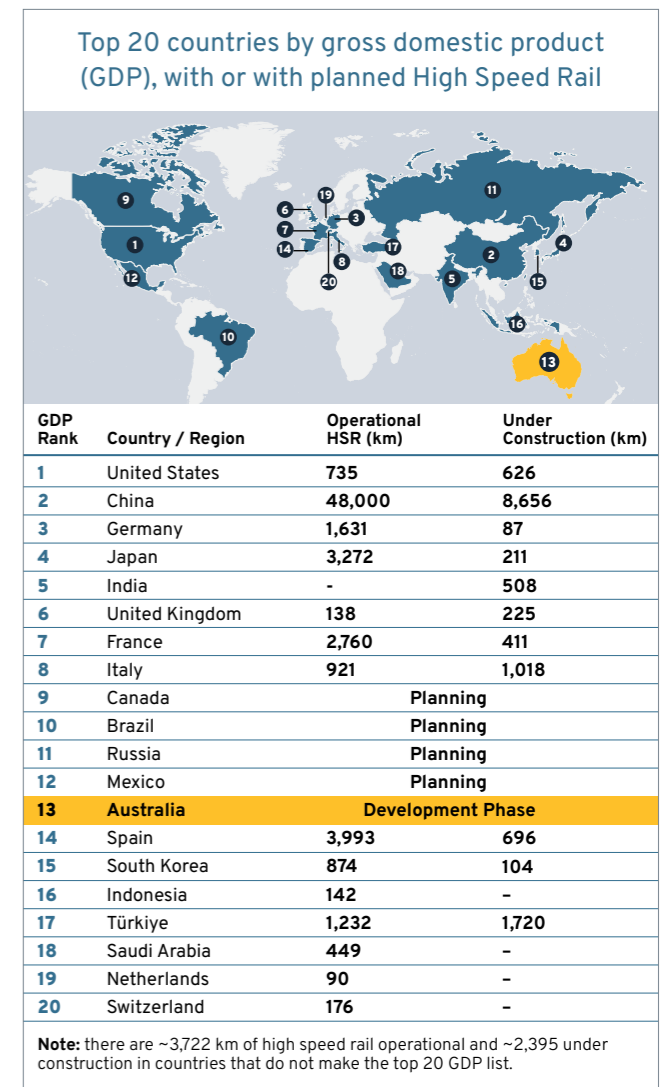
# Leveraging global momentum

Countries around the world have long identified the economic, environmental and social benefits of High Speed Rail. With 70,000 kilometres of High Speed Rail track operational globally, the technology has been revolutionising how people travel between cities and regional areas for more than 60 years.

Experiences from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries like Spain, France, Japan, Germany and Italy highlight the transformative potential of High Speed Rail to drive national progress.

Spain's Alta Velocidad Española (AVE) network has linked previously isolated regions, enhancing economic opportunities, boosting tourism and cutting emissions. Rail has become the preferred mode for many journeys once dominated by air, demonstrating how commercially-viable High Speed Rail can improve accessibility, reduce fares and encourage more sustainable travel options.

Similarly, France's Train à Grande Vitesse (TGV) network has reshaped entire regions by connecting Paris to cities like Lille and Bordeaux, driving regeneration through improving accessibility, strengthening local economies and increasing investment. Japan's Shinkansen network has expanded mobility and economic opportunity across the country, and Germany's InterCity Express (ICE) system and Italy's Alta Velocità (AV) network have both enhanced regional connectivity to enable more balanced development.



## Challenges of shared infrastructure, freight congestion

Germany's rail network, Europe's largest, faces ongoing challenges due the integration of high speed and traditional rail infrastructure.

Since the first high speed InterCity Express (ICE) service between Hamburg and Munich over 30 years ago, Germany has developed around 1,600 kilometres of dedicated High Speed Rail lines, with an additional 170 kilometres under construction or planned.

Despite this progress, high speed lines remain a small portion of the national network, leading to frequent operational conflicts.

ICE trains frequently share tracks with regional and freight services, leading to significant congestion and delays. While new high speed lines, such as the Cologne

to Rhine/Main route, have been designed exclusively for passenger trains, others have been built to enable mixed traffic.

Shared infrastructure continues to constrain ICE trains, limiting their ability to consistently reach top speeds and hampering their recovery from delays. In 2022, more than a third of long distance ICE trains ran late. Along with extended track closures for maintenance, these issues have sparked public frustration.



# Sustainable and resilient travel

High Speed Rail will be instrumental to Australia's transition to a sustainable and resilient transport network, supporting the Australian Government's goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.

Currently, transport is Australia's third largest source of emissions, accounting for 21% of carbon dioxide emissions (CO2e) in 2023.

As other sectors decarbonise, and without further action, transport will be the biggest emitter by 2030.

The disproportionate impact of Australia's transport sector is largely due to our travel patterns: nearly 65% of passenger journeys are made by road and 17% by air – both carbon-intensive modes – while just 18% are shared between coach and conventional rail.

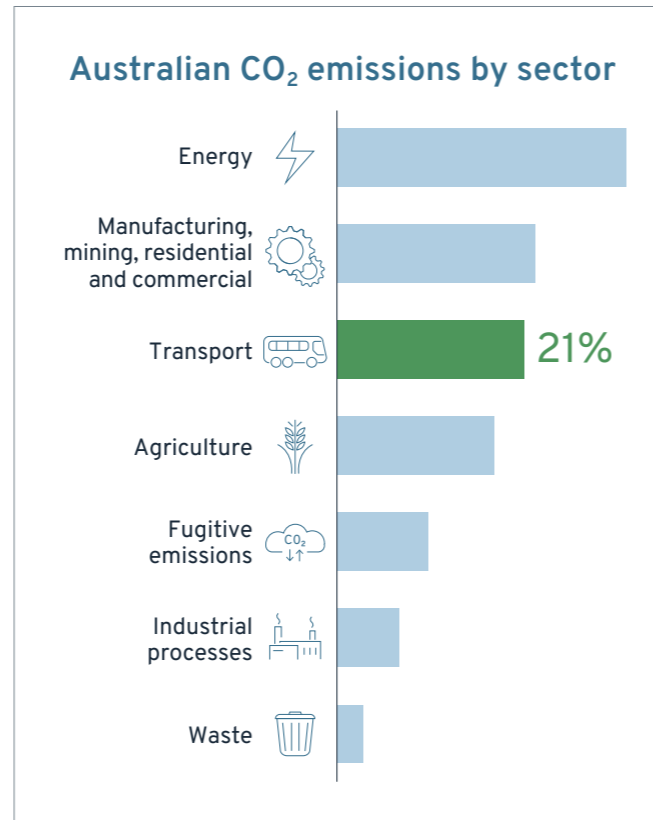
Rail accounts for only 4% of all passenger trips, highlighting its underutilisation. The east coast reflects this national trend, with air and road transport dominating long-distance travel, reflecting inadequate rail alternatives servicing this route.

Since existing rail options are often uncompetitive and unreliable, travel between Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and regional cities depends primarily on air travel, private vehicles and coaches.

But each of these options is highly vulnerable to disruption: air travel is frequently disrupted by weather while road travel is susceptible to accidents, congestion and weather events.


The High Speed Rail network will improve transport resilience between major cities and regions, providing a reliable and frequent alternative to aging and disruption-prone road and rail links.

With modern infrastructure and enhanced climate resilience, the network will be designed to withstand shocks and stresses, including bushfires, flooding, storms and extreme heat.




Australia's High Speed Rail will be net-zero carbon in operation, using 100% renewable energy. Carbon emissions will be progressively reduced in construction, supported by the growth of low-carbon supply chains to meet increasing demand.

Melbourne to Sydney



1,740kg

CO<sub>2</sub>e



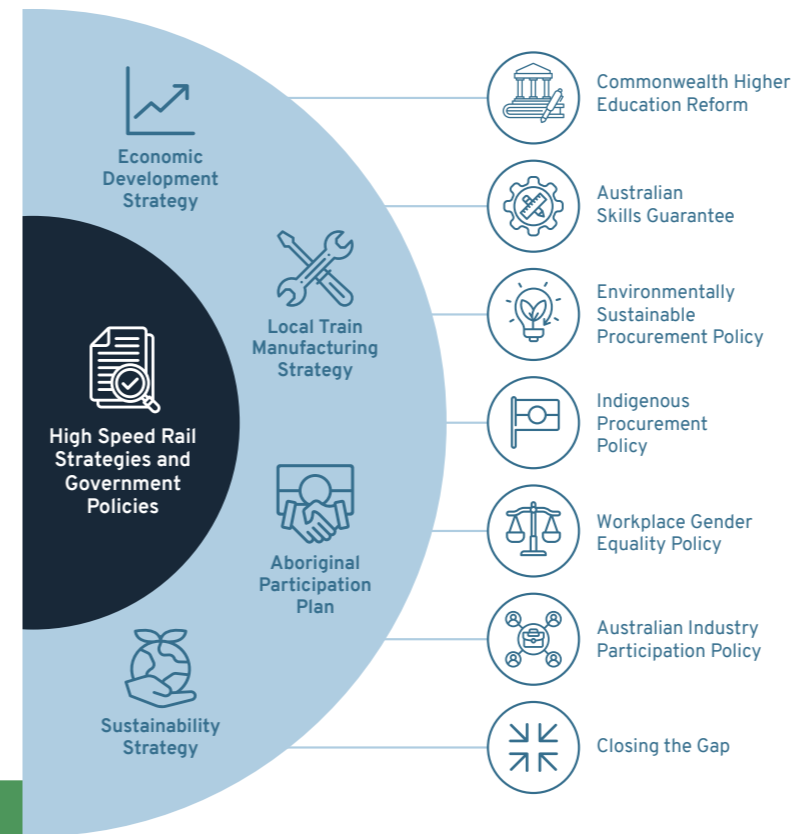
31kg

CO<sub>2</sub>e

99%

reduction

# Delivering a once-in-a-century infrastructure investment



There will be generations of opportunities with more than 170,000 construction-related jobs to be created by 2086. High Speed Rail will create a legacy workforce trained in modern methods, ready to apply their knowledge to other nationally significant infrastructure projects.

Australia has the opportunity to improve sovereign capability in specialist areas that are currently under-developed, including high speed signalling systems, track technology, rolling stock design and digital control platforms – all of which align with global advances in automation, data, artificial intelligence and clean energy.

High Speed Rail will also catalyse workforce development across supporting industries like advanced manufacturing, precision fabrication, smart materials and geotechnical science.

It presents further opportunities to anchor new industrial ecosystems, address regional inequity through increased employment participation for marginalised or under-represented groups and support workforces in industries in transition such as in the mining and energy sectors – particularly in regional and outer-metropolitan areas.

Australia's High Speed Rail network will require a skilled, capable and adaptable workforce that can design, deliver and operate new infrastructure at scale.

With a focus on sovereign capability and strengthening domestic capacity, Australia's High Speed Rail ambition presents a once-in-a-century opportunity to help build national capability, improve productivity and reduce reliance on international inputs – creating careers, strengthening industries and embedding long-term skills across the economy.

Expertise across professions like engineering, construction, operations, digital systems, project management, environmental planning and community engagement will need to be supported by strong leadership, regulatory capacity and cross-sector coordination.



22,000 to 49,600

Construction jobs per year



170,800

Construction jobs created to 2086





Rail steel delivery.

## Opportunities for local manufacturing

Construction will generate benefits across supply chains, directly supporting manufacturing in rolling stock and other heavy industries such as cement and steelmaking.

At the peak of construction, the Newcastle to Sydney link alone will uplift gross domestic product by \$3 billion a year.

By providing a decades-long, sustainable pipeline of work, High Speed Rail will encourage the establishment of modern manufacturing hubs that can provide substantial long-term benefits extending beyond the completion of the network.

During construction, manufacturing hubs will serve as receiving and dispatching centres for bulk materials, accommodating assembly lines for modular components and housing dedicated concrete batching plants for critical infrastructure such as viaducts and tunnels.

Once the network has been delivered, these facilities can be adapted and expanded to support other major infrastructure projects, guaranteeing future opportunities for skilled local workforces, with benefits reaching far beyond the east coast of Australia.

High Speed Rail will also catalyse a shift in domestic production to make Australia more competitive within the global manufacturing market.

Encouraging domestic manufacturing of key components such as rolling stock, signalling systems and track materials, rather than relying on imports, will stimulate growth in industries such as steel, electronics and engineering, and will drive the development of advanced manufacturing technologies. It will also create new jobs, foster export opportunities and modernise Australia's manufacturing sector.



The scale of the Australia's High Speed Rail network presents an opportunity to boost construction productivity, develop skills and drive innovation. Through extensive standardisation and modularisation, the repetitive, linear nature of High Speed Rail infrastructure can enable real cost reduction per kilometre.

**Tim Parker**  
Chief Executive Officer  
High Speed Rail Authority



HSRA General Manager Customer, Operations and Place Graham Nelmes presenting to the 12th UIC World Congress on High Speed Rail in Beijing, China, in July 2025.

## Global expertise, local knowledge

International partnerships and knowledge exchange will play a key delivery role – not as a substitute for local expertise but as a way to accelerate learning, avoid mis-steps and adapt proven methods to Australian conditions.

Workforce planning will be integrated from the outset with the scale and complexity of High Speed Rail – requiring early investment in skills development, coordinated supply chains and regulatory readiness.

The High Speed Rail workforce will be part of Australia's broader economic transformation, helping future proof the infrastructure sector, lift productivity and build enduring national capacity across transport, energy, technology and construction.

Australia has a unique opportunity to engage a new generation of workers – from school leavers and university graduates to re-skilled workers from adjacent sectors, including mining.

Workforce training pathways will evolve to match the scale and complexity of Australia's High Speed Rail and its multi-generational infrastructure pipeline.

High Speed Rail offers meaningful long-term employment in roles that support major national priorities including infrastructure delivery, regional development and the transition to a low-emissions economy.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of working with industry, education and training providers, and other partners to support workforce development. This includes considering opportunities to strengthen training and qualifications pathways for high-demand trade and professional roles over time.

Strong partnerships will be developed between government, industry, universities, TAFEs and training providers. Apprenticeships, cadetships and graduate programs will ensure knowledge transfer and local capability development during the planning and design stages, not just the delivery stage.

Workforce strategies will improve gender balance in construction and engineering, increase Indigenous participation and provide long-term careers in regional areas where employment opportunities have traditionally been limited.



# Realising modern methods of construction

High Speed Rail will be the first major Australian infrastructure project to fully embed advanced manufacturing techniques – a vital innovation that will drive significant efficiency.

Advanced manufacturing facilities in regional areas will be designed to boost productivity and efficiency in the construction sector. They will create new career opportunities for people in areas like the Hunter Valley who have been affected by the job changes caused by the energy transition.

Productivity in the construction industry has not improved in the past 20 years. Working with industry, the Authority can help transform infrastructure delivery by enabling a manufacturing-led approach

to boost construction productivity. This leads to reduced risk, higher quality and reduced costs – not just for High Speed Rail but applicable to many other infrastructure and building projects.

Advanced manufacturing presents a unique opportunity to support local industry and drive skills development and employment – creating jobs that range from skilled tradespeople to engineers and technicians, supporting local industries and improving construction productivity in major cities and across the regions for a range of projects.

Training programs set up to prepare for advanced manufacturing will equip people with future-ready skills to ensure long-term career pathways in a high growth sector or to transition from other industries, helping position Australia as a global leader in construction and manufacturing.

## Improving construction for smarter, more productive outcomes



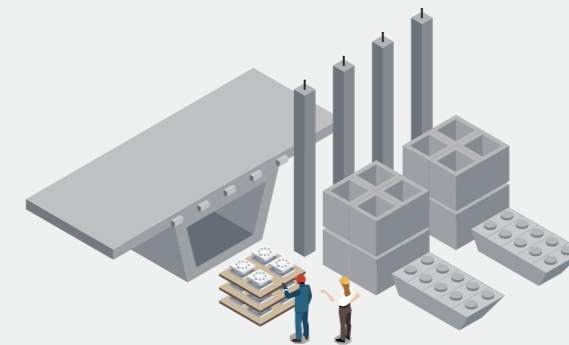
# Key features of the advanced manufacturing policy



**Smart factory production:** instead of building everything on-site, the repeatable building parts will be created in controlled factory environments. The use of robotics and automated systems will help complete precise tasks quickly and safely instead of creating everything from scratch on-site in difficult conditions.



**Digital design and planning** will use advanced computer software and artificial intelligence (AI) to design and plan buildings. And 3D modelling and virtual reality allow engineers to test and refine designs before any physical construction begins.



**Building parts will be manufactured off-site** in modular, standardised sizes and shapes. These pre-made sections can be quickly transported and assembled, reducing construction time and minimising waste.



**Sustainable materials and new technologies** will focus on using environmentally friendly materials that are lighter, stronger and more energy efficient. This includes recycled materials, advanced composites and components designed to improve a building's overall energy performance.



**Smart integration of technologies** will create a reliable and lasting railway that can adapt and respond to environmental conditions, optimise energy use, and provide the best service level to customers throughout its life.



Brisbane.

A SPOTLIGHT ON 

## Supercharging the Sunshine State

South East Queensland is the economic powerhouse of Queensland and a major driver of the Australian economy.

With a combined population of more than 3.5 million, Brisbane and the Gold Coast are forecast to grow by around one third to 4.6 million by 2050.

Brisbane is Australia's fastest-growing capital city, contributing \$201 billion to the national economy in 2024 with forecasts for it to grow over one third by 2041.

The Gold Coast, the nation's sixth largest city, is expected to reach more than 1.1 million residents by 2050 and has consistently ranked as Australia's fastest-growing economy.

Supporting this scale of growth will require new transport capacity that goes beyond incremental upgrades and unlocks the region's full potential. Future stages of High Speed Rail will directly link Brisbane and the Gold Coast into the national network, transforming one of Australia's busiest transport corridors.

The 45-minute journey between the two cities will create a step-change in connectivity supported by fast, reliable links into Northern NSW and a four-hour service to Sydney.

High Speed Rail offers a strong alternative to short-haul flights on one of Australia's busiest aviation routes, reducing airport congestion, freeing up slots for long-haul international services and better-integrating South East Queensland into national and global markets.

Brisbane's central High Speed Rail hub will be the gateway to the national network. It will be strategically located in the CBD and integrated with Cross River Rail, Brisbane Metro and the wider state transport system.



Gold Coast.

On the Gold Coast, High Speed Rail will build on the city's growing economic strength.

With a \$45 billion economy and 13 million visitors each year, the Gold Coast is a national hub for economic growth underpinned by innovation and tourism.

High Speed Rail will enhance this position with fast, reliable links to Brisbane and major cities and centres along the east coast.

Tourism operators will benefit from more day trips and weekend visitors while international and Australian travellers arriving at Gold Coast Airport will have direct, rapid access to world-class beaches, attractions and events.

High Speed Rail helps address South East Queensland's long-term housing challenge, supporting future growth by unlocking new locations for around 65,000 new homes and enabling well-planned station precincts to evolve as vibrant, mixed-use communities over time.



Queensland is forecast to capture up to 15% of the national economic benefits that High Speed Rail will deliver, despite just 5% of the network being in the state.



Thousands of jobs will be created in construction, advanced manufacturing, transport operations and future industries such as aerospace, biotechnology, renewable energy and digital services, many of them anchored in Brisbane's fast-growing innovation economy.



Businesses will benefit from faster access to talent, customers, and investment, with High Speed Rail unlocking bigger markets, boosting productivity, and strengthening the region's role as a connected growth hub on Australia's east coast and the Asia Pacific.



Artist's impression of a High Speed Rail station.

## Guiding delivery principles

The Authority has developed guiding delivery principles for staff, advisers and contractors by drawing key lessons from recent mega projects delivered in Australia and around the world. These principles will be used when developing scopes of work, contracts, internal policies and project management approaches. They will inform approaches to market and will be further developed as we learn more from engagements during the Development Phase.



A values-based organisation with a focus on creating a positive culture for our staff and supply chain.



We will take time to plan well and deliver efficiently.



Specific and clear project objectives will effectively guide our delivery approach.



We will develop the minimum project scope and technical solution to meet the project objectives and assess additional scope against these objectives, including customer outcomes, cost and program.



A financially sustainable project that will attract private investments.



Project budget will be informed by appropriate benchmarks and detailed planning.



We will aim to deliver against our project budget, excluding contingency.



Reporting will be informative, honest and succinct – with one master cost and program forecast.



Maximise the use of modern methods of construction and modular construction to reduce risk and increase productivity.



We will be a lean, informed, accountable and capable client.



Adopt 'leading not bleeding' technology.



Manage and maintain control over the property acquisition process and work respectfully and constructively with affected property owners and communities.



Collaborate early with contractors to co-develop an effective and efficient design and then appropriately share risks under a common commercial framework.



We will lead on all stakeholder and community engagement and operate as an ethical and socially responsible partner with stakeholders and communities to establish and maintain our social licence.



Adopt best practice in sustainability and net zero and minimise environment and heritage impacts.

## Our values



Safety and wellbeing



Teamwork and respect



Impact and innovation



Accountability and integrity



Agile and learning



# High Speed Rail Authority

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**Australian Government**  
**High Speed Rail Authority**