

Submission re Adelaide Rail Freight options

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This submission, albeit late, has drawn on research conducted at the University of Wollongong. However, it does not necessarily reflect the views of the University.

Elsewhere, (in two submissions made in 2009 to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics Inquiry into raising the level of productivity growth in the Australian Economy) this writer has argued that rail productivity needs to improve in Australia and this will require effort on many fronts. This will include a national approach to rail safety and regulation as well as the upgrading of infrastructure to allow for the operation of faster and heavier freight trains. There is also a need to reduce energy use in freight transport, with increased energy efficiency in rail freight and curbing the growth of 'loads on roads'.

Although rail freight growth on the East West corridor has been strong since Melbourne Adelaide Rail Standardisation in 1995, there is scope for further efficiencies. This would include operation of 1800 metre trains from Melbourne to Adelaide with scope for double stacking of containers.

It is appreciated that whether to upgrade the existing route or build a new route to bypass the Adelaide hills, is subject to a study nearing finalisation. However, if it is decided to upgrade the existing track, early consideration should be given to grade and curve easing on the Eastern slopes of the Adelaide Hills along with improved separation of freight and passenger train paths in the Adelaide urban area.

Some excerpts from a paper 2005 (P Laird M Michell, A Stoney, and G Adorni-Braccesi) *Australian freight railways for a new century* AusRail Plus follow. The section of track over the Adelaide Hills has some of the worst gradient/curvature characteristics not only between Melbourne and Perth, but also the North-South corridor between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

A 1997 proposal by M. Michell advocates realignment of the 65 km Murray Bridge - Mt. Lofty section to ease the present severe ruling gradients for west bound trains to eliminate the need for banking locomotives for the heavier west bound freight trains. This proposal includes minor work between Murray Bridge and Callington, followed by a major deviation between Callington and Nairne, and significant but smaller deviations between Nairne and Mt. Lofty.

Further details can be supplied on request.