

Fast Rail Business Case – Sydney to Parkes

State/Territory: New South Wales

Proposed AG funding: \$8.0 million

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Improving transport connections between our capital cities and their regional centres has the potential to support the economic and population growth of the regions. In particular, fast passenger rail links can strengthen economic ties and connect people en masse to housing, jobs, lifestyle amenity and services.

This project will develop a business case to determine the infrastructure and operational issues required to provide fast rail services from Sydney to Parkes (via Bathurst and Orange). The business case will undertake an options analysis to determine the optimal rail solution, determine requirements for integration with the existing rail network, and provide patronage assessment, economic appraisal and funding and financial analysis. The business case will be jointly funded on a 50:50 basis with the New South Wales Government, and/or the private sector.

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Parkes is located within five hours of Sydney and three hours of Canberra at the cross roads of major north south and east west road and rail transport corridors.

The Gross Regional Product of the broader central west region of NSW, which includes the key centres of Bathurst, Orange and Parkes, is around \$14 billion per annum. This economic output is underpinned by agriculture and forestry industries, transport and logistics operations, mining, health care, tourism and public administration.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2017, over 210,000 people lived in the central west NSW region with the population growing by around 0.8 per year.

The rail corridor between Sydney and Parkes is approximately 445 kilometres. Passenger rail services in the corridor are operated by NSW TrainLink and only operates once per week. NSW TrainLink operates services daily to Orange with a bus connection to Parkes. The current rail journey time between Sydney and Parkes is approximately six and a half hours. Fast passenger rail services in the corridor would strengthen the economic productivity of these regional centres and connect people to jobs, services and affordable housing by exploring opportunities to significantly reduce travel times.

PROJECT BENEFITS

- **Improve travel times and service reliability.**
- **Improve passenger rail services.**
- **Increase connectivity.**
- **Ensure forecast population-driven increases in travel demand are met.**