

works, as against about \$43 billion for roads.

### 3.3 AusLink

A potentially new dimension in Australian land transport policy is the initiative of the Federal Government in producing the AusLink Green Paper. The approach adopted by AusLink is consistent with the findings and recommendations of the 1998 report 'Tracking Australia' from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport etc (the Neville Committee), the 1999 'Smorgon' report on revitalising rail, and the final report of the Productivity Commission's inquiry 'Progress in Rail Reform'.

However, RTSA joins all State Transport Ministers in their reservations about the proposed absence of funds for urban public transport. To meet these concerns RTSA proposes **AusLink Plus** retain many of the Green Paper proposals, and include congestion pricing plus mass distance pricing for heavy trucks.

As recommended by the Fuel Taxation Inquiry that reported in 2002, the question of fuel excise indexation needs addressing.

RTSA has suggested in response to the AusLink Green paper that use of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in project delivery has to be done carefully. Australia's record is mixed, with situations such as Sydney's Airport Rail Link showing a need for caution. PPP should not be seen as getting public debt off the government balance sheets or 'finding a market response' to funding requirements. Lumbering future generations with inappropriate debt – unable to generate returns, should be guarded against.

The RTSA submission to the AusLink Green paper (at [www.rtsa.com.au](http://www.rtsa.com.au)) addresses various land transport infrastructure issues including urban public transport, along with regional rail projects including rail haulage of wheat and interstate mainline track straightening to replace current sections with 'steam age' alignment.

In regards to urban transport, as clearly shown by the 1999 report of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, "Sustainable Transport: Responding to the challenges," we have major road traffic problems in our major cities. These problems should be adequately addressed by AusLink.

Like other Australian major cities, Sydney needs measures to overcome excessive 'automobile dependence'. The Sydney Greater Metropolitan Region is now home to about 25 per cent of Australia's population. This region needs about \$20 billion of rail "catch up" investment this decade. A National Transport Plan simply cannot ignore this requirement.

Appendix D includes some comments on some AusLink related issues.

### 3.4 Comments re Federal Budgets

The Society suggests that recent Federal Budgets could have done much more to encourage sustainable transport, which took a step backwards with cheaper cars, cheaper petrol, cheaper diesel and more expensive public transport as a result of the New Tax System. Our suggestions in a pre-budget submission are summarised in Appendix E.

The Society notes the address by the Secretary to the Treasury, Dr Ken Henry to the BTRE Colluquium in Canberra on 4 October 2002. Of particular note is that even *"relatively modest rates of growth in urban traffic raise important issues, especially of urban congestion and, of course, urban air quality. And truck traffic projections raise questions about the capacity and quality of maintenance of our highways."* (emphasis added)

*"Not dealing with these issues now amounts to passing a very challenging set of problems to future generations."*(emphasis added)

Dr Henry's speech later noted that, "... broadly, there are two dimensions of possible regulatory change. "The first looks to the demand side and enquires about the price signals confronting users of transport infrastructure. The second looks to the supply side and enquires about the systems for financing new transport infrastructure.

"The former inquiry is really about discovering the scope for moving user prices closer to the social marginal costs of usage. Most of the possible action here concerns road transport."

The Society submits that the Government should seek to ensure that AusLink tackles head on a need to bring road user charges nearer to the total costs imposed on the community. This will assist in both road vehicle demand management, and generating the additional revenue acknowledged (in page 32 of the Government's Green Paper on AusLink) as necessary to maintain and improve the transport network's performance.

The RTSA suggested in its response to the AusLink Green Paper a new package that includes improved road pricing. This includes congestion pricing and mass-distance charging for heavier trucks.

## 4 REGIONAL FAST RAIL

The Society welcomes the interest of the inquiry in improving transport services to reduce urban sprawl, facilitate decentralisation and promote the needs of businesses and industry servicing the city from regional areas, managing incoming and outgoing goods and passengers.

Tilt trains have proved popular in Queensland since their introduction between Brisbane and Rockhampton in late 1998. In 2004, Regional Fast Rail services will be

progressively introduced for lines in Victoria. Why not NSW and the rest of Australia? Further information follows.

#### **4.1 Campbelltown - Goulburn**

There is a need to improve access between Sydney and the Southern Highlands for CityRail and other services. A direct Menangle to Mittagong route to run alongside the Hume Highway, was proposed by Bill Wentworth as far back as 1991. The Wentworth rail deviation will shorten point to point rail distance by nearly 20 km and cut time for all trains. The ARTC Track Audit estimated its cost at \$218 million for single track. Double track is a better option.

The Hume Highway was diverted to its present route as far back as 1980. The railway still winds around hills instead of cutting through them. The extra distance and slow running forced by steam age alignment encourages people to consider driving cars instead of using a train.

#### **4.2 Intercity rail track upgrading**

New South Wales is very much a crossroads of the nation. With the exception of freight moving between Melbourne - Adelaide and Perth, most freight starting or ending in a mainland capital city will cross NSW at one point.

There are economic imperatives to improve rail freight services between Australia's three largest cities of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. As established by several Federal Government and Parliamentary inquiries (Neville, 1998 and 2001, Prime Ministers Task Force, 1999, and the Productivity Commission, 1999) significant investment in mainline interstate track is needed to remove adverse speed-weight restrictions for intermodal freight trains. As well, an inquiry conducted by the Public Works Committee of the NSW Legislative Assembly during 1998 found a case for mainline track upgrading within NSW prior to the introduction of tilt trains.

In May 2001, the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) released a detailed National Track Audit. This Track Audit includes a summary and final report with appendices by Booz.Allen & Hamilton, and a report on the Melbourne - Sydney and Sydney - Brisbane corridors by Maunsell McIntyre Pty Ltd (MMPL).

In brief, the Track Audit examined minimum freight market improvements (the S1 scenario) and significant track improvements (the S2 "stretch" target scenario). Following

economic analysis, the Track Audit recommended optimised investment of \$507 million with a combined benefit cost ratio of 3.2.

Most of the proposed optimal investment was recommended for works within NSW. This includes \$146 million for Stage 1 of a Sydney Freight Priority Project, \$73 million for Main South rail track deviations, \$63 million for crossing loops, \$30 million for a Southern Control optimisation project, and \$16 million to replace the 1880 bridge over the Murrumbidgee River near Wagga Wagga.

Following the agreement between the Australian and NSW Governments on 6 December 2003 to transfer NSW Mainline track to the ARTC, much of this "catch-up" work should proceed over the next five years. However, there is a need to plan ahead for major track upgrades if rail is to be able to operate heavy freight trains with double-stacked containers on the East Coast of Australia.

#### 4.3 Tilt trains

Intercity trains perform a valuable role in moving passengers in Britain, Europe and Japan. With the introduction of 'tilt' trains travelling up to 170 km/h, intercity rail travel is also gaining popularity in Queensland.

The Federal Government's East Cost Very High Speed Train study has effectively ruled out a future in Australia for a Speedrail type train or a Maglev train. However, as argued by the Warren Centre at Sydney University (in July 2002), NSW should again look at fast trains linking Newcastle, Sydney and Canberra.

The RTSA has proposed 'The Queensland Option' of tilt trains operating on upgraded existing mainline tracks from Sydney to regional centres in NSW. As demonstrated by Queensland, this option is both affordable and highly successful. The Queensland tilt trains operate between Brisbane and Rockhampton on tracks upgraded at a cost of less than \$500 million for faster and heavier freight trains. Since it was introduced in 1998, this service has carried more than one million passengers and given a boost to the towns it serves.

As noted above, Victoria has also made a commitment to **Regional Fast Rail**.

To run trains successfully between Newcastle, Sydney and Canberra/Albury, some track straightening and upgrading is needed. The RTSA is proposing a combination of official 1998 NSW 'Action for Transport 2010' track upgrading commitments, a "T-Line" to link North Canberra to the NSW Main South line, and proposals identified in the ARTC Track Audit including a major rail deviation between Bowning and near Cootamundra.

The estimated cost of the full track straightening and upgrading is less than \$2 billion. This is far less than the \$50 billion order of cost cited by the Federal Government as a reason for not proceeding with a TGV or Maglev.

The RTSA believes that long standing proposals of mainline track straightening and upgrading for faster and heavier freight trains, plus the use of fast passenger trains now warrant the attention of Government at all levels. A full report is at [www.rtsa.com.au](http://www.rtsa.com.au)

## **5 ADELAIDE AND PERTH TRAINS**

The Adelaide urban rail system has some innovative features (including the use of gauge convertible concrete sleepers installed on the Adelaide to Outer Harbor line), with safe and reliable operations. It is however only diesel powered in contrast to the electric systems of the other mainland State capital cities. There appears to be limited Government support for an extension of the system, including that to the south of Noarlunga, which has seen some population growth. The condition of many stations is noted as requiring improvement.

The fact that Adelaide rail patronage declined or remained near static during the 1990s at approximately 10 million passengers p.a. when urban (heavy) rail showed modest growth throughout Australia (from about 400 million passengers in 1989-90 to about 500 million passengers in 2000-01) and strong growth in Perth, is of concern. The reliability of some published Adelaide urban rail patronage data (including the ARA 2002 Year Book on page 11 with 7.86 million rail passengers carried by TransAdelaide) is also of concern.

A report "Rail in the next decade: where to and how?" released by the RTSA in November 2002 at our Conference on Railway Engineering, and then placed on the website "[www.rtsa.com.au](http://www.rtsa.com.au)" gave the Adelaide urban rail infrastructure a 'D' rating. The report also gave a 'C-' rating to CityRail in Sydney, and an 'A-' rating to Perth's urban rail network. These ratings were determined in accordance with guidelines in the IE Aust 2001 Infrastructure Report Card. The ratings were subsequently noted in the February issue of Rail Express, and the Adelaide Advertiser on 21 May 2003.

The Society welcomes the recently announced \$56 million commitment to replace Adelaide's trams along with other infrastructure improvements.

The value of urban rail upgrading is very clearly demonstrated by the upgrading of the Perth suburban system. In 1991, it was carrying 10 million passengers per year. Following electrification and extension to Perth's northern suburbs, trains are now carrying over 31 million passengers per year. The system is now being further extended, and by



2006 will include the growing city of Mandurah to the south west of Perth. Perth's trains are expected to carry 61 million passengers per year by 2011.

## 6 OTHER COMMENTS

Clearly, a new approach to urban land transport within Australia is needed. Many inquiries conducted during the 1990s for the Federal Government have shown the way; and it is now quite clear that 'business as usual' with land transport is simply not good enough for Sydney to remain internationally competitive as a major Asia/Pacific City. Nor is it good enough for Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Canberra.

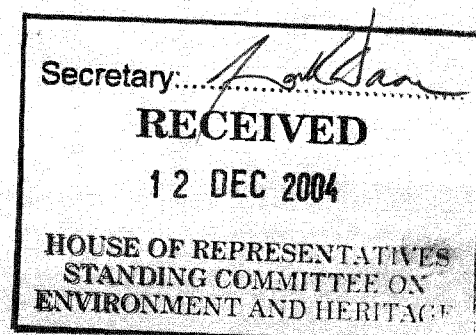
Page 32 of the Government's 2002 Green Paper on AusLink raises the option of road congestion pricing. Given the success of the Central London access pricing scheme introduced in February 2003, there is no reason why the Federal Government should not be encouraging the mainland States to introduce this in their state Capitals, and the ACT Government to introduce it to Canberra.

### 6.1 New Zealand Land Transport Package

Recent initiatives of the New Zealand government in urban land transport are also relevant. On 28 February 2002, the New Zealand Government announced a \$227 million Land Transport Package. The innovative package, called Moving Forward, uses funds raised from increasing petrol and diesel tax by 4.7 cents per litre. Along with generating an extra \$94 million for roads over the next 16 months, the package also includes \$66 million for alternatives to roads, such as rail and public transport.

The aim of the package is to try to replace present transport problems, by a transport system that is 'affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable.' A current National Road Fund will be replaced by a National Land Transport Fund. Further measures were adopted in December 2002 and throughout 2003. For more information, see <http://www.transport.govt.nz/html/15news/land-transport-package/index.shtml>

In addition, the New Zealand Ministry of Transport released in 2002 a report showing, inter alia, that the "invisible road toll" exceeded the "visible road toll".



**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HELD BY THE COMMITTEE**

**ATTACHMENTS TO SUBMISSION NO. 166**

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