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WORKING PARTY ADVOCATING THE HIGH SPEED RAIL NETWORK (HSRN)

With the Federal Government's announcement that phase two of the study into the economic and financial viability of the High Speed Rail Network (HSRN) for Australia's East Coast will now proceed, Regional Development Australia Hunter is leading a working party to support its construction.

The HSRN is an enabling piece of infrastructure that has the potential to integrate communities, ease road and air congestion and reduce carbon emissions. It will vastly improve travel times between destinations (Newcastle to Sydney in just 40 minutes and Sydney to Canberra in one hour) and relieve congestion on our major highways. RDA Hunter has identified HSRN as a priority and is coordinating a group of organisations that are working to make the HSRN a reality. The group currently includes:

NSW Business Chamber, Hunter Business Chamber, Canberra Business Council, Hunter Development Corporation, RDAs in the Hunter, Central Coast, Sydney, Southern Inland, Mid North Coast and ACT; as well as Newcastle Airport and Canberra Airport.

The working party has two objectives:

1. To work together in advocating that the High Speed Rail Network be constructed; and
2. That the first part of construction commences within the Newcastle to Canberra section.

The group will brief state and federal government representatives throughout 2012 about the benefits of constructing the HSRN and for the Newcastle to Canberra leg to be stage one of the project. The working party will be sending a delegation to Canberra on the 15th February.

These benefits include linking areas with the greatest concentration of population; HSRN's potential as a commuter service between Newcastle, Central Coast, Sydney and Canberra increasing capacity to support growth in rail freight on other lines; and tourism benefits for the cities and regions included on the route.

The group will also continue to brief regional business and community groups in 2012, a program that started as awareness raising for the HSRN in 2011 as well as briefing and engaging local MP's.

For more information contact Todd Williams, CEO, RDA Hunter on 02 4908 7300 or 0418 115 577.

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