



The Fairbane Group

INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY LIST CONSULTATION

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31 August 2020



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31 August 2020

Infrastructure Australia  
Deutsche Bank Place  
21/126 Phillip St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Sent by email to: [iplsubmissions@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:iplsubmissions@infrastructure.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY LIST 2020 CONSULTATION**

We would like to extend our gratitude for the opportunity to provide a discussion paper to the *Infrastructure Priority List 2020 Consultation* by Infrastructure Australia.

It is imperative now more than ever that the entire business community is engaged with and new ideas are brought to the table. This requires meaningful access by and engagement with Australian-owned small and micro businesses.

Government, both in its parliamentary and executive capacity has a role to play in making a more inclusive and conducive environment for all businesses to operate.

Our paper will discuss a limited and discrete selection of issues and do not form the entirety of our positions on all related areas of interest.



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## **About Fairbane**

The Fairbane Group (“Fairbane”) is a consulting and private investment group that provides advice and opinions on policy issues to various industry groups and interested stakeholders. Fairbane is the successor entity to a series of consulting and investment groups that date back to the early 2000s. We are experienced in financial markets, legal services, and management consulting. Our operations span internationally and include Australia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Dubai, as well as parts of South-East Asia and Europe.

Fairbane is fortunate enough to have had members work with organisations such as: Deloitte, Ernst & Young, the Australian Government in the Departments of Defence, Trade, Health and Aged Care, the United Kingdom Departments of Defence, and National Health Service, various medium to large companies in industries ranging from Finance, Aerospace, Biotechnology, Communications, Computing, Construction and Resources.

Fairbane is a truly future-oriented organisation with a unique vision for the world. Fairbane’s vision is to push the boundaries and reach out to the horizons of scientific and technological boundaries and do so by ensuring there is the freedom and flexibility available to individual businesses and their industries as a whole to compete and prosper.

At Fairbane, the world in the year 2020 is seen through the lens of what the world could and may well be like in the year 2100 and 2200. This means encouraging development of new ideas and providing a foundation for the new technologies that come from them.

Fairbane provides advice to various companies and individuals in the media industry, primarily in the emerging sub-markets and emerging technologies and platforms, particularly start-ups. Our expertise comes from a management consulting perspective and from legal advice to clients and partners, and policy advice to various entities.



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### **The context of the Infrastructure Priority List**

We recognise that the scope of the Infrastructure Priority List is to find a balance between the following competing objectives:

- Ensuring towns and cities have safe and secure water supplies
- Developing a national strategy for water
- Protecting coastal regions from inundation
- Addressing national waste and recycling management challenges
- Responding to national road maintenance issues
- Improving mobile telecommunications coverage in regional and remote areas
- Establishing an Indigenous art and cultural facilities program

Fairbane takes the further view that these competing interests need to be weighed against an additional contextual overlay that takes into consideration the importance of involving small business, and in particular those proprietors who are from Multi-Cultural and Indigenous or Torres Strait (MAIT) backgrounds as well as other groups under-represented in Australia's prosperity and over-represented in the disadvantages they endure from not benefitting from the system.

Fairbane takes the view that all items currently on the Infrastructure Priority List or those that will be, need to take into account the integration and advancement of small businesses, because those are the businesses that will offer the most to the advancement of society as a whole. For instance, where an Infrastructure tender is released to the public, the scale often suggests only larger providers can offer the tender. This is just not true.

Small business operators are almost always carrying years of experience, often from medium to large providers. For example, there is no reason multiple small concreting contractors cannot take on a single large infrastructure project, such as a road or highway. The prevailing sentiment and mindset is still well enshrined in "go bigger because bigger is better" and this is not only detrimental to small business, it is



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detrimental to society as a whole because it causes labor to be imported temporarily into areas where local employment could be benefitted, which is one of the rationales for developing infrastructure in a said area in the first place.

Fairbane also notes and acknowledges the Assessment Framework published by Infrastructure Australia:

- How climate change risks are treated in the economic appraisal of an infrastructure project (for example, how a mass transit project might be impacted by increasing heat in cities).
- How to capture land use impacts in the cost-benefit analysis of an infrastructure project (for example, how to better capture the 'city shaping' impact of a major transport project that is likely to influence where people live and work).
- Reviewing and reporting on projects after implementation, to determine if outcomes were achieved and inform future infrastructure decisions. It is critical that we learn from our past projects.

Fairbane takes environmental sustainability, and more importantly, caring for our environment very seriously. Our approach is to support and assist in implementing low-impact high-yield infrastructure and common-sense approaches.

In regard to land use, infrastructure needs to be directed at coastal regional towns and cities to encourage business investment and growth. Everything from rail networks, airports and water facilities. All of these will help create jobs and move people out of the congested cities, creating growth and opportunities.

This will be particularly helpful to small business if they are able to have an opportunity to tender for projects and participate in the growth and development in those areas.



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## **Comments on the Infrastructure Priority Listing**

### **Central Coast Region**

There is need for widening of and/or alternate major road networks for the Central Coast Highway and Entrance Roads as the increase in population over the next 10 years will require better access into and out of the Central Coast region.

The Manly-Warringah area north of Sydney can be used as an example of what the Terrigal-to-Swansea area will look like in the next few decades and it is possible to plan ahead for this now. Whilst rail infrastructure would reduce the congestion it is not practicable given the terrain of the region.

Additional roads and perhaps busses would be the best scenario. A ferry network may also be something to consider. Water transport infrastructure including ferry access from Gosford to Terrigal to the Entrance would be both a practically appealing option as well something that would make the region even more appealing and unique in terms of tourism.

### **Great Lakes – Port Stephens**

The growth of Newcastle and the Hunter region has seen an increase in growth in surrounding areas such as to the north, however, the infrastructure development has not kept pace. It is a natural consequence that people will move further up the coast and there is scope for Newcastle to continue to be a regional centre.

It would be encouraging to see development of the civil aviation services in the Newcastle area and grow the airport at Newcastle. The road and utility infrastructure north up to Port Stephens and to Forster needs to be developed to anticipate this growth.



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### **High-Speed Rail Network**

Needless to say, this has been on the agenda for years and may well never happen but it needs to be raised. A way to start this could be to have a part of the network started between two regional cities. The high speed hub could also be in an area outside the CBD or urban zones. Such as Hornsby or Penrith or even Richmond in Sydney. In Maitland or Toronto in Newcastle. One stretch of the High-Speed rail network could be complete much more easily in those regional areas and help boost growth in those areas. E.g. Coffs Harbour to Forster. Forster to Newcastle. Gouburn to Canberra or Goulburn to Campbelltown (surrounds) or the near the site of the new Sydney region airport.

It is worth noting that by high-speed rail we are talking about Mag-lev and not the traditional rail infrastructure Mag-lev transportation systems require much less impact on the environment because they are on pillars, they can be light weight and more agile to implement on rugged terrain. By example, the difficult terrain of the Hawkesbury region, Brisbane waters, and southern highlands will be easily navigable by Maglev systems because the pillars can be set at alternating heights to account for the terrain. These same systems are also much less damaging than conventional rail networks because rather than clearing surrounding land up to 10 metre corridors, a mag-lev system requires a lot less removal of land to implement.

There just needs to be the political will to do this. Allowing for easier and faster travel between cities using a mag-lev rail system would reduce our environmental impact exponentially compared to any existing rail, air or motor vehicle travel.

### **Concluding remarks**

Again, we thank Infrastructure Australia for holding these consultations. It is an opportunity to speak out, particularly for those representing the small businesses that fight and struggle every day - and perhaps someday be heard.



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We would welcome the opportunity to both write and speak to the issues raised in this paper so any further discussion or public hearing would be gratefully appreciated.

If you have any questions or wish to invite us to talk on any issues, we welcome any further consultation. You can contact us at [office@fairbane.com.au](mailto:office@fairbane.com.au).

Yours faithfully

*Fairbane*

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