

# MEDIA RELEASE

JOHN ANDERSON

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT  
AND REGIONAL SERVICES  
LEADER OF THE NATIONAL PARTY

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## **GOVERNMENT ENDS SCOPING STUDY ON EAST COAST VERY HIGH SPEED TRAIN NETWORK**

The Federal Government has decided to conclude its investigations into the possibility of a very high speed train network along the eastern seaboard, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, said today.

The Government would instead continue to pursue practical improvements to existing rail freight and passenger service infrastructure.

"Like many, I would have liked to have seen a very high speed train network built in this country," Mr Anderson said.

"But the likely cost to Government of such a massive infrastructure project was potentially enormous. A Preliminary Study report suggests that to construct a full 2000km network between Melbourne and Brisbane would cost between \$33 billion and \$59 billion.

"The report shows clearly that about 80 percent of the costs involved would have to be provided from public funds. As the ratio for public benefits to public costs is very low - between 0.12 and 0.25 - the return to the community may never justify the public investment required.

"To have continued further with the study would have been an exercise in false hope."

A scoping study was commissioned in December 2000 to conduct a comprehensive examination of options for an East Coast very high speed train network connecting Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne with major regional centres along the way.

While there has been considerable public interest in the possibility of very high speed train links in Australia, up until now there had been a lack of solid information on which to base judgments on whether to proceed. The Preliminary Study report will soon be made publicly available.

The study is now concluded. While it was originally allocated a budget of \$20 million, the actual total cost was \$2.3 million as the results of the preliminary study were sufficient to allow the Government to conclude that further investigation was not warranted.

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