

IN THIS ISSUE

- Outcomes from the 2025 HSR Conference in Sydney
- What's the latest on Newcastle-Sydney HSR Business Case?
- Next Steps for HSR
- Become a Foundation Member!
- Thanks to 2025 Conference Sponsors



High Speed Rail Conference Panel Discussion: Building Sustainable Community Support for Australian High Speed Rail

Panelists (L to R): David Mehan, MP, The Entrance; Nuatali Nelmes, Director PCA; Sharon Claydon, MP/Dpty Speaker of the House, Newcastle; Bridget McKenzie, Senator, Victoria; Judy Hannan, NSW MP, Wollondilly; John Alexander, former MP, Bennelong; Tracey Holmes, Master of Ceremonies

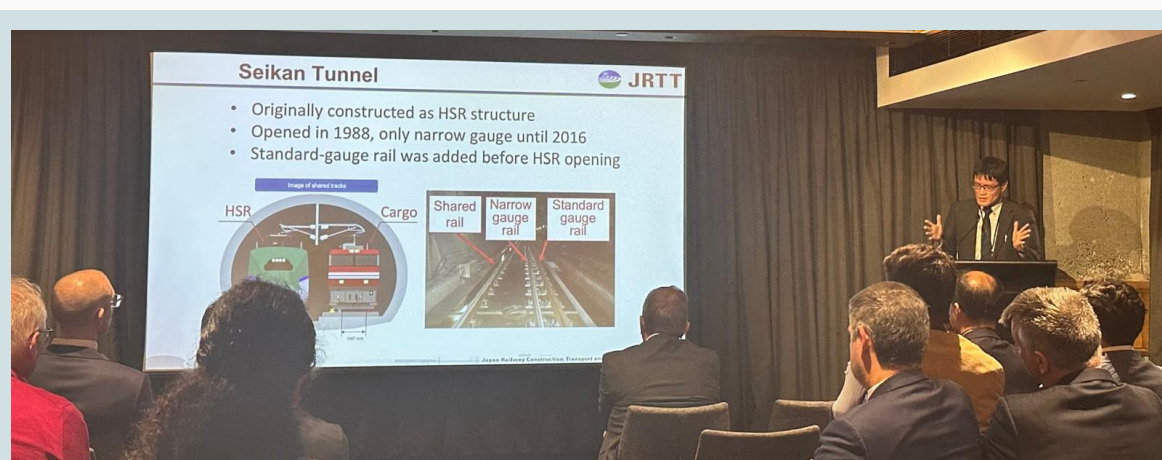
Outcomes from the 2025 High Speed Rail Conference in Sydney

The Association's second annual High Speed Conference drew a engaged, sell-out crowd at the Sydney Masonic Centre in Sydney's CBD on 12 August. The Conference ran from 1:00 pm until 5:30 pm, followed by a packed Networking Session for attendees and speakers. Speakers and special guests enjoyed a fabulous VIP dinner at Surry Hills favourite Chin Chin (www.chinchin.sydney).

Conference Speakers and Topics. The 2025 Conference kicked off with presentations by High Speed Rail Authority **CEO Tim Parker** and **General Manager Graham Nelmes** and featured Australian and international experts on a range of topics. In case you missed the event, check out the [2025 HSR Conference Program](#).

Conference Presentations are available to Association Company Members on request. Contact joe.langley@auhsr.org for further information.

Special thanks go out to **Keiichi Kagayama**, Chief General Manager, Central Japan Railway, and **Kenji Shimizu**, Senior Director for International Development, JR TT. Keiichi and Kenji travelled from Tokyo to celebrate 60 years of Japanese leadership in high speed rail technology.



Kenji Shimizu, Senior Director for International Department for JR TT, provided an informative and entertaining presentation on the tricks and trades of building high speed rail lines in challenging geographies.

Panel Discussion. The highlight of the Conference for many attendees was the concluding panel discussion featuring prominent current and former elected leaders from Federal, state and local governments. Repeating former MP John Alexander's mantra on bipartisanship, panellists discussed the need for investment in high speed rail to be treated as a national, cross-party priority rather than as a political football match with ever-changing goal posts.

In response, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Sharon Claydon announced her intention to form a parliamentary Friends of High Speed Rail Group, and challenged Senator Bridget McKenzie, Leader of the National Party in the Senate, to co-chair the Group. Senator McKenzie dodged the offer, pending release of the Newcastle to Sydney Business Case, highlighting the political obstacles still confronting Australian high speed rail.

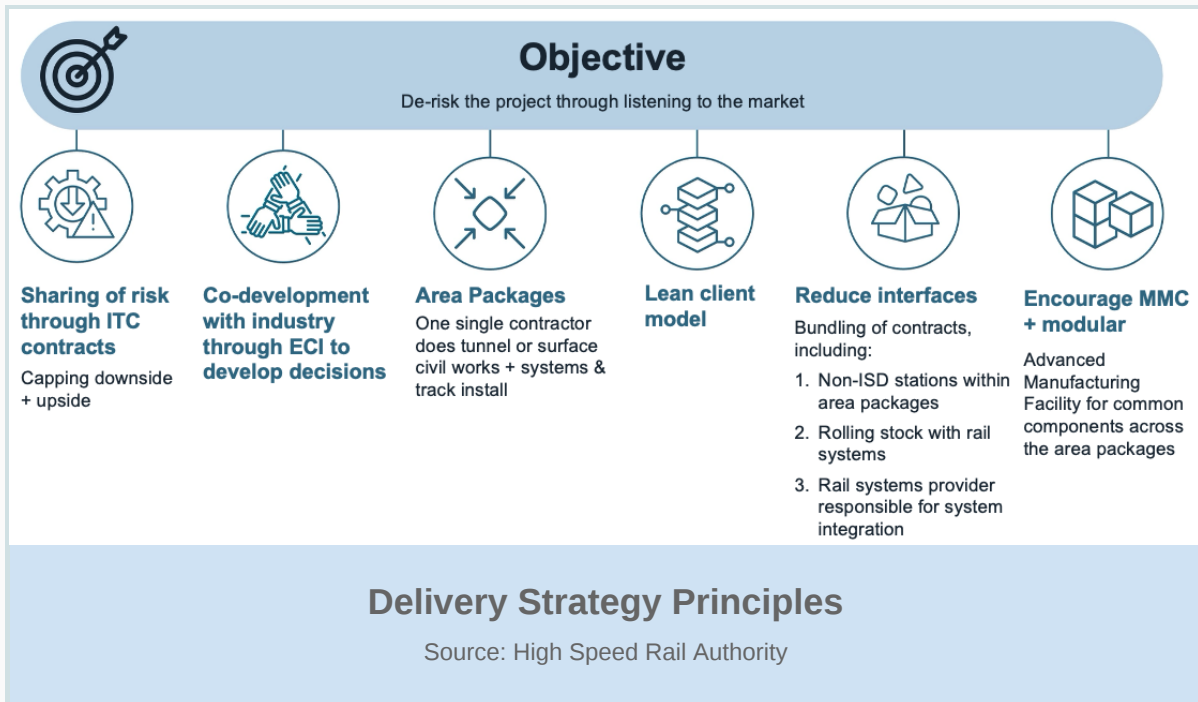
Key Conclusions. Drawing key conclusions from a half-day conference is a challenging task, so we have enlisted the help of TurboScribe (<https://turboscribe.ai/>) and ChatGPT+ (<https://chatgpt.com/>) to summarise five key conclusions from the 2025 HSR Conference;

1. Bipartisan commitment and sustained funding are essential to move high-speed rail from discussion to delivery.
2. Early tangible progress—such as geotechnical surveys, pilot sections, and community engagement—helps build credibility and public trust.
3. Regional connectivity, housing opportunities, and productivity benefits form the strongest case for investment, particularly for Newcastle, the Central Coast, and southern corridor to Canberra.
4. Significant challenges remain: costs, timelines, land acquisition, and skill shortages in construction, all of which require transparent planning and realistic expectations.
5. A long-term vision, supported by institutions like the High Speed Rail Authority, is necessary to ensure this 100-year infrastructure project can be embedded beyond political cycles.

What's the latest on Newcastle to Sydney HSR Business Case?

Unfortunately, no announcement has been made by either Infrastructure Australia or the Albanese government on the Newcastle to Sydney Business Case. Piecing together inferences from a variety of sources, it is anticipated that a decision to proceed with the Newcastle to Sydney first stage may be announced by the end of the year. If this happens, HSRA should be in a position to respond to Infrastructure Australia's review and be ready to kick off a two year development phase in early 2026.

The extended development phase is intended to avoid past mega-project challenges and costly design changes during the delivery phase. The delivery strategy will seek to further de-risk the project through Incentivised Target Cost contract (ITC), Early Contract Involvement (ECI) and other principles. Assuming a ten year construction and testing period, Australia could see high speed trains running by the end of the next decade. High speed rail, like a fine Penfolds wine, takes time.



Next Steps for AuHSR

The Association is planning three advocacy and member events over the next 12 months to keep members informed and broaden support for high speed rail. Check out the Association's [2025/26 Membership Benefits](#) to see what we are planning and how you can participate and stay informed.

Members Briefing - Newcastle to Sydney Business Case. The Association is a registered participant and key stakeholder in the High Speed Rail Authority's stakeholder engagement program. Subject to a positive decision on the Newcastle to Sydney Business Case, we will once again take an active part in this program and seek HSRA's participation in a Members Briefing on business case outcomes and next steps in the procurement process.

If and when a decision to proceed on the project is announced, the Association's **Independent Expert Panel** will delve into HSR technical issues to provide independent commentary, respond to media articles, contribute to public information and education events, and report on matters in the public interest. The Association's Independent Expert Panel is open to qualified Association members and is chaired by Association Director [Victor Prados-Valeria](#). Contact Victor for further details.

Friends of High Speed Rail Group. The Association will work with the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Sharon Claydon and other parliamentarians to establish Friends of HSR and present briefings in Canberra. Deputy Speaker Claydon announced this initiative during the 2025 HSR Conference Panel Discussion and has invited the Association to support the group. The Association will work with the Deputy Speaker's office to organise

and host briefings at Parliament House to cross-party members, drawing upon the technical skills of our Independent Expert Panel and other experts.

2026 High Speed Rail Conference. The Association will organise a 2026 HSR Conference during the second or third quarter of 2026. Individual and Company Members will receive discounts to attend these events and to sponsor events. The Association will work with sponsors to tailor events to;

- **Showcase the capabilities of our members** through events and engagements with HSRA and key decision-makers at local, state and federal government levels.
- **Keep our members up to date and aware** of opportunities to participate in High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) procurements and related activities.
- **Build political and community support** for high speed rail through advocacy, public education, research and professional events.

Association members can take advantage of sponsorship discounts by locking in commitments for future events before the end of this year. Contact [Joe Langley](#) for details.

Become a Foundation Member!

International experience demonstrates that successful high speed rail programs have false starts and may take decades before finally taking off. This has certainly been Australia's experience. However, a growing chorus of stakeholders sense that Australia has come through that phase and that the time has come to put the first spike in the ground for HSR.

Help us bring high speed rail to Australia by becoming a Foundation Member of the Australian High Speed Rail Association. Click the buttons below the take advantage of reduced Individual and Company membership rates, engagement opportunities with industry experts and decision-makers, and sponsorship discounts during our 2025 Foundation Membership Campaign.

Company Foundation
Membership Form

Individual Foundation
Membership Form

Thanks to the 2025 HSR Conference Sponsors

ARUP
www.arup.com

 **ARCADIS**
www.arcadis.com

MiGSO-PCUBED
www.migso-pcubed.com

pro²
Infrastructure Consultants

www.pro2infra.com

AUGMENTIUM 
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY

info@augmentium.net

 **ARX**
SMART MINDS
www.arx.ing

Contact Us

Joe Langley, Chairman

E: joe.langley@auhsr.org

M: +61(0) 458 053 520

Damien Ottaviano, Secretary

E: damien.ottaviano@auhsr.org

M: +61(0) 481 007 197

Copyright © 2024 Australian High Speed Rail Association, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

30 Banksia Street

Bowral, NSW 2576

Australia

www.auhsr.org

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [unsubscribe](#) or [manage preference](#).