

This submission is an appeal from a resident of Belair who has lived near the rail line for 11 years, and has personally experienced the noise and disruption to the community caused when modern freight needs are forced to use antiquated infrastructure.

The Study has spent a great deal of effort looking at the issue from a rail perspective. It has given a nod to the effects on the community, but has not explored them in any structured way at all. This submission highlights those aspects ignored by the study.

COMMUNITY AMENITY

NOISE: The high-pitched squealing generated by the trains has to be experienced to appreciate the physical pain that can be induced in close proximity to the tracks. Such levels are not acceptable near airports, yet thousands of hills residents live with this disruption to their peace and quiet that occurs throughout the day and night. The study glossed over this aspect of the problem, with no attempt to clarify community disruption, no study of noise levels or effects on residents' health.

DISRUPTION: Lengthy freight trains hold up traffic at rail crossings on major road routes through the dormitory suburbs of Blackwood and Belair. During peak periods this can mean lengthy delays and queues of over 500 metres. The sheer waste of time and fuel is unacceptable in a country grappling with carbon emissions. The economic cost and loss of amenity caused should have been taken into account during the study, but once again there is silence on the matter. A proper study should have sought information to quantify this aspect.

BUSHFIRE DANGER: Totally overlooked by the study was the problem associated with running trains over a kilometre in length through the fire-prone sections of the hills. The State Government has just demanded that over 100 hills schools will not open on extreme fire danger days, yet what may happen during a serious fire if freight trains block the few escape routes available to residents and fire and ambulance services?

BELAIR NATIONAL PARK: The existing line passes through Australia's second-oldest national park. This park exists so that Adelaide residents may enjoy the peace of nature and it is one of the most popular parks in the hills because of its proximity to town. The penetrating squeal of freight trains does nothing for the ambience of the park, and an upgrade of the line, particularly if there is a move to double stack containers would cause unacceptable destruction to large sections of a park that has a healthy population of koalas. I note that koalas are in line to be declared a threatened species in Australia.

In my reading of the Study's report I see the issue regarded only from the point-of-view of the needs of the transport/freight sector, with mere lip-service paid to the community. This is totally unjustified. Fortunately I believe the report's findings point to the only viable solution to the problem from an economic/efficiency viewpoint.

NO CHANGE: As the report clearly shows the inadequacies of the present line, and because any delay in deciding to relocate the line will merely add expense and create mayhem for years to come, the decision needs to be made now.

UPGRADE PRESENT LINE: This must be abandoned for all the reasons given in the report. The existing line is inadequate, and re-alignment is virtually impossible. Even if it could be done, taking a greater number of lengthy trains through the inner suburbs of Adelaide is a no-brainer.

TUNNEL OPTION: Ridiculously expensive, time-consuming and does nothing to solve traffic disruption in Adelaide suburbs.

NORTHERN BY-PASS: This is the obvious solution - it takes through traffic (Melbourne- Perth) out of Adelaide's suburbs, and avoids all the problems of the hills alignment. It increases speeds and reduces maintenance costs. Which northern alignment is best is for others to decide.

THE FREIGHT LINE MUST BE RELOCATED TO THE NORTH, AND THE DECISION TO DO SO MUST BE MADE NOW AND WORK BEGUN IMMEDIATELY.

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