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Faster rail service and F3-M2 link recommended for Central Coast

A one-hour express service for rail commuters between Gosford and Sydney within 10 years, and prioritising the F3-M2 Freeway “missing link” to start construction within five years are among key recommendations for the Central Coast in the State Infrastructure Strategy released today.

The 20 year Strategy released today has been prepared by Infrastructure NSW to help guide future infrastructure investment by government.

Infrastructure NSW Chief Executive Paul Broad said the Strategy recommended development of a \$1 billion program to accelerate mainline rail speeds to create one-hour trip times between Gosford and Sydney, and Wollongong and Sydney within the first 10 years of the Strategy.

“Infrastructure NSW has also identified improvements in the line up to Newcastle to achieve a two-hour journey time between Sydney and Newcastle to support jobs and population growth,” Mr Broad said.

“NSW’s economic performance has declined in the last decade compared with other States and spending our infrastructure dollar on the most important economic activities will help turn this around.

“The Central Coast is now part of Greater Sydney from an economic perspective, and it is important that there are good infrastructure links to enable Central Coast residents to get to jobs in Greater Sydney and to enable business and freight activity.”

Mr Broad said that while the existing lines north and south of Sydney will never be able to be adapted to true high speed operation because of the topography, a target average speed of 80 km/h is achievable.

For example, current travel times between Sydney-Newcastle are actually slower than the pre-war “Newcastle Flyer” steam train.

“Getting the trip time down from Gosford to Sydney would be a massive improvement for commuters and it is achievable,” he said.

“Infrastructure NSW has also recommended a high priority be placed on completing the F3-M2 link, ideally starting work within five years. In our view it is among the highest priority road infrastructure projects with private sector funding.

“This is an important missing link for eastern seaboard freight movements and a solution is needed to ease the congestion for commuters and freight businesses.

“Infrastructure NSW considers the most likely solution for the F3-M2 is private sector funding and an unsolicited proposal is currently being assessed by Infrastructure NSW and other NSW Government agencies. If this can be achieved then the time frame for delivery should be accelerated.”

The State Infrastructure Strategy 2012-2032 is Infrastructure NSW's independent advice to the NSW Government on the priority infrastructure investments and reforms required to drive productivity and economic growth.

The Strategy's recommendations have been provided to the Government for its consideration in developing plans for infrastructure investment. For further information, the Strategy can be found on www.insw.com

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