



BYPASS OR BUST

**PUSH TO REMOVE RAIL
FREIGHT FROM HILLS**

*An artist's
impression of a rail
freight hub which
could form part of
a northern bypass
project.*

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The report recommends a 154km route, with seven tunnels, seven level crossings, six road bridges and 10 rail bridges or viaducts, with a gradient of no greater or less than 1%.

RDA Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island chief executive Damien Cooke said with Australia's inland rail network expanding, and new options including a line between Mildura and Menindee, transport companies were becoming increasingly frustrated at the limitations of the Melbourne to Adelaide line due to the Hills section.

Steep gradients, winding sections and height limits restrict both the load and speeds of freight trains through this part of the line.

"Major transport companies, if they were going to move something from Melbourne to Adelaide, they would use road because it's more

efficient," Mr Cooke said. "If they are moving from Melbourne to Perth, their first preference is rail, but they don't like having to transship it."

That can involve having to restack trains from double-stacked containers to single-stacked, or move them onto trucks to get around limitations with the Hills line.

If rail isn't made more efficient or easier through the construction of the northern bypass, "road would be the only option", Mr Cooke said.

"It would have a huge impact on our exports," he said. "They're (exporters) going to have to push everything out to Melbourne or somewhere else to be shipped."

A bypass could be a 10-year project, but Mr Cooke said he was hopeful the State Government would build a case for its construction to pitch to both the Federal Government and Infrastructure Australia, an independent body which prioritises nationally significant infrastructure.

However, SA Freight Council executive officer Evan Knapp said the early cost benefit work showed a northern rail bypass "doesn't come close to presenting a viable project".

"This report really supports the freight council's previously indicated view that we don't believe the GlobeLink proposal is viable," he said.

Mr Knapp said improvements had been made to the Hills line which had increased efficiency and it was still moving a "huge amount of freight".

It was "exceedingly unlikely" that SA would become a forgotten State on the national rail network if the bypass did not go ahead, he said.

The State would be better off improving its existing network, such as removing rail crossings from major roads like Cross Road, he said.

"For up to \$5 billion we can get a lot of projects that have positive cost benefit ratios that deliver great economic benefits to SA rather than a northern freight bypass which will be an economic drag on the State," Mr Knapp said.