

70-minute train to city

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PASSENGER rail will not meet consumer needs, with money better spent on expanding existing bus services, an independent Adelaide Hills transport study has found.

Infrastructure SA on Monday released its Mount Barker Mass Transit Study, in which it backed the state government's push for a rapid bus service but not passenger rail.

This is despite months of lobbying by both the Mount Barker and Adelaide Hills councils, Kavel independent

Study claims buses best option for Hills residents

MP Dan Cregan and the SA Transport Action Group.

"Although a rail service could be re-established in the Hills, the existing train line would not achieve travel times competitive with current bus services or cars, despite claims to the contrary," the report states.

"The small proportion of passengers who commute to the CBD will be required to use private vehicles to travel to sta-

tions at trip origin, interchange to a broad gauge service to reach Adelaide Railway Station, then travel from North Tce to their final destination, each element adding to the overall journey time."

Travel by rail would take more than 70 minutes from Mount Barker to the city, according to the study. This compared to 39 minutes via a rapid transit bus.

"I reject the finding that rail

is not viable," Mr Cregan said. "An alternative study has found modern railcars with higher power-to-weight ratios can do the trip to Mount Barker in as little as 45 minutes, with \$70m in track improvements.

"The government walked away from Globelink and I don't want them walking away from this latest study, too.

"After GlobeLink and plans to cut Hills bus routes, my community has limited confi-

dence in public transport announcements from the Marshall government."

SA Transport Action Group chairman John Hill said the report did not provide any real comparison between passenger rail and buses.

He also questioned the validity of commuting times presented in the report.

"The purported 71 minutes is slower than the seven-stop timetable of 50 years ago using

1960s underpowered railcars," he said.

Mt Barker District Council Mayor Ann Ferguson said she was concerned, but not surprised, by the study's findings.

"The fact remains that after 12 years, no government has been willing to develop, let alone implement, a viable short or long-term transport plan for Hills residents," she said.

"Our community is growing so rapidly, and it is imperative that essential services and infrastructure are in place which rightly requires government leadership and support."