

# GREENS BACK HILLS RAIL

**SCOTT MURPHY**

The SA Greens are pushing for State and Federal funding for a passenger rail service between Mt Barker and the city.

The party launched the campaign this week, saying the region had grown significantly, putting strain on existing transport infrastructure, including the freeway.

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# Greens back passenger rail

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Greens Candidate for Kavel Melanie Selwood said the State and Federal governments needed to take public transport more seriously in the Hills and find longer term solutions.

"We're not going to get everyone onto a train or a bus, but we need to be looking at long-term solutions that give our residents more options," she said.

Greens spokesperson for transport Robert Simms said the Government had put the housing developers needs before the infrastructure needs of the community.

"For years, calls by the Hills community to establish a railway line have been met

with silence by successive Federal and State governments," he said. "The people of the Adelaide Hills deserve reliable, accessible, and safe transport options."

A recent Infrastructure SA report found that there were "significant physical barriers that limit the potential for a compelling passenger rail service on the current track alignment".

But Mr Simms said there were other experts that supported the concept and enough community support to warrant its progression.

Mr Simms said the party hoped to hold the balance of power in the State's upper house after the next election and make rail a key issue.

# MP calls for transport fix

Federal Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie has called on the State Government to come up with an “immediate” solution to Mt Barker’s transport issues.

In light of a recent Infrastructure SA Mass Transit study, Ms Sharkie wrote to Transport Minister Corey Wingard asking for a costed plan addressing safety and congestion issues on the freeway. “Community concerns regarding inadequately planned population growth, restrictive bus services, route alternatives, freight routes and rail as a mass transit option are acknowledged in the report,” she said.

“Despite this acknowledgement, the study does not offer any substantive suggestions to address the immediate and longer-term requirements beyond yet another more comprehensive study.” Ms Sharkie said she was willing to present a State plan to the Federal Government and to advocate for a solution to issues outlined in the report.

In the interim she’s pushing for the SA Government to implement the “least-cost Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)” option set out in the report – a dedicated busway along Glen Osmond Road and the freeway.

She is also calling for a commitment to develop the “BRT tunnel and busway” option as a long-term solution, which would see a BRT tunnel at Glen Osmond Road combined with a dedicated busway from the tollgate to Mt Barker.

“The complexity associated with addressing the transport needs of Mt Barker ... will require several options including better mass transport offerings, reducing freight movements, and improvements to incident responses on the freeway,” Ms Sharkie said.

“I’m pleased that some of these issues are included in the recommendations of the study and improvements such as moveable concrete barriers have been recently announced by the Government.”

# Answers sought on exclusion of freight from mass transit study

**LOUIS MAYFIELD**

The Mt Barker Council is pushing for answers from the State Government as to why freight was excluded from the scope of the recently released Infrastructure SA Mass Transit Study.

At last Monday's council meeting, councillors agreed to support all of the recommendations included in the report, but also to write to key stakeholders about the freight and rail options not "adequately explored and considered".

The council also raised the need for the Government to complete the Heysen Boulevard and develop long-term transport infrastructure planning to support the rapidly growing Mt Barker community.

The executive summary of the study states that "both current road and rail corridors are utilised for freight; however, freight movements were not within the scope of this study and are not considered in detail".

The report concluded that an efficient transport service featuring the use of buses would "have the capacity to meet the forecast demand from the region".

Councillor Harry Seager said it was

"absolutely extraordinary" for the Government to exclude freight options from its report.

"It is mind-boggling that they could leave it off the agenda, it's a purely political act," he said.

Cr David Leach said the Government should divert freight away from the freeway and develop a rail corridor between Mt Barker and Adelaide.

"That will free up the freeway so we won't have those trucks going up and down it. The secret to all of this is freight, it's not rapid bus transport," he said.

## Melbourne comparison

Cr Simon Westwood said the absence of freight was a "gaping hole" in the report, however he noted that Adelaide had become the "30 minute" city.

"Things are moving up ... if you live the same distance away (from your destination) in Melbourne then it's a two-hour trip on a five-lane freeway in each direction," he said.

Key stakeholders who will be notified of the council's concerns include Premier Steven Marshall, Opposition Leader Peter Malinauskas, Member for Kavel Dan Cregan, and Mayors from surrounding councils.

# Calls for investigation into new transport corridor around Hills

**LOUIS MAYFIELD**

Economic consultants Systems Knowledge Concepts (SKC) have weighed in on the debate surrounding the best solution to Mt Barker's congestion issues, concluding that a new city bypass multimode transport corridor should be investigated.

SKC director Simon Molloy recently published a report titled *Moving On From the Failure of Globelink*, which discussed why a decade of cost benefit studies had failed to address transport efficiency in Adelaide.

Mr Molloy said a transport corridor comprising of road, rail, or both, east



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— SKC director Simon Molloy

of the Mt Lofty Ranges should be the subject of a comprehensive cost benefit analysis as it would enable:

- The substantive removal of transnational road freight from Adelaide's metropolitan road network, particularly the freeway.
- The removal of freight trains from Adelaide's metro rail and road networks (including twenty-four level crossings)
- The freeing-up of Hills rail capacity

for effective express commuter services from the Hills to the city and possible future Murray Bridge and Victor Harbor services.

"Only a corridor will address all the concerns of the community," Mr Molloy said. "It could be road only, rail only, road and rail, an eight-lane super road, Australia's first autobahn ... this should all be looked at with any scoping expenditure."

Mr Molloy said a freight toll road where trucks would pay a toll but normal traffic would be exempt was another option for the Federal Government to consider.

He also said there may be interest from private companies to invest in a major transport project because of opportunities to set up facilities along the road.

"There is a misconception that something like this would have to be fully funded by the Government," he said.

To explore the benefits of this corridor, Mr Molloy said a cost analysis should consider the benefits to Adelaide's metropolitan transport network beyond simple reductions to level crossing waiting times.