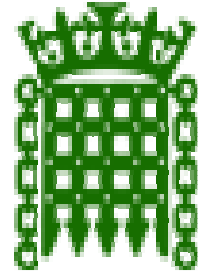


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House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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PM Change Spurs Australia Cities to Dust Off Light-Rail Plans



BY SANDY SMITH | SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

(Photo by Orderinchaos)

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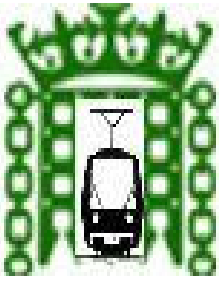
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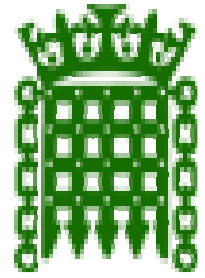


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Change at the Top in Canberra Brings Change in Focus for Transportation

With Malcolm Turnbull now in the prime minister's chair, Adelaide could get the green light on rail projects.

Australia just experienced a change in government without an election when the ruling Liberal Party ousted Prime Minister Tony Abbott and chose Malcolm Turnbull as his replacement. That in turn has led officials in at least two Australian cities to dust off or propose plans for new light-rail lines, as Turnbull has made comments suggesting that he would be more receptive to rail transit projects than the road-focused Abbott was.

One of the two cities is Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, which already has tram service. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reports that Acting State Premier John Rau plans to submit proposals to Infrastructure Australia for major extensions of the Adelaide tram network and the completion of electrification of the Gawler railway line.

The new tram lines would serve Adelaide's airport as well as the communities of Semaphore, Blair Athol, Mitcham and Magill.

"The fact that we now appear to have a different attitude in Canberra is very welcome and that means we shift our emphasis now from road projects that we've got sitting there, over to rail projects," Rau said. A former federal government official is also using the change at the top to urge the state government of Tasmania to proceed with plans to build a light-rail network for its capital, Hobart.

Another ABC news report says former Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer told the Tasmanian state government that such a system would "set Hobart up for the 21st century" and that the state government had a fiscal responsibility to build it.

The initial line would use existing narrow-gauge railroad tracks connecting Hobart with the suburb of Glenorchy. "There is modern technology relating to light rail on narrow gauge, which can be done without even having to erect overhead wires," Fischer told the ABC.

Fischer, who was in Tasmania to meet with local industry leaders, said that the state government should have commissioned the line long ago and that it would prove to be a huge asset once it went into service.

"Now that we have a Prime Minister backing light rail ahead of road, go for it," he said.

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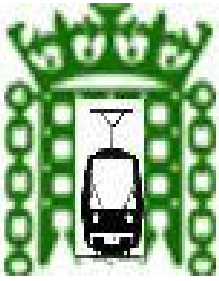
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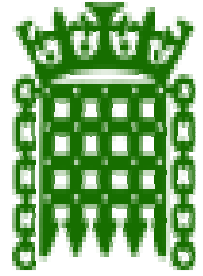


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Infrastructure Tasmania is currently conducting an assessment of the light-rail project and is due to report back to the state government on its feasibility by year-end

Courtesy: Next Cities Australia.

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