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7 December 2011

Australians prefer investment in urban rail over high-speed services

More Australians want improved rail services in major cities rather than high-speed intercity rail, [the latest quarterly national transport survey](#) from the University of Sydney shows.

“High speed rail between cities is important for Australia in the face of an increasing population, but people are more focused on what affects them day-to-day,” says Professor David Hensher from the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies which conducts the ITLS-Interfleet Transport Opinion Survey (TOPS). “This result is consistent with other responses showing strong support for public transport, consistently ranked the top transport priority for Australia since our quarterly survey began in March 2010.”

When asked about rail investment priorities, more than half of respondents in the latest survey said investment in rail within our cities was the highest priority. About one third of respondents said high-speed rail between our cities, currently under investigation by the federal government, was most pressing.

Support for rail within cities was highest amongst frequent public transport users, Victorian residents, and people living in capital cities.

Elsewhere in the survey, two thirds of participants said the Qantas brand would eventually recover from damage caused by the airline’s recent grounding. Queenslanders were most optimistic about the brand recovering, perhaps reflecting the airline’s origins.

Overall, Professor Hensher says more Australians think transport in their local area will be the same in a year’s time than in any quarter since the survey started. Queensland residents were most confident that transport in their local area will be better in one year’s time.

Confidence about transport nationally remained constant, with 46 per cent of respondents saying transport would improve across Australia in the next five years. “We will continue to monitor community confidence,” Professor Hensher says.

The first national survey to measure transport opinions on a regular basis, TOPS is a reliable indicator of Australians’ ongoing confidence about transport in their local area and transport in Australia.

The ITLS in the University of Sydney Business School provides education and conducts research in transport, logistics and supply chain management. Interfleet Technology is one of the world’s leading rail consultancy groups providing strategic, operational, management and technical services to the international rail industry.

The December 2011 quarterly report is at: <http://sydney.edu.au/business/itls/tops>.

ITLS
Professor David Hensher
Ph (02) 9351 0071

Interfleet Technology
Brian Hastings
Ph (02) 9262 6011

University of Sydney media
Katie Szittner
Ph (02) 9351 2261
Mobile 0478 316809