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## Peak body for rail welcomes Federal Government IA response

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) welcomes the Federal Government's response to the Infrastructure Australia (IA) 15 year plan released today.

In particular, the ARA supports the strong commitment to key initiatives, particularly those relating to working with State governments to develop urban and peri-urban rail plans in Australia's five largest cities and the proposed development of a national freight and supply chain strategy.

ARA CEO, Danny Broad said the rail industry was encouraged by the Federal Government's response.

"The Australasian Railway Association believes passenger rail – both heavy and light rail – can play an even greater role in urban areas and linking this to land use planning is critical," he said.

"The ARA welcomes Federal Government involvement in this proposal and hopes it will be matched with increased Commonwealth Government infrastructure funding for urban rail, to help the States who are doing the heavy lifting currently," Mr Broad said.

"The focus on Australia's freight supply chain productivity and efficiency is pleasing," continued Mr Broad.

"The ARA has noted strong political and community support for getting more freight onto rail and the Commonwealth Government needs to support this through projects such as Inland Rail."

The ARA also welcomes the commitment by the Federal Government to continue heavy vehicle road user charging reform and hopes this will support the acceleration of this reform to enable competitive neutrality between road and rail freight.

"Road user charging and investment reform for heavy vehicles has been discussed within governments for a decade. The ARA hopes the steps announced will accelerate this matter as reform would deliver more efficient infrastructure investment and use, including reduced congestions in major cities. Certainly the indication in the response of an independent price regulator being appointed is welcome news," said Mr Broad.

"The rail industry is ready and very willing to be involved in working with the Federal and State Governments on the agreed initiatives where relevant to rail and applauds the Federal Government's support for the vast majority of the recommendations in the IA Plan," concluded Mr Broad.

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