

## Fast rail funding, new corridor assessments and planning authority welcomed

ARA CEO Danny Broad welcomed today's announcement by the Prime Minister that \$2 billion would be allocated for fast rail between Geelong and Melbourne and \$40 million for detailed assessments of five additional fast rail corridors.

"Fast Rail reduces travelling times, facilitating decentralisation of major cities, and revitalising regional centres through effective integrated transport options. It allows commuting like never before."

"Other key benefits include easing of road congestion, and reduction of road maintenance costs, carbon and other polluting emissions. "

Mr Broad also hailed the commitment to create a National Fast Rail Agency to guide the projects, determine priorities, examine financing options and work with communities.

"With the Federal Opposition's policy for a High Speed Rail Planning Authority, we appear to have bipartisan support for a national agency dedicated to long term planning of faster rail initiatives. This is a welcome development," he said.

"Rail projects in Australia have historically been in the province of state governments, resulting in a disjointed and uncoordinated approach to rail investment and decision-making. The difference in rail gauges today is typical of some of our challenges."

"A National Agency will allow long term planning, and corridor acquisition that can work towards fast rail and High Speed Rail being realised in Australia."

"Significant rail infrastructure needs long term planning and robust economic, and technical assessment that extends beyond the political cycle. We are beginning to see this bearing fruit."

"Governments around the country have already committed to over \$100 Billion of rail projects nationally over the next 10 years, consisting of city metros, light rail and Inland Rail," Mr Broad continued.

"These announcements complement existing rail investments."

However Mr Broad also warned that the Australian, State and Territory Governments need to address critical skilled labour shortages impacting rail construction, operations and maintenance.

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# MEDIA RELEASE

In November 2018 ARA released the report [Skills Crisis: A Call to Action](#), prepared by BIS Oxford Economics that warned that unless urgent action was taken to address market failure, rail projects would blow out of budgeted costs and timeframes.


“Just as we need leadership in committing to high value projects, we also need leadership to reform our approach to rail education and training to provide the workforce to build and operate these systems.”

“A common approach from government and industry is needed. That’s why we are advocating for a high level taskforce to address the skills issues.”

-ENDS-

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