

MEDIA RELEASE

IA Audit Shows Congestion Will Continue

ARA CEO Danny Broad welcomed today's Infrastructure Australia Audit 2019.

"The audit provides a frank, evidence based assessment of the key challenges facing Australia in meeting future infrastructure needs. It is complex and multi-faceted," he said.

"The most considered and challenging finding is that the record investment being made in infrastructure by state, territory and the Commonwealth Governments is not a once-in-a-generation aberration, but is in fact the 'new normal.'

"Governments will be required to continue to build more infrastructure needed to keep pace with Australia's growing population, and more complex and varied needs."

"The audit finds urban congestion will continue to grow with population unless investment continues to increase. "

"A key issue then becomes the ability and commitment of governments to sustain these levels of funding over the medium term. ARA has estimated that over \$150 B has been committed to rail projects alone over a 15 year period."

"Many of the key themes identified in the Audit are already on the ARA public policy agenda. This audit reinforces the need for Commonwealth and state governments to rise to the challenges, and put in place strategies to address these challenges over the long term," he said.

Relevant findings of the audit include:



- The cost of public transport congestion will grow from \$175 million in 2016 to \$837 million in 2031;
- The cost of road congestion will grow from \$18.9 billion in 2016 to \$38.8 billion in 2031;
- There is a need for increasing investment in passenger rail networks. Access to and quality of passenger transport networks is unequal and more difficult to access for financially stressed, people with a disability, people who are older, and those who live in regional and remote communities or the outer suburbs of major cities;
- Australia's freight task is growing rapidly. Congestion on key urban freight routes, inconsistent regulation and bottlenecks continue to hinder freight efficiency. As cities grow and demands for living space increase, governments must find ways to successfully integrate freight needs into their urban planning;
- There is no clear link between expenditure on roads and usage, which means road expenditure is inequitable, inefficient, unsustainable and lacks transparency. Without reform, revenue from fuel excise will decline, drivers will not be charged fairly and people will be incentivised to drive, contributing to congestion.

ARA commends the breadth of the report and commits to making a submission to inform the next Australian Infrastructure Plan.

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