AUSTRALASIAN
RAILWAY
ASSOCIATION

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Press Club Launch: A Road to No-Where or on Track to the Future?

The Rail Industry is calling for the Government to end its love affair with cars and to recognise the real benefits of passenger and freight rail travel as it launches a report today at the National Press Club.

The True Value of Rail report has found that the savings rail travel creates can fund more hospital beds and doctors whilst removing cars and trucks from our roads and helping reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.

According to Bryan Nye, CEO of the Australasian Railway Association (ARA), the report demonstrates the importance of rail in helping to address Australia's challenges of road congestion, growing carbon emissions and the rising road toll.

"Since 1985, Governments have invested more than $293 billion in our roads. Attention has focused on roads for too long. Our love affair with cars must end," he said.

The study shows that one passenger train takes 525 cars off the road. In one year, one trainload of passengers is equal to removing more than three million vehicle kilometres of traffic from our roads.

"Fewer cars on our roads means less congestion, safer roads and decreased carbon emissions," said Mr Nye.

"Australians are one of the highest polluters per person in the world. A carbon tax is not the only solution. We need to implement measures that help reduce our carbon footprint.

The True Value of Rail study has found that one freight train in place of trucks between Melbourne and Brisbane reduces carbon emissions by the same amount as a household of three going without electricity for 46 years.

"As well as being good for our environment, more freight on rail will reduce the amount of traffic on our roads, reducing congestion and making our roads safer," said Mr Nye.

"Australian taxpayers lose more than $136 million every day through road accidents and time wasted stuck in traffic. Our congested roads are hurting Australia's productivity. Clearly our money can be better spent.

The study also found that one trainload of passengers travelling by rail instead of car for one year reduces accident costs by an amount that could fund 130 hospital visits, 505 hospital beds per day, or 6 doctors for one year.

"The True Value of Rail study has found that rail has much wider benefits than it receives acknowledgment for. If we are to realise these benefits, strong political leadership is required. Our governments must consider the impacts of each transport mode when making investments decisions or developing transport policies for the future," continued Mr Nye.

The 'True Value of Rail' study was conducted by the Rail Industry to arm Governments with the financial, social and environmental benefits that rail travel provides.

"We must take a truly national approach and recognise that state borders are no longer relevant. We must have a National Transport Plan, a Plan that would allow each mode of transport to play to its strengths," said Mr Nye.

"This is a challenging task but it must be done. Our governments must step up and make bold decisions. No more reviews, no more committees, just actions.

"The Rail Industry is committed to working with governments to improve Australia's transport system," concluded Mr Nye.

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Lance Hockridge, Chairman of the ARA and Managing Director and CEO of QR National, will launch the report at the National Press Club.

The True Value of Rail report was commissioned by the ARA and conducted by Deloitte Access Economics.

The report is available at www.ara.net.au

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The True Value of Rail Key Findings

Relieving Congestion

- One passenger train can take 525 cars off the road. This is 3.2 million vehicle kilometres annually or 1000 trips Sydney to Perth

- The average freight train takes 110 trucks off the road. This reduces truck movements by around 49.7 million truck kilometres per year or 3100 times the distance between Sydney and New York.

Safer and Healthier Australians

- One passenger train reduces accident costs by an amount that could fund 130 hospital visits, 505 hospital beds per day, or 6 doctors for one year.

Reducing Carbon Emissions and Protecting our Environment

- One freight train in place of trucks between Melbourne and Brisbane reduces carbon emissions by the same amount as a household of 3 people going without electricity for 46 years.

- In one year, one passenger train reduces carbon emissions by the same amount as planting 320 hectares of trees. This would cover Melbourne's CBD, Docklands Stadium and Fitzroy and Carlton Gardens or an area twice the size of Newtown in Sydney's inner west.

- In one year, one freight train travelling between Melbourne and Brisbane reduces carbon emissions by the same amount as planting 600 hectares of trees. This would cover Sydney's CBD, Hyde Park, the Domain, Botanical Gardens, Pyrmont and Central Station or an area 8.5 times the size of Brisbane's CBD.

About the Australasian Railway Association

The ARA is the peak body representing passenger, freight, track operators and the wider rail industry in Australia and New Zealand.

About Lance Hockridge

Lance is the ARA Chairman and Managing Director and CEO of QR National, Australia's largest rail freight company.

Rail in Australia

The Rail industry in Australia provides more than 769.9 million annual passenger train trips every year. Rail also moves more than 853.5 million tonnes of freight per annum.

This is achieved by the ongoing maintenance of over 41,000 kilometres of track, more than 1,800 locomotives, 32,000 carriages and wagons and through the dedication, knowledge and skills of more than 100,000 people in over 150 companies.