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Milestone breakthrough in technology for Australian rail

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) strongly endorses the Federal Government's allocation of 1800 MHz radio spectrum to the Australian Rail Industry, bringing a successful end to four years of negotiation.

ARA CEO Bryan Nye was delighted by today's announcement by Anthony Albanese, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, saying that "this allocation of radio spectrum for rail across the continent will not only allow for the uptake of advanced communication and train control technology, it has future proofed the industry and as such is a world first".

"This allocation of spectrum enables metropolitan rail entities to deploy next-generation wireless rail control and safety systems, allowing more services to be run on existing networks safely" said Mr Nye.

"For the public this means more frequent metropolitan train services, for the Australian Rail Industry this will mean the move to an interoperable system nation-wide.

"Sydney's rail network runs 3,000 services and supports more than 1 million passengers every business day. The new technology that this spectrum allocation allows will make a significant difference, not just in the effectiveness of the city's public rail system but will also increase productivity and economic performance," said Mr Nye.

A report by Deloitte Access Economics found that in Sydney and Melbourne the potential additional benefits from reduced congestion on the roads, reductions in emissions and improved road safety resulting from these changes would be in the order \$400,000 for every hour that a train operates at capacity at peak times.

"The availability of radio spectrum to support the uptake of advanced technology consistently across the continent is something that our counterparts in Europe and the US have yet to achieve and is the envy of the world," Mr Nye continued.

"Spectrum is a limited resource that is in very high demand from other major industries, in particular telecommunications," he concluded.

The Australian Government has allocated harmonised spectrum licences in the 1800MHz band to metropolitan rail entities at a public interest price, delivering an effective cost saving to the industry of \$33.8 million.

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