

## ARA backs IA's Strong Rail Focus in Infrastructure Priority List

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) welcomes Infrastructure Australia's (IA) 2019 Infrastructure Priority List released today.

"IA plays an important role in identifying key infrastructure problems and opportunities to ensure investment is appropriately targeted to areas of greatest need," said ARA CEO Danny Broad.

"The rail projects included in IA's 2019 Infrastructure Priority List are important nation-building initiatives and are endorsed by the rail sector," he continued.

"Pleasingly, there are more rail projects and initiatives in the report compared to the 2018 Infrastructure Priority List, with 54 of the 125 projects and initiatives rail-related.

"As Australia's population grows, rail infrastructure will increasingly become the backbone to meet Australia's growing passenger and freight needs. To manage the challenges posed in our cities and regions in the long-term, Australia will need to ensure that it continuously invests in rail infrastructure.

"We know that rail is an efficient, environmentally and socially beneficial mode of transport. We also know that rail has lower emissions than road transport, is safer and can help reduce congestion in our cities.

"The significance of these rail projects identified by IA warrants investment from governments at all levels. Our networks of infrastructure and services connect people and communities, support freight transport across the country, help deliver our resources to overseas markets and continue to generate economic growth and employment.

"The latest update to the Infrastructure Priority List highlights a number of projects have been positively assessed, including METRONET: Yanchep Rail Extension which has been identified as a high priority project.

"The Ballarat Line Upgrade, METRONET: Thornlie-Cockburn Link and the Gawler Rail Line Electrification and Modernisation project have also been positively assessed as Priority Projects in light of the significant opportunities they will bring our nation.

"A High priority Initiative of particular note is the Network Optimisation Program - Rail. This involves a program of work focussed on addressing capacity constraints and improving service levels on existing urban and regional passenger and freight networks, doubling their 'bang for the buck' because they reduce the need for large scale capital investment.

# MEDIA RELEASE

“I’d like to reiterate the key point that maximising the economic benefits of the projects and initiatives contained in the Infrastructure Priority List relies heavily on Australia having the skilled labour available to construct, operate and maintain them. Late last year ARA produced a [report](#) that predicted skilled labour shortages would inhibit our ability to deliver projects on budget and on time, unless urgent action was undertaken to address them.” he concluded.

The IA report can be found [here](#).

Mal Larsen 0423 783 667

14 February 2019

