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Timely delivery of Inland Rail critical to Australia's supply chains

The rail industry has called for the swift implementation of the Inland Rail review recommendations, warning a failure to do so would risk the viability of the project and undermine efforts to increase rail freight use in Australia.

Australasian Railway Association (ARA) Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said the timely adoption of 19 recommendations made today by Dr Kerry Schott will deliver certainty for rail freight operators and the wider supply chain and maximise the significant benefits of the project.

"The ARA hopes the legacy of this review will be the acceleration of this vital project and greater clarity on the route and future operation of Inland Rail," Ms Wilkie said.

"We must move more freight on rail to meet growing demand and respond to the climate crisis. It is absolutely critical that Inland Rail is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible.

"Failure to do so would see more trucks on the road and undermine the rail industry's efforts to support a more sustainable national freight network.

"Continued uncertainty about the project will make it harder for freight operators to plan and for complimentary businesses to invest along the route.

"It is therefore critical that the implementation of the review's recommendations does not distract from work already underway and provides a clearer path forward for the remainder of the project."

Ms Wilkie said it was reassuring to hear today that the Government is committed to delivering the entire 1700km track, which will directly link Brisbane to Melbourne.

"We welcome the commitment to ensure the route from Melbourne to Parkes is operational by 2027," Ms Wilkie said.

"It is critical that there is certainty around the route beyond Parkes and we look forward to seeing approvals and more detailed costings being determined as soon as possible."

The ARA strongly supported the recommendation for Inland Rail to be established as a subsidiary company, which would enable ARTC to focus on the management and resilience of the wider national rail freight network.

The review confirmed the project's critical role in moving more freight on rail, reducing emissions and boosting supply chains.

Ms Wilkie said Inland Rail will be the backbone of a sustainable national freight supply chain, with each train able to carry the same amount of consumer goods and resources as 110 B-double trucks.

“Inland Rail will transform Australia’s freight networks, significantly improving supply chain efficiency and road safety and support growing export markets for the country,” Ms Wilkie said.

“It will enable freight to move from Brisbane to Melbourne in less than 24 hours on double-stacked trains, reducing freight costs and improving supply chains by getting products to market more quickly - benefiting the Australian economy.

“It is essential transport infrastructure, if we are to dramatically reduce pollution from trucks travelling on our east coast highways, support Australia’s net-zero targets and ultimately achieve a sustainable transport system.

“Inland Rail will also support regional development and create employment opportunities for local communities across several states.”

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Further information

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