

Tuesday, 19 September 2023

ARA welcomes commitment to key rail projects in NSW Budget

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has welcomed the NSW Government's investment in several significant rail projects as part of its \$72.3 billion commitment to transport infrastructure in the 2023-24 Budget.

ARA CEO Caroline Wilkie said it was encouraging to see the NSW Government continue its commitment to the vital Sydney Metro projects, maintaining funding allocations for Sydney Metro West, Sydney Metro to Western Sydney Airport and Sydney Metro City and Southwest.

The NSW Government today announced several new rail investments in the 2023-24 Budget, including:

- An additional \$1 billion for Sydney Metro City and Southwest
- An additional \$300 million to upgrade train station car parks and make stations more accessible through the installation of new lifts, ramps, and footbridges
- \$200 million reserved to expedite the planning for the procurement, construction, and delivery of Parramatta Light Rail Stage 2 for Western Sydney
- \$95.9 million for the Fixing Country Rail program, to deliver improved capacity and reliability to the regional rail network and deliver a highly functional network for moving freight in and out of regional areas.
- \$1.4 billion for the delivery of a new regional rail fleet to replace the ageing regional fleet.

"A safe, reliable and sustainable transport system is essential to enabling NSW communities to thrive as it is proven to deliver great economic, social and environmental benefits," Ms Wilkie said.

"These city-shaping transport infrastructure projects in NSW not only create tens of thousands of jobs during construction but, once complete, provide a vital connection for communities and reduce congestion on our busy roads.

"It is critical that we increase the capacity of the rail network to meet growing demand, with faster and more frequent and reliable services."

Ms Wilkie said it was critical the Sydney Metro West project continued as planned to meet the needs of Sydney's growing western suburbs.

The ARA looks forward to the completion of the Sydney Metro West Review so the full benefits of the once-in-a-generation project can be realised by the community.

Ms Wilkie also said rail plays an important role in the decarbonisation of transport and meeting Australia's future net zero target.

An ARA report, Return to Rail Insights, published in December last year, confirmed the sustainable benefits of public transport, with two thirds (66 per cent) of respondents viewing rail as the most environmentally sustainable transport mode.

"Greater use of public transport will be key to reducing emissions in our communities, while also supporting improved health outcomes - one commuter train takes 578 cars off the road."

Further information

Natasha Wallace
Senior Strategic Communications Manager
0499 272 672, nwallace@ara.net.au