

ARA welcomes rail focus on Infrastructure Priority List

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The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has welcomed the release of the Infrastructure Priority List and its clear recognition of rail as a critical part of Australia's future infrastructure network.

The report highlights the growing need to invest in both passenger and freight rail to support population growth, improve national productivity and strengthen connections between communities, industries and key economic centres.

The ARA welcomed a focus on high productivity freight networks and high-capacity transport for growing cities as part of the report, including the identification of key rail projects to deliver on these priorities.

ARA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said the report sends an important signal about the role rail must play in future infrastructure planning.

"Rail is a key driver of Australia's economic growth and sustainable development," Ms Wilkie said.

"The Infrastructure Priorities List recognises that rail is central to meeting the challenges of population growth, freight demand, emissions reduction and better access to jobs and services.

"The ARA is pleased to see Infrastructure Australia's recognition that strategic and coordinated investment is essential to unlock the full potential of rail freight as part of a productive and sustainable national network.

"We welcome the focus on modernising rail infrastructure, improving interoperability, providing dedicated freight railways and strengthening connectivity.

"The ARA also welcomes the ambition to increase public transport's mode share to support improved housing, liveability and net zero outcomes.

"This requires a continued focus on network expansion as well as ongoing upgrades to the current rail passenger network."

The Infrastructure Priority List also confirmed a focus on ports capacity and connectivity, and delivering net zero.

Ms Wilkie welcomed a strong focus on the preservation of rail corridors to ensure the continued expansion of the network to meet future needs.

"Getting these decisions right now matters," Ms Wilkie said.

"We have seen in recent years the transformative impact that well planned rail investment can have on our economy and community.

"Australia must continue to invest in rail to ensure the infrastructure network can continue to meet our long term needs and act as a genuine catalyst for growth and development."

The ARA looks forward to working with governments and industry on the priorities identified in the report.

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