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Grattan recommendations undermine government and industry engagement on key projects

A Grattan Institute report on Australia's 'megaprojects' released today dismisses the value of ongoing engagement between government and industry to get the best from major infrastructure projects.

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) warned a lack of collaboration between the public and private sectors could damage industry confidence, lead to rising costs and result in poorer outcomes on key projects.

ARA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said pragmatic reforms to planning and procurement processes could achieve better outcomes, but would only be delivered successfully if industry and government worked in partnership.

She warned against creating fear about so-called megaprojects underway or planned.

"The current pipeline of infrastructure projects is addressing years and years of underinvestment in rail and creating jobs at a time when we need them more than ever," Ms Wilkie said.

"If we don't act now to bridge the gap, we will be facing more congestion and higher emissions as our populations rise.

"While the Grattan Institute has identified some areas where reform could be considered, this simply cannot come at the expense of the projects that will shape our cities and keep people in much needed jobs."

Ms Wilkie said the Grattan Institute's claims that governments were too concerned about industry views undermined the focus on partnership that would ensure real improvements could be delivered over time.

"The organisations leading rail construction projects work in partnership with government to make sure they deliver the best possible outcomes on every project," Ms Wilkie said.

"Meaningful engagement between government and industry is an essential part of improving the understanding of a project's scope and complexity from the very beginning."

She encouraged the Grattan Institute to consider recommendations that put the focus on partnership between the public and private sectors, with a focus on solutions that meet Australia's long term needs.

The ARA worked with organisations operating in infrastructure construction to develop its [Rail Construction Procurement Guide](#) last year.

The guide provides a series of recommendations to improve planning and procurement processes, with a focus on ongoing engagement between government and industry.

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Further information

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