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## National coordination and innovation focus required to make the most of infrastructure investment

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has called for greater national coordination to drive innovation and maximise the benefits of the current wave of infrastructure investment continues across the country.

The ARA made the recommendations in its submission to the *Inquiry into procurement practices for government-funded infrastructure*.

ARA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said improved coordination and planning between governments would drive efficiency gains in the procurement process.

“We are in a unique position to make change right now with so many significant infrastructure projects planned across the country,” Ms Wilkie said.

“The right reforms could save money, improve efficiency and lead to more jobs for Australians.

“It is critical we take action now to harness this opportunity and make sure infrastructure investment creates lasting benefits for all Australians.”

The ARA recommended its [best practice principles for rail construction procurement](#) be adopted to improve coordination, reduce administrative burdens and foster innovation.

“A consistent national approach would reduce duplication and make it easier to move projects from planning to construction,” Ms Wilkie said.

“A national registration and pre-qualification program would be an essential part of this to make it easier for industry to focus on creating new solutions and innovation.”

The ARA also recommended new groups be established under the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers’ Meeting and National Rail Action Plan to create greater consistency between states.

Ms Wilkie said it was essential governments championed a culture of innovation and promoted local industry in the infrastructure sector.

“There are so many organisations in our industry with new technologies and innovations that could help shape the future of infrastructure in Australia,” Ms Wilkie said.

“We must show our support for the outstanding capability that exists in our industry and create opportunities for innovation to flourish.”

The ARA has recommended the threshold for projects requiring Australian Industry Participant Plans be reduced.

Ms Wilkie said a national research and innovation body, as recommended in the ARA's [Finding the fast track for innovation in the Australasian rail industry](#), was also required.

“Innovation needs to be incentivised if we want to keep the world’s best here in Australia,” Ms Wilkie said.

“Procurement models should give industry the chance to put forward solutions that support more sustainable and efficient infrastructure for the long term.”

The ARA's submission to the inquiry can be found [here](#).

ENDS

## Further information

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