

7 September 2021

ARA launches new sustainability strategy

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) released its sustainability strategy today to guide its development of key sustainability initiatives over the next three years.

ARA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said the strategy reflected the industry's growing commitment to support Australia and New Zealand's sustainable development.

"The rail industry provides inherent sustainability benefits to support the development of long term, low carbon infrastructure in our cities and towns," Ms Wilkie said.

"As the infrastructure sector moves to net zero, the strategy will help drive action to further enhance the rail industry's contribution to this effort.

"The strategy outlines our commitment across six themes to ensure a continued focus on leading industry engagement on key sustainability issues."

The strategy sets out a three-year action plan to be implemented across the themes of leadership, people, carbon and energy, environment, resource efficiency and resilience.

It identifies areas where the ARA's existing initiatives support the achievement of sustainability outcomes under these themes, and confirms a range of new activities to be implemented to further this work.

Ms Wilkie said the strategy's release followed extensive work by the ARA Sustainability Committee following its creation in 2020.

Work is now underway to progress the strategy, with planning for the development of a rail sustainability play book already being progressed.

Further activities were planned to expand the ARA's diversity inclusion focus, including increased engagement with First Nations people, while a new network would be established to promote information sharing to support the eradication of modern slavery.

Additional initiatives to promote the rail industry's contribution to net zero carbon across its supply chain, prioritise opportunities for circular economy outcomes and support climate risk and adaptation planning would also be progressed.,

Ms Wilkie also welcomed today's announcement that the ARA would join forces with Roads Australia and the Infrastructure Sustainability Council to deliver a new environmental sustainability project for the transport sector.

Ainsley Simpson, CEO of the Infrastructure Sustainability congratulated the ARA on the outcome-based strategy noting sustainability is a shared responsibility for a resilient, inclusive net-zero future.

Ms Wilkie acknowledged the early leadership of the ARA's Young Leaders Advisory Board (Y-LAB), who first identified sustainability as a strategic area of focus in 2019.

"Y-LAB identified the importance of increasing our focus on sustainability to support the industry's long term growth and success," Ms Wilkie said.

"It is fantastic to see the insights and leadership of young rail professionals ultimately leading to the significant program of work outlined in the strategy."

The sustainability strategy is [available here](#) and will be launched at a [webinar at 11am AEST on Tuesday 7 September](#).

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Further information

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