Australasian Railway Association

MEDIA RELEASE

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Rail investment and policy reform must be a continued priority for the re-elected Albanese Government

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) today congratulated Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the Australian Labor Party on their re-election, and reaffirmed the rail industry's commitment to working with government to build a stronger, more sustainable transport future.

ARA CEO Caroline Wilkie said a strong and stable pipeline of rail infrastructure projects is critical to Australia's future economic growth and supporting our growing cities and regions.

"With rail contributing more than $30 billion to the national economy each year and supporting Australia's net zero goals, sustained investment in rail is vital to our long-term economic, environmental and social prosperity," Ms Wilkie said.

"Proposed projects such as the Sydney to Newcastle High Speed Rail, the Melbourne Airport Rail Link, as well as the critical development of Inland Rail are nation-shaping infrastructure investments that will transform how Australians live, work and travel.

"We have recently seen the incredible benefits that rail delivers through success stories like the Sydney Metro and light rail networks in Canberra and the Gold Coast that have driven urban growth and investment, increased housing supply, and created more connected, sustainable and resilient communities."

Ms Wilkie said the ARA also looked forward to progressing critical reform initiatives under the National Rail Action Plan, particularly standards harmonisation and interoperability. These reforms will be essential to improving efficiency and productivity across the national rail network and to position rail to play and even greater role in supporting our national supply chain.

"We also welcome the opportunity to continue growing Australia's rail manufacturing capability to secure local jobs and create a more competitive rail industry internationally," Ms Wilkie said.

"There is also an urgent need in Australia to significantly increase the volume of freight on rail – continued investment and strengthening of policies that support a more resilient and reliable rail freight sector will be critical to supporting our supply chain in the future."

The ARA supports continued progress on the development of the Inland Rail project, both in terms of its construction through to Parkes and the planning and approvals required to ensure its ultimate connection into Brisbane. Increasing the volume of freight on rail will not only decarbonise our transport economy, it will reduce heavy vehicle traffic on our roads and highways and improve safety outcomes for all road users.

The Albanese Labor Government pledged $3 billion towards rail projects as part of its pre-election commitments, including $2 billion for upgrading Sunshine Station to support the

Rail Link and $1 billion to secure corridors for a future rail connection to Western Sydney International Airport.

“The ARA has been advocating for a consistent, transparent investment pipeline for rail projects to support both the economy and communities,” said Ms Wilkie.

“Long-term and stable investment in rail infrastructure will be essential to delivering sustainable, reliable, and efficient transport solutions for our cities and regions.

“The ARA looks forward to working with the Albanese Government to ensure that continued investment in rail remains a priority, as well as continued regulatory reform that supports improved productivity, efficiency, and sustainability across the industry.”

Labor Government investment commitments to rail (Federal Budget 2025-26):

- $2 billion additional funding for the Melbourne Airport Rail Link to transform Sunshine Station and advance the construction of the rail link connecting Melbourne’s city centre to the airport
- $1 billion to preserve rail corridors connecting south-western Sydney to the new Western Sydney International Airport
- $325 million towards the Melton line upgrade, to increase the rail capacity by 50 per cent
- $20.5 million towards planning for Melbourne Western Suburbs Rail upgrades
- $7.05 million towards planning for Melbourne Northern Suburbs rail upgrades
- $125 million for Curtis Road Level Crossing Removal

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