

Media Release

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Rail stimulus must be part of infrastructure budget

Rail stimulus projects must be part of next week's Federal Budget to support the nation's infrastructure-led recovery.

Australasian Railway Association (ARA) Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said rail has an essential role to play in meeting future infrastructure needs and the budget provided an opportunity to invest in jobs-creating projects across the country.

"This is undoubtedly going to be a strong infrastructure budget and rail must be a part of the equation," Ms Wilkie said.

"There is a significant pipeline of rail investment that could be fast tracked to generate more jobs and opportunity to support our economic recovery.

"This is work that will make a difference right now while leaving a lasting legacy for the cities and towns that benefit from new rail projects."

Ms Wilkie said infrastructure upgrades that would improve the speed and efficiency of the network and level crossing removal projects that would deliver enhanced safety outcomes were among the projects that should be considered as part of the budget.

Funding for key projects such as Inland Rail, the Melbourne Airport Rail Link and North East Link, as well as innovation projects such as the Advanced Train Management System, could also provide a significant boost to the sector.

She said new jobs created in the rail industry today could lead to rich and rewarding careers for people currently looking for work.

"Early investment in rail now will give people the chance to get their foot in the door and build the foundations for a long career in the industry," she said.

"At a time where we desperately need more people in jobs and more certainty for those rebounding from the economic hardships of the pandemic, we need to see more projects started sooner to build the country back up again."

The ARA has been engaging with Federal and state governments on stimulus projects throughout the pandemic to help inform their economic response.

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