



In reply please quote #87457

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Dear Ms Michel

*INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF INFRASTRUCTURE AUSTRALIA*

Thank you for the correspondence from Ms Nicole Lockwood and Mr Mike Mrdak dated 29 July 2022, inviting submissions in relation to the Independent Review of Infrastructure Australia (IA).

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport (the Department), has a strong working relationship with IA, particularly with the Project Advisory & Evaluation team.

The recent lifting of the threshold for IA to review infrastructure proposals where more than \$250 million in Australian Government funding has been committed, was a positive step. There is however, an opportunity as part of the review to consider a further lifting of the threshold to \$500 million given the strategic role of IA and the costs associated with most strategic infrastructure projects.

We have introduced, over the last 18-months, regular meetings with IA, together with Infrastructure South Australia to discuss all relevant matters. This has been welcomed and provides early strategic alignment, project insights and the opportunity to work through key issues, both current and emerging. As part of the review, there is an opportunity to consider the interrelationships between the national and state based I-bodies to maximise benefits and reduce duplication of processes.

The recent Project Assessment Framework updates in mid-2021 have brought a pragmatic and contemporary approach to project appraisal. This included a collaborative consultation approach with jurisdictions. The presence of a national body to drive assessment best practice has been beneficial and has improved the quality of submissions prepared by South Australia.

Beyond project assurance, there has been limited engagement on the broader policy and research work undertaken by IA and its connection with State based policy. The Department seeks to have greater engagement and insights on work undertaken in these spaces.

This is seen as particularly relevant moving forward, given any policy change linked to an increased focus on environmental outcomes and decarbonisation, which may lead to investment policy review. There would be benefit in IA leading reviews of relevant Federal Government policy.

The Australian Infrastructure Audit provides an independent assessment of the infrastructure needs across the nation and assists with infrastructure prioritisation nationally and at the local level. The resulting Infrastructure Priority List provides a focus for ongoing transport planning and guides government investment. The Department continues to develop projects and initiatives for submission to IA for assessment and inclusion into the Infrastructure Priority List as well as reviewing existing initiatives. The changes IA have made, allowing submissions to occur at any time, will assist with this process.

For further information and participation in the review process, please contact Mr Andrew Excell, Executive Director, Transport Planning and Program Development on mobile [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

I trust this information is of assistance, and we appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the IA review.

Yours sincerely

  
Jon Whelan  
Chief Executive

17 August 2022