1. Reform delivery
The ARA endorses Recommendation 1.1 of Infrastructure Australia’s Australian Infrastructure Plan to establish Information Reform Incentives, linking additional infrastructure funding to the delivery of reform outcomes. The ARA sees this as an integral approach to creating greater efficiencies in the national rail freight and supply chain.

2. Commitment to a competitively neutral policy approach
Domestic rail freight markets should operate as far as possible on a level footing with other modal choices by creating an environment where there is an equitable and comparable regulatory environment and/or competitive neutrality between competing modes of transport.

3. A national framework for corridor protection
The ARA seeks Commonwealth, State and Territory Government collaboration in adopting Infrastructure Australia’s corridor protection recommendations to:
- Prepare agreed, robust plans
- Prepare feasibility studies on the corridors arising from those plans
- Establish joint funding and governance arrangements to protect and capture the value in these corridors.

4. Equitable access pricing for road and rail
The ARA endorses an economically competitive level playing field between rail and road and seeks a mass-distance-location charging mechanism for heavy vehicles to be adopted along major interstate routes, which will allow road to compete equally with rail.
5. Efficient infrastructure investment

Commonwealth, State and Territory Government investment is required to optimise existing infrastructure to achieve enhanced productivity with funding focused on rail freight efficiency in our major cities and improving rail-port connectivity.

6. Maximising efficiency on the existing network:

Commonwealth, State and Territory Government's need to embrace separate freight and passenger lines to assist rail operators meet increasing customer requirements, based on service, reliability, quality and price.

7. Addressing externalities:

Governments need to include ‘externalities’ in decision-making processes to ensure externalities do not impact the Australian community negatively. Externalities could include:

- Environmental costs, such as emissions, noise and land use
- Safety costs, such as fatalities, injuries and property damage
- Congestion and its associated costs.

8. Supporting technology developments:

The rail industry is committed to embracing and investing in new and emerging technologies to help facilitate improvements across the sector. Government can work with industry to:

- Invest in research to implement international best practice in the area of rail freight technology development and adoption
- Explore the concept of a Commonwealth Innovation Fund that provides seed funding to develop rail freight technology projects that would create greater efficiency to the national freight and supply chain.

9. Addressing jurisdictional inconsistencies:

There needs to be greater Commonwealth, State and Territory Government collaboration to improve jurisdictional regulation inconsistencies. This could include, but not limited to, environmental legislation, a lack of standardised approval processes and procedures for rolling stock approvals, as well as drug and alcohol testing.

10. Access / separation:

Continue to identify ways to address challenges associated with different track owners.

For further information, visit https://ara.net.au/submissions