



The Australian Government established the High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) to lead, plan, develop, coordinate, oversee and monitor the construction and operation of a high speed rail network in Australia.

This Statement of Intent outlines the HSRA's response to the Government's Statement of Expectations of 4 August 2023 in relation to the HSRA's roles, responsibilities, statutory functions and accountability obligations under the *High Speed Rail Authority Act 2022* (the HSRA Act), the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act) and associated regulations, as well as other relevant legislation and legal instruments.

As a new statutory authority, this Statement of Intent has a particular focus on the establishment of the HSRA and early priorities, and it is expected that this document will be updated as the Authority matures.

Our Roles and Responsibilities

The HSRA is the independent and trusted advisor to the Australian Government on the development and delivery of a high speed rail network from Melbourne to Brisbane via Canberra and Sydney. In line with our Portfolio Budget Statement Outcome, our role is to lead the development of a high speed rail network between cities and key regional centres along Australia's east coast through policy development and planning, national coordination and the provision of strategic advice to the Government.

The HSRA's statutory functions are contained in the HSRA Act and include:

- Leading and coordinating policy development and planning
- Consulting, liaising and negotiating with States and Territories and other relevant parties
- Providing advice and recommendations to our Minister and other relevant parties (including advice and recommendations on environmental matters and interconnectedness)
- Undertaking evaluations and research and gathering information in relation to the high speed rail network, the high speed rail corridor, a faster rail network and additional rail corridors for a faster rail network.

The HSRA is committed to delivering the Government's priority of detailed planning and corridor protection on the Sydney to Newcastle section of the high speed rail network.

Transparency, accountability and governance

For the purposes of Section 12 of the PGPA Act, the HSRA Board is the accountable authority of the HSRA and is responsible for establishing the strategic direction of the HSRA, governing, contributing to and overseeing the priorities of the HSRA to deliver the government's agenda and to meeting the performance requirements detailed in the HSRA Act.

The HSRA commits to being transparent and accountable in its decision-making and in achieving outcomes. It will ensure it has strong internal governance arrangements in place to promote compliance with its legislative and regulatory obligations.

The HSRA is committed to upholding the Australian Public Service Values, as well as adhering to the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct.

The HSRA will ensure a permanent Chief Executive Officer is appointed in the early part of its establishment to provide strategic day-to-day oversight of the HSRA, ensure stability and assist the HSRA in meeting its operational activities and objectives.

Although it is an independent authority, the HSRA performs its statutory functions as part of the Commonwealth Government and is accountable to the Parliament and ultimately the Australian public. The HSRA will report to the Parliament through its Portfolio Budget Statements, Corporate Plan and Annual Report (including financial statements and an annual performance statement).

The HSRA commits to providing timely and accurate information and briefing to the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government including through promoting and maintaining a close working relationship with our Portfolio Department (the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts).

The HSRA will keep the Minister and Department informed of progress and issues through quarterly performance reporting and financial updates as well as the above mentioned reporting to the Parliament. The HSRA will also ensure proactive and open disclosure of information to the Minister for which the Government is accountable to the Parliament.

Strategic plan

The HSRA will develop a Strategic Plan (the Plan) to support the delivery of the Australian Government's high speed rail commitments. In particular, the Plan will set a vision and purpose by providing a road map for appropriately sequencing and successfully delivering an east coast high speed rail network in stages, with a focus on the Australian Government's priority of completing detailed planning and corridor protection on the Sydney to Newcastle section.

The Plan will determine the short and long term strategic scope of work to be completed, sequence of functional activities and milestones, deliverables and timelines to achieve the HSRA's outcome. This will in turn help to marshal the resources that will be required to progress delivery these milestones.

The Plan will need to be shaped around key dependencies, assumptions and project constraints and take into consideration the Government's broader policy agenda including long term emissions targets, environmental protection measures, sustainability goals, settlement plans, regional development opportunities, and manufacturing, skills and workforce objectives.

The Plan will support the development of a Pathway to Delivery report for east coast high speed rail that will build on the 2013 High Speed Rail Study Phase 2 Report. This Pathway to Delivery report will provide a foundation for delivering east coast high speed rail and consider strategies to progress environmental and planning approvals as well as present options for securing the corridor and staging the delivery of projects.

The Plan will also support the delivery of a business case for high speed rail on the Sydney to Newcastle corridor which will provide the Government with funding and investment options to complete the corridor protection phase and initiate potential project funding commitments.

To ensure the Plan is informed by past analysis and experience, a review of the findings, recommendations and next steps identified previous studies and success factors and lessons learnt from exemplar large scale infrastructure delivery projects in Australia and internationally will be undertaken.

To provide clarity around key project management items, the following strategic documents will also be completed as part of the Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Risk Management Plan
- Strategic Industry Engagement Plan
- Strategic Probity Plan

Organisational strategy

The HSRA will develop an organisational strategy that will provide a road map for developing the organisation and its workforce capability and resource needs to deliver its outcome. By having the right structure, resources, capabilities and skills in place within the HSRA, we will maximise the quality and value of the advice we provide to the government and stakeholders.

A strong capability culture and clear lines of accountability will be critical to achieving our purpose, supporting the Australian Government's priorities and serving the interests of all Australians.

As a new Authority, we will ensure we build our in-house capability by creating fit-for-purpose structures, processes and systems which will allow us to recruit high calibre people and teams, and, where necessary, bring in specialist external support.

We will also work to build our capability by evaluating our core skills against our purpose, objectives and key milestones and investing in the development of our people to achieve these outcomes. We will strive to engage a committed, skilled, resilient and experienced work force (both in-house and through specialist external support where necessary) to provide expert advice and support to ensure the Australian Government's high speed rail agenda is delivered.

The HSRA will also work to leverage Australian and international major project delivery and operational expertise to inform our work and what we do.

Stakeholder engagement and communications

The HSRA will develop a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy that will outline a framework, including objectives and timeframes, for the HSRA to engage with key stakeholders on key initiatives and actions the HSRA will take. The strategy will assist the HSRA in building transparent and positive relationships with stakeholders as well as to create effective communication with our stakeholders which builds trust in the work and actions of the HSRA.

Cooperation, collaboration and partnerships will underpin and strengthen all that we do and the advice that we provide to the Minister and Government about the development of an east coast HSR network. Maintaining strong collaboration with all levels of government will be a priority to ensure our advice is robust and our plans can be effectively and efficiently implemented. Cooperation, collaboration and partnerships will also be critical to progressing the development and delivery of our key milestones efficiently and effectively.

We will work closely and in partnership with other Commonwealth departments and agencies to ensure our work is integrated and aligned with the Government's broader policy agenda – particularly in relation to economic, environment, manufacturing and skills matters.

We will also work closely with the NSW, Victoria, Queensland and ACT governments and their relevant departments to progress strategic planning for an east coast HSR network. These states and the ACT are critical partners and close, collaborative engagement with them during all phases of planning and delivery will be instrumental to the success of the HSRA.

The HSRA will also seek out and be informed by guidance and advice from both Australian and international experts and expertise in the delivery of major nation-shaping infrastructure projects and high speed rail lines. Understanding and incorporating lessons learnt from other major transport projects will help to strengthen and broaden our advice, our planning and our project delivery.

Relationship with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

The HSRA recognises the importance of its relationship with its Portfolio Department in its role as principal adviser to the Minister on a range of matters.

The HSRA will work collaboratively with the Department to ensure its significant technical and policy expertise can inform our advice to Government and minimise unnecessary duplication.

The HSRA will maintain a close relationship with the Department through regular meetings, updates and briefings between officers and, where appropriate, HSRA Board members. HSRA officials will meet regularly with members and senior staff of the Department to discuss strategic issues of mutual interest.

The HSRA will also ensure that its work program complements that of the Portfolio Department's through close collaboration between the relevant teams leading work streams.