

## Infrastructure Australia launches enhanced Assessment Framework for major infrastructure proposals

Infrastructure Australia has published new guidelines for the development and assessment of major infrastructure proposals. Released today, the **2021 Assessment Framework** is a contemporary approach to guide infrastructure decision-making in Australia. It provides clear and concise instructions on how to develop strong business cases and aims to streamline approval processes.

Infrastructure Australia's *Assessment Framework* sets out the criteria for assessing proposals for inclusion on the **Infrastructure Priority List** (Priority List), the national pipeline of investment priorities. The 2021 edition of the Assessment Framework was developed over an 18-month period in close consultation with key stakeholders, including a Reference Group made up of experts from federal, state and territory governments.

The 2021 edition includes broadened Assessment Criteria to allow for more holistic review of a proposal's potential benefits, in addition to those that can be monetised through traditional cost-benefit analysis. This enables Infrastructure Australia to better take account of benefits such as sustainability, resilience and quality of life, which are covered in expanded guidance in this edition.

"Infrastructure Australia's enhanced Assessment Framework responds to community expectations, while still setting clear and transparent expectations on how we will assess major infrastructure proposals" said **Infrastructure Australia Chief Executive, Romilly Madew**.

"One of the clear messages we have heard from stakeholders around the country, is that they wanted the Assessment Framework to provide more support for the consideration of broader community benefits that can be delivered through major infrastructure investment.

"Our 2021 Assessment Framework supports the development of high-quality business cases for major infrastructure while also reflecting a clear shift in our approach. In addition to the benefit-cost ratio of a proposal, we are now better positioned to consider broader social and community outcomes alongside traditional economic benefits when advising governments on potential investments.

"In enhancing the Assessment Framework, we have aimed to not only reflect the latest thinking but also improved transparency and useability. To do this, we have developed an Assessment Framework that provides robust but pragmatic guidance, which aligns to national, state and territory guidelines and supports streamlined project assessment," Ms Madew said.

To ensure the *Assessment Framework* remains fit for purpose and continues to reflect best-practice advice, Infrastructure Australia is committed to updating it periodically. The 2021 edition represents a comprehensive enhancement of its content and structure, which responds to input from stakeholders and Infrastructure Australia's own research and experience.

Key updates to the *Assessment Framework* include:

- **New guidance** on how to demonstrate strategic merit, quality-of-life impacts, meaningful stakeholder engagement activities, sustainability and resilience.
- **A simpler, four-stage process** that aligns with state and territory frameworks.
- **A pragmatic approach for defining a base case.**
- **Recommending but not requiring at least two options** and a base case in a business case.
- An **updated CBA methodology.**
- **Four new technical guidelines** to provide greater detail on: risk and uncertainty analysis; program appraisal; multi-criteria analysis and economic appraisal.

## When will the 2021 Assessment Framework take effect?

Acknowledging submissions may already be in development, Infrastructure Australia has staggered the timing around when proponents are required to follow the new guidelines:

- **Stage 1** submissions are expected to adopt the new guidance **immediately**.
- **Stage 2 and Stage 3** submissions are expected to align with the new guidance **from 1 January 2022**.

Infrastructure Australia is already working to embed the new *Assessment Framework* in internal work practices and develop new training materials for our stakeholders.

The *Assessment Framework* is now available on the Infrastructure Australia **website**:  
[www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/assessment-framework](http://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/assessment-framework)

## Submissions for the 2022 Infrastructure Priority List now open

Submissions for the 2022 Priority List are now also open. The submissions period will be open from 16 July 2021 until 3 September 2021.

For further information please refer to our [website](#) or contact us at [proposals@infrastructureaustralia.gov.au](mailto:proposals@infrastructureaustralia.gov.au).