

Statement of Intent

October 2024

Infrastructure Australia is the Australian Government's independent adviser on nationally significant infrastructure investment planning and project prioritisation.

Following changes to the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* passed by the Australian Parliament in December 2023, Infrastructure Australia proceeds with a strengthened mandate to support the Government to meet its infrastructure investment priorities and objectives.

The Australian Government recently provided Infrastructure Australia with a Statement of Expectations (SoE) outlining what it expects of Infrastructure Australia to meet its responsibilities. Here we set out Infrastructure Australia's Statement of Intent responding to the expectations set out in the SoE.

Relationship with the Australian Government

The Australian Government is the primary customer for Infrastructure Australia's advice, which will be informed by Government's stated priorities in the [Infrastructure Policy Statement](#) and other strategic priorities across other sectors within our remit.

Infrastructure Australia will ensure the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (the Minister), is informed of significant matters relating to its role, including governance and performance arrangements, reform opportunities and regular reports on progress of nationally significant infrastructure investment.

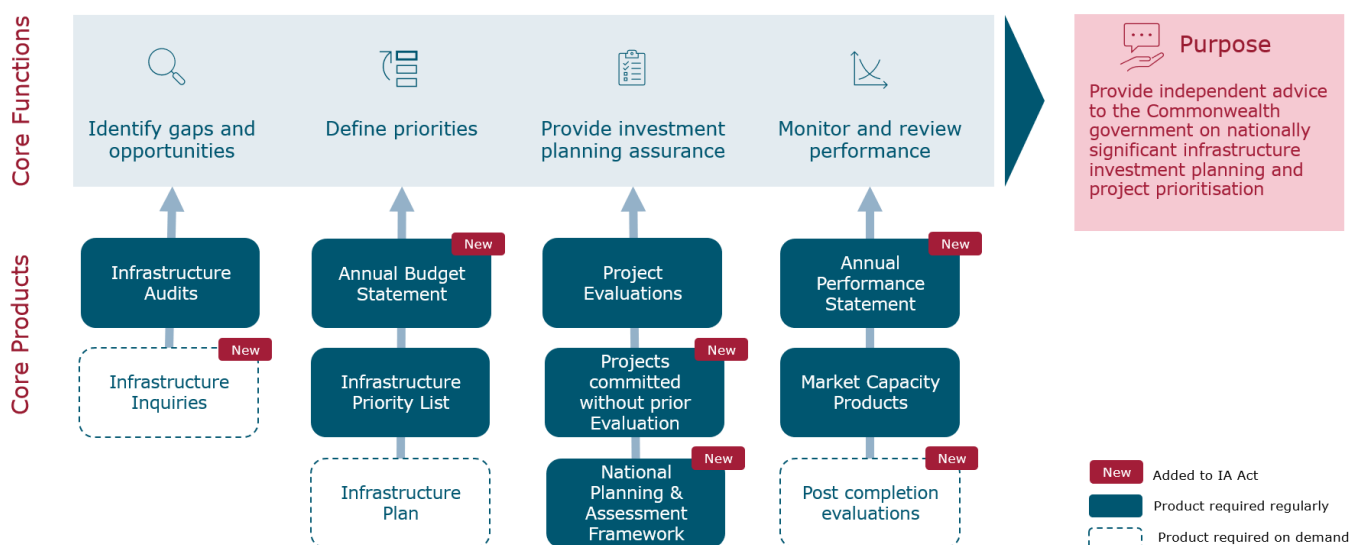
Infrastructure Australia will continue to engage with and advise other Australian Government Ministers on nationally significant infrastructure related to transport and in the water, energy, communications and social infrastructure sectors.

Infrastructure Australia will also engage with the Advisory Council, when established by the Government with an agreed Terms of Reference, to support Infrastructure Australia's work program and to complement the skill sets and strategic expertise of Commissioners.

Infrastructure Australia's product suite, priorities and expert advice

Our remit is focussed on nationally significant infrastructure across the transport, water, energy, and communications sectors as appropriate, and we will generally consider social infrastructure in the context of broader place or region-based infrastructure planning.

Over the coming year (and beyond), Infrastructure Australia will implement changes to our work program and products to reflect the legislative changes passed in December 2023 and set out in the SoE. We will implement the changes with close regard to the advice needs of the Government. We will work collaboratively with Australian, state and territory governments when developing new products and will deliver our products and services efficiently and effectively.



Infrastructure investment opportunities

Having regard to the Australian Government's priorities, and infrastructure strategies and plans of the states, territories and local government, Infrastructure Australia will provide advice by inquiring into and reporting on matters relating to nationally significant infrastructure. Our Australian Infrastructure Audits will take account of economic and population growth; economic, social and environmental sustainability; and Australia's emissions reduction targets. By drawing on robust data and evidence, we will report on the adequacy, capacity and condition of nationally significant infrastructure through our Audit work.

Infrastructure investment planning and prioritisation

For the purpose of assisting Government consideration and determination of infrastructure investments, Infrastructure Australia will provide advice on proposals, including those brought forward by the states and territories or otherwise referred to us, to inform Australian Government Budget processes. Though independent in substance, our advice will be developed in consultation with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the Department) and other relevant government agencies.

A reformed Infrastructure Priority List (IPL), developed in consultation with the Australian Government and states and territories will be a targeted, streamlined list of high-quality, priority infrastructure investment opportunities. The IPL will seek to maximise the Australian Government's priority outcomes for nationally significant infrastructure across the transport, water, energy, communications and social infrastructure sectors.

Infrastructure Australia will review the priority projects of jurisdictions that are seeking investment, including existing IPL listings, and will also draw from the data in the Australian Infrastructure Audit, and utilise our Market Capacity modelling as it refines the IPL. The evidence and insights gleaned will feed into the Annual Budget Statement.

The reformed IPL will underpin our advice to government's investment decisions including investments that are needed in the near and medium term to respond to immediate challenges, as well as forward-thinking proposals that will deliver longer-term productivity and community benefits.

Infrastructure investment evaluation and assessment

Evaluation of infrastructure proposals that are nationally significant or seeking more than \$250 million of Commonwealth funding will continue to be undertaken by Infrastructure Australia. Where an appropriate state or territory assurance process exists, project evaluations will leverage a peer review model to supplement the work and capabilities of a jurisdiction.

Unless otherwise determined by the Minister under s5B(7)(b) of the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008*, or required under an Australian Government funding agreement (such as a Federation

Funding Agreement), Infrastructure Australia will typically consider proposals for social infrastructure investment where they:

1. form part of a broader infrastructure development proposal that includes integrated investments in other infrastructure (such as land transport) AND
2. are explicitly identified as a priority or commitment in a place-based or region-based infrastructure plan of the Australian Government, state or territory.

Assessments of certain nationally significant infrastructure without prior evaluation¹ will depend on Infrastructure Australia obtaining substantive and current project information in order for meaningful advice being provided to the Australian Government.

Development of a national infrastructure planning and assessment framework

Work is underway to develop a national infrastructure planning and assessment framework to promote national consistency and coordination in infrastructure evaluations to enable consistent advice to government on infrastructure proposals across all relevant sectors. The national infrastructure planning and assessment framework will evolve in consultation with state and territory government infrastructure agencies and departments. Infrastructure Australia will embrace the opportunity to further understand and develop their capabilities with a view to harmonising evaluation processes. The national infrastructure planning and assessment framework will be reviewed at least every 5 years to ensure learnings and environmental changes are reflected.

Infrastructure sector monitoring, project review and performance

Through its research program Infrastructure Australia will continue to:

- monitor infrastructure market conditions and capacity and monitor progress to mitigate these constraints.
- support policies and actions to decarbonise transport and infrastructure, by developing a baseline of the embodied carbon intensity of Australia's forward public infrastructure pipeline.
- promote methods to improve infrastructure industry productivity and innovation.
- have regard to the Australian Government's Infrastructure Policy Statement and the priorities of the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting.

These activities enable Infrastructure Australia the opportunity to coordinate and analyse cross-jurisdictional data and facilitate cross-border, cross-sectoral knowledge sharing to help drive continuous system-wide improvement; assist in the balancing of demand-supply and support long-term sustainability of the construction sector.

Through collaboration with the Department, state and territory governments and infrastructure bodies on project delivery, the achievement of policy objectives and information-sharing, we will develop a framework to undertake evaluations of delivery data or post-completion reviews for nationally significant projects. To enable Infrastructure Australia to complete post-completion evaluations of selected projects, the cooperation and engagement with state and territory funding recipients will be imperative in designing and applying a suitable framework.

Substantive research initiated by Infrastructure Australia will be developed in consultation with the Minister.

Collaboration with key stakeholders

We will maintain our effective working relationship with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. We will continue to work with the Department and other relevant Commonwealth departments on our work program and support the provision of advice to the Minister. This includes the Cities and Suburbs unit.

¹ undertaken pursuant to s5DA of the IA Act

As part of the streamlining process for project submissions, we will work with the Department and state and territory governments to understand and develop capabilities, identify efficiencies and support the uptake of best practice with a view to harmonising evaluation processes. This will include consultation on the development and implementation of a national infrastructure planning and assessment framework. We will also work closely with the Department's Cities and Suburbs Unit to identify the support it can provide in integrated infrastructure planning and advice.

Infrastructure Australia will work with local governments and Regional Development Australia to strengthen their capability to make submissions to state bodies on project proposals and support the Government's commitment to delivering a purposeful, targeted and coordinated approach to regional and urban development.

Infrastructure Australia will continue to lead two dedicated national forums that provide a platform to engage closely with senior government stakeholders; the Cross-Jurisdictional Meeting and the I-bodies CEO forum. As our products evolve, we will continue to seek feedback on project planning, funding and engagement pathways as they relate to the interaction of state and territory governments with the Australian Government and Infrastructure Australia.

While much of our work is in land transport, Infrastructure Australia works alongside other departments in our remit to contribute to:

- achieving greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, policy outcomes and actions to decarbonise infrastructure, by developing a baseline of the embodied carbon intensity of Australia's forward public infrastructure pipeline and providing ongoing advice in this area.
- Informing cross-sectoral demand management and consideration of market conditions in project delivery.
- proposal assessment and evaluation.

Infrastructure Australia will work with Regional Development Australia and local governments to strengthen their capability to make submissions to state bodies on project proposals.

Strong governance to support and demonstrate delivery to our mandate

Infrastructure Australia is established under the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* as a body corporate and is classified under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act, 2013* (PGPA Act) as a Corporate Commonwealth entity. Under the governance arrangements in place since April 2024, Commissioners have replaced the Infrastructure Australia Board to provide strategic and governance oversight to ensure the organisation meets the performance requirements detailed in the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008* (Cth) and the PGPA Act.

The Commissioners will lead oversight of all Infrastructure Australia functions, including being closely involved in day-to-day delivery of Infrastructure Australia's work items, inquiring into and reporting on infrastructure matters, and participating in the Australian Government's infrastructure investment decision-making process. In line with new requirements of the *Infrastructure Australia Act 2008*, the Commissioners will also ensure the Annual Statements and other relevant Infrastructure Australia products are delivered to the Minister in advance of tabling the documents in Parliament.

In accordance with requirements of the PGPA Act, we will publish Corporate Plans on an annual basis and deliver an Annual Report to our responsible Minister for tabling in Parliament.