



Urban Mobility

3. Senate Inquiry into the Investment of Commonwealth and State Funds in Public Transport Infrastructure and Services (2009)

The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee conducted an Inquiry into *the Investment of Commonwealth and State Funds in Public Transport Infrastructure and Services* concluding and reporting in August 2009.

Further Reading:

[Investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services](#)

Terms of Reference

On 4 December 2008 the Senate referred the following matter to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee for inquiry and report by 18 June 2009:

The investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services, with reference to the August 2005 report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage, Sustainable Cities, and the February 2007 report of the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee, Australia's future oil supply and alternative transport fuels, including:

- (a) An audit of the state of public passenger transport in Australia;
- (b) Current and historical levels of public investment in private vehicle and public passenger transport services and infrastructure;
- (c) An assessment of the benefits of public passenger transport, including integration with bicycle and pedestrian initiatives;
- (d) Measures by which the Commonwealth Government could facilitate improvement in public passenger transport services and infrastructure;
- (e) The role of Commonwealth Government legislation, taxation, subsidies, policies and other mechanisms that either discourage or encourage public passenger transport; and
- (f) Best practice international examples of public passenger transport services and infrastructure.

Submissions to this Senate Inquiry

Submissions made by the wide and diverse range of stakeholders are listed in the Senate report released in August 2009.

Further Reading:

[Investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services](#)

Previous Parliamentary Reports and Recommendations

Issues around urban transport planning have been identified in a number of previous national parliamentary reports that have not been acted upon. Some also have numerous elements relevant to urban rail that have not been addressed.

The ARA submission to this Senate Inquiry has drawn attention to three previous national parliamentary reports in particular that identified that the Commonwealth's governance and funding of the transport sector needs to change by incorporating sustainability, with its inter-connected dimensions for economy, society and ecological.

Together, they show that continuation of 'business-as-usual' is no longer supportable on the evidence of failing transport in cities, spatial division of cities that mirror social and health disadvantage, degrading environmental quality with costly damage to health.

Re-orientation is a strong theme through these previous public inquiries and the ARA has recommended that the issues around urban transport planning evidenced in these previous national parliamentary reports be acted upon as part of the Senate Inquiry's deliberations:

The Oil Report (2007) and the recommendations relating to:

- reducing oil-dependency;
- corridor strategy planning;
- investigation into hypothecation of congestion; and
- reforming the Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) concession.

Sustainable Cities (2005) report aimed 'to direct Australian urban policy onto a path of sustainability by 2025' and recommended that:

- the Commonwealth government significantly boost its funding commitment for public transport systems, particularly light and heavy rail, in the major cities and the inclusion of sustainability criteria in transport infrastructure funding; and
- the provision of Commonwealth government transport infrastructure funds include provision of funding specifically for sustainable public transport infrastructure for suburbs and developments on the outer fringes of our cities.

Senate Report – The Heat is On (2003) included two specific recommendations, relevant to the current Senate Inquiry, relating to the inclusion of reductions of greenhouse gas emissions as a central objective for Commonwealth, State and Territory government policy development and key assessment criteria of new projects.

Additional ARA comment on these previous Parliamentary Reports can be found in Section 4 of the ARA submission to the Senate Inquiry.

Link

[ARA Urban Mobility](#)

ARA Submission

The ARA, with assistance from Australian passenger rail operators, made a submission that in broad terms put the rail industry case around these key elements:

- rail benefits in passenger public transport such as low emissions, safety, and efficient land use;
- history of rail funding and planning essentially State-based and need for long-term planning; and
- the need to adopt much improved national passenger public transport planning and funding arrangements with a clear role for the Commonwealth and the States.

ARA's case was based in part on existing material contained in its *National Passenger Transport Agenda 2006* and the 2008 policy statement '*Moving people around Australia – the role of rail in urban mobility*'.

The ARA submission is available for review at ARA website, or you have the option of looking at the key elements of the ARA submission in the following snapshot format:

Links[ARA Urban Mobility](#)[ARA Submission to Senate Inquiry - Executive Summary](#)