

**Jenny Aitchison**

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads



## Media Release

# New program to shape future of regional rail infrastructure

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The Minns Labor Government has greenlit development of a new strategy that will lay out the pathway to a better regional rail network in NSW for passengers and freight.

Representing a fresh approach to how rail infrastructure investment is determined, the Regional Network East/West Uplift (RNEW) Program has been established to create a 10-year investment pipeline and strategic plan for rail infrastructure in regional NSW.

Under the former government, regional rail infrastructure investment was determined on an ad-hoc basis without proper regard for the needs of the regional rail network in its entirety. Industry partners and other major stakeholders were also not always properly consulted, with initiatives like Fixing Country Rail and the Main West Capacity Enhancement Program lacking a holistic, strategic focus and projects often stuck in development limbo for years.

The RNEW Program will take a fresh look at where regional rail infrastructure investment is needed, while putting proper evidence-based decision making at the forefront of planning work and giving industry, the Government and the public a clear vision for the future of the network.

Through comprehensive data analysis, research into reliability and future capacity requirements, extensive evaluation of existing assets and wide-ranging consultation - the RNEW Program will ensure the NSW Government better understands, manages, forecasts and delivers upgrades to regional rail network.

The Program will also have a key focus on opportunities to improve the Country Regional Network (CRN) which includes over 2,300 kilometres of operational rail lines and is vital for transporting 2.7 billion gross tonnes of freight annually and delivering more than 120 passenger services per week.

Linkages between the broader regional rail network and existing projects such as Inland Rail, the Freight Policy Reform and Regional Level Crossing programs will also be explored by the Program team, with potential efficiency improvements to be identified and considered.

Once developed, the final investment strategy will complement Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans being developed across the nine regional areas in the state.

The RNEW Program team will commence engagement with freight industry, rail operators and users, and local government in 2025, with the final strategy to be delivered in 2026.

**Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison said:**

“The NSW Government is committed to providing rail networks across the state that are effective, efficient and reliable for all users – freight and passengers.

“The RNEW Program will allow us to better understand, manage, forecast, and deliver improvements on the state’s regional rail network, bringing projects under one banner to ensure a holistic and strategic approach.

“Regional communities have been calling for investment in rail infrastructure in the regions. This program will ensure any investment is made on the basis of robust planning and development to enrich our state.

“The program will enable the NSW Government to develop a long-term pipeline of infrastructure investment initiatives whilst being flexible and agile enough to address emerging network issues.”