

Inquiry into Federal Financial Support for State and Territory Infrastructure Projects

**Ports Australia Submission to the
Finance and Public Administration
References Committee**

January 2026





Ports Australia is the peak body representing the interests of the Australian port industry. It serves as a national voice and plays a crucial role in advocating for policies and initiatives that promote the growth and development of Australian ports.

Ports Australia is governed by a Board of Directors comprising the Chief Executive Officers of 14 port corporations and authorities from across Australia.

We bring together various stakeholders, including government entities, industry members, and representative bodies, to ensure that Australian ports are at the forefront of environmental, safety, and security matters.

Ports Australia brings all these groups together in collaboration to ensure our ports are not only in compliance with relevant regulations but go above and beyond to ensure the best outcomes.

Financial Support for State and Territory Infrastructure Projects

On 26 November 2025, the Senate referred the following matters to the Finance and Public Administration References Committee for inquiry and report by 30 March 2026:

The process, governance and effectiveness of federal financial support provided to state and territory governments for infrastructure development, with particular reference to:

- a. the criteria and processes used by the federal government to assess, prioritise and allocate infrastructure funding
- b. the transparency, consistency and accountability of federal funding decisions
- c. how the viability and appropriateness of state and territory projects receiving federal funding is assessed, including the adequacy of business cases, rural and regional distribution impacts, and use of independent assessments
- d. how the economic, social, cultural and community impacts of federally supported infrastructure projects are considered during assessments
- e. federal oversight mechanisms used to track progress and performance of a state or territory project receiving federal funding and opportunities to improve governance, oversight and public reporting; and
- f. any other related matters.



Australian ports facilitate some 700,000 jobs and more than 1.6 billion tonnes of annual trade – moving 99% of Australian international trade by volume. To maintain a global competitive advantage Australian ports are pivotal to discussions on productivity and infrastructure investments that raise efficiency of our vital supply chains.

Port operators, port facility operators and the businesses and structures that support them are essential to shape a suitable and practical plan for securing trade of vital commodities across the national landscape, and in turn securing Australia's GDP through international trade and investment.

As Members would be aware, the ownership and operation of port land, infrastructure and facilities varies across the port sector. Some ports are landlord ports which own the land and lease out specific areas to port facility operators which in turn undertake the day-to-day site management and operations, while others own and operate the land and facilities. Others are variations of these.

This is underpinned by a significant portion of Australian ports in State Government ownership. Another significant portion have either a single or small number of commodity throughputs.



Ports Australia and ports recommend any adopted government policy changes impacting Australian ports continue to meet best practice, with legislation, policy frameworks, plans and environments accounting for port differences and supporting each Australian port to optimise their operational performance, trade throughput and border security settings.

The benefits to Australian ports, their customers and Australia's economic trade and sovereign security must outweigh any imposition of further requirements related to the planning, operation and infrastructure of ports themselves.

In this context Australia's ports look to work with the Federal Parliament and Federal Government and all of its departments and agencies to improve efficiencies across the supply chain and economy.

Considering the ownership and operating model differences within the ports and maritime sector, this submission does not represent all industry perspectives.

Should further details be required, please contact Ports Australia.

Government Policy Reform in the National Interest

Like ports, we recognise Federal, State and Territory Governments and their departments and agencies are critically aware of the need to build capacity and capability to protect Australia's critical infrastructure, which includes Australia's ports.

Ports Australia submits the Federal Government's approach to ensuring effective infrastructure investment within the maritime industry, and in turn the wider supply chain, needs to:

- protect Australia's economic security and sovereignty
- secure Australia's \$650 billion in annual trade for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of goods to consumers and customers
- recognise the role of ports as strategic assets and critical infrastructure
- protect supply chains of goods into and leaving Australia
- ensure any financial impacts on Australian consumers, exporters and importers are outweighed by the benefits to the Australian community
- be informed by the current international and national maritime landscape
- capable of being adopted in the most cost-effective way for long term sustainability of Australian ports and international trade
- recognise the differing attributes of Australian ports and maritime industry participants, and differing capacity to finance and implement regulatory measures
- assign to industry participants only those responsibilities and financial imposts they should appropriately hold as they undertake that function
- support a fit-for-purpose legislative framework with evidence-based and cost-effective measures that minimise regulatory burden
- set a clear regulatory environment for investment certainty.

It cannot fall solely to industry nor Federal funding programs to deliver physical infrastructure and technological innovation within freight and supply chain sectors. The Federal Government has to lead on what are the most efficient and effective funding mechanisms for infrastructure projects impacting our supply chains.

Funding mechanisms need to go beyond a simple cost-benefit analysis to include not only the factors listed above. Mechanisms need to incorporate wider important factors such as maintaining global competitive advantage of Australian manufacturing, productivity of the economy, and securing Australia's GDP through international trade and investment.



Working with State and Territory Governments - Treasury Support for Infrastructure Investment

The Federal Government needs to not only work with state and territory governments in having the most effective long-term infrastructure financial support mechanisms in place. They must also work with Treasury Departments at all levels of government.

In ports this is important for two key reasons. As noted earlier, a substantial number are under State Government ownership and another significant portion have either a single or small number of commodity throughputs.

Secondly, with 99% of international trade by volume going through our ports, without long-term sustained infrastructure investment by governments at all levels for ports and connections to ports, our nation's economy is in jeopardy.

Members would be aware successfully delivering infrastructure funding is at significant risk without fundamental support at a Treasury level. Where Treasury lacks confidence in a funding program's economics and outcomes, budget setting for such programs and in turn successful delivery of a project becomes complex.

Treasuries are not only the economic advisers to government, they are the implementers of policies and programs. They set the criteria for funding applications to be accepted and the terms in which those funds are made available.

The Federal Government should be clear in its communications to all levels of government and Treasury departments that investment in maritime and associated landside infrastructure is mission critical.

Federal Infrastructure Policy Statement

Ports Australia and its members actively engage across all levels of Australian governments. It is important when governments contemplate changing policy directions they not only identify and consider potential negative impacts on the operation, efficiency and safety of ports, but also maintain focus on the need for Australian ports to prioritise risk and resilience building in ensuring Australia's trade, sovereign security and economic prosperity.

The Federal Government's 2023 **Infrastructure Policy Statement** notes, "*Transport infrastructure should not be an end in itself – when properly planned and targeted, it is an enabler that helps us unlock a range of significant economic, social and environmental objectives.*"

The Federal Government considers nationally significant transport infrastructure projects to comprise projects which require a clear role for the Commonwealth, and include at least two of the following characteristics:

- an Australian Government contribution of at least \$250 million
- alignment with Government priorities as articulated in the Statement
- situated on or connected to the National Land Transport Network and/or other key freight routes, such as those identified in the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy
- supporting other emerging or broader national priorities such as housing, defence, the development of critical mineral resources and Closing the Gap.

In noting the importance of partnership between governments and stakeholders, Federal funding for nationally significant land transport infrastructure projects will be equally split with state and territory partners, the Policy Statement states:

"Regional Australia contributes approximately two-thirds of Australia's export earnings through industries such as agriculture, tourism, resources, retail and manufacturing. The regions help drive productivity by getting products from our farm gate to our manufacturing centres or our ports to meet the increasing demand from international markets. The



Government will continue to support nationally significant projects in regional Australia that provide the connections between our regions, communities and major gateways. We will also prioritise investments in regional networks that help grow economies and communities.”

“Ensuring reliable links between producers and markets, including through international gateways and intermodal terminals, is a critical part of improving the efficiency and competitiveness of our national supply chains. The Government will seek to invest in projects that improve the efficiency of the supply chains by removing bottlenecks and improving network resilience.”

Infrastructure Australia’s Annual Budget Statement 2025

In February 2025 Infrastructure Australia released their **Annual Budget Statement 2025**, outlining proposed national infrastructure investment priorities.

The Ports Capacity and Connectivity priority notes: *“Increasing national ports capacity and strengthening import-export supply chains with last mile freight and intermodal connections for ports and port precincts.”*

And that ports must be well-connected, including to road and rail, as: *“Increasing national ports capacity, common-user infrastructure, freight hubs and land transport connections is vital to Australia’s trade and competitiveness.”*

Additionally, High Productivity Freight Networks notes: *“Enhancing the capacity, interoperability and resilience of nationally-important regional freight corridors and networks for higher productivity rail and road freight.”*

The Statement also notes the importance of moving freight by the mode most suited to the task, adding: *“Any new investments in the national freight network will build on significant existing investments in project planning and delivery by the Australian, state and territory governments.”*

As well as: *“Maximising the productivity and resilience of our supply chains will be critical for Australia to continue to prosper and remain globally competitive. An efficient freight network is also crucial to the achievement of other policy objectives such as road safety and net zero.”*

Ports Australia is pleased to note the priorities outlined as we continue to support ports and government in their preparedness and approach to supply chain innovation, responding to evolving assurance challenges, as well as greater efficiency and integration within the supply chain.

Driving Exports, Securing Supply Chains and a 24/7 Economy

As Ports Australia’s 2024 Inaugural *State of Trade* report highlights, Australian ports annually facilitate more than 1.53 billion tonnes of exports worth \$395 billion.

Australia’s economic growth and its transition to a 24-hour economy demands regulatory flexibility, focused consistent infrastructure investment, and industry-driven innovation.

Clearly, Australia needs coordinated investment in transport, logistics, and freight infrastructure to address emerging capacity constraints and reduce supply chain bottlenecks, which is why Australian ports are ensuring they have long-term, sustainable growth strategies in place.

Protecting industrial land, particularly industrial precincts associated with ports and their supply chain partners, is vital for meeting existing supply chain needs and accounting for future industrial land demand to secure long term productivity of the Australian economy.

The role of state, territory and local governments in developing and implementing planning policies that position the country to fully meet future freight needs is significant. Interdependency of supply chains means decisions in one jurisdiction can negatively impact the supply chain across the country.



With continued population growth, particularly within state capitals, demands for affordable housing options in cities is increasing pressure on governments at all three levels to consider repurposing industrial land for alternative uses, particularly residential development.

To maintain supply chain efficiency and productivity, it is vital all levels of government through robust policy and planning frameworks adopt a coordinated planning approach protecting key industrial precincts, freight hubs and transport corridors - especially as residential development increasingly encroaches on port-related industries.

The loss of industrial land threatens unacceptable delays and higher costs for freight transport, increased road congestion, increased disturbance in residential areas, increased interference to commercial areas, and additional costly mitigation and management measures which will likely be borne by customers, whether individuals or businesses, and reduced economic productivity.

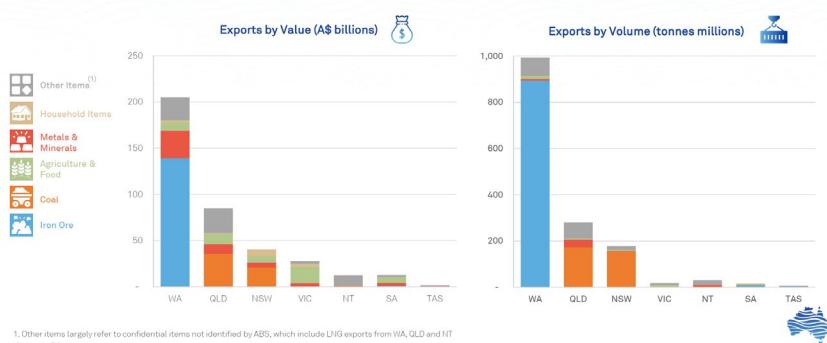
Supporting development of export industries

State of Trade report outlines the breakdown for Australian exports going through our ports each year:

- 36% Iron Ore
- 20% Other Items
- 14% Metal and Minerals
- 14% Coal
- 13% Agriculture and Food
- 4% Household Items

The graphic below from the *State of Trade* provides a more detailed breakdown.

Australia's exports are dominated by iron ore from WA and coal from Queensland and NSW, with other metals and minerals, and agricultural goods exported from a broader geographic base.



Australian ports are undertaking significant infrastructure projects aimed at boosting throughput and in turn supporting the Australian economy. *State of Trade* found over the prior five years Ports Australia port members had invested over \$3.8 billion in capital expenditure across the country.

Optimising Port Infrastructure to Support Low Carbon Liquid Fuels (LCLFs) and Offshore Decommissioning

As the Department of Industry, Science and Resources December 2024 Report *Australia's Offshore Resources Decommissioning Roadmap* points out, there is an imperative for the Australian Government to work with the maritime industry, as well as state and territory governments to support cooperation on infrastructure and port developments, noting: 'Port access may...be constrained by competition from existing and emerging uses. Existing mining and offshore oil and gas operational activities, export opportunities, defence, civil engineering projects and potential offshore wind projects all compete for port access.'

Clarity is necessary at the earliest opportunity on the large-scale storage and distribution of LCLFs within port and port-adjacent environments. This will ensure Australian ports have the capacity and ability to establish the logistics and any required new infrastructure to deliver LCLFs from our ports. Noting there will



be a period of dual delivery and use of both current and future fuels within our economy, detailed planning is required to safeguard efficiency of our ports and crucial supply chains across the short to medium term.

With the highly competitive environment for limited berth, heavy lifting and laydown space, for Australian ports to deliver capability on LCLFs and offshore decommissioning returned material waste transfer, include balancing capacity limits and competition within ports from:

- decarbonisation projects within ports requiring land allocations (such as on-shore power connections, solar panels)
- necessary customs and border security screening enhancements (such as faster screening module infrastructure)
- use of lay-down areas for large infrastructure supporting Renewable Energy Zones, solar farms, on-shore and off-shore wind projects, as well as future Offshore Decommissioning returned material waste transfer
- expansion of existing and/or delivering new services to customers (such as accepting containerised/break-bulk/RoRo goods)
- capital city container ports in close proximity to metropolitan areas resulting in loss of adjacent industrial land through urban encroachment, including residential development.

Streamlined delivery of domestic LCLF production and distribution, particularly in the short to medium term transition, will help secure Australia's economic prosperity, sovereignty and maintain a global competitive advantage. As such, it is imperative all levels of government through robust policy and planning frameworks work with Australian ports, fuel producers and the wider supply chain to coordinate planning approaches to protect key port and industrial precincts, freight hubs and transport corridors.

Supporting the decommissioning industry

The **Offshore Resources Decommissioning Roadmap** outlines the Federal Government's plan to decommission Australia's offshore energy infrastructure, with the resources and energy industry projected to spend \$60 billion over the next five decades. This projection can be expected to grow as Australia builds an offshore wind industry, which will be repatriated to shore as infrastructure reaches end-of-life.

The Federal Government has committed to a series of actions, including to reach intergovernmental agreements with state and territory governments, support industry to connect with government funding bodies, and with industry identify government and industry mechanisms to finance supporting infrastructure.

Australian ports continuously explore opportunities to deliver additional services - including assessing what role they may play in supporting decommissioning - within their current capacity parameters, as well as through delivery of additional infrastructure.

Federal, State and Territory Government financial support for port-based infrastructure construction to support decommissioning will be critical. It cannot simply be left to ports – with significant State Government ownership – to solely invest upfront in any berth construction, new heavy lifting cranes and additional laydown space required to participate in decommissioning.

Introduce Mandatory Supply Chain Impact Statements on Rezoning

Potential adverse impacts on the supply chain are particularly important when Federal and State Governments are considering investment in infrastructure projects.

Ports Australia continues to encourage each jurisdiction to establish a **mandatory supply chain impact statement and accompanying assessment** wherever industrial precinct land is subject to rezoning or significant change in usage. The purpose of such statements would be to determine what, if any, significant detrimental outcome for Australia's supply chain would occur in the event the land became unavailable for industrial purposes.

The proposed approach of mandatory supply chain impact statements and accompanying assessments should guide land use decision-making across all levels of government to improve planning for freight in



Australia's regional and metropolitan areas.

Similar to *Regional Australia Impact Statements*, supply chain impact statements would aid policymakers when considering how a rezoning or change in usage proposal would impact the supply chain and broader economy. It will ensure decision-making across all levels of government understands the importance of resilience within our supply chains, particularly those associated with ports, and to respond to changes in demand and freight movements, including an increased focus on the use of rail to move goods.

The importance of retaining industrial lands within metropolitan areas to support freight transportation, storage and distribution is highlighted with NSW Ports noting over 80% of containers imported through Port Botany are delivered within a 40km of the port, and 90% of containers within 50km. The Port of Melbourne noted in 2020 that 94% of import containers and 64% of export containers going through their port were linked to the metropolitan area.

Evidence of increasing pressures on industrial lands encroaching into public policy was exemplified in the Greater Sydney Commission Industrial Lands Policy Review of the 'Retain and Manage' policy, while concluding it be retained, was followed by Recommendation 1.6 of the NSW Productivity Commission Final Report "*Review of Housing Supply Challenges and Policy Options for New South Wales*" recommending changing this approach to apply a 'Review and Manage' approach to all urban industrial land, potentially exposing land to be rezoned.

For the benefit of Members, below are some current and recent infrastructure investments by governments that are supporting Australia's ports and in turn trade and supply chains:

Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct, Darwin

The Federal and Northern Territory Governments are providing funding support for the new precinct, including a wharf, offloading facility, and shipping channel dredging, aimed at renewable energy and advanced manufacturing, including green hydrogen and critical minerals, along with downstream onshore processing and manufacturing.

Port of Dampier

In January 2026 the Federal Government announced the stage two contract awarding for the Dampier Cargo Wharf Projects to design and build by late this year a new 57 metre bridge to connect the Dampier Cargo Wharf to the Bulk Handling Facility, boosting direct shipping services in the Pilbara. The Projects are being delivered in three stages and include the construction of two multi-user facilities - the Dampier Bulk Handling Facility (currently underway) and Dampier Link Bridge (contract awarded January 2026), and a major refurbishment of the existing Dampier Cargo Wharf. The Federal Government has committed \$565 million towards port infrastructure upgrades in the Pilbara, including \$115m for the Port of Dampier and the Western Australian Government is also providing funding. The *Northern Australia Action Plan 2024-2029* notes a \$160m commitment through a NAIF loan to the Dampier Bulk Handling Facility alongside WA Government funding.

Lumsden Point, Pilbara

Pilbara Ports are developing new multi-user facilities and berths at Lumsden Point – including two wharfs, supported by the remaining \$450m of the \$565m noted above, in partnership with the WA Government, who are contributing \$96.6m. Works include a causeway and logistics hub, supporting the Australian Renewable Energy Hub, Kimberley Marine Support Base, Qube and Toll. The development will support the export of battery metals and minerals and the importation of renewable energy infrastructure.

Bowen Wharf

Bowen Wharf is a \$68 million project to construct a new jetty and public facilities with \$50m from the Queensland Government and \$18m from North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation (NQBP). Construction is expected to commence in 2027 and open in late 2028.



Single Source Funding Advice

Australian ports would significantly benefit from consistent and clear processes to access Commonwealth funding sources. Compared to the road, rail and aviation sectors, ports have previously suffered from a dearth of Federation Funding Agreements or grants programs open to them.

When seeking to identify sources to fund significant infrastructure projects, including decarbonisation and renewable energy projects, industry would benefit from a designated 'one stop' federal government agency to provide a centralised information source for funding – whether government or outside third parties.

Recently Ports Australia has sought information from government agencies on possible sources of funding for Australian ports to undertake not only decarbonisation projects within their ports but also to fund other valuable initiatives.

By way of example the Commonwealth grants framework had worked against many Australian ports applying under the Maritime Industry Skills and Training Initiative as under the then framework rules "*a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government agency or body (including government business enterprises)*" was not eligible to apply.

Such challenges to identify investment funding options could be overcome with a 'one stop shop', linking industry with advice on government agencies, government funding programs, and third party investment options they could explore.

Bipartisanship

Given the capital-intensive nature of port infrastructure, long-term investment depends on stable, nationally aligned regulatory frameworks providing industry with certainty across multiple electoral cycles.

In the absence of federal bipartisanship on the lynchpin economic drivers – whether in policy settings or funding – investor confidence in decarbonisation and renewable energy projects risks remaining stagnant.

Ports Australia on behalf of the maritime industry calls on political parties to jointly commit to a limited number of lynchpin economic drivers which will provide investor confidence.

Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Investment

Government provision of financial and regulatory certainty over the medium to long term is a prerequisite for industries to invest in decarbonisation and renewable energy initiatives, particularly where the market does not yet exist.

Infrastructure Australia's *Annual Budget Statement 2025* on delivering net zero and clean energy notes the transition requires coordinated investments in ports, land transport, water and social infrastructure.

Within the 2024-25 Federal Budget the Commonwealth identified five sectors aligning with the ***National Interest Framework*** – renewable hydrogen, clean energy manufacturing (such as batteries and solar panels), critical minerals processing, green metals and low carbon liquid fuels.

Australian ports do and will play an important role in all these sectors. For example, hydrogen hubs are mostly being developed close to ports, including Gladstone, Pilbara, Whyalla and Melville Island. The ***Critical Minerals Strategy 2023-2030*** has in part as its objectives to create diverse, resilient and sustainable supply chains, build sovereign capability, and value-add resources, creating jobs and economic opportunity.

Ports expect there will be an ongoing focus on ports to support the trade and importantly the downstream value-adding conversion of critical minerals and renewable hydrogen.

Ports are evaluating the port-based infrastructure upgrades and supply chain connections, particularly rail based, that will be required to facilitate the movement of green metals, renewable hydrogen and critical minerals.



Ports are also vital to facilitate the delivery of Renewable Energy Zone (REZs) solar panels and wind turbine components, including for on-shore and off-shore wind zones. Ports Australia in conjunction with ports, industry and government agencies continue to work through challenges in road and rail infrastructure when transporting over-size and over-mass renewable components from ports to site. Fixing the bottlenecks will require federal and/or state/territory government funding support.

In this context Australian ports will increasingly look to the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to invest in linking infrastructure, not to simply support the export supply chain, but importantly to identify where processing industries, heavy industry and renewable energy zones can, where appropriate, be developed in proximity to ports.

Along with regulatory certainty, direct measures also need to be part of the equation including government grant programs for renewable energy projects, underwriting initial offtake agreements for future fuels, tax incentives for decarbonisation initiatives, as well as in some cases government mandates.

National Future Fuels Plan

Domestically produced, sourced and consumed fuels hold significant benefits for Australia's economic security and sovereign security. Australia's domestic fuel security is key to protecting our community and our economy from supply chain disruptions which impact productivity.

Alongside the work being done through the National Fuel Council, Ports Australia has called on the Federal Government to lead development of a **National Future Fuels Plan**, informed by supply chain mapping, to enable greater fuel certainty in Australia for governments, industry and consumers. Producers and suppliers of future fuels and potential consumers of low or zero emission fuels are seeking assurance from government as our economy heads towards net zero. Assurance:

- there is enough demand for a low or zero emission fuel if industry produces and supplies it
- there will be reliable and sufficient supply of the fuels Australians need
- where price competitive, Australia has locally produced, locally supplied and locally consumed low or zero emission fuels, and
- domestically produced low or zero emission fuels are available for Australian industry and consumer purchase, in other words they are not exclusively for export trade.

National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy

In 2025 the Federal Government released the updated National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy, with a number of actions relevant to Australian ports (see table below). Successful delivery of many of these actions will require not only the Federal Government working with industry, state and territory governments, but also substantial and ongoing levels of funding investment.

Actions commencing in 2025 (expected completion date)
1.1: Define and model the current freight and supply chain network (<i>mid 2026</i>)
1.3: Improve freight education and awareness in urban and industrial land use planning (<i>end 2026</i>)
1.4: Promote uptake of technology to improve safety and productivity (<i>ongoing</i>)
2.1: Develop a National Freight Resilience Plan (NFRP) (<i>end 2025</i>)
2.3: Develop a Freight Infrastructure Investment Framework (<i>end 2025</i>)
3.1: Develop government and industry frameworks to collaborate on the transition to net zero (<i>end 2026</i>)
3.2: Support development of a domestic low carbon liquid fuels (LCLF) industry (<i>ongoing</i>)
4.1: Develop a data development plan to support the National Freight Data Hub (<i>end 2026</i>)
4.2: Quantify the economic significance of the supply chain and freight logistics industry to Australia (<i>end 2025</i>)
Actions commencing in 2026
1.2: Model the ideal future freight network in 2040 (<i>end 2027</i>)
2.4: Conduct a current and future skills gap analysis for the freight and logistics sector (<i>end 2026</i>)
4.3: Develop additional key performance measures for future inclusion in the Strategy (<i>end 2027</i>)
Actions commencing in 2027
2.2: Conduct periodic supply chain risk and resilience modelling (<i>end 2028</i>)



It is crucial when the Federal Government releases plans and introduces new policy settings requiring significant planning and implementation investment by industry, reform that requires funding is accompanied by significant and ongoing Federal Budget funding.

When released it is hoped the Freight Infrastructure Investment Framework will complement the Regional Investment Framework and Infrastructure Policy Statement objectives, and support supply chain infrastructure delivery. Ports Australia welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to deliver nationally significant land transport projects, partnering with stakeholders. It is important as part of this, connections to ports are included.

Supporting the adoption of technology and automation

It is imperative a national perspective is adopted to simplify and digitalise Australia's trade system. As technology develops, opportunities for greater supply chain efficiency continue to build. Alongside digitalisation, adoption of new technology and automation is accelerating at ports, including through innovation in freight logistics and supply chain management to enhance efficiency and competitiveness.

Automation, electrification, and digital supply chain technologies offer significant potential to optimise operations, reduce inefficiencies, and lower emissions. These innovations not only reduce the sector's environmental footprint but also improve throughput, turnaround times, and cost efficiency—key drivers of national supply chain productivity. To fully realise the benefits at appropriate scale will require coordinated government action across the freight-based supply chain to:

- incentivise investment in automation, electric vehicles, and smart logistics systems
- support the adoption of cleaner maritime fuels and hybrid propulsion systems
- support the rollout of shore power infrastructure
- establish national emissions monitoring and reporting frameworks to ensure transparency, support regulatory compliance, and drive continuous improvement.

Coordinated Departmental responses, not overlapping regulatory requirements

Australian ports are heavily regulated by federal, state and territory government departments and agencies, including Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Department of Home Affairs, as well as the Departments responsible for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Energy, Agriculture, Climate Change, Water and the Environment.

As the Australian economy moves toward net zero and clean energy becomes a significant national export and industrial transition opportunity, seamless coordination is required among key Ministerial portfolios at all levels of government. In Departments delivering their policy priorities, matters such as low or zero emissions energy, international engagement and consensus, renewable energy networks, and supply chain assurance require a unified, strategic approach that includes industry as a delivery partner.

With most commercial ports in Australia under state or territory government ownership, in proposing any change to regulatory frameworks and their adoption processes there are practical challenges arising from different legislative frameworks and expectations between state and territory jurisdictions and the Commonwealth. To ensure consistency and maximise efficiencies for government, importers, exporters, transporters and other supply chain entities, discussions on infrastructure delivery relating to ports should include states and the Northern Territory.

In conclusion, Ports Australia notes the importance of all Federal Members focusing on what measures the Federal Government can take to enable industry productivity and investment initiatives, recognising the importance of coordinated approaches for innumerable government, supply chain and community benefits.

