A collaborative journey

Extensive consultation over a period of 2 years has shaped the vision for WA's infrastructure future.

A collaborative and multifaceted consultation and engagement program, led by IWA, ensured all Western Australians had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Strategy, with hundreds of organisations and people having their say.

As a result, the Strategy reflects the views and priorities of stakeholders across the state and benefits from the invaluable expertise, perspectives and knowledge they have contributed through their considered input, technical advice and peer review.

More than 800 individuals and organisations responded to an initial discussion paper, *A stronger tomorrow*, released in June 2020, which outlined the principles, objectives and methodology that would be used to develop the Strategy. The discussion paper sparked wide-ranging conversation on infrastructure priorities that would best support WA's future.

Feedback was published in the *Consultation outcomes report*, released in December 2020, and channelled into the detailed analysis that underpinned the Strategy's development.

A range of reference groups and discussion forums were convened to gain the insight of subject matter experts and special interest groups to ensure recommendations were well-informed, relevant, practical and considered. These groups included a State Agencies Working Group, External Stakeholder Reference Group and Strategic Expert Panel.

The release of the draft strategy marked the start of another intensive consultation and comment period.

IWA again opened its consultation channels to request feedback on the draft strategy's recommendations. More than 700 people accepted that invitation and participated in 30 workshops, roundtables and briefing sessions in all regions across the state.

This generated rich feedback from all regions and sectors of the WA community, which included 193 submissions, with the strongest level of response coming from peak bodies, local government and the general community. Figure 12 shows the breakdown of submissions by stakeholder group.

Submissions were received via an online survey and through written submissions. Quantitative survey results demonstrated 87% overall support for the draft strategy.

New issues and responses arising from this phase of the consultation process resulted in further refinement and testing of refined and new recommendations with stakeholders. An overview of the full consultation process is provided in Figure 13.

What we heard

Hundreds of Western Australians reviewed the draft strategy from a broad geographic, social and economic perspective and their input was far-reaching. Overall, there was strong support with many stakeholders welcoming a strategic infrastructure outlook for the state and the proposed recommendations to support it.

Many of the themes and recommendations that resulted are closely linked and call for improvements to the core elements of the infrastructure system, such as policy, planning and legislation, to better position the state to achieve the Strategy's vision and objectives.

The discussion paper **sparked wide-ranging conversation on infrastructure priorities** that would best support WA's future.

Figure 12: Percentage of submissions by stakeholder group in response to the draft strategy
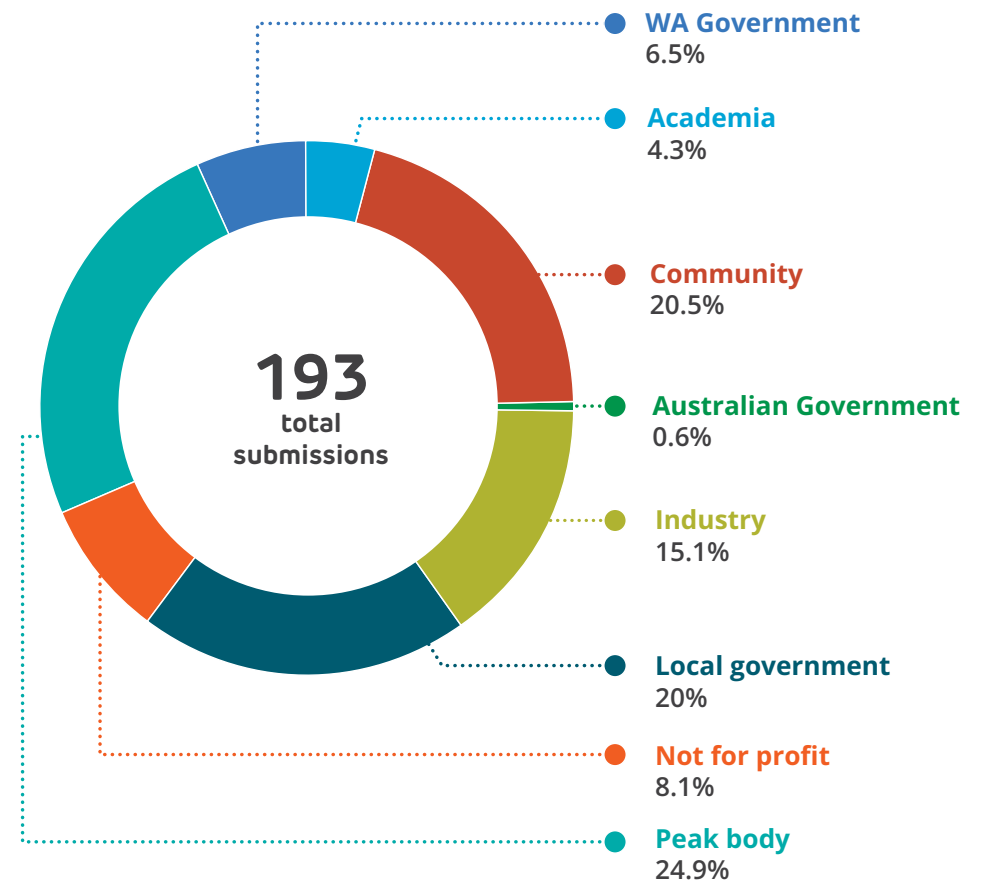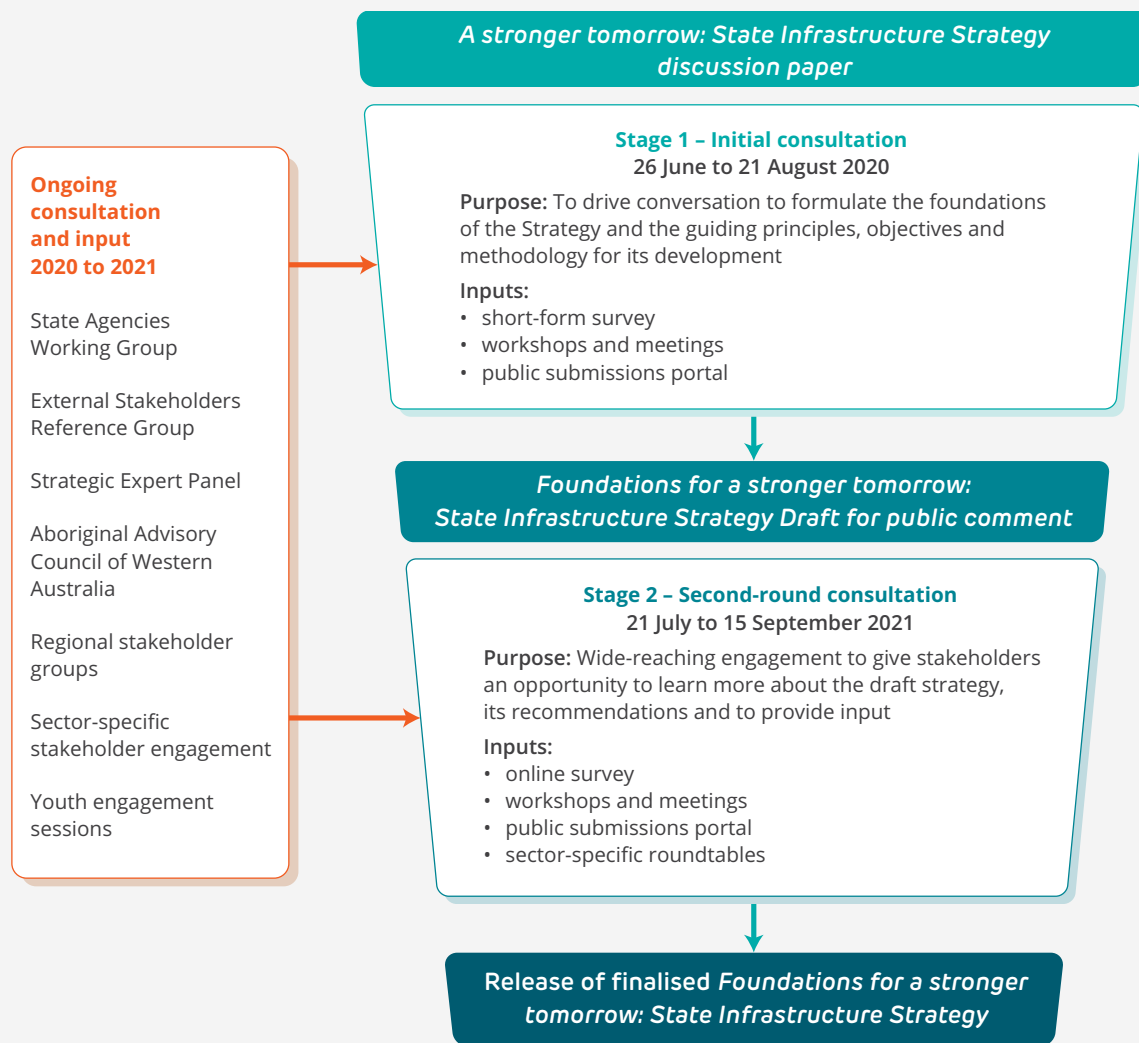

WA Government
6.5%

Academia
4.3%

Community
20.5%

Australian Government
0.6%

Industry
15.1%

Local government
20%

Not for profit
8.1%

Peak body
24.9%

193 total submissions

Figure 13: Consultation overview

A stronger tomorrow: State Infrastructure Strategy discussion paper

Ongoing consultation and input 2020 to 2021

State Agencies Working Group

External Stakeholders Reference Group

Strategic Expert Panel

Aboriginal Advisory Council of Western Australia

Regional stakeholder groups

Sector-specific stakeholder engagement

Youth engagement sessions

Stage 1 – Initial consultation
26 June to 21 August 2020

Purpose: To drive conversation to formulate the foundations of the Strategy and the guiding principles, objectives and methodology for its development

Inputs:
- short-form survey
- workshops and meetings
- public submissions portal

Foundations for a stronger tomorrow: State Infrastructure Strategy Draft for public comment

Stage 2 – Second-round consultation
21 July to 15 September 2021

Purpose: Wide-reaching engagement to give stakeholders an opportunity to learn more about the draft strategy, its recommendations and to provide input

Inputs:
- online survey
- workshops and meetings
- public submissions portal
- sector-specific roundtables

Release of finalised *Foundations for a stronger tomorrow: State Infrastructure Strategy*

Common themes emerging from consultation on the draft strategy and IWA's subsequent response included:

- Calls for more ambitious targets and time frames to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including legislation and interim targets to be included. Local governments also requested additional guidance and funding support for emissions reduction. The Strategy now recommends that the WA Government strengthen the current net zero emissions by 2050 aspiration to become a firm target and establish interim emissions reduction targets.

- Clarification of local government's role in implementing the Strategy. To address this, additional detail on the Strategy and IWA's role in relation to local governments, as well as the interaction between different levels of government and the role of the community, has been included.

- Request for clear guidance on the implementation time frames of several recommendations. To address this, a detailed review has been undertaken, and for recommendations in the 2022 to 2027 time frame category, the Strategy now recommends a specific year for completion.

- Greater consideration of infrastructure resilience matters to be incorporated, including shocks and stresses such as managing cybersecurity risks, natural hazards and impacts of climate change. In response, IWA has included additional content on resilience throughout the Strategy.

There was also support for recommendations within the Aboriginal cultural heritage, wellbeing and enterprise chapter, particularly regarding stronger Aboriginal engagement and co-design throughout the infrastructure lifecycle to support empowerment, self-determination and wellbeing.

Feedback on the development of the Strategy confirmed 6 core themes, which have been addressed throughout and underpin most of IWA's recommendations. Within these core themes, the following feedback was received, recognised and embedded throughout the Strategy.

Managing demand for infrastructure through prevention, early intervention and pricing

There was strong consensus that better demand management and the need for early intervention and prevention initiatives are required to divert, delay or avoid the need for costly infrastructure, particularly to reduce demand on our health, social services and justice system.

The connection between health outcomes and housing was raised by several stakeholders and has been addressed in this Strategy to demonstrate how appropriate, stable accommodation can improve the health of Western Australians and reduce demands on the state's health system.

Other feedback and IWA's subsequent response relating to better demand through early intervention included:

- The need to improve water efficiency through better understanding and management of self-supplied groundwater and surface water. As a result, relevant recommendations have been expanded to address these matters.

- The role of active transport through early intervention and stakeholder feedback. In response to this feedback, active transport recommendations have been extended beyond cycling to address walking and e-mobility devices, such as electric scooters.

Improving the quality and consistency of strategic infrastructure planning and processes

Stakeholders acknowledged the importance of robust and evidence-based planning as a foundation to identifying infrastructure investment needs and priorities. Stakeholders also noted the role of the Strategic Asset Management Framework and supported the recommendations that seek to improve decision-making in relation to infrastructure proposals, particularly business cases.

Regional stakeholders provided significant feedback reinforcing the need for a regional development strategic framework and to reform regional service models, and noted the importance of:

- infrastructure investment to support economic development and diversification of existing and emerging industries and the growth of regional centres and populations

- access to appropriate and affordable housing in the regions to enable economic growth, recognising that in some locations, even when incomes are relatively high, demonstrated market failure requires a greater role for government-driven mechanisms and investment.

An additional recommendation has been included to establish the principles, criteria and models for state government housing intervention in regional locations that are demonstrating market failure, informed by regional housing plans.

Other plans and processes suggested through consultation and addressed in this Strategy included:

- Greater focus on environmental protection and enhancement in infrastructure and land-use planning, including the development of an environmental and heritage information system for priority locations.

- Well-placed developments around activity centres, urban corridors and public transport hubs to promote increased density. Greater clarity has been provided to identify and prioritise infrastructure capacity upgrades and coordination issues to support infill development in line with the locations set out in the accompanying land-use plans and frameworks such as Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million.

- Planning for future education precincts and schools to meet the needs of growing populations. This has been addressed in the recommendation for a business case to support school site acquisition in inner and middle suburbs.

- Stronger integrated planning that gives greater consideration to public open space, and sport and recreation facilities. Recommendations for development of a regional-level sporting facilities plan and investment in capital works proposed in the State Sporting Infrastructure Plan have been added to the Strategy.

Addressing climate change

Recommendations in the Climate change and sustainability chapter received strong support from stakeholders, with many stakeholders seeking clarity or further detail.

In addition to a more ambitious approach to time frames and targets to address climate change, other significant feedback included:

- calls for increased support for renewable energy, particularly green hydrogen, with further detail added to this Strategy to explore the feasibility of prospective large-scale hydrogen industry in locations where energy, water, transport, skilled labour and market proximity can be leveraged.

- support for long-term water planning and protection of natural water resources, including development of a 20-year state water strategy as recommended in the Strategy.

Feedback on natural gas and hydrogen varied. Some highlighted the importance of transitioning away from natural gas and increased greenhouse gas emissions associated with the blue hydrogen industry compared to green hydrogen. Others highlighted the need for the blue hydrogen industry to support effective transition to green hydrogen.

The Climate change and sustainability, and Energy chapters have been refined to better clarify and link how greenhouse gas reduction planning mechanisms will enable emission reduction in the energy sector.

Implementing data sharing and other tools to support infrastructure planning and investment decision-making

Feedback reinforced the importance of digital connectivity and inclusion for increasing social equity. The importance of digital technology was also widely acknowledged as an enabler for improved productivity across sectors and industries. This was especially recognised in the health sector, where stakeholders called for the acceleration of digital technology initiatives, noting the electronic medical records program as a priority for implementation, to underpin system-wide reforms. This has been addressed in the Strategy.

Generally, stakeholders supported increased digitisation of infrastructure, but noted that outdated information and communications technology (ICT) systems operating within government are a barrier to digital transformation and readiness. The announcement of a dedicated government funding program for ICT projects has been highlighted and supported in the Strategy.

The need for greater emphasis on building digital and data science skills within government was also raised by some stakeholders, as well as the need to establish improved data sharing and management tools and processes, such as a whole of government platform to enable the sharing of location-based asset information. Amendments have been made to recommendations to strengthen the focus on a whole of government data platform.

Optimising the existing infrastructure asset base

Stakeholders supported the recommendations for asset management and proposed a whole of government asset management policy to raise asset management maturity. To address this, the Strategy has recommended expanding the Building Asset Management Framework pilot, once established, to apply to all asset classes.

A greater focus on digitisation, digital connectivity and a more coordinated approach to data management were also identified as important for optimising the existing infrastructure asset base and improving the government's capacity in this area.

Feedback called for asset management practices across local government to be strengthened. The Strategy acknowledges a significant amount of community and social infrastructure assets are managed by local government and that having sound and consistent management systems in place and improving maturity is important.

The Strategy also addresses stakeholder feedback calling for proposed reforms in funding and hypothecation arrangements to consider and ensure adequate support for regional and local government roads, along with improved resilience, road maintenance and road safety programs.

Identifying major infrastructure projects and programs

While many recommendations in this Strategy focus on non-build initiatives, examining future major projects or programs through a robust process of planning and business case development was an area of interest to many stakeholders.

Increased investment in rail infrastructure drew strong support. Some stakeholders emphasised the need for light rail to link with land-use and transport planning. The link between the light rail, bus rapid transit and the Perth and Peel transport plan has been emphasised.

The Strategy recommends more than 70 capital projects and programs for investment, business case development, planning or investigation. Once the Strategy is finalised, planning for the annual rollout of the 10-year state infrastructure program from 2023 will also commence, which will inform a future pipeline of projects.

What happens next?

Targeted engagement is now ongoing as the strategic focus shifts from planning to the WA Government's implementation of the Strategy's supported recommendations.

The Implementation and future activities chapter of this Strategy provides further information on the WA Government's implementation of the Strategy's supported recommendations, and IWA's monitoring and reporting function.