**Australian Government Funding:** $15.0 million
Total: $15.0 million

**Project Description**
Sydney to Newcastle is one of the oldest and busiest regional passenger lines in Australia. The 117 kilometre corridor has tight curves and steep gradients resulting from geographic limitations and an alignment dating back to the 1880s. These constraints, and the interaction between passenger and freight trains, restricts the number and speed of passenger trains that can operate in the corridor. The current travel time from Sydney to Newcastle by rail is around 2.5 hours compared to around 2 hours by road.

The Australian and New South Wales Governments completed a strategic business case for faster passenger rail between Sydney and Newcastle in 2019. The business case supported the case for faster rail passenger rail given expected population growth and future development opportunities along the corridor. In 2016, Infrastructure Australia also assessed upgrading the corridor as a “priority initiative”.

This further funding will finalise the scope, cost, timing and delivery of faster rail projects along the corridor and facilitate a detailed assessment of projects by Infrastructure Australia. The project will also consider value sharing opportunities and possible alternative funding and financing mechanisms in partnership with the New South Wales Government.

**Project benefits**
- Improved passenger rail services.
- Improved freight rail services.
- Reduced congestion and improved travel times.
- Planning and design of future public investments.

**Project timelines**
- This project is expected to start in mid 2021 and be finished by mid 2023.