

Communiqué

**ADELAIDE
FRIDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2015**

The 4th meeting of the Transport and Infrastructure Council (the Council) was held in Adelaide today. The Council includes Transport, Infrastructure and Planning Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association.

Industry representatives from Australasian Railway Association, Australian Automobile Association, Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association, Australian Logistics Council, Australian Trucking Association, Ports Australia, Transport Workers Union and the Truck Industry Council also attended as observers of the meeting and provided their views on the items for consideration by Ministers.

INFRASTRUCTURE REFORMS

Jurisdictions have completed significant micro-economic reforms over the last 12 months to ensure better project delivery. The project procurement and cost benchmarking in particular, will provide for better standards which will drive down costs for both governments and industry. Over the next 12 months, there is still further work to be done in delivering the project appraisal work underway through the National Guidelines for Transport System Management; more market based reforms with user-charging and better asset utilisation; and to develop a work programme to protect transport corridors and precincts. Governments also look forward to the delivery of Infrastructure Australia's Australian Infrastructure Plan, which will provide independent advice on the future infrastructure needs of Australia.

HEAVY VEHICLE CHARGES

The Council agreed on an implementation pathway to introduce the new heavy vehicle charges Determination from 1 July 2016. The Council agreed to freeze revenue which will see heavy vehicle charges revenue held constant at 2015-16 levels for an initial two years. Registration and road use charges will be adjusted appropriately during this period. Ministers requested the National Transport Commission investigate and report back to it with options to advance the methodology to better balance heavy vehicle charges and government revenues. This decision will ensure that governments can maintain the quality of roads and services that support the heavy vehicle industry.

The new Determination includes a number of key technical changes which are aimed at improving the accuracy and fairness of the heavy vehicle charge setting process. It also

includes a mechanism to recover the regulatory costs of enforcement and administration of the Heavy Vehicle National Law through registration charges.

HEAVY VEHICLE ASSET REGISTERS EXPENDITURE PLANS

The Council agreed that the first editions of the heavy vehicle asset registers and expenditure plans, covering the key freight routes, will be published by the end of the year. These measures provide transparency around the costs of services being delivered to heavy vehicle operators and are a key achievement along the path to reforming heavy vehicle investment and charging arrangements.

Governments will shortly undertake industry consultation on the expenditure plans and asset registers, with a view to refining future editions to better meet the needs of industry and preparing for the next phase of Heavy Vehicle Road Reform and transitioning to a forward cost base for heavy vehicles.

The Council also agreed that the Austroads Framework for Guiding Private Sector Participation be adopted by road managers to provide more certainty of process for all parties in negotiations on paying for improved high productivity vehicle access on public roads. Collectively, these measures provide some of the baseline information required to transition towards heavy vehicle infrastructure as an economic service and represent significant early progress against the Heavy Vehicle Road Reform Roadmap agreed by the Council in May 2015.

TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY

The use of technology to maximise the utilisation and life of infrastructure is critical to meeting Australia's future transport needs. The Council considered Australia's progress in developing, adopting and deploying Intelligent Transport Systems and noted that this work would continue in conjunction with the upcoming review of the Council's 2011 Policy Framework for Intelligent Transport Systems in Australia. The Council expects to agree an action plan and revised framework in the first half of 2016.

The Council noted South Australia's activities, in conjunction with ARRB Group Limited and Volvo, to facilitate Australia's first on-road trials of driverless vehicle technology. The Council was also briefed on point-to-point on-demand transport services and noted the reviews of taxi and hire car regulations and policies being undertaken by states and territories. The Council agreed it was important to share learnings across all jurisdictions; have a view on future challenges; and work towards harmonised standards and regulation to ensure that Australia is well positioned to adopt new technologies.

HEAVY VEHICLE REGULATION

The Council noted the work of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator in progressing a range of heavy vehicle reforms, and agreed on changes to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's 2016–17 budget in order to achieve further outcomes for industry and governments.

The Council was briefed by the National Transport Commission and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator on progress with the Heavy Vehicle Roadworthiness Program, and agreed to measures designed to extensively modernise the current Heavy Vehicle National Law, including the introduction of primary duty of care provisions on operators, prime contractors and employers to ensure the safety of their road transport operations, and other measures designed to improve safety outcomes and better target risky behaviour. In addition, the Council also agreed to progress consideration of more harmonised and risk-based vehicle inspection regimes.

RAIL REGULATION

The Council approved amendments to the Rail Safety National Law and supporting regulations. The amendments will improve the operation of the Rail Safety National Law by updating rail safety worker competency requirements and refining the operation of provisions relating to offences and legal proceedings. The Council also noted progress by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator and the rail industry towards the delivery of the benefits of the national rail safety reform, the efforts of the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator towards achieving full industry cost recovery arrangements and the current work program with stakeholders on potential legislative changes for regulatory oversight of major rail projects, including the ability to charge a fee for the regulatory oversight.

The Council congratulated Western Australia on its formal adoption of the Rail Safety National Law on 2 November 2015.

Ministers discussed the significant benefits for Australian jobs and economic growth that could be generated by greater harmonisation of rolling stock for Australian rail networks and agreed further work to be undertaken in this regard.

MARINE SAFETY REGULATION

The Council was briefed on progress with the implementation of revised service delivery arrangements for national commercial vessel regulation, which will see the Australian Maritime Safety Authority assume the majority of service delivery activities by mid-2017 and subsequently full service delivery by mid-2019. The new arrangements will focus on rewarding good safety management by reducing the regulatory burden on industry without compromising safety outcomes. The Council agreed to transitional funding arrangements that will apply from 1 July 2017.

NATIONAL REMOTE AND REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Council approved the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy, which outlines high level actions that seek to address the significant transport challenges faced in remote and regional Australia.

The Council noted the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy was informed by the 2014 National Remote and Regional Transport Services Forum and aligns with the Australian Government's vision for developing northern Australia. The Council acknowledged the collaboration and consultation between governments and key stakeholders to develop and finalise the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy.

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY

The Council considered the National Road Safety Strategy Implementation Status Report and noted the strong results to date in reducing road deaths, with the total in 2014 (1,155) reduced by 19.0 per cent under the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020. The Council also noted the considerable amount of activity underway to implement the 19 actions that were put forward in the National Road Safety Action Plan 2015–2017. The National Road Safety Strategy Implementation Status Report will be available from today on the new National Road Safety Strategy website at www.roadsafety.gov.au.

Ministers also agreed on the need to resolve inconsistencies in standards for the sale and use of motorcycle helmets and agreed an update on progress would be provided to the next meeting.

The Council endorsed the principle of a single national Australian driver's licence to be issued by all jurisdictions and agreed that it would consider options for harmonisation in this area in May 2016.

COUNCIL DIRECTIONS

The Australian infrastructure and transport sectors face a number of significant challenges in the coming decades. Responding to the demands of population growth; securing sustainable funding; and ensuring access to services will require new, innovative responses at all levels of government. Today the Council released its long term vision for infrastructure and transport in Australia, acknowledging the important role transport services play in driving economic growth, increasing employment opportunities, supporting social connectivity and enhancing Australians' quality of life. Members agreed that a focus on 'Infrastructure and transport systems and services that enhance Australia's productivity, competitiveness and liveability' will actively shape the work of the Council, now and in the long term. Seven agreed themes will frame the Council's programme of work, helping to ensure that Australia is on the front foot in responding to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for our transport and infrastructure services.

KEY FREIGHT ROUTES MAP

The Council welcomed the implementation of an interactive online version of the Australian National Key Freight Routes Map. The Council agreed to Australia's first ever national key freight routes map in November 2014 and the new online version brings transport mapping into the digital age.

The map will play a key role in assisting the development of a greater understanding of our national land freight system. The online format enables users to overlay other base-maps and datasets, and zoom in to a high level of detail. The map is expected to be of interest to a range of users including: the transport and logistics industry, all levels of government, land use planners, researchers, and property and business groups.

The maps are available at <http://maps.infrastructure.gov.au/KeyFreightRoute/>.

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

The Hon Warren Truss MP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development (Commonwealth)
The Hon Paul Fletcher MP	Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects (Commonwealth)
The Hon Michael McCormack MP	Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister (Commonwealth)
The Hon Duncan Gay MLC	Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight (New South Wales)
The Hon Jacinta Allan MP	Minister for Public Transport (Victoria)
The Hon Luke Donnellan MP	Minister for Roads and Road Safety (Victoria)
The Hon Mark Bailey MP	Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports (Queensland)
The Hon Dean Nalder MLA	Minister for Transport (Western Australia)
The Hon Stephen Mullighan MP	Minister for Transport and Infrastructure (South Australia)
The Hon Rene Hidding MP	Minister for Infrastructure (Tasmania)
The Hon Peter Chandler MLA	Minister for Transport; and Infrastructure (Northern Territory)
Minister Shane Rattenbury MLA	Minister for Justice (Australian Capital Territory)
Mayor Troy Pickard	President (Australian Local Government Association)