



Communiqué

BRISBANE

FRIDAY, 19 MAY 2017

The 7th meeting of the Transport and Infrastructure Council (the Council) was held in Brisbane 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, Bus Industry Confederation, Ports Australia and Truck Industry Council also attended as observers of the meeting.

RAIL INVESTMENT

The meeting included a strategic discussion regarding rail infrastructure and operations, recent pressures and developments and the future of rail investment in Australia. Ministers noted strong growth in rail use nationally, and discussed key rail trends and challenges in each jurisdiction. Rail is increasingly important to help people move around our cities, as well as between our cities and their surrounding regional areas, quickly and efficiently. Ministers also discussed a range of passenger and freight projects of national significance, including Inland Rail, Metronet, and Cross River Rail; and how governments can work together to address rail challenges going forward.

Discussions were broad ranging, including: land use integration, funding and financing challenges, new rail lines and extensions of existing lines to new growth areas; meeting increased demand growth on existing rail lines; infrastructure investments that enhance network capacity; the challenge of managing capacity freight and passenger demands; the need to tailor value capture approaches; and the role that technology can play in achieving outcomes.

The Council noted the Australian Government's significant new funding for rail infrastructure announced in the 2017-18 Budget, including \$10 billion over a ten year period for the National Rail Program that will fund investments in major passenger rail projects in our big cities and improve passenger rail connections to their surrounding regional areas.

Council confirmed the primary role that state/territory governments have for planning rail networks, and agreed to working in partnership with the Australian Government to inform future

investment priorities, including through the development of Urban Rail Plans for our five largest cities and their surrounding regions.

HEAVY VEHICLE ROAD REFORM

The Council agreed to three tangible heavy vehicle road reform outcomes being pursued over the next two years. The Australian Government will work with state and territory governments to implement independent price regulation for heavy vehicle charges, to design and consider a forward-looking cost base for roads, and to seek agreement on a range of heavy vehicle user charging trials. Key decisions on these matters will be sought at the next Council meeting in November 2017.

The Council will work with the Council on Federal Financial Relations to explore the potential revenue impacts across government of reform options, and to agree on alternative distribution agreements if roads are to be funded from direct charging revenue.

Also agreed were a set of broader policy priorities over the next two to three years, relevant to both heavy vehicle road reform and full land transport market reform. This included assessing community service obligation requirements and costs; assessing governance and institutional arrangements; developing charging and rebate options for operators; and developing low-cost technologies for data capture purposes. Progress in these priority areas will ensure that heavy vehicle reform is implemented with full market reform in mind.

AUTOMATED VEHICLES

The Council discussed current and future actions required to support the commercial deployment of semi-automated and driverless vehicles, and other emerging transport technologies in Australia as well as future challenges to deploying automated vehicles as part of a safe and efficient transport system.

The Council noted progress against its 3 year national action plan which is contained in its *National Policy Framework for Land Transport Technology* at <http://transportinfrastructurecouncil.gov.au/publications/>. Most recent activities in preparing Australia for more highly automated road vehicles, includes work on legal issues such as considering what these vehicles mean for driver licensing and road rules, infrastructure requirements and safety assurance measures. The *National Guidelines for Automated Vehicle Trials* were agreed which will provide consistent conditions for safe trials across Australia, while maintaining flexibility and innovation for industry.

Council also discussed the strategic impacts that more highly automated vehicles will have on Australia's transport networks over time and the need to manage systems that provide for semi-automated, driverless and existing non-automated vehicles.

ROAD SAFETY

The Council discussed national actions to address road trauma following high-level road safety meetings with stakeholders, Ministers and Police Commissioners regarding recent increases in deaths and serious injuries and the need for all governments to increase efforts to work together to reduce road trauma. Ministers considered a report on progress of the actions taken at its previous meeting and agreed to:

- convene an independent reference group to inquire into progress under the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020; and
- promote the purchase of safer vehicles, especially for younger drivers, through the Australasian New Car Assessment Program and the Used Car Safety Ratings.

The Council also noted the development of proposals to:

- remove barriers to the increased testing and enforcement of drug-impaired driving; and
- investigate options to reduce driver distraction from mobile phones.

Ministers also noted that the Commonwealth is preparing a Statement of Expectations for local governments relating to the prioritisation of road safety in the use of funds from the Roads to Recovery Program.

HEAVY VEHICLE REGULATION

The Council agreed the implementation package for the introduction of the national registration scheme for heavy vehicles. This package, which includes the necessary funding agreements and the national number plate, also features a commitment to a range of industry benefitting measures for 1 July 2018. These include removing the requirement for heavy vehicle registration stickers, more flexible and more consistent options for heavy vehicle registration transactions, and more seamless interstate registration transfer capability. Today's commitment represents the first in a series of ongoing commitments by Ministers to deliver this long sought reform.

The 2017-18 Heavy Vehicle Road Safety Initiatives work plan to be undertaken by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) was also endorsed by Council. The 2017-18 work plan will target a range of industry and government recommended areas, and will include national heavy vehicle monitoring, share the road, chain of responsibility, proof of concept infrastructure, and rest stop sharing. As with the current work plan, the 2017-18 work plan utilises funding provided by the Commonwealth from the now-defunct Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal. The NHVR will report to the Council on the work plan in May 2018.

A range of heavy vehicle policy initiatives designed to boost Australia's heavy vehicle fleet productivity through increases in allowable volumetric load capacity without increasing mass limits were also agreed. These initiatives include greater as-of-right, general access for Performance Based Standard Level 1 heavy vehicles where the infrastructure allows it, greater

accountability by road managers to the NHVR for road access requests, and increased access for heavy vehicles 4.6 m in height that meet prescribed conditions. Modelling undertaken under the auspices of the National Transport Commission suggests up to \$1 billion per year in realisable benefits can be achieved by industry from these measures.

Council also agreed that jurisdictions, industry stakeholders and the NHVR establish a heavy vehicle Written off Vehicles Register as a priority and that New South Wales will lead the working group to progress this work.

RAIL REGULATION

The Council welcomed the historic July 2017 transition of Queensland into the national rail safety scheme. This step by Queensland to the Rail Safety National Law, marks the last in a series of jurisdictions to adopt the scheme, and from July 2017, will give the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator 100% safety coverage of Australia's rail sector.

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

The Hon Darren Chester MP	Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (Commonwealth)
The Hon Paul Fletcher MP	Minister for Urban Infrastructure (Commonwealth)
The Hon Melinda Pavey MP	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; Ports (Victoria)
The Hon Jackie Trad MP	Deputy Premier; Minister for Transport; Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Queensland)
The Hon Mark Bailey MP	Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports (Queensland)
The Hon Rita Saffioti MLA	Minister for Transport, Planning and Lands (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 Shane Rattenbury MLA	Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs (Australian Capital Territory)
Mayor Damien Ryan	Vice President (Australian Local Government Association)