



Austroads submission to: 2009 National Transport Commission Review

Purpose of submission

This submission is intended to provide the review committee with information about Austroads and the relationship between Austroads and the National Transport Commission (NTC) and the role Austroads plays in the formulation of national transport policy.

This is an important aspect of understanding the relationship between the NTC and road authorities and road regulatory bodies within jurisdictions.

It is understood that most members of Austroads will be making their own submissions. This submission is not an attempt to aggregate those submissions.

About Austroads

Austroads is the association of Australian and New Zealand road transport and traffic authorities.

Austroads aims to provide research and advice for the integrated development, management and operation of the Australian and New Zealand road systems, through:

- Promoting national uniformity and harmony
- Eliminating unnecessary duplication
- Identifying and promoting best practice
- Providing input to ATC and the Standing Committee on Transport (SCOT).

It has an annual work program of approximately \$10m which is funded by its member organisations which are the road authorities in each of the six states, the two territories, plus the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Australian Local Government Association and NZ Transport Agency. Observer representatives also attend Austroads Council meetings from ARRB Transport Research, the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, NTC and the Department of Transport Papua New Guinea.

Austroads is governed by a Council, comprising the chief executive, or their nominee from each member organisation. The Council meets three times each year and has responsibility for providing clear strategic direction. It also monitors the performance of Austroads against strategic objectives and approves the annual work plan for Austroads.

Austroads work program is guided by its strategic plan. The current plan covers the five years from 2007 to 2012. It includes the following strategic priorities Austroads has identified for that period and the objectives for each:

- Asset management – *to minimise the whole of life cost of road and bridge assets to meet the transport task*
 - Capability – *skills development and retention*
 - Freight management – *to address the future freight task*
 - Network optimisation – *to improve the productivity and reliability of the road network in moving people and goods*
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- Registration and licensing – *to enhance the security and integrity of registration and licensing information*
- Road safety – *to reduce road trauma through a safe systems approach*
- Technology – *to promote best practice in technology.*

Austroads utilises the expertise of its member organisations to achieve its outcomes. This provides opportunities for the staff of member organisations to participate in the operation of Austroads and the development and delivery of projects. It also encourages a collegiate, collaborative approach and facilitates learning, development, sharing and a high level of consistency across jurisdictions. The work to be undertaken in the Strategic Plan is divided into programs which broadly align with the strategic priorities.

Program managers are responsible for the development and management of annual work programs made up of projects that address their strategic objectives. Program managers report to Council on the performance of each program. They work on Austroads activities for a proportion of their time in conjunction with their regular responsibilities within their own organisations.

Task forces and review panels are established with representatives of member and some observer organisations. Task forces identify areas of interest and develop project proposals; oversee projects; promote the dissemination of results and provide a forum for the exchange of information between Austroads member and related organisations. Review panels oversee the development of Austroads guides.

Austroads produces a comprehensive range of technical guides. These are adopted by road agencies for their use in the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of their road networks. This avoids substantial duplication of effort which would occur through the independent development of separate jurisdictional documentation. These technical guides also produce a high level of national consistency. This is a significant benefit to the transport sector as a whole.

Relationship with NTC

There is a close working relationship between Austroads and the NTC. There is a formal agreement between Austroads and NTC which is designed to:

- promote cooperative and mutually supportive activities between Austroads and NTC
- broadly identify the respective roles of Austroads (and Austroads member organisations) and NTC in the research, policy development and implementation of road transport regulatory reform
- provide a framework for the coordination of the development and implementation of road transport regulatory and operational reform in Australia.

In essence the agreement says that the policy development role is the responsibility of NTC while the two organisations collaborate on research and implementation.



Austroads seeks to achieve harmonisation of regulatory practices between member organisations. This is consistent with NTC's objectives. The benefit to NTC and to Austroads member organisations is greatest when this can be done through agreement and consensus. Where a national statutory approach is required, that is the responsibility of NTC. However, NTC can use Austroads processes to ensure that the recommended approach is practical and capable of effective implementation by road authorities within jurisdictions.

The Chief Executive of NTC attends Austroads Council meetings as an observer and in accordance with the agreement, NTC staff also attend meetings of several Austroads task forces including:

- Registration and licensing
- Freight
- Safety
- Network.

Also as per the agreement, there have been a number of joint research projects undertaken between NTC and Austroads. These include:

- AS1335 – Improved Cost Allocation Rules by Road Type (including unsealed roads)
- AS1336 – Examine the Technical Requirements of Alternatives to PAYGO
- AS1337 – Establishing a New National Pavement Maintenance Database
- AT1394 – Understanding Wear and Cost Implications of Incremental Loads on the Road Network (Optimal Mass Limits)
- CS1338 – Improving Local Road Expenditure Data Provision
- TS1397 – PBS Bridge Loading Package - scoping project
- TS1398 – Develop ESA (Equivalent Standard Axles) Relationships for all Heavy Vehicle Classes Using Both an Average and a Distribution Approach Methodology
- TS1399 – Investigate Cost Allocation Relationships for Bridges in Relation to Heavy Vehicles

As well as a strong and formal relationship with NTC, Austroads also has a strong relationship with research bodies including ARRB and BITRE, both of which also have observer status at Austroads meetings.

Austroads role in progressing the national transport policy agenda

Historically Austroads has had a strong affiliation with ATC through SCOT. The advent of a new approach to development and the delivery of national transport reform in early 2008 has provided an opportunity to reinforce that relationship. Austroads has and provides strategic direction and support as well as providing solid technical and operational input into national decision making and policy setting through ATC.

Austroads has well established mechanisms for effective engagement of road agencies and the delivery of technical innovation and reform. It has made an effective and substantial contribution to improving the management, utilisation and capacity of the road network. It has an effective and efficient mechanism for collective decision making across jurisdictions on operational and technical issues which obviates the need for relatively minor matters to be referred to ministers for resolution.



Austroads has managed a number of projects on behalf of SCOT for ATC and more recently COAG. Such projects include:

- projects in conjunction with NTC which provide the technical basis for road reform and the implementation of performance based standards
- business system requirements for the operation of mass distance charging
- development of the framework for IT based access to the road network, which has culminated in the establishment of Transport Certification Australia and the roll out of the IT based access
- heavy vehicle safety issues, including auditing rest areas against national guidelines
- undertaking the current operational trial of digital tachographs and speed enforcement technology
- national harmonisation of driver licence and vehicle registration practices
- contribution to the development of the National Identity Security Strategy including participation in the pilot Document Verification System via NEVDIS.

Conclusion

Austroads has long been highly regarded for the quality of its technical work and publications. It also has the capacity to provide strategic direction and support to the development of national transport policy through SCOT and ATC.

There are formal and informal mechanisms for Austroads to work with NTC to achieve agreed national objectives. It complements NTC, enabling it to achieve substantially more than it would be able to do otherwise. It effectively utilises road authority resources to supplement those of NTC.

The relationship between the two organisations is important and mutually beneficial. Austroads is keen to ensure that these benefits continue and is available to contribute to the ongoing task of national.

AGREEMENT

between

AUSTROADS

and

NATIONAL TRANSPORT COMMISSION



PREAMBLE

Austrroads

Austrroads is the association of Australian and New Zealand road transport and traffic authorities whose purpose is to contribute to the achievement of improved Australian and New Zealand transport related outcomes. Austrroads membership comprises the six Australian state and two territory road transport and traffic authorities, the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services, the Australian Local Government Association and Transit New Zealand.

National Transport Commission

The National Transport Commission (NTC) is established under an agreement between the Commonwealth, states and territories to progress regulatory and operational reform for road, rail and intermodal transport to deliver and sustain uniform or nationally consistent outcomes. The NTC works with governments, industry and other stakeholders to introduce nationally consistent policies, legislation and guidelines for land transport. In its work in road transport, much of the focus of the NTC is on heavy vehicles. The NTC's aims for road transport are to:

- make it more innovative, efficient and safer
- make transport regulation more nationally consistent and effective
- reduce road transport's environmental impacts.

CONTEXT

A closely co-ordinated working relationship between Austrroads and NTC is crucial for the success of road transport regulatory reform. Road and licensing authorities have primary responsibility for the implementation of road transport regulatory reform which is required to achieve the desired objectives of all the parties. In those areas this can be best achieved through collaborative action using Austrroads processes.

PURPOSE

This agreement is designed to:

- promote cooperative and mutually supportive activities between Austrroads and NTC
- broadly identify the respective roles of Austrroads (and Austrroads member organisations) and NTC in the research, policy development and implementation of road transport regulatory reform
- provide a framework for the coordination of the development and implementation of road transport regulatory and operational reform in Australia.

SCOPE

Research

Research on road transport issues is undertaken by a number of agencies both within Australasia and internationally. NTC draws on this research in performing its role in policy development. Where gaps in research are identified, NTC will explore a range of possible mechanisms for obtaining the necessary research results. This may include projects undertaken by Austrroads.

NTC will work with Austrroads program managers and participate in Austrroads program development processes to identify forward research requirements. This includes input into the development of Austrroads strategic plan and into the development of annual work programs.

Similarly, Austroads will participate in the development of the NTC strategic plan and forward work program.

Policy development

The primary responsibility of the NTC is the development of national policy on transport regulatory and operational reform, for consideration by the Australian Transport Council. Austroads, as a key stakeholder, will have input into this process, mainly through related research projects undertaken. Austroads members also have input through SCOT and TACE.

A key area for research relates to the policy development to achieve optimal performance of both heavy vehicles and the road network in addressing the projected freight task based on improved knowledge of vehicle/infrastructure interaction.

Implementation

Road and licensing authorities play the primary role in the implementation of road transport regulatory reform. Austroads provides a mechanism to ensure a coordinated national approach. The NTC plays an advisory, facilitative and monitoring role to Austroads members and the Australian Transport Council. The NTC also has a role in interpreting policy and legislative intent and verifying the implementation is consistent with that intent.

Where agreed, Austroads and the NTC will work together to produce guidelines and other supporting material to ensure that implementation of regulations is practical and achieves the policy objectives.

NTC will provide advice to Austroads on anticipated future implementation requirements, with sufficient notice to allow these to be addressed in the development of Austroads forward work program and completed in adequate time.

Operational matters

Austroads and NTC will collaborate on operational matters, including the technical issues relating to NTC reforms. NTC will be invited to nominate representatives to the relevant Austroads task forces and review panels

Monitoring Vehicle and Network Performance

Austroads will play an active role in monitoring vehicle and network performance in a range of areas. This monitoring may include vehicle condition, mass and speed as well as road network condition, and could be collected by a range of methods utilised by road authorities. Austroads and NTC will collaborate in the development of a national approach to monitoring data capture and management of both road authority and industry.

Joint projects

From time to time NTC and Austroads may undertake joint projects, such as performance based standards.

Any projects that either the NTC or Austroads seeks to propose as joint projects will need to be considered in the development of Austroads work program with input from jurisdictions through task forces and review panels. Where projects are initiated by SCOT, ATC or COAG, these would be considered as they arise in the same way as other Austroads projects initiated by these mechanisms.

Arrangements for these projects including funding by each organisation, project management and other resource commitments will be determined on a case by case basis, including the development of business cases for consideration by the Austroads Council and NTC Commissioners.

Monitoring and delivery of Projects

Where projects of mutual interest are approved by Austroads and the NTC, the parties agree to use best endeavours to ensure alignment of deliverables to meet the obligations of both parties.

CONSULTATION

The Executive Director of Austroads and the Chief Executive of the NTC, or their nominees, will confer at least twice annually and generally ahead of Austroads Council meetings, to coordinate activities between the two organisations.

VARIATION

This Agreement may be varied by both parties agreeing. Any such variation shall be set out in writing and signed by both parties.

DURATION

The terms of this Agreement between Austroads and NTC shall be from the date of signing until 31 March 2010.

TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

Austroads or the NTC may terminate this agreement at any time after giving 6 months written notice to the other party. Austroads and the NTC may jointly agree to terminate this agreement at any time.

SIGNED:

Chairman
Austroads
Date:

Chief Executive
NTC
Date: