National Surface Transport Security Strategy

September 2013

Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials’ Committee

Transport Security Committee
National Surface Transport Security Strategy (NSTSS)

Foreword

Australia is a terrorist target.

Surface transport systems, particularly urban mass passenger systems are attractive to terrorists, because they concentrate large numbers of people in urban areas at peak periods and at predictable times. They are likely to remain attractive targets for the foreseeable future.

Surface transport systems include heavy and light rail operations, ferries, buses and other road vehicles. These operations are vital to the efficient movement of the travelling public and the delivery of goods and services, and they are critical to the strength of Australia’s economy.

An Australian National Transport Security Strategy was first agreed in 2004 as a multi-modal response to the events of 11 September 2001 and other terrorist attacks on the transport sector.

The Strategy reflected the understanding of the surface transport security environment at that time. Further versions built upon the decisions of the Special Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Meeting on Counter-Terrorism in September 2005. It also drew from the recommendations and proposed objectives of various jurisdictional reviews, including those initiated through a decision of the Australian Transport Council and agreement by State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers. It was reviewed, updated and released as the National Surface Transport Security Strategy (the Strategy) in August 2009.

Consistent with the timeframe applied to the review of the National Counter-Terrorism Plan, the Strategy should be reviewed every 3 years (or more regularly as the Transport Security Committee sees fit).

Vision

The vision driving the Strategy is: Surface transport systems across Australia that are more secure and resilient to the effects of terrorism.
The Threat Context and the Transport Security Environment

Previous plots within Australia – as well as plots and attacks against transport systems overseas – reveal the enduring intent and capability of terrorists to target the transport sector.

Surface transport systems are attractive terrorist targets, because – depending on the nature of the transport operation – they may fulfil a number of the following criteria:

- These systems present a high potential for mass casualties.
- Transport systems are by their nature open to the public, very accessible and vulnerable to attack.
- An attack on a transport system could have a significant economic impact.
- Spectacular imagery is likely to be generated.
- There is significant opportunity for attack and likelihood of success.
- An attack against a transport system would make a symbolic statement that would resonate with terrorist objectives and the targeted communities.
- An attack would generate significant public fear and anxiety.

Terrorists have demonstrated a preference for mass-casualty transport sector attacks, commonly using improvised explosive devices, firearms or a combination of both in a mixed mode attack. Given these attack scenarios, preventive security and timely and effective responses to a threat or an attack incident are critical.

- Surface transport systems also store and transport dangerous goods such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear material which may make them attractive terrorist targets. Transport vehicles could also be used to deliver hidden explosive devices when undertaking an attack against other critical infrastructure.
- Terrorists are innovative, and their tactics continue to evolve. The dynamic nature of the threat means that even if preventive security measures are in place, they may not necessarily be successful in deterring or preventing an attack. There may be little or no warning of an attack against the surface transport sector before it occurs.

National Arrangements

Surface Transport security policy in Australia rests on two fundamentals:

- Regulatory responsibility for security in the surface transport sector rests with the state and territory governments; and
- Surface transport owners and operators have primary responsibility for security arrangements at their own facilities, assets and networks.

This Strategy supports the objectives of both the Intergovernmental Agreement on Australia’s Counter-Terrorism Arrangements (2002) and the Intergovernmental Agreement of Surface Transport Security (2005).
The Intergovernmental Agreement on Australia’s Counter-Terrorism Arrangements (2002) recognises the joint Commonwealth, State and Territory responsibility in contributing to the development and maintenance of a nation-wide counter-terrorism capability.

The subsequent Intergovernmental Agreement on Surface Transport Security (2005) more specifically aims to put in place arrangements to protect the community and Australia’s surface transport systems by:

- Reducing the likelihood that the surface transport system will be a target for terrorism and other security threats.
- Increasing the implementation of nationally consistent protective security planning and preventative measures in the surface transport systems, and
- Helping the surface transport sector across Australia to move consistently and more effectively to higher levels of alert when required.

The Intergovernmental Agreement on Surface Transport Security (2005) states that Transport Ministers – in conjunction with First Ministers and other responsible Ministers – are accountable for surface transport security outcomes.

The Transport Security Committee

Surface transport security outcomes are reported through the Transport Security Committee (TSC) to the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials’ Committee (TISOC), and through the TISOC to the Standing Council of Transport and Infrastructure (SCOTI).

The TSC comprises representatives from all States and Territories, and is an established forum through which to address transport security issues and coordinate policy implementation.

The TSC is responsible for developing and maintaining this strategy. In order to deliver the strategic objectives outlined in this strategy, the TSC also maintains a work program of initiatives that aims to mitigate security risks to the transport sector and complement the National Counter Terrorism Arrangements and other planning arrangements for security and emergency management as appropriately determined by each jurisdiction.

Scope of this Strategy

This strategy aims to foster consistent efforts and common strategic objectives across and within jurisdictions, while recognising that each jurisdiction will meet these objectives with regard to their respective legislative frameworks, contractual arrangements with surface transport operators and all-hazards approaches to security and emergency management.

The Strategy complements the National Counter-Terrorism Plan, supports the implementation of the National Terrorism Public Alert System, and complements the objectives of the National Security Statement, the National Security Strategy, the Counter Terrorism White Paper and the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy.

Guiding Principles

This Strategy and respective jurisdictional efforts to achieve its objectives are underpinned by the following Guiding Principles:
• Jurisdictions will take an **intelligence-led risk management** approach to surface transport security.

• The Commonwealth, States and Territories will **seek to develop consistency** in their respective approaches to surface transport security in order to foster greater security outcomes, notwithstanding differences that may be necessary to meet specific jurisdictional needs.

• A collaborative effort to achieve security outcomes may help to reduce costs in each jurisdiction, improve consistency for the surface transport sector, and help to **avoid unnecessary duplication** by sharing information, guidance material and lessons learnt.

• Governments will **work with** surface transport operators in their respective jurisdictions to address the risk of terrorism in the surface transport sector.

• Effective surface transport security programs will **increase the confidence** of the public and surface transport operators in the security of the surface transport system.

• **Prioritising and identifying vulnerabilities** in their operations by utilising appropriate risk management and best practice principles will assist surface transport operators to achieve effective transport security programs.

• Surface transport security will be approached from **cross-modal and inter-jurisdictional perspectives** to ensure threats are adequately understood and to maximise efficient movement of people and goods across modes and borders.

**Strategic Objectives**

National transport security strategic objectives are aligned to the achievement of the broad aims of the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Surface Transport Security*. Portfolio agencies and departments responsible for surface transport security in each jurisdiction will seek to:

• Take an intelligence-led risk management approach to surface transport security.

• Ensure that surface transport response arrangements of state and territory governments are in place in accordance with the National Counter-Terrorism Plan.

• Ensure respective transport security legislation and/or operators’ contracts are sufficiently strong to manage transport security risks in each jurisdiction.

• Maintain measures to determine security-identified surface transport operations within their jurisdictions that are at risk of being the target of terrorist activities.

• Ensure the effective communication of relevant intelligence and surface transport security information to surface transport system owners and operators.

• Promote best practice security risk management by providing surface transport owners and operators with access to guidance material to help implement nationally consistent preventative security measures.
• Encourage surface transport owners and operators to consider and understand the benefits of counter-terrorism security measures that offset their cost by bringing value and the greatest capacity to treat other risks including criminality to their businesses also.

• Promote scalability in surface transport security plans to enable operators to increase or decrease levels of security proportionate to any changes in the threat environment.

• Work with emergency services and first responders to enhance the development and coordination of incident response plans and promote effective surface transport security outcomes for the sector.

• Ensure that appropriate incident and suspicious activity reporting arrangements are in place so that information that may prevent an act of terrorism is provided to the police and National Security Hotline in a timely manner.

• Share lessons learned from surface transport security exercises or security incidents that may benefit broader national security outcomes such as building critical infrastructure resilience.

• Ensure exercises are developed and conducted involving surface transport security scenarios on an ongoing basis.

• Develop transport system resilience through oversight of risk management, business continuity and service continuity activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Acknowledging that primary responsibility for surface transport security lies with the states and territories, the parties recognise the following roles and responsibilities:

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth will:

(a) provide strategic leadership, guidelines and coordination in agreement with states and territories to develop a national approach to preventative surface transport security;

(b) develop, with state and territory governments and private surface transport operators, guidance and other material to help implement nationally-consistent preventative security measures for surface transport;

(c) engage with national transport industry bodies to ensure that national transport security arrangements are developed with national industry perspectives in mind and receive due attention by industry decision-makers;

(d) support, in consultation with state and territory government officials, transport sector forums established under critical infrastructure protection arrangements to allow for the sharing of information between transport owners and operators;
(e) in relation to surface transport services owned by the Commonwealth, ensure that, consistent with the National Guidelines for Protecting Critical Infrastructure from Terrorism, the following activities are undertaken:

(i) security risk assessments are conducted in accordance with the accredited risk management standard set by Standards Australia,

(ii) security plans are developed incorporating measures that correspond to the four levels of National Counter-Terrorism Alert (Low; Medium; High; and Extreme), and

(iii) appropriate preventative security measures are implemented and are tested, reviewed and updated on a regular basis;

(f) in relation to intelligence and related information:

(i) communicate relevant intelligence including strategic threat assessments and other surface transport security information to the states and territories, and

(ii) work cooperatively with state and territory officials to communicate strategic threat assessment material and its policy and planning implications to the surface transport industry;

(g) advise state and territory governments on information related to incidents and suspicious activity that would help the development of surface transport security intelligence; and

(h) ensure that the Commonwealth’s response arrangements are in place in accordance with the National Counter-Terrorism Plan and conduct or participate in exercises involving surface transport security scenarios on an ongoing basis.

States and Territories

3.2.1 The states and territories will:

(a) provide leadership and whole-of-government coordination to develop and implement a nationally-consistent approach to preventative surface transport security within their jurisdictions;

(b) determine security-identified surface transport operations within their jurisdictions taking into consideration intelligence from Commonwealth and state and territory government authorities and relevant risk assessments;

(c) ensure that appropriate action is undertaken by security-identified surface transport operators within their jurisdiction such as:

(i) a security risk assessment conducted in accordance with the accredited risk management model set by Standards Australia,

(ii) a security plan developed that incorporates measures that correspond to the four levels of National Counter-Terrorism Alert (Low; Medium; High and Extreme), and
(iii) appropriate preventative security measures implemented and reviewed on a regular basis;

(d) ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to assess and audit the security plans of security-identified surface transport operations;

(e) provide guidance and educational material on security to surface transport operators;

(f) provide surface transport operators with access to guidance material to help implement consistent preventative security measures for surface transport;

(g) communicate relevant intelligence and surface transport security information to surface transport operators within their jurisdiction;

(h) ensure that appropriate incident and suspicious activity reporting arrangements are in place; and

(i) ensure that response arrangements of state and territory governments are in place in accordance with the National Counter-Terrorism Plan and conduct or participate in exercises involving surface transport security scenarios on an ongoing basis.