

STATEMENT ON THE 5 FEBRUARY 2024 MEETING OF THE HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW REFORM IMPLEMENTATION STEERING COMMITTEE

19 February 2024

The eleventh meeting of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) Reform Implementation Steering Committee meeting was held via MS Teams on Monday 5 February 2024.

The Steering Committee was attended by the following members:

- Mr Jim Betts, Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA)
- Mr Matt Fuller representing Mr Josh Murray, Secretary, Transport for NSW (NSW)
- Ms Sally Stannard, Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads (Queensland)
- Ms Denise McIntyre, Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of State Growth (Tasmania).

The Steering Committee continues to receive independent advice from:

- Mr Ken Kanofski
- Ms Amy Crawford, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).
- Mr Sanjiv Sathiah, Director, Transport and Infrastructure Policy, ALGA.

Both the National Transport Commission (NTC) and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) were in attendance.

The Steering Committee noted good progress had been made on legislative drafting for the amendments to the primary law agreed by Ministers as part of the May 2023 Decision RIS. The NTC has been busy analysing 52 detailed written submissions made in response to the October 2023 Consultation RIS, that canvassed options for matters to be dealt with in regulations and other subordinate instruments (such as improved access, fatigue management and the review of offences).

The extension to the deadline granted by Ministers, to now have the final full legislative package submitted by the end of this year, has given more breathing space to allow industry and government stakeholders to fully engage on these options and their further refinement.

The NTC is keeping stakeholders informed on progress, and seeking further feedback on options, through the Reform Advisory Committee (RAC+). The Steering Committee emphasised the focus of effort must remain on the core legislative reforms Ministers agreed were in scope for the December 2024 package.

Good progress is also being made on non-legislative reforms, with initial milestones for some measures having been completed in 2023 (such as a new Statement of Expectations for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, and the work of NSW and Austroads to progress a range of work under the National Access Framework for Heavy Vehicles).

Regrettably there will be a delay with operationalising non-legislative reform 8.1, with the reform requiring jurisdictions that do not already offer monthly direct debit payments for heavy vehicle registration to consider the feasibility of doing so. Following some meetings and inter-governmental workshops in 2023, it appears offering monthly payments will not be feasible in the near future for most corporate registrants. This is due to the cost and complexity of the modifications that would be required to update legacy registration systems. However, given new systems are under medium-term development in some jurisdictions, as well as some jurisdictions making efforts to find near-term work-arounds for heavy vehicle operators, the Steering Committee will revisit this as a priority in 2025.

The Steering Committee noted a first informal meeting of the National Automated Access System (NAAS) Oversight Committee was held on 22 January. The NAAS Oversight Committee will provide oversight of the development of a single national system (the NAAS), working towards alignment of the three workstreams already underway by participating states, Austroads and the NHVR. The NAAS Oversight Committee will report to the Steering Committee regularly on progress towards establishment of the NAAS. Queensland is planning to host an industry briefing in early March, updating industry on progress towards the NAAS via a webinar.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for 18 March 2024.