



# INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT MINISTERS MEETING

FRIDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2020

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The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of Infrastructure and Transport Ministers was held today via teleconference. Membership comprises Infrastructure, Transport, and Planning Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association.

Given the inability to meet in person, Ministers welcomed written submissions from the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP Safety), Cohda Wireless, the Australasian Automobile Association, Australasian Constructors Association, Roads Australia and the Australasian Railway Association.

Ministers also welcomed National Cabinet's endorsement of the recommendations from the Review of COAG Councils and Ministerial Forums led by Peter Conran AM. Ministers committed to working collaboratively in the transition to the new federated governing model. This includes retaining the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting and establishing the National Cabinet Reform Committee on Infrastructure and Transport.

## **FAST TRACKING OF INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OUR ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

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Ministers reaffirmed the role transport infrastructure construction activity will play in Australia's economic recovery from COVID-19 and their commitment to move projects through assessment processes and into construction faster by targeting administrative bottlenecks. Ministers noted that pre-construction acceleration can be best supported by adequate resourcing, prioritisation, information sharing and accountability. Ministers discussed the appropriate threshold for Infrastructure Australia assessment of business cases, noting that the current \$100 million threshold for Australian Government funding has not been adjusted since it was first set. Ministers agreed to work together to improve processes for Project Proposal Reports for projects funded under the Infrastructure Investment Program and will consider shared progress towards this objective at their next meeting.

## **MAKING OUR ROADS SAFER**

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### *National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030*

Ministers considered a draft of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021–2030 and accompanying Fact Sheets.

A draft of the Strategy is expected to be released in early 2021 and will be available via the Office of Road Safety website, including information on how to provide input. This ensures stakeholders will have the opportunity to contribute before the final Strategy is considered by Ministers for endorsement in 2021.

Ministers also agreed an interim target of 50% reduction in the annual per capita fatality rate, and an interim target of 30% reduction in the per capita serious injury rate by 2030. Interim targets are being used while modelling of the impact of a range of potential road safety countermeasures is completed.

Ministers also noted options for tracking delivery of the new Strategy and Action Plan and the potential for establishing an advisory group for the National Road Safety Strategy.

### *Rules to regulate Driver Distraction*

Ministers considered the National Transport Commission's (NTC) proposal through a technology-neutral approach to regulate interactions with technology while driving. Ministers agreed to work towards amending the Australian Road Rules.

Ministers also discussed broader issues in relation to driver distraction, including improving data collection and developing nationally consistent messaging and guidelines. Ministers agreed that the NTC would work with jurisdictions to ensure jurisdictional enforcement requirements are met.

### *Roadside Advertising*

Ministers agreed the need for further research to better understand the impacts of roadside advertising on driver distraction and will task a joint industry government research committee to develop a methodology and make recommendations on a national research program.

### *Automated vehicles*

Ministers agreed to revised national trial guidelines to improve the processes, safety management and reporting for automated vehicles. The NTC, with governments and others, will report back to Ministers in November 2021 on an evaluation framework for trials and the scope for reviewing Australia's overall readiness for the commercial deployment of automated vehicles. A national working group has been created to focus on government access to, and use of, vehicle generated data.

### *Australian Design Rules*

Ministers reaffirmed their support for aligning the Australian Design Rules with the United Nations standards.

## **IMPROVING HEAVY VEHICLE PRODUCTIVITY**

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### *Heavy Vehicle Road Reform*

Ministers approved two elements of the draft framework for national service level standards for roads as the basis for public consultation in 2021, and agreed a plan to finalise the framework by November 2021. The framework will establish nationally-consistent road categories and will set out the different aspects of road performance that road users and managers have said matter most – such as safety, reliability and efficiency.



Ministers also noted the broad support expressed during recent public consultation for the main elements of the proposed Heavy Vehicle Road Reform.

Further decisions on the package of reforms – to the way heavy vehicle charges are set and invested – are planned for the first half of 2021.

#### *Update on the Heavy Vehicle National Law Review (the Review)*

Ministers noted the NTC's progress on the Heavy Vehicle National Law Review and also noted the establishment of a Reform Reference Committee (RRC) to advise the NTC, comprising representatives from industry, jurisdictions, regulators and the police. Ministers noted that the NTC is on track to provide a package of policy and regulatory reforms for consideration by Ministers at their May 2021 meeting.

#### *Heavy Vehicle Safety*

Ministers acknowledged the progress made towards implementing the recommendations of the Review of Oversize Overmass Heavy Vehicle Access Arrangements, with implementation of 29 of the 38 recommendations now completed. Ministers welcomed the positive impact of actions taken to streamline and simplify access arrangements, including through the introduction of exemption notices.

Ministers further reaffirmed their commitment to a National Written-Off Heavy Vehicles Register with timing of alignment and implementation to progress on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis as soon as practicable based on existing arrangements and needs.

## **MORE EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT FREIGHT AND SUPPLY CHAINS**

#### *National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy*

Ministers endorsed the first annual progress report for the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy, which highlights Australia's freight network performance over the last 12 months including insights gained during the COVID-19 pandemic and progress against over 350 initiatives across the country.

The report includes a statement by the independent Freight Industry Reference Panel, encouraging governments and industry to leverage best practice examples identified in the report, and to ensure accurate, timely and comparable data is gathered to measure freight movements through supply chains across jurisdictional boundaries and transport modes. For more information, visit [www.freightaustralia.gov.au](http://www.freightaustralia.gov.au).

#### *National Rail Action Plan*

Ministers noted the progress of the National Rail Action Plan to improve harmonisation, interoperability, and skills and labour in the rail sector. Work to date has highlighted the benefits of investment in new technology and has identified key interfaces in the national network, as well as critical and emerging skills needs in the rail sector. Ministers also agreed to the next stage of work, which includes developing common standards and



operating rules, strengthening links between industry and centres of excellence, and providing targeted career pathways. The NTC will report back to Ministers on further progress in May 2021.

### *National Approach to Stevedore Infrastructure Charges*

Ministers endorsed for the National Transport Commission to develop voluntary national guidelines for applying stevedore infrastructure and access charges (both their introduction and increase) at Australia's container ports. The introduction and setting of charges at container ports has flow-on effects throughout the supply chain. The development of these guidelines will provide greater certainty and transparency for both stevedores and landside transport operators and support continued investment in terminal facilities.



## PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

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The Hon Michael McCormack MP	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development (Commonwealth)
The Hon Scott Buchholz MP	Assistant Minister for Road Safety and Freight Transport (Commonwealth)
The Hon Mark Coulton MP	Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government (Commonwealth)
The Hon Andrew Constance MP	Minister for Transport and Roads (New South Wales)
The Hon Paul Toole MP	Minister for Regional Transport and Roads (New South Wales)
The Hon Jacinta Allan MP	Minister for Transport Infrastructure (Victoria)
The Hon Ben Carroll MP	Minister for Public Transport; Roads and Road Safety (Victoria)
The Hon Steven Miles MP	Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure Local Government and Planning (Queensland)
The Hon Mark Bailey MP	Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Queensland)
The Hon Corey Wingard MP	Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (South Australia)
The Hon Rita Saffioti MLA	Minister for Transport; Planning (Western Australia)
The Hon Michael Ferguson MP	Minister for Infrastructure (Tasmania)
The Hon Eva Lawler MLA	Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (Northern Territory)
Chris Steel MLA	Minister for Transport and City Services; Minister for Skills Special Minister of State (Australian Capital Territory)
Cr Linda Scott	President (Australian Local Government Association)

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