National Freight Data Hub Response

Introduction

International Forwarders & Customs Brokers Association of Australia Ltd. (IFCBAAA)

IFCBAAA is Australia's leading peak national body representing members' interests in international trade logistics and supply chain management service provision.

We are committed to being the single voice for international freight forwarders and licensed customs brokers, operators of premises licensed by the Australian Border Force for the holding and movement of goods subject to customs controls, and other associated groups involved in international trade.

IFCBAAA represents its members and industry in a diverse spectrum of domestic and international trade committees, forums and discussion groups. In representing its members,

IFCBAAA also represents the interests of the customers of its members being importers and exporters and those providing goods to importers and exporters. As will be clear, IFCBAAA represents (whether directly or indirectly) all parties in the international and domestic supply chain and has done so for many years.

IFCBAAA was recently established through the merger of the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia Ltd. (CBFCA) and the Australian Federation of International Forwarders Ltd. (AFIF).

Further details of IFCBAAA, its credentials and its involvement in the movement and clearance of goods in and out of Australia are available at www.ifcbaa.com

Background

IFCBAAA was invited to participate in a stakeholders webinar and requested to provide a submission to the Federal Government’s development of a National Freight Data Hub.

A summary of the Government’s proposal

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC) is leading a process to settle the design of a National Freight Data Hub. The Hub will enable freight data creators, data owners and data users to more easily and securely access and share freight data. Better access to robust freight data will help businesses, governments and researchers make data-driven insights to solve business challenges.
The Australian Government has committed $8.5 million to improve national freight data. Access to robust freight data will help industry and governments plan, make better operational and investment decisions and be more resilient and responsive.

The commitment includes: $5.2 million to settle the design of a National Freight Data Hub (the Hub). The Hub will identify freight data priorities and host or link to data. It will include arrangements for data collection, protection, dissemination and hosting.

**Purpose**

Three purposes of the Hub were agreed with stakeholders in 2019. They are to enhance collection of and access to freight data, across all modes, to:

1. Enable end-to-end performance **evaluation** for Australia’s freight system
2. Improve **planning** for infrastructure and transport network investment decisions
3. Support day to day **operations** by fostering data standards and exchange, and provide timely insights about the freight system performance and bottlenecks to industry

**Functions**

Stakeholders want the Hub to have three main functions:

- Leadership and innovation
- Open data
- Data exchange

The business case will consider arrangements for data collection, protection, dissemination and hosting across these purposes and functions. The Hub will take a leadership position to facilitate agreed data standards which will enable the efficient sharing of data.

**National Freight Data Hub Options Discussion Paper**

**IFCBAA Response**

IFCBAA provides the following commentary in response to the National Freight Data Hub Options Discussion Paper

IFCBAA cannot respond on the technical aspects of the preferred model of systems technologies and architecture. Our members operate with many different IT systems, configurations, software providers, packages and perspectives. These views would be best sourced directly from industry providers.

IFCBAA recognises the need for improved freight data to enable the government and major infrastructure developers to plan and make better operational and investment decisions which benefit the country.

Improving supply chain efficiency through capturing freight location, movements and performance data, is one of the aims of the Hub project. ie. what, where and when freight is being moved and how much?

The government is promoting the Hub as open access.

The National Freight Hub is not a Trade Community System, it collects data from industry participants and enables the data to be shared.

The Hub is not intended to replace existing systems being used by businesses to support day to day freight operations, rather it will likely draw data from those systems and provide aggregated data back to improve efficiency.
IFCBAAs questions

The Hub’s data integrity would appear to be reliant on capturing data from all identified participants in the supply chain.

What is the incentive for participants in the supply chain who create and hold the data, or the software provider that transmits the data, to provide the data into the government’s national data hub?

If participants are not compensated for providing the information voluntarily, will the government require industry to provide the data, compulsorily? ie. not unlike the ABS requiring companies to provide certain business data and they are fined if it’s not provided.

Will stakeholders providing data to the Hub for free be able to obtain data back from the Hub for free, or, will this data be required to be purchased?

Safeguarding confidentiality of commercially sensitive data provided by stakeholders is imperative.

IFCBAA would expect the government consults fully with industry on the key design elements of the Hub.

- Data
- Technology
- Governance
- Funding
- Regulation

IFCBAA supports the concept of the National Freight Data Hub as an open access, free exchange of freight data, to and from industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this feedback. IFCBAA would like to continue to participate in the consultation and design process and looks forward to further discussion.