



Transport and Infrastructure Council

Communiqué

MELBOURNE

FRIDAY, 22 November 2019

The 12th meeting of the Transport and Infrastructure Council (Council) was held in Melbourne today. Council comprises Transport, Infrastructure and Planning Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association.

Council held a pre-meeting industry consultation session where ministers heard from Australian business about their experience deploying new technologies – connected and automated vehicles, low and zero emissions vehicles, intelligent transport systems, and freight and mass transit systems. Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering CEO and Fellow, Dr Margaret Hartley, who facilitated the session, and to the senior industry presenters from General Motors, Woolworths, Cohda Wireless and Rio Tinto.

Ministers discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, including how governments and industry can take practical steps to support our economy and protect the health of our communities by better harnessing recycled materials, returning them to productive use. To support the COAG Waste Export Ban and the National Waste Action Plan, Ministers asked officials to:

- identify any significant procurement opportunities over coming months such as major road projects that could use recycled material; and
- prioritise the development of standards to support the use of recycled materials in road construction.

Officials will report back to Council on progress at its first meeting in 2020.

Ministers also discussed concerns regarding the Commonwealth Department of Social Services' assessment of payments to the taxi and hire car industry following regulatory reform. This is particularly in relation to payments made to individuals experiencing financial hardship as a result of the reform, receipt of these hardship payments has detrimentally impacted the income support received by these individuals.

SUPPORTING THE UPTAKE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

The session with industry informed Ministers' discussion about the actions governments and others need to take to realise the opportunities new technologies offer to improve safety, productivity, accessibility and sustainability.

Ministers emphasised the importance of a nationally consistent approach to connected and automated vehicles and agreed this requires collaborative and coordinated action by all tiers of government, in partnership with industry and others. Building on the [National Policy Framework for Land Transport Technology and Action Plan](#) that Council had endorsed at its previous meeting, members affirmed the importance of the National Transport Commission (NTC) work to update guidelines to support larger-scale, cross border trials of automated vehicles. The Council also considered the readiness of Australia's physical and digital infrastructure for uptake of connected and automated vehicles, and enabling the development and deployment of Mobility as a Service.

Council considered the many initiatives underway to address the network consequences of increased uptake of low and zero emissions vehicles - the Commonwealth's National Electric Vehicle Strategy as well as state and territory government strategies and the Council's Low and Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan. Ministers committed to: continue their efforts to encourage purchases of low and zero emissions vehicles; prepare the electricity grid for a larger electric vehicle fleet; coordinate the rollout of charging infrastructure; and consider the revenue implications of electric vehicles.

MAKING OUR ROADS SAFER

Building on the findings from the *Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy*, Council committed to the framework for the next National Road Safety Strategy and positioning Australia to achieve the vision zero target by 2050. Council agreed the National Road Safety Strategy for the decade to 2030 will be underpinned by the Safe System principles and include a 2030 national target for reduced road deaths and serious injuries. Council recognised responsibility for road safety rests with all levels of governments, with the Australian Government Office of Road Safety leading the development of the next Strategy, working closely with states, territories, local government, Austroads and other Council bodies.

Council has framed the next Strategy around three key themes: Safe Roads, Safe Vehicles, and Safe Road Use. Safe Road Use will improve the safety of all road users, including vulnerable road users such as cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians, and discourage high risk behaviour. Speed will be considered within each of these themes. Council agreed the next Strategy will complement and support state, territory and local government road safety strategies and plans.

Council will consider the detailed policy priorities, milestones and targets for the next Strategy at its next meeting. The final Strategy and first Action Plan will be considered at its final meeting of 2020.

Council noted progress on actions agreed by Council at its last meeting, and that appropriate levels of investment and resources will need to be provided by all jurisdictions to ensure the goals of the next Strategy can be delivered.

Council commended the work of all jurisdictions to reduce road trauma through responses to the Inquiry into the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020. The final response and implementation arrangements for the Inquiry recommendations will be published by December 2019. Council also agreed to release the 2018 Safety Performance Indicators to monitor progress on the Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020.



Ministers expressed concern about the risks to drivers posed by defective Takata airbags and looked for opportunities to continue the Australian Government's strong action recalling defective Takata airbags to protect Australian drivers.

Ministers also discussed the approach to ensuring the safety of drivers after having suffered a stroke, with NTC to review the current arrangements as part of a scheduled review of fitness to drive guidelines in July 2020.

With a focus on addressing the devastating impacts of drug-impaired driving, the Council commended the continuing work of the National Drug Driving Working Group and its focus on maintaining Australia's position as a global leader in addressing drug-impaired driving and conducting roadside drug testing.

DELIVERING FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY

Infrastructure Market Conditions

In November 2018 Council committed to further support delivery of the substantial infrastructure pipeline across Australia. Council acknowledged the scale of investment in transport infrastructure and the pressure this is placing on market capacity and capability, particularly in Sydney, Melbourne and South East Queensland.

Following the August 2019 COAG direction to provide advice on jurisdictions' infrastructure market conditions, Council endorsed an initial analysis, and sought further investigation on policy options to:

- better plan and match transport infrastructure construction demand and supply;
- deliver best practice major project procurement and risk allocation settings; and
- review infrastructure construction regulatory arrangements.

Commonwealth and state officials have been tasked to develop policy options and next steps to address challenges in the infrastructure market for consideration by Council, and submission to COAG for its first meeting of 2020.

Council noted advice on implementation of the seven high-level principles for infrastructure capability that Council endorsed in November 2018. The principles encourage government and industry to work together to deliver greater balance and diversity in the sector, address skill shortages, and manage infrastructure project costs. Council commends government agencies and industry for working together to strengthen the sustainability of the sector.

Supporting rail in Australia

Recognising the rapid expansion in public investment in the delivery of rail infrastructure all across the country, Council agreed to a National Rail Action Plan covering skills and workforce issues and harmonisation of standards. The Plan focuses on actions to meet the rail sector's critical skills and labour needs and to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and safety of Australia's rail system by continuing to align or harmonise operating rules, infrastructure and operational standards and systems across the nation's rail network.



Council noted the work on harmonisation of rail operating systems while ensuring further inter-operability of train control and communication systems is important work that is long overdue. The first stage of harmonisation work will identify options for change for consideration by Ministers in 2020.

The National Rail Action Plan contributes to delivering the National Rail Vision and taken together with work to modernise the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002, promote greater competition in the infrastructure construction sector, and technology actions including the rail industry's Smart Rail Route Map, forms a comprehensive national rail plan. The Action Plan will be available on the Council website.

Heavy Vehicle Road Reform

Acknowledging the potential productivity gains of changes to the way heavy vehicle charges are set and spent, Council agreed to develop implementation details on a package of reforms for consultation and decisions in 2020. The key elements of the package are:

- using the National Service Level Standards Framework for Roads to inform investment planning;
- independent determination of what spending is recoverable from heavy vehicle charges using the National Service Level Standards Framework for Roads;
- independent setting of heavy vehicle charges, (noting the 2018 Decision Regulation Impact Statement on Independent Price Regulation of Heavy Vehicle Charges); and
- dedicating (hypothecating) heavy vehicle revenue to fund and finance roads.

Council discussed the importance of implementing robust and credible institutions to provide assurance to users. Council agreed to continue consideration of these reforms in collaboration with the Council on Federal Financial Relations.

The National Service Level Standards Framework for Roads, which Council agreed to develop in 2018, will be the foundation of the new system. Council noted the progress to date in developing the Framework, ahead of consultation with heavy vehicle road users in 2020 on provisional road categories and customer levels of service.

Council noted an update from the NTC on the progress of the review of the Heavy Vehicle National Law, including the recent workshops, and endorsed the NTC's plan to publish a regulation impact statement for consultation in early 2020. The Council also noted an update from the Expert Panel providing independent advice to Council on the review of the Heavy Vehicle National Law.

Heavy Vehicle Charges

Council considered the advice of the NTC, and acknowledged that, following recent growth in government investment in roads, there was a growing gap between road expenditure and revenue from charges. National heavy vehicle charges, which are designed to recover the heavy vehicle share of road expenditure, have essentially been frozen since 2014.

However, in reaching its position Council was very mindful of the challenges faced by transport industry operators, and having sought the views of industry representatives earlier in the day, Council identified a



preference for charges to rise by 2.5 per cent in 2020-21 and 2.5 per cent in 2021-22, subject to consideration by governments where necessary.

Council noted the charge increases would be significantly less than the amount of 11.4% estimated by the NTC as necessary to recover the heavy vehicle share of recent road construction and maintenance costs.

Council also directed the NTC to undertake a determination to review the method for calculating heavy vehicle charges. This will ensure future decisions on charges recover the correct amount from each heavy vehicle type. Industry and stakeholder consultation will be central to the determination process.

Implementation of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy

Council endorsed the arrangements presented by each jurisdiction to implement the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy and associated National Action Plan.

The Strategy's governance arrangements will provide a mechanism to ratchet up ambition over time and further support the performance of our freight system.

Other matters discussed at Council

Council also agreed to amend the Australian Vehicle Standards Rules, Australian Road Rules model law and the Rail Safety National Law, and, to ensure they remain contemporary and improve harmonisation. These amendments include:

- changes to Australian Vehicle Standards Rules so that light and heavy vehicle standards align with the Australian Design Rules and allow for safety improvements to vehicles, including for heavy vehicles to be fitted with a front safety mirror to improve driver visibility;
- addressing emerging issues or other problems identified by stakeholders with the Australian Road Rules including by: creating an offence for a driver to interrupt a funeral procession; providing model rules about the use of 'Bus Only' lanes; and clarifying rules about motorcyclists with respect to signalling a change of direction and removal of feet from footrests; and
- aligning the definition of 'rail safety work' with the purpose and objects of the Rail Safety National Law.



PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

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 Andrew Gee MP	Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister (Commonwealth)
The Hon Andrew Constance MP	Minister for Transport and Roads (New South Wales)
The Hon Jacinta Allan MP	Minister for Transport Infrastructure (Victoria)
The Hon Jaala Pulford MP	Minister for Roads; Road Safety and the TAC (Victoria)
The Hon Mark Bailey MP	Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Queensland)
The Hon Stephan Knoll MP	Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government; Planning (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 Canberra; City Services; Multicultural Affairs; Recycling and Waste Reduction; Roads and Active Travel (Australian Capital Territory)
The Hon Phil Twyford MP	Minister for Transport; Minister for Economic Development; Minister for Urban Development (New Zealand)
Mayor David O'Loughlin	President (Australian Local Government Association)

