



Transport and Infrastructure Council

Communiqué

HOBART

FRIDAY, 10 November 2017

The 8th meeting of the Transport and Infrastructure Council (the Council) was held in Hobart today. The Council includes Transport, Infrastructure and Planning Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association. State and Territory Police were also in attendance.

Industry representatives from Australasian Railway Association, Australian Automobile Association, Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association, Australian Logistics Council, Australian Trucking Association, Bus Industry Confederation, Ports Australia and Truck Industry Council also attended as observers of the meeting.

ROAD SAFETY

Council considered the latest National Road Safety Strategy Implementation Status Report, which provides an update of the key statistical measures on progress for 2016 and a report on progress against the current National Road Safety Action Plan.

Council noted the considerable amount of activity in all jurisdictions to implement the 19 actions in the current National Road Safety Action Plan 2015–2017. The Council noted that the 1,296 road crash deaths in 2016 represented an increase of 7.5 per cent relative to 2015. By the end of 2016 only 9% of the 30% target to reduce deaths had been achieved 6 years into the 10 year strategy. Deaths have reduced since the end of 2016 and the latest figures show a reduction of 13.3% from the Strategy baseline. The National Road Safety Strategy Implementation Status Report is available on the National Road Safety Strategy website at www.roadsafety.gov.au.

Council reaffirmed its commitment to a national approach to the measurement of serious injury through the pilot project being conducted by all jurisdictions through Austroads. Ministers agreed to support the efforts of all jurisdictions to ensure that the necessary approvals are given and data provided by March 2018. This work is critical for establishing a national serious injury reporting baseline to measure performance under the next road safety strategy; and to produce annual updates to support stronger national action to reduce deaths and serious injuries from road crashes.

Council noted that progress has been made on the additional actions agreed at the 2016 Road Safety Ministers' Forum, including scoping and research conducted by several jurisdictions into driver distraction from mobile



devices and drug-impaired driving. Ministers also endorsed the formation of a cross-jurisdictional working group to progress the development of best practice approaches to roadside drug testing.

Council considered the draft National Road Safety Action Plan for 2018-2020 and asked for further work to be undertaken. The Action Plan will focus governments' efforts on key national priority areas including systematically improving the uptake and use of technology, the safety of road infrastructure, improving vehicle safety standards and promoting the uptake of safer vehicles especially by younger drivers, improving road safety enforcement, building awareness and implementation of safer speeds, and improving safety in regional and remote areas. Council agreed to consider endorsement of the Action Plan out-of-session by the end of this year.

NATIONAL FREIGHT SYSTEM

Council held a strategic discussion about its long-term view of where we want our freight system to be in 20 years' time, and what we need to start doing now to help us reach this point. The meeting considered the wider views of industry, government, academia and the consumer sectors provided to the Inquiry into National Freight and Supply Chain Priorities and reviews among states and territories currently underway.

Council affirmed its clear role in relation to driving improvements in freight productivity nationally, and discussed opportunities for improved freight movement, including national consistency and opportunities for investment. The meeting acknowledged the firm foundation that long-term reforms already undertaken provide, such as the establishment of single national regulators, and measures currently in-train such as the national rail vision and heavy vehicle charging reform. The Council recognised the need to continue to work with local governments to conduct adequate road assessments. The Council agreed the need for jurisdictions to collaborate to improve national freight performance, and that a National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy will be prepared for its consideration in 2018.

HEAVY VEHICLE REGULATION

Council finalised implementation arrangements for the commencement of the national registration scheme for heavy vehicles in July 2018. This includes the implementation of the communications package, to ensure operators are ready for changes in 2018. These changes include removing the requirement for heavy vehicle registration stickers, more flexible options for heavy vehicle registration transactions, and the introduction of the national number plate.

In addition, Council agreed the latest legislative package to deliver improvements to the Heavy Vehicle National Law, developed by the National Transport Commission. The amendments will improve a range of areas of the law including load restraint, national heavy vehicle registration, increase the efficiency of volumetrically constrained heavy vehicles, and other minor, uncontroversial amendments to ensure the law remains contemporary and fit for purpose.



HEAVY VEHICLE ROAD REFORM – NEXT STEPS

Council agreed to commence work on a Council of Australian Governments Regulation Impact Statement (COAG RIS), to assess implementation options for independent price regulation of heavy vehicle charges. This process will thoroughly examine the costs and benefits of implementation of independent price regulation and a forward looking cost base, and better enable jurisdictions to assess the potential financial impacts of these measures, including the assessing of impacts on regional communities of changes to road pricing models. This will then enable the Council to make a decision on implementation in 2018-19.

HEAVY VEHICLE CHARGES

Council agreed to freeze heavy vehicle charges at 2017-18 levels for a further two years (2018-19 and 2019-20), considering this appropriate as we progress towards more comprehensive reform of the heavy vehicle user charge system. The Council's discussions recognised the need for governments to continue to invest in infrastructure to support heavy vehicle productivity, and the need to provide revenue and price certainty to road management agencies and heavy vehicle operators as heavy vehicle road reform is accelerated.

NATIONAL MARINE SAFETY REGULATION

In November 2016, Council advised it would extend the timeframe for implementation of new service delivery arrangements for the National System for Domestic Commercial Vessel Safety (national system) to allow jurisdictions and industry to better consult and prepare for these significant changes.

Council has considered the views of industry and is close to resolving arrangements that will commence in 2018.

SAFETY ASSURANCE OF AUTOMATED VEHICLES

Council agreed that Australian governments will aim to have end-to-end regulation in place by 2020 to support the safe deployment of automated vehicles. Subject to the development of a Regulation Impact Statement, industry will be responsible for meeting principles-based safety criteria under a new safety assurance framework for automated driving systems based on mandatory manufacturer self-certification. Under this arrangement, Australia will continue to be at the forefront of international regulation for automated vehicles. This will also provide a flexible approach while automated technology continues to progress and international standards are being developed.

Council also agreed to national enforcement guidelines that provide guidance to police agencies when enforcing the road rules for automated vehicles (up to conditional automation). The guidelines provide clear guidance about who is responsible for compliance with road rules when an automated driving system is engaged and provide examples of indicators of 'proper control' of a vehicle. Keeping hands on the steering wheel will no longer be an indicator of 'proper control' if the automated system is operating to drive the vehicle, or is being used for parking. The human driver will remain responsible for complying with the road rules, but this position will be reviewed over time.



PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

The Hon Darren Chester MP	Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (Commonwealth)
The Hon Paul Fletcher MP	Minister for Urban Infrastructure (Commonwealth)
The Hon Melinda Pavey MP	Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight (New South Wales)
The Hon Luke Donnellan MP	Minister for Roads and Road Safety; Ports (Victoria)
The Hon Rita Saffioti MLA	Minister for Transport, Planning and Lands (Western Australia)
The Hon Stephen Mullighan MP	Minister for Transport and Infrastructure (South Australia)
The Hon Rene Hidding MP	Minister for Infrastructure (Tasmania)
The Hon Nicole Manison MLA	Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (Northern Territory)
The Hon Shane Rattenbury MLA	Minister for Justice, Road Safety and Consumer Affairs (Australian Capital Territory)
The Hon Meegan Fitzharris	Minister for Transport and City Services (Australian Capital Territory)
Mayor David O'Loughlin	President (Australian Local Government Association)

