



Communiqué

**ALICE SPRINGS
FRIDAY, 23 MAY 2014**

The 1st meeting of the Transport and Infrastructure Council (the Council) was held in Alice Springs today. It was the first Council meeting following the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement in December 2013 to a new Council System to better enable COAG to focus on, and progress, nationally significant reforms. The Council includes Transport, Infrastructure and Planning Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association.

REMOTE AND REGIONAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FORUM

The Council recognises the enormous and ongoing economic contribution made by remote and regional Australia for the benefit of all Australians.

The Council congratulated the Northern Territory and remote jurisdictions for the highly successful Remote and Regional Transport Infrastructure and Services Forum held on 22 May 2014, with over 120 industry and government participants. The Council has agreed that the Northern Territory Government will lead the development of a Remote and Regional Transport Strategy that takes full account of the key issues and possible solutions identified to resolve the significant transport challenges faced in remote and regional Australia.

The Council also recognises that the significant and distinctive challenges in remote and regional Australia require flexible application of national approaches.

INFRASTRUCTURE REFORMS

The Council reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the delivery of high quality infrastructure to enhance future productivity and underpin economic growth. The Council noted that infrastructure investment was a key focus at the COAG meeting of 2 May 2014, including agreement to a new \$5 billion Asset Recycling initiative, where the Commonwealth will provide incentive payments to the States and Territories to privatise assets and reinvest proceeds into new infrastructure. The Council discussed the infrastructure reform agenda and welcomed the substantial progress being made through the Infrastructure Working Group, with all jurisdictions committed to accelerating infrastructure delivery and improving processes for planning, selection, funding and financing.

The Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development provided an update on progress with the Productivity Commission's inquiry into public infrastructure and confirmed that

the Productivity Commission's final report was expected by the end of May. The Council noted that an Australian Government response to the Productivity Commission inquiry would be due before the next Council meeting and agreed it would be important for the Infrastructure Working Group to consider the Productivity Commission's recommendations once the final report had been delivered.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

The Council was updated on progress of Infrastructure Australia's National Audit to develop a 15 year infrastructure plan and the audit of Northern Australia infrastructure. The Council welcomed Infrastructure Australia's plans to engage with all jurisdictions on strategies to better protect important transport corridors and precincts, noting that jurisdictions are already undertaking substantial improvements to policies and processes in this area through the Infrastructure Working Group.

HEAVY VEHICLE CHARGING AND INVESTMENT REFORM

The Council agreed that jurisdictions would commence work to implement initial heavy vehicle investment and access reform measures. These measures recognise the need to improve the transparency of information provided to the heavy vehicle industry on road conditions and service standards, provide the heavy vehicle industry with assurance that road agency planning and funding processes are robust and transparent and, where appropriate, enable industry to be more closely consulted in decision making processes.

The Council has also agreed that advice be prepared on possible next steps in heavy vehicle charging and investment reform for consideration at the next Council meeting. This advice will build off a plan prepared by the Heavy Vehicle Charging and Investment Board, which has now completed its work. The Council acknowledged the contribution of the Board and the Project Directorate to the reform measures.

NATIONAL TRANSPORT REGULATION REFORMS

The Council took some major decisions in relation to the national transport regulation reforms. These reforms will provide significant productivity benefits to the transport industry and to Australia's national economy.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) commenced regulating under the Heavy Vehicle National Law from 10 February 2014 in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. The Council noted the extensive work undertaken by the NHVR in the operation of the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme and Performance Based Standards (PBS) Scheme, including the approval of 415 PBS vehicles. Implementation of the regulator's roads access permit arrangements for over size and/or over mass vehicles was not as successful as anticipated and interim processing arrangements are currently in place. Ministers noted advice from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator Board on

remediation activities and finalised the Regulator's Budget for 2014–15. The Council also approved the regulator's corporate plan for 2014–2017.

The Council also endorsed the recommendations of a number of reports from the National Transport Commission relating to heavy vehicle regulation. The reports considered by the Council included:

- Policy papers on a compliance framework for heavy vehicle telematics and on electronic work diaries for managing fatigue;
- A review of residual fatigue risks and counting time arrangements;
- A review of chain of responsibility arrangements, undertaken jointly with industry associations, and representatives from state roads agencies and police; and
- A review of penalties in the Heavy Vehicle National Law.

The Council has approved an amended heavy vehicle national regulation to allow up to one-tonne of mass to be transferred to a tri-axle group from other axle groups, without increasing the overall mass of the vehicle operating under General Mass limits. This is expected to provide greater loading flexibility and improve handling of uneven loads.

The Council approved the 8th amendment package for the Australian Vehicle Standards Rules, which improves alignment between the rules and the Heavy Vehicle National Law.

The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator commenced operations on 20 January 2013 and the Rail Safety National Law is now operating in South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Victoria. The Council has approved the regulator's 2014–2017 Corporate Plan and the national fees regulation to apply from 1 July 2014.

The National System for commercial vessel safety commenced on 1 July 2013. The Council noted the progress of the ongoing development work and streamlining review being undertaken by the National Marine Safety Regulator and jurisdictions. The Council also approved the regulator's Corporate Plan 2014–15.

DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Council noted the draft report of the second five-year review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 and that it has been released for a two-month consultation period.

NATIONAL CYCLING STRATEGY

The Council noted the National Cycling Strategy Implementation Report for 2013. In 2013, states and territories invested \$112.8 million in cycling infrastructure and programs, with investments focusing on integrating cycling with broader transport and land use planning and public transport; increasing separation of bicycles from motor vehicles; increasing the role of

active forms of transport including cycling in tackling health issues; and aligning street design and speed limits with street purposes.

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

The Hon Warren Truss MP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development (Commonwealth)
The Hon Jamie Briggs MP	Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development (Commonwealth)
The Hon Duncan Gay MLC	Minister for Roads and Ports (New South Wales)
The Hon Terry Mulder MP	Minister for Roads, Minister for Public Transport (Victoria)
The Hon Scott Emerson MP (represented by Mr Neil Scales)	Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Queensland)
The Hon Dean Nalder MLA	Minister for Transport (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 Peter Styles MLA	Minister for Transport (Northern Territory)
Minister Simon Corbell MLA	Attorney General (Australian Capital Territory)
Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis	President (Australian Local Government Association)