

Communiqué

**LAUNCESTON
FRIDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2014**

The 2nd meeting of the Transport and Infrastructure Council (the Council) was held in Launceston today. The Council includes Transport, Infrastructure and Planning Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association. Victorian Ministers did not participate as their Government is currently in caretaker mode for the forthcoming state election.

NATIONAL TERRORISM PUBLIC ALERT LEVEL RAISED TO HIGH

The Council discussed transport security following the raising of Australia's national terrorism public alert to high. Ministers considered the increased vigilance and security measures in place to address the risk alert.

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND INVESTMENT

Infrastructure Australia provided the Council with a briefing on the National Infrastructure Audit which is due for public consideration by the end of 2014. Infrastructure Australia also outlined how the National Infrastructure Audit will be used in the development of the 15-year National Infrastructure Plan which is expected to be finalised by April 2015.

The Council also considered the publication of the first-ever maps of Australia's key freight routes. The maps provide a detailed picture of the road and rail routes connecting Australia's nationally significant places for freight. The maps will assist governments and industry to better understand, and plan for, our critical freight flows, and will be maintained to inform a range of national transport infrastructure policy, regulatory, planning and operational issues.

The Council has also approved access objectives for heavy vehicles on the key freight routes. There will be a baseline minimum of 'as of right' B-double access across all road key freight routes. The routes that do not currently provide this level of access will be considered by relevant jurisdictions on a case by case basis.

The Council also agreed to deliver increased safety and efficiency in management of the freight task by adopting the objective of increasing access above the baseline for high productivity vehicles, particularly on inter-urban routes. High productivity vehicle access will be subject to safety and engineering standards consistent with the Performance Based Standards scheme and to the infrastructure being suited to these vehicles.

Improvements in high productivity vehicle access levels on the key freight routes will be subject to ongoing monitoring, with the results to be published annually by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and to include gaps in access and anomalies across state and territory borders.

The Council was provided with an update on progress with developing the Australian Government's response to the Productivity Commission inquiry into Public Infrastructure, which is expected to be released in the coming weeks. Jurisdictions were thanked for their constructive engagement in considering reform options, particularly in the areas of benchmarking and project appraisal, and jurisdictions agreed to continue their close cooperation to implement agreed reforms and to drive best practice across infrastructure planning, procurement and delivery.

HEAVY VEHICLE REFORM

Ministers noted advice from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) on activities to improve access permit administration, particularly progress to boost the number of pre-approved routes. Over 500 gazetted and pre-approved routes have been implemented since February 2014. The Council also noted further progress to approve more Performance-Based Standards scheme vehicles which offer industry the potential to achieve higher productivity safely through innovative vehicle design.

The Council was briefed by the National Transport Commission and the NHVR on progress with the Heavy Vehicle Roadworthiness Program, including development of options contained in a draft consultation regulation impact statement. Ministers agreed new arrangements for the appointment of independent auditors and more effective business rules for the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme to ensure more effective roadworthiness requirements for heavy vehicles. The Northern Territory will agree, following finalisation of an arrangement with the NHVR, to a flexible approach to auditor technical qualifications in remote areas.

Ministers have also requested that the NHVR accelerate progression of a range of operational and non-regulatory measures designed to further improve heavy vehicle roadworthiness.

The Council approved the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill to be introduced to the Queensland Parliament next year, which will improve the regulation of modified heavy vehicles and vehicles subject to defect notices, and implement changes to penalties that were agreed by the Council in May 2014.

RAIL REGULATION

The Council approved the Rail Safety National Law Amendment Bill to be introduced into the South Australian Parliament next year. Ministers also endorsed the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator working with industry and jurisdictions to further develop improved national standards.

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Council welcomed the findings of a major review of the National Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020. Overall, the review found that reasonable progress had been made across the wide-ranging action agenda initially released with the strategy, with some notable achievements in the first three years, particularly in relation to vehicle safety. However, it also identified a number of pressing issues and challenges requiring greater attention in the coming years.

Based on the review findings, the Council agreed that the Safe System principles, 10-year targets and strategic objectives set out in the National Road Safety Strategy should continue to guide national efforts to improve road safety.

The Council also endorsed the National Road Safety Strategy Action Plan 2015-17, which was developed in response to the review findings. The new Action Plan is intended to focus national efforts on activities that will deliver or support significant long-term improvements to the safety of Australia's road transport system, especially through strategic investment in infrastructure safety, vehicle safety and capacity building work.

The Council agreed to publish the Action Plan on the Council website.

NATIONAL TRANSPORT COMMISSION REVIEW

The Council agreed to the Terms of Reference for the Review of the National Transport Commission under s.51 of the *National Transport Commission Act 2003*.

GRADUATED LICENSING SCHEME

The Council endorsed a national policy framework for Graduated Licensing Schemes, designed to encourage and guide Graduated Licensing Schemes improvements in all states and territories. The framework is informed by the best available evidence on the safety effects of different Graduated Licensing Schemes components and takes into account the varied circumstances that apply across jurisdictions.

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 Scott Emerson MP	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)