



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

22 MAY 2009

Transport Ministers from the Commonwealth and States and Territories together with the New Zealand Minister for Transport and a representative of the Australian Local Government Association met in Cairns today as the Australian Transport Council (ATC) to approve approaches to consistent national transport regulation which they would propose to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

SINGLE NATIONAL TRANSPORT MARKETS

COAG asked the ATC in September 2008 to prepare Regulatory Impact Statements (RISs) on single national systems for heavy vehicle regulation, maritime safety, and rail safety regulator and investigator.

Today, ATC agreed to endorse each of the three final RISs for transmission to COAG. ATC wishes to express appreciation to the many stakeholders that have contributed to the development of these documents. The recommended option in each RIS is for a single national regulator. Broadly, ATC is recommending that COAG agree to proceed to further develop arrangements so that by 2013:

- the Australian Maritime Safety Authority would become the sole national regulator of all commercial vessels operating in Australian waters¹,
- a new national heavy vehicle regulator would become responsible for regulating all vehicles over 4.5 gross tonnes, with a commitment to ongoing improvements to safety and the preservation of local productivity initiatives,
- a national rail safety regulator would provide a one-stop shop for all those operating in and on our rail networks, and
- the Australian Transport Safety Bureau would become the preferred national rail safety incident investigator.

ATC recognises that there are many issues both of principle and of detail to be worked out to deliver these consolidated national regulatory approaches. ATC is proposing to resolve certain key matters first and report to COAG in each case not later than the middle of 2010. These matters include which jurisdiction will host the proposed national regulator and the

¹ Victoria's endorsement was limited at this stage to interstate maritime safety.

laws for rail and heavy vehicles, and how implementation and ongoing costs for each national system will be met. These governance and financial arrangements would then be embodied in national partnership agreements prior to the new national systems coming into initial effect in 2012, with a view to full implementation by 2013.

COAG ROAD REFORM PLAN

In 2007, responding to advice from the Productivity Commission, COAG charged the ATC with undertaking heavy vehicle pricing reform research in a three phase Road Reform Plan.

ATC Ministers have accepted the final report of Phase I, which will be submitted to COAG. A detailed work program for Phase II will be considered by ATC at its November meeting.

ROAD SAFETY

ATC Ministers noted that work had commenced on the development of a National Speed Management Strategy which will be presented for ATC consideration later in the year and that a project on Safe System practice in road safety would help to guide the development of a new ten-year National Road Safety Strategy to come into effect at the end of 2010.

In the area of vehicle safety, ATC noted that the Commonwealth was in the final stages of the regulatory process for an Australian Design Rule covering stability control systems, and also noted plans to introduce the voluntary 'Stars on Cars' safety ratings program.

Ministers noted the development of an Austroads project to establish a nationally consistent approach to crash risk assessment on major parts of the road network.

VEHICLE FUEL EFFICIENCY

Ministers considered the final report from the Vehicle Fuel Efficiency Working Group, which follows the release by the Chairs of ATC and the Environment and Heritage Protection Council of a public consultation paper in September 2008.

The final report recommends vehicle based measures that if taken could improve the fuel efficiency of the vehicle fleet. These measures relate to vehicle standards – such as CO₂ emission standards for new light vehicles, fiscal measures – differing duties and charges, and improving consumer information. Environment Ministers are also considering the report. Jointly these two Ministerial Councils will take the proposals to COAG in July.

Measures agreed by COAG will be incorporated in the new National Strategy for Energy Efficiency. The ATC will monitor and report on progress of agreed measures. Mandatory CO₂ emission standards would only be considered for introduction if a regulatory impact assessment process – which would involve industry and consumer consultation – demonstrates a net public benefit case.

NATIONAL TRANSPORT COMMISSION (NTC) REVIEW

The Chair of the NTC Review Steering Committee, Mr Bruce Wilson, provided Ministers with a brief update on the progress of the NTC Review which is due to report to Ministers by

August this year. ATC will subsequently develop a response to the review recommendations for COAG's consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL TRANSPORT INITIATIVES

ATC Ministers agreed to implement the future work agenda flowing from ATC's consideration of initiatives arising from the NTC's *National Transport Policy Framework* advice through a streamlined structure of subcommittees of the Standing Committee on Transport. The subcommittees will focus on Productivity, Safety, Environment, Security, Maritime and Network Performance agendas framed around ensuring transport infrastructure and operations can play their essential role in underpinning a return to economic growth. The new structure will be operational by November 2009.

NATIONAL MARITIME PLACE OF REFUGE RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

ATC Ministers approved the revised National Maritime Place of Refuge Guidelines, which reflect changes involving the National Maritime Emergency Response Arrangements.

The ATC meeting was attended by:

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP	Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (Commonwealth)
The Hon Michael Daley MP	Minister for Roads (New South Wales)
The Hon Lynne Kosky MP	Minister for Public Transport (Victoria)
The Hon Tim Pallas MP	Minister for Roads and Ports (Victoria)
The Hon Craig Wallace MP	Minister for Main Roads (Queensland)
The Hon Rachael Nolan MP	Minister for Transport (Queensland)
The Hon Michael O'Brien MP	Minister for Road Safety (South Australia)
The Hon Graeme Sturges MP	Minister for Infrastructure (Tasmania)
The Hon Gerald McCarthy MLA	Minister for Transport (Northern Territory)
The Hon Steven Joyce MP	Minister for Transport, New Zealand
Mr Bill Marmion MLA	Parliamentary Secretary assisting Minister Simon O'Brien, Minister for Transport (Western Australia)