



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

7 NOVEMBER 2008

Transport Ministers from each Australian State and Territory met with the Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and the President of the Australian Local Government Association as the Australian Transport Council (ATC) today in Adelaide to discuss progress towards achieving more consistent national arrangements for ensuring the nation gets best use out of its transport infrastructure, and transport security issues.

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL

Ministers settled the terms of a draft intergovernmental agreement to underpin the operations of a new National Road Safety Council (NRSC). The draft agreement will be presented for consideration to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in early 2009.

Road trauma continues to impose an enormous economic and social cost on Australians. In supporting the establishment of the NRSC, Ministers recognise that new approaches are needed to accelerate national road safety improvement.

All governments are committed to reducing road trauma in Australia through the implementation of evidence-based measures and the application of the Safe System principles set out in the National Road Safety Strategy and supporting Action Plans.

A National Road Safety Council would facilitate the implementation of nationally-agreed road safety reforms.

The NRSC is to bring together a high level group of key community leaders and experts to help raise the profile of road safety and forge critical partnerships across relevant government, industry and community sectors.

This group would harness the expertise and resources of relevant stakeholders to support the implementation of National Road Safety Strategies, Action Plans and other initiatives agreed by the ATC.

A NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY

Nationally Consistent Transport Regulation

COAG has asked the ATC to prepare Regulatory Impact Statements (RISs) on a single national system for each of rail safety regulation and investigation, maritime safety regulation and heavy vehicle regulation. ATC will report to COAG in the first half of 2009 on the outcomes of those three RIS, including financial implications and proposed ways forward.

ATC noted that work is well advanced on the development of the RISs. ATC reinforced the need for:

- thorough examination of possible options;
- rigorous cost benefit analyses; and
- continuing close cooperation between jurisdictions to progress the development of these proposals.

Economic Framework for an Efficient Transportation Marketplace

Ministers discussed a *Review of Regulatory Approaches to Transport Safety Law* submitted by NSW Ministers, agreeing to the objective of improving the interface with OHS law and that this be taken into account in the forthcoming review of the National Transport Commission (NTC).

Infrastructure Planning and Investment and Urban Congestion

Ministers considered the work led by Victorian Ministers on elements of possible future transport infrastructure investment policy, including in our cities. Ministers agreed that this work would be provided to Infrastructure Australia and the COAG Infrastructure Working Group for their consideration.

In particular, ATC affirmed the joint development with the Local Government and Planning Ministers Council of guidelines on integrating transport and land use planning, especially in outer urban locations. It agreed that road pricing schemes need to be carefully designed and specific to their proposed locations. Jurisdictions will cooperate in modelling the congestion, network, socio-economic and emissions outcomes of various targeted pricing scenarios.

Workforce Planning and Skills

ATC welcomed proposals for jurisdictional level joint government/industry Transport and Logistics Workforce Advisory Groups, based on the successful Queensland Transport Industry Capability model. These Advisory Groups will create a collaborative mechanism to focus on identifying priorities and addressing workforce issues (such as access to training and skills development and retention) in the transport and logistics industry.

Transport Security

Ministers were briefed by the Inspector of Transport Security, Mr Mick Palmer AO APM, about his final report of the Ferry Security Inquiry. The report focussed on intrastate, privately operated, large commercial passenger ferries i.e. passenger vessels that are not regulated under the *Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003*.

Ministers noted that a number of key pieces of work, which address the Report's main findings and contribute to a more effective security regime for ferry operators, are being undertaken through the Transport Security Working Group of ATC.

Road Safety

ATC Ministers considered a number of specific measures relating to improving road safety.

The ATC agreed that a "stars on cars" program would be developed, initially as a voluntary scheme, to provide information to consumers at point of sale on the performance of new vehicles crash tested under the Australasian New Car Assessment Program.

Ministers agreed on the need for early engagement with primary stakeholders, including the proposed NRSC and Police Ministers, in developing a national speed management strategy which recognises that speed management is an integral component of Australia's Safe System approach to reducing road trauma.

Ministers approved the *National Road Safety Action Plan 2009 and 2010*, which is now available on the ATC website. This is the final two-year action plan presented under the *National Road Safety Strategy 2001–2010*. It identifies the main issues expected to affect road trauma levels in the foreseeable future and sets out the priority areas for action in 2009 and 2010. The Action Plan reinforces Australia's commitment to Safe System principles.

Ministers noted progress towards the creation of a systematic crash risk assessment model for major parts of the road network. They also noted work to develop a framework for greater use of in-vehicle and at-roadside technology and endorsed the need to gain access to suitable radio spectrum for this technology.

ATC also noted the preparation by the Commonwealth of a Regulatory Impact Statement for a possible design rule covering stability control mechanisms in cars.

Capacity Constraints and Supply Chain Performance

Ministers noted that the supply chain pilot studies in the livestock, grain, intermodal and coal sectors, commissioned by ATC in May, are now underway with a report on each of the initial four pilot studies to be provided to ATC in early 2009.

Strategic Research and Technology

Ministers agreed to adopt the Australian Bureau of Statistics Data Quality Framework as the common data framework for all strategically important national transportation data. An action plan for improving transportation data was also agreed.

SAFER PAYMENT SYSTEMS FOR HEAVY VEHICLES

ATC considered advice about a national framework for setting and maintaining safe payments systems in the road transport industry, including safe rates for owner drivers and employees. The potential flow-on effects from payment rates and methods on unsafe on-road behaviours and poor safety outcomes in the trucking industry were noted.

Ministers agreed that there is a case for investigating a whole of government regulatory approach to address this issue.

The Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government agreed to progress the issue within the Commonwealth and provide reports to future ATC meetings.

HEAVY VEHICLE REGULATORY REFORM

Continuing progress is being made on heavy vehicle regulatory reforms, with recent developments in the Performance Based Standards (PBS) and fatigue reform streams.

ATC has approved a PBS amendment package that gives the PBS Review Panel greater discretion when considering PBS applications. These amendments respond to industry and jurisdictional concerns that greater flexibility is needed in the PBS scheme. The NTC has also commenced a review of PBS standards for completion in early 2009. The review work will inform development of a Regulatory Impact Statement that will propose an improved regulatory structure and facilitate the preparation of the PBS model legislation package.

Ministers noted that the new fatigue laws commenced in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia on the ATC agreed implementation date of 29 September 2008, whilst the Northern Territory, Tasmania and ACT will implement at a later date. The Western Australian Government advised that it will continue to regulate fatigue under its own Occupational Health and Safety laws. The laws provide for transitional arrangements to assist industry adjustment to the new requirements.

These new laws move to a stronger performance-based focus, addressing the root causes of driver fatigue rather than simply regulating work hours. Operators who require drivers to work long hours and night shifts must reduce driver fatigue risks through audited accreditation schemes.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES FOR MANAGING HEAVY VEHICLE ROAD USE

The use of technology in regulatory schemes is developing rapidly around the world - it improves both safety and efficiency. Ministers agreed that, as an initial step, in the first half of 2009 officials would develop a possible regulatory framework, a business case and Australian performance-based specification for electronic devices to monitor heavy vehicle speed and fatigue. The work would be led by the Commonwealth, NSW and the NTC, and include public consultations. A detailed Regulatory Impact Statement would be developed in the second half of 2009.

MARITIME STANDARDS

ATC Ministers agreed to adopt Amendment List 7 to the Uniform Shipping Laws Code (USL Code) for immediate gazettal under the *Navigation Act 1912 (Cth)*. This will enable state jurisdictions to apply the amendments for the transition from the USL Code to the National Standard for Commercial Vessels without having to amend their current legislation.

The ATC further agreed to changes to national standards regarding:

- navigation and fire safety equipment for commercial vessels; and
- safety equipment requirements for the carriage of Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons by commercial vessels.

ATC Ministers supported the adoption of the revised Guidelines for Marine Pilotage Standards in Australia. They also noted the key outcomes of the National Assessment of Boating Fatalities in Australia 1999–2004, and the National Marine Safety Committee's current activities to address the issues raised in the assessment.

DISABILITY PARKING

Ministers endorsed a national framework to progress the Australian Government's commitment to harmonise disability parking schemes across Australia. The framework provides for the creation of an Australian Disability Parking Scheme to achieve national consistency in disability parking across all States and Territories. The national scheme will improve opportunities for eligible people with disability by providing common eligibility criteria, entitlements and a national parking permit. Key elements that will be developed through 2009 include a national consultation strategy and communications framework.

This work will be led by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, along with State, Territory, Local Government and other providers.

Ministers noted that the proposal had also been referred for the endorsement of the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference.

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORT COMMISSION

The NTC was established in 2003 with ongoing responsibility to develop, monitor and maintain uniform or nationally consistent regulatory and operational reforms relating to road transport, rail transport and intermodal transport. The *National Transport Commission Act 2003* requires that the ATC review the operations of the Commission after six years.

The ATC today agreed the terms of reference and timetable for this first review of the NTC's operation. The Review will be headed by Mr Bruce Wilson, immediate past Director-General of Queensland Transport. An issues paper including the terms of reference and seeking input to the review will be available in late December 2008.

The ATC meeting was attended by:

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP	Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (Commonwealth)
The Hon David Campbell MP	Minister for Transport (New South Wales)
The Hon Michael Daley MP	Minister for Roads (New South Wales)
The Hon Tim Pallas MP	Minister for Roads and Ports (Victoria)
The Hon Warren Pitt MP	Minister for Main Roads and Local Government (Queensland)
The Hon Patrick Conlon MHA	Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy (South Australia)
The Hon Carmel Zollo MLC	Minister for Road Safety (South Australia)
The Hon Graeme Sturges MP	Minister for Infrastructure (Tasmania)
The Hon Delia Lawrie MLA	Minister for Transport and Infrastructure (Northern Territory)
Mr Gary Fenlon MP	Parliamentary Secretary assisting Minister John Mickel, Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations (Queensland)
Mr Bill Marmion MLA	Parliamentary Secretary assisting Minister Simon O'Brien, Minister for Transport and Disability Services (Western Australia)
Cr Paul Bell	President, Australian Local Government Association