



September 2009

33rd Industry Advisory Group Meeting

The NTC hosted the second Industry Advisory Group meeting for 2009 at the NTC offices on 29 September. The Chair and one Commissioner of NTC and senior NTC officers met with key industry stakeholders including representatives from road transport, unions, rail, ports, vehicle manufacturing, transport customers and other leading industry associations to share information on current NTC projects and forward work programme, and to gain insight into industry views.

This IAG meeting was the first to follow an updated format which had been developed by NTC to ensure that stakeholders were provided with the opportunity to be briefed on current or upcoming NTC work, and to share their views with other stakeholders.

One of the themes that emerged through the discussions across all areas, was the importance of open, transparent and timely engagement with stakeholders on key national reforms. As a number of the current reforms involve a number of agency or working group structures, stakeholders impressed upon NTC the need to ensure that stakeholders received engagement opportunities similar to those for NTC reforms.

ECONOMICS AND PRODUCTIVITY

Meena Naidu, General Manager Economics and Productivity, outlined the key economics and productivity items (slides available at <http://www.ntc.gov.au/filemedia/AboutUs/IAGSept09PresentationEconProd.pdf>).

Council of Australian Governments Road Reform Plan

Stakeholders noted the importance of first establishing some high level objectives to guide the project to ensure that the project considers all means of addressing the problems, rather than focussing on a particular outcome. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of regular and comprehensive engagement in all aspects of the project, including being involved in setting initial objectives.

Performance Based Standards

Stakeholders noted that improvements to the PBS process were important to support industry's ability to make investment decisions in new vehicles. NTC will monitor the progress of approved PBS vehicles in gaining access to operate on the road network.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator

It was strongly noted by several stakeholders that there needs to be some clarity around what the stakeholder engagement process would be for the establishment of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

Rail Productivity Review Phase II

Some road transport stakeholders noted that they did not believe road transport charges are distorted compared to regional rail. Rail stakeholders were pleased to see rail productivity on the NTC's agenda but raised some concerns with some sections of the "Freight Rail Productivity Review – Final Position Paper" including terminal access, regional rail networks, grain markets and the privatisation of below rail assets. It was also noted that this review could be extended to passenger rail as part of a moving people strategy.

It was suggested that the NTC should use a "zero-based" approach to its analysis for these reviews wherever possible.

SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT

Tim Eaton, General Manager Safety and Environment outlined progress on a number of safety and environment items (slides available at <http://www.ntc.gov.au/filemedia/AboutUs/IGSept2009PresentationSafEnvir.pdf>)

Single National Rail Regulator

It was noted that there has been little communication following the COAG decision on the rail regulator, with many stakeholders unclear of how the work will progress. It was suggested that industry needs to be given a better understanding of what the forward process will be for the establishment of the regulator, as there is a range of issues that industry would like to discuss.

Compliance Strategy

Several stakeholders noted that a compliance strategy outlining an approach that balances safety and productivity in the transport industry should be high on the NTC's agenda, and should be taken to COAG level. Some stakeholders raised concerns about looking forward without finishing previous reforms, such as full implementation of the Compliance and Enforcement Reform and the Heavy Vehicle Driver Fatigue Reform. Concerns were also raised about differences in the understanding of reforms which leads to varied enforcement practices nationally.

Stakeholders agreed that the industry had undergone some cultural change for compliance with safety laws, and a compliance strategy could be important in ensuring it continues to improve.

It was suggested the key objectives of a compliance strategy should be to grow the economy, keep people fed, and to stop transport injuries (link with the direction of Vision Zero).

Telematics Strategy

Several road transport stakeholders raised concerns surrounding the current electronic work diary project with regards to the counting of time. Concerns were raised around some of the submissions to the electronic work diary discussion paper, particularly those which focussed on mandating the use of Intelligent Access Program work diaries.

STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ian Hunter, Chief Planning and Development Officer outlined current strategy items on the work programme, including the upcoming round of strategic planning for the NTCs 2010-11 work programme (slides available at <http://www.ntc.gov.au/filemedia/AboutUs/IGSept09PresentationStratComms.pdf>).

NTC Review

Stakeholders supported comments regarding an increased focus on implementation being an important part of the NTC's work. It was also raised that the NTC should become more involved in assisting the states to "market" reforms as part of implementation.

Strategic Plan

Stakeholders indicated strong interest in being involved in the development of the work programme for 2010-11.

It was suggested that the NTC should measure its performance against best practice, and consider how its performance and individual reforms are assessed as having succeeded.

National Ports Strategy

Stakeholders again noted the importance of thorough consultation on this project, which is being led by Infrastructure Australia. It was noted that a national ports strategy is a long overdue initiative.

It was also noted that the national ports strategy needs to link closely with the national freight strategy, as all components need to be considered together.

ATTENDEES AT MEETING:

Greg Martin	Chairman, Commissioner NTC
Bill Noonan	Commissioner NTC
Lynne Habner	Acting CEO NTC
Meena Naidu	General Manager Economics & Productivity NTC
Tim Eaton	General Manager Safety & Environment NTC
Ian Hunter	Chief Planning & Development Officer NTC
Kathryn Hodges	Manager Public Affairs NTC
Bernie Belacic	NatRoads
Sid Marris	Minerals Council of Australia
Rod Pickette	MUA
Michael Kilgariff	CEO, Australian Logistics Council
Sam Nelson	National Farmers Federation
Trevor Martyn	Chairman, Australian Trucking Association
David Coonan	Australian Trucking Association
Caroline Wilkie	Tourism & Transport Forum
Steve Shearer	South Australian Road Transport Association
Roger Jowett	RTBU
Ian Webb	CE, Roads Australia
Brett Reed	TWU
Craig Newland	Australian Automobile Association
Peter Dunphy	CVIAA
Tony McMullan	CEO, Truck Industry Council
Luke Fraser	Australian Livestock Transporters Association
David Anderson	Ports Australia