



## **JOINT COMMUNIQUE**

**29 FEBRUARY 2008, CANBERRA**

Australian, State and Territory Transport Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) met in Canberra on Friday 29 February 2008 to consider a range of important national infrastructure and transport issues.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE AUSTRALIA**

The Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP provided a detailed briefing to the Council on the establishment of Infrastructure Australia (IA) to drive the coordination of infrastructure provision in Australia. As a key first step IA, which will be headed by Sir Rod Eddington, will audit the adequacy of the nation's infrastructure and develop an Infrastructure Priority List within 12 months for consideration by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

IA will be established as a statutory advisory council and comprise members nominated by Commonwealth and State and Territory Ministers including members of the private sector with experience and expertise in areas of relevance to the functions of Infrastructure Australia and one member with expertise of local government's role. The legislation to establish IA was tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament on Thursday, 21 February 2008.

### **NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY**

ATC Ministers received a detailed briefing from the Chairman of the National Transport Commission (NTC) on the development of the National Transport Plan and Policy Framework.

Ministers agreed that there is a need for a national approach to transport policy. Implementing the national transport policy will involve:

- agreeing the details of a national policy framework;
- a new inter-governmental agreement to implement the national policy framework which will establish the governance structure;
- settling the key work priorities and timetable.

Individual Ministers will take responsibility for developing aspects of a national transport policy for consideration at the next ATC meeting on 2 May 2008:

- Economic Framework for Efficient Transportation Marketplace (NSW)
- Infrastructure Planning and Investment (VIC)
- Capacity Constraints and Supply Chain Performance (SA)
- Urban Congestion (VIC)
- Climate Change, Environment and Energy (WA)
- Safety and Security (QLD)
- Strategic Research and Technology (TAS)
- Workforce Planning and Skills (NT)
- Social Inclusion (ACT)
- Governance (Commonwealth)

## **ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES**

Ministers discussed the national road safety strategy and noted their concern at the slow rate of progress in reducing national road deaths and the significant challenge that Australia face in reaching the 2010 road toll target.

In particular, Ministers noted that national road fatality statistics to the end of 2007 show no significant improvement since 2004. The fatality rate in the 12 months to December 2007 was 7.7 deaths per 100,000 population, representing an overall 17.8 per cent reduction relative to the 1999 benchmark of 9.3.

In discussing this challenge Ministers noted that research shows that effective speed enforcement measures significantly improve road safety performance. Ministers endorsed the importance of best practice speed enforcement and agreed to implement a range of measures with ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes achieved.

In addition to other priorities in the 2007 and 2008 National Road Safety Action Plan, Ministers agreed to a program based on established best practice using both national and international experience.

Ministers noted the commitment of the Council of Australian Federation in relation to safety technologies for vehicles and committed to further work towards a national approach to be determined at the May ATC meeting.

## **HEAVY VEHICLE CHARGES DETERMINATION**

The Australian Transport Council endorsed the NTC's recommendations in regards the establishment of a new heavy vehicle charging regime. The charges, which will implement COAG's request to fully recover the cost of provision of the road network to the heavy vehicle industry, will be implemented by all jurisdictions.

ATC noted and endorsed the Commonwealth Government's intention to implement the increase in the road user charge from 1 January 2009 and the decision by the Commonwealth Government to implement a \$70m road safety and productivity package.

Increases in registration charges for the larger heavy vehicles will be phased in over a 3 year period to enable the trucking industry time to adjust to the increases and to renegotiate ongoing contractual arrangements.

## **HEAVY VEHICLE SAFETY**

Ministers endorsed a national study into the introduction of digital tachographs and other electronic monitoring devices in heavy vehicles to better ensure compliance with national laws on fatigue, speeding, driving hours and safe driving. The technology has the ability to assist road operators to better manage driver workloads and resist pressure to drive beyond safe working hours and bend the fatigue laws.

Ministers have also asked that further work be undertaken to introduce legislative chain of responsibility requirements in each jurisdiction for health checks for all heavy vehicle drivers and consistent national standards and testing programmes for drug and alcohol testing of drivers in the workplace. Additionally, a review will be undertaken of heavy vehicle braking system requirements with the view to aligning our standards with international requirements for mandatory anti-lock braking systems.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON NATIONAL MARITIME EMERGENCY RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS**

Ministers formalised the agreement of all jurisdictions to the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on the National Maritime Emergency Response Arrangements (NMEMA).

The NMEMA minimise the risks of pollution damage from shipping incidents around the Australian coastline. This is done through a system of emergency towage vessels contracted by the Australian Government and a regulatory framework that ensures that if there is an incident involving the risk of pollution, governments have the ability to deal with it effectively. The IGA is the last element of the NMEMA to be put in place, defining the roles of the Commonwealth and State and Northern Territory Governments in the national system.

The NMEMA has already proven its worth, with ‘Pacific Responder’, a towage vessel contracted under the national arrangements, playing a critical role in the salvage of the “Pasher Bulker” in 2007. The maritime industry is fully supportive of the approach.

## **NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL VESSELS**

New National Standards for Commercial Vessels (NSCV) covering Construction, Stability and Anchoring Systems were agreed by Ministers. The standards have industry support through a comprehensive consultative process which included workshops, consultative forums and extensive public comment opportunities.

The Construction Standard incorporates established rules developed by Lloyds Register. The Standards for Intact Stability and Stability Tests and Stability Information specify the criteria required to meet minimum safety outcomes and providing test methodologies for the specified criteria. The Standard for Anchoring

Systems recognises anchoring systems as safety equipment and defining the rules to apply to these systems.

## **NTC COMMISSIONERS**

ATC Members considered nominations for appointment to the National Transport Commission (NTC). In accordance with the NTC legislation appointments will be made subject to the consideration and endorsement of the Australian Government.

## **STRONGER LAWS FOR THE SAFE RESTRAINT OF CHILDREN**

Ministers today announced unanimous support for new national child restraint laws, which provide a safe pathway from capsules to seat belts.

In response to calls from road safety experts and the community for tougher minimum standards, children up to 6 months old must be restrained in a rearward facing infant capsule; then a forward facing child seat until the age of 4; and a booster seat from 4 to 7 years old. The new road rules will reduce the risk of injury caused by seat restraints which are unsuitable for the child's weight and height.

The reform package also recognises the increased safety protection offered by rear car seats. A child under 7 years old must be seated at the back, unless all the rear seat positions are occupied by other young children (under 7 years old).

Currently, 500 children up to the age of 10 are killed or seriously injured every year in car accidents, with 2,300 sustaining minor injuries.

For more information visit: [www.ntc.gov.au](http://www.ntc.gov.au)

## NEXT MEETING

The next ATC meeting will be held in Melbourne on Friday, 2 May 2008.

The ATC meeting was attended by:

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP	Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Local Government (Commonwealth)
The Hon John Watkins MLA	Minister for Transport (New South Wales)
The Hon Eric Roozendaal MLC	Minister for Roads (New South Wales)
The Hon Lynne Kosky MP	Minister for Public Transport (Victoria)
The Hon Tim Pallas MLA	Minister for Roads and Ports (Victoria)
The Hon John Mickel MP	Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations (Queensland)
The Hon Warren Pitt MP	Minister for Main Roads and Local Government (Queensland)
The Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLA	Minister for Planning and Infrastructure (Western Australia)
The Hon Patrick Conlon MHA	Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Energy (South Australia)
The Hon Steven Kons MHA	Minister for Infrastructure (Tasmania)
The Hon Delia Lawrie MLA	Minister for Transport and Infrastructure (Northern Territory)
The Hon John Hargreaves MLA	Minister for Territory and Municipal Services (ACT)
The Hon Annette King MP	Minister of Transport (New Zealand)
Cr Paul Bell	President, Australian Local Government Association