

20 February 2023

Dr Gillian Miles  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Transport Commission  
Level 3/600 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Gillian,

### **Heavy Vehicle Charges Consultation Report – NatRoad Submission**

The National Road Transport Association welcomes the opportunity to submit this in response to the NTC Heavy Vehicle Charges Consultation Report.

#### **NatRoad supports the ATA submission of the Heavy Vehicle Charges Consultation Report:**

As outlined in the ATA submission, the ATA has correctly observed that relevant information shows the existing heavy vehicle cost base is meaningless, as it uses state governments' road expenditure figures without any audit or appraisal. The spending included in the cost base is entirely driven by governments' budget decisions. There is no direct and systematic link to the needs of industry or broader transport policy priorities, such as increasing productivity.

Under the current system, new projects are prioritised over road maintenance spending. The priority that many road managers have placed on repairing flood-damaged roads. Still, Australia needs a more systematic approach to building, maintaining and funding resilient infrastructure so there is less need for emergency measures. Attempt has yet to be made to separate this expenditure, which is appropriately a cost the whole community should bear.

#### **We strongly recommend that the NTC should adopt the ATA recommendations.**

NatRoad mainly draws your attention to the setting charges for 2023-24 under Recommendation 1, specifically that the continued high price of fuel is just one of the increased costs that trucking businesses have been expected to absorb, which also include the cost of inconsistent and poorly communicated state border closures, COVID-19 measures, purchasing COVID-19 related PPE and increased AdBlue costs and the impact of the previous government's six-month fuel tax cut.

From 1 April to 18 August 2022, some 2,000 heavy on-road transport operators had to negotiate payment arrangements with the ATO because of this budget decision. Given the high costs faced by trucking businesses and the lingering effects of the fuel tax cut, the ATA considers that charges should stay the same in 2023-24.

NatRoad's contact for this submission is Edmund De Wet on 02 6183 6425 or at [edmund.dewet@natroad.com.au](mailto:edmund.dewet@natroad.com.au)

We appreciate your consideration of these inputs.

Yours faithfully,



Warren Clark  
Chief Executive Officer