

STATEMENT ON THE 24 JULY 2023 MEETING OF THE HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW REFORM IMPLEMENTATION STEERING COMMITTEE

9 August 2023

The seventh meeting of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) Reform Implementation Steering Committee meeting was held via Teams on Monday 24 July 2023.

The Steering Committee was attended by the following members:

- Ms Marisa Purvis-Smith, A/g Secretary, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA)
- Mr Scott Greenow representing Mr Howard Collins, OBE, A/g Secretary, Transport for NSW (NSW)
- Mr Nick Shaw representing Ms Sally Stannard, A/g Director-General, Department of Transport and Main Roads (Queensland)
- Mr Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary, Transport and Infrastructure, Department of State Growth (Tasmania).

The Steering Committee continues to receive independent advice from:

- Mr Ken Kanofski
- Mr Sanjiv Sathiah, Director, Transport and Infrastructure Policy, Australian Local Government Association.

Representatives from the Bus Industry Confederation (BIC) and the National Road Freighters Association (NRFA) attended part of the meeting and drew the Committee's attention to reform issues important to them. The BIC representative highlighted the need to ensure regulations across states and territories do not result in unnecessary duplication. For example, requiring drivers to undergo multiple medical assessments to satisfy licencing criteria, is inefficient and expensive. The representative also stressed the importance of recognising the different requirements for buses and trucks in any new legislation and regulation.

The NRFA representative noted the ongoing industry frustration with the time taken to progress the reform package. They called for industry engagement methods to be improved to ensure drivers can easily engage with the reform process. They noted ongoing frustration with fines being issued for minor administrative offences rather than focusing on deliberate safety breaches, and the negative impact this has on drivers.

The Steering Committee acknowledged the concerns and recognised the importance of getting a real and practical understanding of the challenges the reform process presents from the perspective of industry, operators and drivers on the ground.

The National Transport Commission (NTC) provided their regular update on their HVNL legislative reform program. The Steering Committee was provided with an implementation plan, including timeframes and key milestones, to demonstrate how the reforms will be progressed and delivered. The Steering Committee noted the very tight delivery schedule needs to be closely monitored to ensure key elements of the work remain on track and deliver the intent of the reform outcomes sought. The Committee noted that the NTC intends to brief industry on the implementation plan details at the next RAC+ meeting.

The Steering Committee noted the work on implementing the non-legislative reforms that is underway. A number of initiatives are interdependent on other non-legislative reforms, or have some dependency on legislative reforms, and therefore will commence later.

Work is progressing on a national automated access system (NAAS). States and territories have agreed to implement the optimal technical solution for the system, as recommended by WSP in their final report on the interoperability between the different systems. This will see the Tasmanian Heavy Vehicle Access Management System (HVAMS) being used as the basis for a NAAS, while the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) Portal will continue to be the entry and exit point for all applicants seeking access. Integration with other NHVR Portal functions will help maximise the benefits to industry users of the system. Austroads will now drive the implementation of the NAAS.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be on 4 September 2023.