

21st September 2023

National Freight and Supply Chain Review Secretariat
Dept of Infrastructure, Transport, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594
Canberra
ACT 2601

Via Email: freightstrategy@infrastructure.gov.au

SAFC Submission to the Review of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy

The South Australian Freight Council is the multi-modal advocacy body for SA. We provide a voice for freight and infrastructure issues across all modes – Sea, Air, Road and Rail. Supported by the SA state government, our membership consists of providers, users and facilitators of freight across all 4 modes.

SAFC remains supportive of the national freight and supply chain strategy, and we offer the following responses based around the identified questions.

Gaps and goals of the strategy and areas for action

Resilience of the industry

This should be a priority for the strategy. During covid the importance of the sector to Australia's economy and local communities was obvious. The trend toward increased home delivery was proven along with the criticality of moving product from origin to destination.

- **Identification of current and future trends** moving focus from reactive actions to proactive actions. It is important to look at future expectation and the application of emerging technologies overseas to identify potential future opportunities.
- **A connected approach to infrastructure across the country** – we have seen the impact of floods and loss of critical infrastructure and the isolating effect that can have on regional communities as well as the disruption to east-west and north-south freight movements. This would refer to the ambition to have seamless movement across the entire nation as well as managing critical infrastructure to a level that will enable efficient and safe movement of products and people.
- **International Connectivity** – Improved air freight connections. The federal department of Agriculture has significantly invested in assisting our agricultural industries diversify markets. Much of this product is high value, time sensitive cargo that needs to move by air. The strategy does not put suitable focus on air freight, which while is only a fraction of total volume, represents a significant contribution to export value. Much of this freight is concentrated through Melbourne and Sydney – meaning that south Australian primary producers are either unable to access lucrative export markets at all, or at significantly increased costs. The strategy should consider strategies to support airports such as Adelaide or Hobart to provide these opportunities.
- **Manage the process to decarbonisation:** The industry recognises the need to reduce emissions in a meaningful way, however the unique geographical and population distribution challenges of Australia must be recognised as a constraint. The movement towards decarbonisation must be achieved in a way that is financially sustainable. The movement towards EV has exacerbated the issue of reduced excise revenue and the related reduction in funds for

road maintenance – this challenge must be addressed. Where electric HV are considered the additional weight of the electric vehicle must not result in reduced payloads. Freight remains a means to an end – that is the industry exists to move product from one location to another – when considering the decarbonisation of the industry, it must be considered in the context of the whole supply chain to be meaningful.

Planning and Regulation

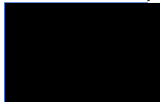
- **Resolving inconsistent regulation between different jurisdictions.** SAFC members report moving freight by road from NSW into SA however the approaches to permitted vehicle combinations are not consistent this leads to both frustration and inefficiency. Where commonwealth funding is used to construct/ upgrade/maintain roads the approach to users should be the same. The jurisdiction with the most restrictive regulation on an entire route sets the limitation for that entire route.
- **Protection of critical assets** – there is increasing encroachment on critical assets, particularly from residential housing – critical infrastructure – including air and seaports, freight corridors and existing heavy industry should be protected. As the needs of the industry and the community continue to change – conflict is inevitable and without protection for current and future needs represent a fundamental risk for air and seaports and those industries that rely on access as well as providing barriers to accessing suitable funding.
- **Improved efficiency through safety** – Physically separate vulnerable road users away from heavy vehicles – (b-double routes) In South Australia there are several critical freight routes, particularly through metropolitan Adelaide (e.g., Portrush Road, Cross Road) where heavy vehicles (b-Doubles) operate alongside bicycles – separated only by a white line. Cyclists are legitimate road users, however, there needs to be a national approach to ensuring physical separation between heavy vehicles and vulnerable road users.

Improved freight data and information

- **Timely release of information** – While the information released by BITRE is helpful, it is often released well after collection, information is often released 3-6months after collection which reduces its usefulness in an environment that is rapidly changing.
- **Integration of Information** – The dept of agriculture collates significant information on the nature of Australian agricultural exports, however this is collated at a national level, and it would be helpful to understand the state of origin of the freight as well as the domestic mode of transport.
- **Control of freight** – as part of understanding the state of the freight sector it would be useful to understand where and who is making significant decisions regarding the movement of freight. This would allow clear identification of those decision makers and enable a means to understand the motivations that would effect meaningful change in flows.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the review. Should you have further questions regarding SAFC's response please do not hesitate to contact me at the details below.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Wilson
CEO
SAFC

