

Remote Areas Consultative Group Communiqué

Queensland hosted the Remote Areas Consultative Group (RACG) on 5 November 2015 in Brisbane, Queensland and once again the meeting was very successful and well attended by state and territory governments, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, industry and road freight sector representatives.

Summary of key points and meeting outcomes

- **Heavy tow truck axle mass limits** – Industry are pursuing an increase of steer axle mass on road trains from 6.5 tonne to 7-7.5 tonne. This is a complex issue in achieving consistency across jurisdictions and resolving the impact on pavements and bridges generated by increased mass. Further discussion and work will be required in this area.
- **Queensland Management of Tri-Drive Prime Mover Operations, Policy Determination** – Queensland implemented a policy determination on the management of tri-drive prime mover operations in July 2015. The determination provides for road access for tri-drive prime movers and policy rationale for circumstances where tri-drive prime movers may be used. This includes deviations from current Performance Based Standards (PBS) requirements for tri-drive prime movers.
- **National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy (NRRTS)** – A Draft NRRTS for public consultation was approved by Transport and Infrastructure Council (TIC), and released for public consultation in May 2015. Feedback from submissions was addressed and incorporated by the working group into the re-drafted and finalised strategy. The Northern Territory will continue to work with other jurisdictions represented on the cross-jurisdictional Working Group to progress the implementation of key actions under the Strategy.

After the 5 November RACG meeting, TIC met in Adelaide on 6 November 2015 and approved the NRRTS, which outlines high level actions that seek to address the significant transport challenges faced in remote and regional Australia.

Northern Australia Beef Funds Roads – There are two federal programs running comprising the Northern Australia infrastructure program, which is \$600 million dollars and the \$100 million dollar beef roads program that was announced in mid-2015. The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (DIRD) held a Northern Australia Beef Roads Roundtable on Friday, 2 October 2015 in Rockhampton, which was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister, regional Qld Mayors and representatives from Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), Northern Territory and Western Australia. CSIRO has been commissioned by the federal government to model submissions from road agencies and transport industries through the CSIRO TRANSIT model.

- **Cross border road train operations and road freight project** – Queensland is undertaking a project that is focussing on identifying issues limiting seamless access across borders where access conditions or fatigue management requirements may change. The initial survey results were circulated identifying the prioritised issues that required consideration across jurisdictions and territories, industry and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. Issues included access conditions, fatigue, pilot and escorts and steer axle mass limits.

- **60 Metre Road Train in the Pilbara** – In March 2015 Main Roads Western Australia granted in principle approval pending the outcome of an initial three month trial of 60 metre road trains. These combinations are subject to conditions including, vehicles must be built, certified and maintained to ensure they meet the relevant Performance Based Standards (PBS) assessment and must only operate on approved routes. They are also required to operate at a maximum speed of 90 kilometres per hour and be fitted with an approved Intelligent Access Program (IAP) in-vehicle telematics device.
- **Austroads Freight Program** – RACG members continue to have an interest in many of the projects being developed by the Austroads Freight Program. The progress of several freight projects were discussed including:
 - Improving High Productivity Vehicle (HPV) access through potential charging regimes
 - National steer axle mass limits
 - Heavy vehicle auxiliary braking technology
 - Moving freight in emergency situations
 - National steer axle mass limits
 - Opportunities and framework for improving access through direct private investment in public road infrastructure
- **Updates** – To enhance knowledge sharing, jurisdictions, territories, government agencies and representatives provided comprehensive updates on remote areas related activities undertaken in their respective areas of work. This was a highly valuable exchange of information, particularly given the unique opportunity provided within the RACG membership base to engage directly with industry representatives on key strategic issues.
- The next RACG meeting will be scheduled to meet in mid-2016 in Brisbane.

For further information, contact the RACG Secretariat on freight@tmr.qld.gov.au or telephone (07) 3066 2517.

RACG members were hosted by the Woolworths Larapinta Distribution Centre as part of the RACG meeting program



Neil Wong, NTC and Sandra Corowa, Queensland Transport Manager Woolworths Larapinta Distribution Centre

