

# Remote Areas Consultative Group Communiqué

Queensland hosted its second Remote Areas Consultative Group (RACG) for the 2015/2016 period on 13 May 2015 in Brisbane to align with the biennial Brisbane Truck Show.

The RACG meeting was once again very successful and well attended by state and territory governments, the National Transport Commission, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, industry and road freight sector representatives.

## Summary of key points and meeting outcomes

- **Automation in Heavy Vehicles** – The future technological possibilities related to automation in heavy vehicles will provide unique challenges for governments and heavy vehicle operators in regional and remote Australia. RACG members see a strong role for the group to support the National Transport Commission (NTC) and other bodies to progress necessary regulatory and infrastructure developments required to support these innovative vehicles.
- **Northern Australia Beef Funds Roads – White Paper** – Following the announcement of \$100 million in funding for Northern Australian Beef Funds Roads, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland committed to work together and collaborate on identifying opportunities to maximise benefits for remote areas.
- **Cross border road train operations and road freight** – Queensland will develop a project that will focus on identifying issues limiting seamless access across borders where access conditions or fatigue management requirements may change. This will be undertaken with strong industry and jurisdictional consultation and focus on improving efficiency for long distance, cross border operators and will provide valuable input to the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy.
- **National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy (NRRTS)** – The draft Strategy for public consultation was endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials' Committee (TISOC) in April. The RACG discussed the transport and regulation aspects and how the proposed action plan would be implemented. The public consultation process is proposed to take place between May and July 2015.
- **Heavy tow truck steer axle mass limits** – The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) will take a facilitator role in working towards bringing together a national model to ensure greater consistency. RACG will work with the NHVR and continue to progress the issue.
- **PBS 4B Quad Road Trains** – Main Roads Western Australia has approved the trial of higher productivity 60 metre quad road trains to operate in the Pilbara region, these vehicles are considered to be the safest and highest productivity quad road trains in Australia and were assessed against the Performance Based Standards (PBS) standards.
- **Load Restraint Guide** – The NTC will be conducting workshops targeting industry, technical experts, governments and police to review the existing Load Restraint Guide. NTC is working closely with NHVR on the education, enforcement component, as the project scope and objectives include increasing the consistency of enforcement at the road side.
- **90 Day Project, A Modern Transport System for Agriculture** – South Australia presented a new approach to developing 'A Modern Transport System for Agriculture' using a partnership approach. Working with Primary Producers SA (PPSA) and Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA), the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) undertook a '90 day project' to identify issues of significant concern.

The project received 680 responses, raising over 1000 issues, which fell into two broad categories, being agricultural machinery issues and route extensions/last mile issues. Issues were reviewed and prioritised and the final report was produced outlining changes and reforms to be implemented. RACG members agreed this has been a successful approach and an example of success when industry and government work together.

- **Austroads Freight Program** – RACG members continue have an interest in many of the projects being developed by the Austroads Freight Program. The progress of several freight projects were discussed; that were of particular interest to the group:
  - Moving freight in emergency situations
  - Expansion of the PBS Route Assessment Tool (RAT) specifically to include bridge assessment
  - Opportunities and framework for improving access through direct private investment in public road infrastructure
  - Review of Over Size Over Mass (OSOM) Limits
  - Improving High Productivity Vehicle (HPV) access through potential charging regimes
  - National steer axle mass limits
  - Heavy vehicle braking technology
- **Updates** – To enhance knowledge sharing, jurisdictions, government agencies and representatives provided comprehensive updates on remote areas related work 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 is planned for 5 November 2015 in Brisbane. It is likely a workshop will be held in-between meetings to progress the key Cross Border Road Train Operations project and ensure alignment with the progress of National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy.

For further information contact the RACG Secretariat on telephone (07) 3066 2517.

*RACG members were hosted by the Brisbane Truck Show as part of the formal RACG meeting program*



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