

**Remote Areas Consultative Group Communiqué**

The Remote Areas Consultative Group (RACG) consists of the four states / territories with extensive remote regions, namely Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The RACG is sponsored by the Chief Executives of the respective jurisdictions. The purpose of the RACG is to act as an advisory body to provide a remote areas perspective on proposed and existing road reforms.

As part of a two year jurisdictional hosting sequence, the Northern Territory hosted its second meeting of the RACG in Darwin on 9 December 2017. The meeting was well attended by all jurisdictions and most regional members, as well as the National Road Transport Association, Australian Road Research Board, National Transport Commission and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

**Summary of key points and meeting outcomes**

* **RACG Terms of Reference** – The Group approved an updated Terms of Reference, which aligns the Group with the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials Committee, rather than with the National Transport Commission (NTC); seen as more appropriate given the NTC’s recent move to a higher level strategic focus.
* **NRRTS Cross Border Regulation Project** – Jurisdictions and industry representatives provided detailed input on actions required to progress the next stage of the project. Priority issues were workshopped and members tasked with providing jurisdictional data.
* **Regional issues** – All government and industry bodies provided updates on key current activities and issues. In particular, permit delays for goods transported across state borders was discussed; with an agreement to obtain data to identify the primary causes of delay.
* **National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy (NRRTS)** – Of the 11 key actions in the Strategy, 6 are now completed and 5 are underway, including Action 9, the Cross Border Regulation Project, which the RACG has primary responsibility for.
* **National Heavy Vehicle Regulator** – Described a trial in South Australia of longer single articulated and B-Double combinations using road train prime movers, to determine their safety performance on the eastern seaboard and what part of the road network could be accessed. The NHVR concluded there was no increased safety risk and is rolling out the trial to other jurisdictions. The NHVR also provided updates on the customer portal and road manager permit access systems and the training being provided.
* **Austroads**– Updated the Group on the status of current projects in its freight program.
* **Australian Road Research Board** – Invited members to the 28th ARRB International Conference in Brisbane, 29 April to 2 May 2018 and the 8th Surf Symposium in Brisbane, 2-4 May 2018.
* **National Transport Commission** – Described projects underway to support automated vehicles and advised that the updated restraint guides for light and heavy vehicles have been approved by the Transport and Infrastructure Council.
* **Steer Axle Mass Limits** – The NT outlined proposed changes to steer axle mass limits and permit scheme policy, in response to heavier steer axles and evidence that pavement impacts are due to tyre width as well as steer axle mass.
* The next RACG meeting is scheduled for June 2018 in Darwin.

For further information, contact the RACG Secretariat on policy.transport@nt.gov.au or telephone (08) 8924 7965.