

**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 third meeting of the RACG in Darwin on 26 June 2018. The meeting was well attended by all jurisdictions and most regional members, as well as the National Road Transport Association, National Transport Commission and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

**Summary of key points and meeting outcomes**

* **NRRTS Cross Border Regulation Project** – This project is a key action of the National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy. The project continues to be a key focus of the Group, to ensure that regulation and standards take into account remote and regional issues; minimise regulatory burden and compliance costs for operators in remote and regional areas; are risk based; and are enablers to achieving improved infrastructure and transport services in remote and regional Australia. The Group is currently collating data in order to enable exploration of the economic benefits of expanding the triple road train area of operation within Australia.
* **Variances in Over Size and Over Mass permit allowances and conditions** – The Group is looking for ‘quick wins’ for harmonising OSOM period permit/notice conditions, by identifying the rationale for variances and adjusting them where possible.
* **Access inconsistencies for twin steers and tri-drives** - The Group is seeking solutions where access is restricted, either due to infrastructure limitations, or to historical reasons that may no longer apply. Permitting these combinations on a greater area of the road network would reduce the number of heavy vehicles on the road.
* **Regional issues** – All government and industry bodies provided updates on key current activities and issues. Local government methodology for charging for road wear and the ‘counting time’ rule in the Heavy Vehicle National Law were discussed.
* **National Heavy Vehicle Regulator** – Provided an update on the customer portal and road manager permit access systems and the rollout of the National Services Transition. The National Compliance and Enforcement Policy is currently at the consultation draft stage. Electronic Work Diaries Policy Framework and Standards are being revised following consultation and will be published shortly to allow EWD operations to commence.
* **National Transport Commission** – The NTC currently has six papers out for public consultation, including Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation Consultation draft, Mass Limits for Three-axle Buses, Effluent and Load Restraint, and HVNL Fatigue Issues.
* The next RACG meeting is scheduled for November 2018 in Darwin.

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