

**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 first meeting of the RACG in 2017, held in Darwin on 8 March. 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 agreed to review and update the Terms of Reference and a working group was formed to report back to the Group at the next meeting.
* **Regional issues** – All government and industry bodies provided updates on key current activities and issues.
* **National Remote and Regional Transport Strategy (NRRTS)** – The Northern Territory is continuing to monitor and report against NRRTS projects in collaboration with jurisdictions.
* **NRRTS Cross Border Regulation Project** – Work will continue with input required from industry members, including provision of case studies to pinpoint areas of inconsistency causing cross-border issues.
* **National Heavy Vehicle Regulator** –Provided an update of the heavy vehicle access customer portal. The new customer portal has reduced permit processing time by 45% and has achieved 95% take-up. Ongoing development includes a new mapping system to be integrated into the portal and a road manager access portal. A presentation will be provided at the next meeting.
* **Austroads Freight Program** **update** – Outlined recent and current projects, including bridge assessment for high productivity freight vehicle access, freight movement in emergency situations and community service obligations for roads.
* **Australian Road Research Board** – Reported the Australian Government announcement on 7 March 2017 for $55M over 10 years to fund a co-operative research centre (CRC) to work with organisations and researchers on the development of intelligent transport systems in Australia.
* **National Transport Commission** – Updated the Group on its four year draft work program, intended to enable next generation mobility through more responsive regulation improve efficiencies in current systems and arm Ministers with up-to-date, strategic intelligence and recommended responses to shifts in existing transport related markets and consumer preferences.
* **Steer Axle Mass Limits** – The Austroads recommendation of a 7 tonne limit has been implemented in WA and will be placed on the NHVR forward work program. The NT will review the charging regime applicable to its current permit system up to 7 tonnes and will consider further mass increases consistent with the Austroads research.
* **Livestock Loading** – The NT and QLD are both reviewing their respective livestock loading schemes and provided updates.
* The next RACG meeting will be scheduled for late 2017 and will be held in Darwin.

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