



Local Government Association
of South Australia

The **Voice**
of Local
Government

NATIONAL LAND FREIGHT STRATEGY

**Submission by Local Government
Association of South Australia**

May 2011

Introduction

The Local Government Association is recognised as the peak representative body for Local Government in South Australia. The Association provides leadership to all the 68 Councils in South Australia and representation outwards to State and Federal governments and other key stakeholders. The LGA has engaged Councils to determine their respective positions on the:

- a) National Land Freight Strategy,
- b) Regulatory Reform Law (NHVR), and
- c) COAG Road Reform Plan.

This submission is based on feedback provided by member Councils.

Local Government in South Australia is primarily concerned about the road network and to a much lesser extent rail and ports infrastructure, although Councils do recognise their interconnectedness and the need for integrated planning.

Councils generally endorse and support the mission statement included in the Discussion Paper of:

'The overarching purpose of the national land freight network strategy is to drive the development of efficient, sustainable freight logistics that balance the needs of a growing Australian community and economy, with the quality of life aspirations of the Australian people'. (p51).'

Although supportive, Councils seek further discussion and consultation on the development of the strategy with particular reference to the following areas:

1. Integrated and future planning

The map (map 4 - p6) indicating the proposed/existing network is acknowledged as a concept but is of minimal use from a Local Government perspective. The "devil is in the details" which is how the freight network will be planned to interact with the communities through which it will pass in both rural and metropolitan settings.

As alluded to in the Strategy (p3) the publication of likely major freight routes and precincts, with reference to relevant jurisdictional planning documents, better integration of freight transport and land use planning is essential from a Council perspective.

Councils require detail about what is being proposed, the timeframe of the proposal and certainty that it will happen, so that their land use planning can meet the expectations of both the community and freight operators. Lack of planning causes conflict between the competing interests of residential and industrial development, especially when both are expanding and require the provision of suitable and adequate transport infrastructure.

2. Local input

Communication strategies need to ensure that communities are engaged and aware of the network proposals and that there is adequate two way consultation. This engagement must demonstrate to communities that they can influence the planning process.

Urban amenity, emissions, congestion and safety are the key concerns that are expressed by the community to Councils about heavy vehicles accessing their suburbs.

Councils, whilst appreciating the efficiencies that modern high load vehicles bring to freight operations, are concerned that many of the roads that will be required to complete the network, "the last mile", are not fit for purpose and will require substantial upgrading to adequately carry such vehicles.

The recognition that “distributed urban freight; low density rural infrastructure and connectivity of major freight generators to the national network” (p7) are local and regional issues but require the same nationally consistent approach is important and cannot be over emphasized. The claim that lack of attention to this aspect will cause supply chain disconnects (p19) is entirely supported by Local Government.

Councils are very aware that land use planning and “permitted use” locations can have “a critical impact on freight activities and the routes used by trucks and trains” the inefficiencies of which are passed on through the supply chain side (p8). The challenge will be achieving a balance between the competing interests.

3. Targeted funding

Local Government supports the development of a prioritised long term capital works program that draws funding from the public and private sectors. Transport infrastructure improvement should be a priority at Federal, State and Local levels.

The intention of the COAG Road Reform Plan is supported by Local Government in South Australia but Councils require detail as to how this will eventually translate into acceptable funding programs. They are, however, adamant that they should not receive less than currently received through funding programs for construction and maintenance of road infrastructure.

4. Regulations

Councils maintain that if their roads are going to be opened up to heavy vehicles then load limits and speed restrictions should be adequately enforced by State agencies. Councils are sceptical that this will occur as they have noted the continual withdrawal of resources from the area of regulatory services.

Conclusion

Local Government in SA supports the identification and publication of a national land freight network, but it must be done in consultation with all jurisdictions and contain viable infrastructure development and maintenance regimes coupled with adequately controlled nationally agreed regulation.