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INITIATIVE

REALISE THE PRODUCTIVE POTENTIAL OF AUSTRALIA'S FREIGHT ROUTES

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Bottlenecks and pinchpoints on local road networks are increasing the time it takes for freight to travel from sender to receiver.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR COMMUNITIES?

More efficient transport routes connecting local businesses to national and global markets can help create more success and economic prosperity for regional communities.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- The efficient movement of freight is essential in a national economy.
- Local government roads and bridges in general were designed and built decades ago and are no longer fit for purpose. As a result, vehicle access to parts of the local road network is more limited as road providers try to balance access with protection of the road assets from vehicle damage.
- The first/last mile problem typically refers to a local road network that is not of the same standard as the major arterial network. This can result in bottlenecks and pinch points that increase the time it takes for freight to travel from sender to receiver.
- Limited access frequently requires high productivity vehicles to 'break down' to smaller configurations at the start or end of the journey. This requires drivers to depart production facilities with only one trailer attached and drive to a suitable assembly point adjacent to an approved high productivity road before returning to collect subsequent trailers, and then assembling it all in a double or triple configuration. This process negates some of the benefits of higher mass limit reforms.
- The Commonwealth is currently developing a comprehensive national freight strategy that takes an "end-to-end" approach to supporting business supply chains. However, work on the known challenge of first and last mile issues should commence immediately given the extent of the problems that currently restrict freight.
- Many councils have demonstrated their willingness, capacity and competence to undertake regional planning on behalf of their region. These regional plans could be developed in all regions and can provide the basic building blocks for project identification, prioritisation and investment, to drive productivity improvements across council boundaries and in some cases jurisdictional boundaries.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSES

Realise the productive potential of Australia's freight routes by funding a Local Government Higher Productivity Investment Plan starting at \$200 million per annum over five years.



ECONOMIC BENEFIT

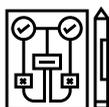
\$1.66 billion cumulative Gross Domestic Product benefit by year 3 and 2,300 new jobs.



System Gaps

Currently, the system for managing Australia's total road network is not appropriately linked, and access consent is difficult to coordinate.

A key enabler of timely access to local roads is a fully interoperable system between the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR), jurisdictions and industry.



Planning Gaps

The current system of planning, including freight route identification to meet industry needs, is ad hoc.

Local government is committed to regional transport planning, including route identification and prioritisation in consultation with jurisdictions and industry to improve the alignment of needs and priorities – subject to resources.

ALGA proposes that the Commonwealth incentivise councils to undertake regional transport plans, including demand forecasting on key freight routes.



Knowledge Gaps

Currently, the system for consenting to access on local roads requires councils to make decisions on the capacity of roads and other key assets such as bridges in order to undertake the task.

These decisions take into consideration engineering conditions, asset management plans and financial management plans. Where councils have limited, inadequate, or no current data on the engineering conditions of such assets, formal assessments may be required.

However, councils need adequate funds to undertake appropriate engineering assessments of key strategic assets on key freight routes.



Funding Gaps

The current system of funding of local roads is designed primarily to meet property access needs in line with local community expectations and councils' long-term financial management plans.

External funding for road reconstruction and maintenance has not increased to keep pace with industry and community needs.

Councils are struggling to maintain the status quo and generally have very limited capability to self-fund demand for improvements flowing from advanced safety technologies or higher productivity freight configuration.