

The NSW Freight Transport Advisory Council (FTAC) provides strategic advice to the NSW Government on freight transport strategies, policies, and projects in NSW. The Council also provides a link between the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and the freight transport sector.

## FTAC Meeting 7 November 2022

The NSW Freight Transport Advisory Council (FTAC) chaired by independent member Hon Duncan Gay, met for the final meeting of the year on Monday 7 November 2022. Discussion at the meeting was concentrated on the FTAC priority focus areas of freight planning integration and sustainability.

### Extreme weather impacts

Minister Faraway, in his address to members once more noted the impact of the continuing extreme weather events across the whole supply chain, and the challenges for the freight sector in the coming months with the very late harvest and busy holiday period. Despite the extensive damage to the road and rail network, Transport for NSW teams have been working around the clock to keep the networks open until dryer conditions allow for recovery and reconstruction works to start. The NSW Government and Transport for NSW will continue to channel resources where needed and maintain regular road and rail briefings to ensure the sector is armed with the information necessary to run their businesses through these disruptions.

### Regional Freight Forums

The Minister shared a range of insights from the recent Regional Freight forums held across regional NSW (Parkes, Dubbo, Griffith, Tamworth, Singleton and Grafton). The forums have been well attended with representation from a wide cross-section of the community and industry including mayors, business chambers, operators and community members. A combination of issues spanning oversize overmass movements, truck stops, rail pathing, heavy vehicle permits, funding and investment were amongst the matters raised that provide opportunities for further discussion and action by Government and advisory bodies such as FTAC.

A key issue highlighted to the Minister by regional transport operators was that of labour and skills shortages across the sector, especially within road freight. The median age of truck drivers is approaching fifty, which contributes to a declining workforce as well as the national skills shortage facing all sectors.

There was unanimous agreement amongst Council members of the need for a nationally recognised competency based accreditation scheme. The Minister emphasised the need for initiatives to be developed within the State so that NSW can be prepared for the future.

### Sustainability

The Australian Logistics Council, Australasian Railway Association and Port of Newcastle shared their perspectives on sustainability initiatives being developed within the sector. The presentations highlighted the

expansive industry investment in innovation and technology contributing to an integrated and sustainable freight system. With key initiatives at every point of the end-to-end supply chain. Beyond emissions, common themes across the rail, port and logistics sectors included fuel security, inter-connectivity and integration across modes and infrastructure, circular economy, harmonisation of regulation, human resources and future proofing key routes between the ports and renewable energy zones. Innovative financial strategies are also being developed with exploration of sustainability linked finance models and their ability to drive sustainable development across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) pillars.

### **Freight integration**

Following initial discussion on holistic approaches to industrial land usage and integrated planning, the Council continued its focus on freight integration with a constructive conversation with senior planners from the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), the Greater Cities Commission (GCC) and the Chief Transport Planner from Transport for NSW. The discussion covered explanation of statutory frameworks and various planning instruments, highlighting the need for early engagement and advocacy of freight considerations at the strategic planning level, with key opportunities arising during the course of next year for consolidated sector input into the GCC region planning and the Six Cities modelling. The changing landscape and post-pandemic impacts now require a re-thinking of concepts such as 'amenity' to move beyond simply residential land amenity to broader, more inclusive notions of connected, growing cities and liveable communities. Other key themes of discussion covered patterns of movement of goods, more efficient use of the network, including having the right asset at the right place and the right load on the right road.

Members were thanked for their ongoing commitment and participation. There will be a break over the Christmas and New Year Period, with the next meeting of the Council anticipated in early **2023**.

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### Ministerial attendance

- Hon. Sam Faraway – Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

### Member attendance

- Hon. Duncan Gay, Chair of Freight Transport Advisory Council
- Austin Vella, Chair Road Freight NSW
- Andrew Harding, Chair Freight on Rail Group
- Hermione Parsons, CEO Australian Logistics Council
- Craig Carmody, CEO Port of Newcastle
- Geoff Crouch, Executive Director Ron Crouch Transport
- Les Logue, Head of Retail Transport & Linehaul Toll Group
- Marika Calfas, CEO NSW Ports
- Michael Gallacher, CEO Ports Australia
- Neil Johns, Executive General Manager Namoi Cotton
- Wade Lewis, President Livestock Bulk and Rural Carriers Association
- Scott Walker, National Transport Manager Mondiale VGL
- Warren Clark, CEO NatRoad
- Rick Dani, Head of Store Delivery Woolworths Group
- Ben Pratt, Director Corporate Affairs (for Paul Digney, Managing Director Qube)
- Caroline Wilkie, CEO Australasian Railway Association (Apology).

### TfNSW representatives

- Matt Fuller, Deputy Secretary Regional & Outer Metropolitan
- Susie Harwood, Executive Director, Freight Branch.

### FTAC Secretariat

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