Concluding Statement

2019 ALC Supply Chain Technology & Data Summit

The 2019 Supply Chain Technology & Data Summit hosted by the Australian Logistics Council (ALC) in Melbourne this week has established a number of priority areas where rapid action is needed to allow Australia’s freight logistics operators and consumers to realise the productivity and safety benefits on offer from emerging technology and the use of data to monitor, measure and optimise supply chain performance.

Held on Tuesday 19 November, the Summit featured presentations, demonstrations and panel discussions that featured prominent designers and providers of technology systems, researchers, regulatory and policy-making bodies, and industry participants from across the supply chain.

In addition to examining the potential of technology solutions now on offer to the industry, Summit participants also explored some of the regulatory barriers, market hesitations and infrastructure impediments that are inhibiting the uptake of technology by some supply chain participants.

The overarching theme to emerge from the Summit was the need for a more proactive embrace of technology, using it to identify business opportunities, manage performance and control safety risks.

Industry will be far better served if it uses technology to identify problems and prevent safety incidents before they emerge, rather than using data and technology as a reactive tool to determine why initiatives fail, or why accidents occur.

The key issues and areas in which to pursue action were identified as follows:

- **Agreeing** a single data standard for use in Australia is central to unlocking productivity benefits for the industry. Facilitating interoperability between different types of data-collection equipment and promoting rapid information sharing are critical to optimising supply chain performance;

- **Pursuing** enhanced supply chain visibility and international competitiveness in Australia by encouraging supply chain participants to adopt the use of global data standards (GDS) in their day-to-day operations. There is a particular need to enhance the visibility of freight once it leaves ports;

- **Adopting** a proactive rather than reactive approach to the use of technology and data sharing in logistics operations. This is particularly relevant to improving safety outcomes, where technology can be deployed to enhance the quality of safety training and in-vehicle telematics and safety equipment can be used to prevent incidents, rather than to investigate the cause of incidents after the fact;
• **Highlighting** the major advances that technology can bring to industry safety. This includes using the review of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) to pursue mandatory collection of data through the use of in-vehicle telematics, as well as deploying the Advanced Train Management System (ATMS) developed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC);

• **Overcoming** industry reluctance around data sharing by ensuring there is a rigorous framework in place that protects privacy and commerciality of data. We must make certain that data sets are appropriately aggregated and presented in a fashion that promotes better decision-making around investments and operations, but does not threaten the commercial interests of operators, or the privacy of customers;

• **Demonstrating** the commercial benefits of supply chain technology more clearly, particularly opportunities to reduce administrative costs and red-tape through the introduction of systems that eliminate duplication of tasks and the risk of errors through manual data entry and paper-based systems;

• **Helping** the freight logistics industry to understand what it wants to achieve though the use of technologies like blockchain or policy initiatives such as the National Freight Data Hub. These can only be ‘solutions’ if we first understand the problems we want to solve, or the questions we need answered;

• **Developing** a more sophisticated understanding among industry participants and policy-makers about the operational, safety, environmental and commercial benefits of electric vehicle (EV) and autonomous vehicle technology. Governments must also be persuaded to help drive the switch to EVs as a last-mile delivery solution by providing concessions on stamp duty and vehicle registration charges for fleet managers and for small businesses; and

• **Enhancing** the quality of vocational training opportunities to reflect the fact that the industry’s future workforce will require competencies in the management of technology and the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to data as core skills. This will be vital to protecting the long-term viability of the industry by ensuring we attract quality personnel from diverse backgrounds.

The actions identified above will now be reflected in ALC’s continuing advocacy and engagement with industry and governments on key initiatives, including the design of the National Freight Data Hub, the development of the Transport Sector Skills Strategy being led by the Commonwealth, and the ongoing implementation of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy.

ALC thanks all Summit presenters, sponsors and attendees for their involvement and contribution to the discussions.

Selected photos and presentations from the Summit are available on ALC’s website

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