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IA report proposes freight and supply chain strategy

Infrastructure Australia has released its latest report detailing what priorities governments should set to move the country forward. Not surprisingly, it includes recommendations for improving Australia's transport and freight networks.

Infrastructure Australia (IA) is an independent statutory body that conducts research and offers advice for governments, industry and the community on nationally significant infrastructure needs, and how to better plan and utilise infrastructure networks.

IA has responsibility to strategically audit Australia's nationally significant infrastructure, and develop 15-year rolling infrastructure plans that specify national and state level priorities.

In its latest report, released this month, one of the major recommendations is the delivery of a *National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy*, which would map nationally significant supply chains and their access to supporting infrastructure. The strategy would help to identify and then recommend a series of reforms and investments to enable more efficient movement of freight.

The report calls for a rigorous system of road charges – potentially including the introduction of variable tolls depending on congestion levels – to help meet future funding challenges.

The report also acknowledges automated vehicles are likely to impact infrastructure spending, saying that over coming decades,

the proliferation of automated vehicles is likely to require a growing network of devices and sensors in and around roadways. Technology, it says, can enable drivers to use their time more productively, prevent accidents, save fuel, reduce emissions, raise average speeds and expand the capacity of roads.

The report recommends the freight strategy should map nationally-significant supply chains and their access to supporting infrastructure and gateways; evaluate the adequacy of the institutional framework supporting freight networks; and recommend reforms and investments that will enable the more efficient movement of freight.

It also recommends removing first and last mile constraints across the national freight network. The report suggests that Federal, State and Territory governments should commit to the full implementation of a heavy vehicle road charging structure in the next five years. This reform must include the removal of all existing registration and usage charges under the PayGo model and the introduction of supporting regulatory and investment frameworks.

‘Sensible reforms’

The Australian Logistics Council (ALC) says the IA report proposes a range of sensible reforms which, if implemented, would boost the efficiency of Australia’s national supply chains and in turn, underpin economic growth.

“In particular, we applaud IA’s recommendation for a *National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy* which acknowledges the importance of putting in place a long-term plan incorporating the various, interlinked components of our national and international supply chains,” said ALC Managing Director Michael Kilgariff.

Kilgariff said governments must continue to work in the national interest and implement IA’s recommendations in a timely and coordinated fashion. He said governments and the private sector should work together to map nationally significant supply chains and their access to supporting infrastructure and gateways, calling it “sensible long-term thinking.”

“As part of this work, we would like to see Infrastructure Australia audit the existing National Freight and Port strategies to identify priority areas for action. ALC also hopes the report’s recommendation to implement a heavy vehicle road charging structure in the next five years will help drive this important reform through the many roadblocks it has experienced over the past decade,” Kilgariff said.

The ALC also encouraged a public inquiry into road user charging, calling it “a sensible way to address both the lack of robust information regarding the current pricing system and the emotionally charged nature of this highly political issue”.

Keeping up with the changes

How will the IA report, especially the *National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy*, if implemented, impact your business? What is the best way to stay informed about these changes and your ongoing obligations under Chain of Responsibility (CoR) law? By subscribing to *CoR Advisor*, of course.

CoR Advisor, compiled by Editor-in-Chief Geoff Farnsworth, a transport expert at Holding

Redlich Lawyers, has all the CoR information and updates you need at your fingertips. CoR obligations aren't always easy to navigate through, so having all this information in the one place and in an easy-to-read format is extremely beneficial. Find out how the *CoR Adviser* will help your organisation. [Sign up today.](#)

Until next time,

The CoR Adviser Team

News in Brief

- ▶ **Infrastructure Australia CEO Phil Davies will outline the 15-year infrastructure plan at the ALC Forum at Royal Randwick Sydney, 1-3 March.**
- ▶ **Following the resignation from Parliament last week of Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss, Victorian Nationals MP Darren Chester has been appointed the new minister for Infrastructure and Transport.**



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