



Australian, State and Territory
Governments

SM21/0185/NCRCIT
25 March 2021

NATIONAL CABINET MINUTE

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT NATIONAL CABINET REFORM COMMITTEE

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT NATIONAL CABINET REFORM COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Infrastructure and Transport National Cabinet Reform Committee ('the Committee'):

1. Noted two of the National Cabinet's priorities for the Committee are to:
 - (a) expedite major infrastructure projects through approval processes
 - (b) optimise job opportunities from the national infrastructure pipeline.
2. Agreed the Committee will present a Paper to the National Cabinet by mid-2021 that will include:
 - (a) actions taken to date to streamline approvals and optimise job outcomes
 - (b) reforms aimed at:
 - (i) streamlining infrastructure planning and approval processes
 - (ii) improving transparency of the infrastructure pipelines
 - (iii) improving the capacity, capability and sustainability of the construction industry and delivery of transport infrastructure projects in order to optimise job opportunities.

3. Noted all governments continue to invest in infrastructure to support jobs, provide economic stimulus and boost long term productivity and have undertaken work to expedite major projects and optimise job outcomes, including:

- (a) increasing the threshold for business cases to be assessed by Infrastructure Australia (IA), from a Commonwealth Government ('the Commonwealth') contribution of \$100 million to \$250 million
- (b) a commitment by the Commonwealth to work with jurisdictions to accelerate the 15 major projects endorsed by the National Cabinet on 24 July 2020 through Commonwealth environmental approval processes
- (c) ongoing reviews by:
 - (i) the Commonwealth of business processes for projects with Commonwealth funding, including the Project Proposal Report process to reduce approval time and administrative burden
 - (ii) IA on their assessment framework, including:
 - (A) recommending, but not requiring, final business cases to have at least two options and a base case
 - (B) looking beyond the benefit-cost ratio and considering other benefits such as quality of life
 - (C) streamlining their processes for fully-funded proposals.

4. Noted IA is developing an annual market capacity report, including a national database of public infrastructure projects, to provide insights into market conditions and capacity constraints, with outcomes to be delivered by mid-2021.

5. Agreed in order to develop further reform options to present to the National Cabinet:

- (a) jurisdictions will come back to the Commonwealth by 5 April 2021, with:
 - (i) a stocktake of their approval processes and the outcomes of a mapping exercise to identify and prioritise opportunities to expedite these processes
 - (ii) procurement practices that have proven effective in expediting infrastructure delivery
 - (iii) policies and practices that have lowered procurement costs and optimised market capacity, such as through facilitating increased participation of lower tier firms and earlier contract engagement
 - (iv) other market capacity and sustainability measures undertaken

- (b) jurisdictions will work with the Commonwealth to investigate options for:
 - (i) getting projects into construction sooner through measures that increase capacity in, and streamline, the planning and development phase of the project life cycle
 - (ii) improving market capacity, efficiency and sustainability
 - (iii) delegating decisions on scope changes for Commonwealth/State and Territory funded projects, below an agreed threshold, from Transport Ministers to Senior Officials
 - (iv) embedding changes in procurement practices
 - (c) the Commonwealth will report back with appropriate governance and data models to support IA to develop a national view of market conditions and capacity constraints which can be used to help optimise jobs from the national infrastructure pipeline
 - (d) the Commonwealth will report back with options for using the Committee to share information and insights at a state, national and international level which will impact on the future shape of delivery of infrastructure projects including risk allocation and insurance
 - (e) jurisdictions will work with the Commonwealth to develop a framework to monitor and report on streamlining measures, job outcomes and project delivery.
6. Noted the preference for increased flexibility in the National Partnership Agreement (NPA), noting the NPA framework is the responsibility of the Council on Federal Financial Relations.
7. Noted:
- (a) the continued importance infrastructure investment and delivery has in generating jobs, providing economic stimulus, and boosting long-term productivity as Australia begins its recovery from COVID-19
 - (b) the Commonwealth's progress update on its land transport infrastructure stimulus response measures.
9. Agreed each state and territory will provide an update on the progress of infrastructure projects including stimulus measures being delivered by their respective jurisdictions at the next meeting of the Committee.
10. Noted the oral update on the IA referral threshold, rising from a Commonwealth Government contribution of \$100 million to \$250 million.

11. Agreed jurisdictions will work with the Commonwealth to investigate options to further streamline IA processes including potentially allowing IA to accept and endorse state and territory assessment processes, noting there is significant variation in state and territory based assessment processes.

12. Considered the oral update on the ongoing national transport reform work already underway in cooperation with states and territories to improve the efficiency and resilience of Australia's transport system and increase national freight productivity, and:

- (a) agreed to develop options for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee on:
 - (i) accelerating the digital transformation of the transport and freight sectors
 - (ii) the opportunity to embed short term freight productivity measures implemented in response to COVID such as curfews
 - (iii) measures to increase increased use of public transport
- (b) noted the relevance of work underway through the National Rail Action Plan to harmonise rail operating standards.

13. Agreed the amended Infrastructure and Transport National Cabinet Reform Committee Operating Protocols.

14. Noted arrangements for future meetings with meetings to occur in May 2021 and June 2021 followed by a report to National Cabinet by mid-2021.

Cabinet Secretary



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SM21/0538/NCRCIT
09 June 2021

NATIONAL CABINET MINUTE

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT NATIONAL CABINET REFORM COMMITTEE

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT NATIONAL CABINET REFORM COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Infrastructure and Transport National Cabinet Reform Committee
(‘the Committee’):

1. Agreed the Paper titled ‘Reforms to Expedite Major Projects through Approvals Processes and Optimise Job Opportunities from the National Infrastructure Pipeline’ (Attachment A to the Paper refers) be provided to a future meeting of the National Cabinet, noting Queensland did not agree to the current drafting of Recommendation 7 in the proposed National Cabinet Paper on the development of a roadmap of guidance for the sector, with the recommendation to be amended and agreed by the Committee out-of-session.
2. Noted the Paper was developed collaboratively by the Commonwealth Government (‘the Commonwealth’) with input from the States and Territories and in line with decisions taken at the 11 December 2020 National Cabinet meeting and the 25 March 2021 Infrastructure and Transport National Cabinet Reform Committee meeting, with the Paper:
 - (a) outlining actions taken to date to expedite major infrastructure projects through approvals processes and optimise job opportunities, including increasing the threshold for business cases to be assessed by Infrastructure Australia (IA) from \$100 million to \$250 million in Commonwealth funding
 - (b) establishing an approach to better share information and insights at a jurisdictional and national level

- (c) detailing work by the jurisdictions and the Commonwealth towards a framework to monitor and report on streamlining measures, job outcomes and project delivery
 - (d) outlining measures to:
 - (i) streamline infrastructure planning and approval processes
 - (ii) improve transparency of the infrastructure pipelines
 - (iii) improve the capacity, capability and sustainability of the construction industry and delivery of transport infrastructure projects in order to optimise job opportunities
 - (e) including additional proposed infrastructure delivery reforms.
3. Noted the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communication and IA are continuing to collaborate on the most appropriate data models to support IA's development of a national view of market conditions and capacity constraints.
4. Noted the updates received from States and Territories on progress of infrastructure projects including stimulus measures being delivered.
5. Noted the work jurisdictions have undertaken with the Commonwealth to investigate options to further streamline IA processes, including the current reforms being progressed.
6. Agreed the Commonwealth, together with the States and Territories, would:
- (a) utilise the existing officials jurisdictional reform working group forum to continue to work to achieve greater levels of alignment and efficiency on business processes, procurement, packaging and processes, including:
 - (i) requirements for Project Proposal Reports for Commonwealth funding of infrastructure projects
 - (ii) overcoming challenges of industry capacity and skills shortages
 - (b) report back on the work in paragraph 6(a) above to a future meeting of the Committee by the end of 2021.
7. Agreed the Paper titled 'Improving the Efficiency, Resilience and Reform of Australia's Transport System and Increase National Freight Productivity' (Attachment A1 to the Paper refers) be provided to a future meeting of the National Cabinet.

8. Agreed the Commonwealth, together with the States and Territories, convene a round table with industry, transport experts and regulators to inform further advice to ministers on challenges and opportunities of digital transformation in the transport and freight sectors.
9. Agreed the Commonwealth, together with the States and Territories, will identify international best practice and learnings from countries with higher levels of transport digitisation that could be applied in Australia.
10. Agreed all governments will work together to improve data quality and nurture reciprocal access, including sharing, data standards, asset classification, data formats and integration.
11. Agreed all governments will consider ways to prioritise, accelerate and expand digitisation and streamlining of regulatory and associated delivery processes in the transport and freight sectors, including through existing deregulation work.
12. Agreed all State and Territory governments will investigate, on a case by case basis, options to support the continued relaxation of curfews for heavy vehicles.
13. Agreed all governments will investigate opportunities for collaborating on cross-border connected and autonomous vehicle and electric vehicle trials, pending further advice from the States and Territories.
14. Agreed in-principle that all governments will collaborate to undertake inter-jurisdictional trials and develop a national approach to cooperative intelligent transport systems.
15. Noted data is showing commuter preferences have shifted from public transport to private vehicle usage.
16. Noted encouraging increased uptake of public transport has the potential to promote economic recovery, reduce congestion and carbon emissions while appropriately managing COVID-19 risks.
17. Agreed State and Territory governments will establish a time-limited official-level working group to:
 - (a) share strategies and lessons learned that support a long-term increase in the ongoing uptake of public transport in a COVID-normal world
 - (b) explore the development of a nationally consistent or jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction campaign to welcome the public back onto public transport once the risks of COVID-19 have subsided.

18. Noted the information contained in the Paper titled Public Transport Measures Undertaken to Date by Jurisdictions (Attachment A4 to the Paper refers) regarding current measures to increase the use of public transport by each jurisdiction.

original authorised by

Cabinet Secretary

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