

Austroads Council Meeting No. 44

Auckland, New Zealand

27 March 2008

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Austroads Council met in Auckland, New Zealand on 27 March 2008. The meeting was chaired by the Austroads Chairman Alan Tesch. This communiqué summarises the main discussions, decisions and actions arising at the meeting.

Revised SCOT and ATC arrangements

The Council considered the decisions of the February meeting of the transport ministers (ATC) and their decision to adopt a new approach to the development of national transport policy. Individual ministers will take responsibility for developing aspects of a national transport policy for consideration at the next ATC meeting on 2 May 2008:

- Economic Framework for Efficient Transportation Marketplace (NSW)
- Infrastructure Planning and Investment (VIC)
- Capacity Constraints and Supply Chain Performance (SA)
- Urban Congestion (VIC)
- Climate Change, Environment and Energy (WA)
- Safety and Security (QLD)
- Strategic Research and Technology (TAS)
- Workforce Planning and Skills (NT)
- Social Inclusion (ACT)
- Governance (Commonwealth).

Working groups have been established by jurisdictions for each of these priority areas. Future organisational arrangements will be determined following the ATC meeting. There are a number of Austroads projects both current and proposed which could provide valuable input into the work of these groups. The main Austroads work will be identified and circulated to members for input through their agency. The role of Austroads and its potential contribution to the new ATC arrangements is to be formally communicated to the Commonwealth Minister. Austroads will also provide input to the work being undertaken by Tasmania on strategic research and technology.

Progress on the 2007-08 work program

Project status as at 29 February was:

Program	Active	Completed/deferred	Total
Assets	22	-	22
Capability	1	1	2
Freight	8	8	16
Network	15	5	20
R&L	8	2	10
Safety	29	2	31
Technology	31	5	36
Corporate	3	2	5
Total	117	25	142

Council noted that a small number of projects were more than twelve months overdue and emphasised that there should not be any projects in this category as at 30 June.

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Preliminary consideration of the 2008-09 work program

Council gave preliminary consideration to the 2008-09 work program. The projects supported by the Executive Committee which met in February were supported. The total proposed work program expenditure for 2008-09 is just over \$9m.

Austrroads International Activities

Council received reports on World Road Association matters including the Executive meeting in Quebec in February 2008.

An agreement between Austrroads' International Committee and the Australian Chapter of the REAAA was endorsed. A meeting of the REAAA Council will be held in Perth in November 2008, coinciding with the Austrroads Council meeting.

Future strategic plan and program management arrangements

The Council also considered recommendations from the Executive Committee in relation to the strategic planning timeframe and associated arrangements for its implementation. Council supported these recommendations. The current arrangement of an annual approval process for projects will continue for the 2008-09 work program. A three year package of work is to be submitted to the March 2009 Council meeting which will cover the remainder of the current strategic plan period to June 2012. From 2009-10 onwards, project funding may be approved for more than one year subject to achievement of agreed milestones during the project.

Future Austrroads strategic plans are to be for a period of four years. At the commencement of the plan a four year package of work will be approved and only new projects will be considered on an annual basis. A major review and update of the strategic plan will be undertaken every two years.

Program managers will be appointed for a period of four years, to changeover midway through the four year strategic plan. The current program managers will continue until June 2009.

Young professionals study tour

The young professionals study tour was established in 2004. It is intended to add to the knowledge within Austrroads member organisations in an area of strategic importance and to recognise young professionals within Austrroads member organisations who have the potential to make a significant contribution to their own organisation and Austrroads over a sustained period. The tours are held bi-annually.

The Council approved a study tour for 2008-09 entitled '*Achieving ambitious road safety targets*' which will visit countries with the lowest road toll rates – including Norway, Netherlands and Sweden – and speak with key personnel in regard to both the setting of the targets and more importantly, how they went about achieving them. All of these countries subscribe to a safe system approach, as does Australia. The tour is to conclude with attendance at the OECD Conference in Paris in September 2008, which will have as one key theme "Achieving Ambitious Targets for Road Safety: The Safe System Approach".

Austrroads member organisations will be invited to nominate suitable young professionals to participate. There is no age criteria applied to participation. However, it is expected that the participants will be younger staff members who are able to draw on the knowledge gained and contribute the benefits to their organisation and Austrroads.

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Reports

Council considered reports from the following organisations:

- ARRB Group
- Australian Local Government Association
- Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics
- National Transport Commission.

Discussion on longer term research requirements

A discussion was held on longer term research requirements for the Australasian road industry. The following papers had been prepared and circulated prior to the meeting:

- Background paper prepared by Austroads national office
- ARRB Research – International Road Transport Research Activities and its Drivers – January 2008
- BTRE 2007 Transport Colloquium: Australian Transport - Policy Challenges for Future Growth – December 2007
- NTC – Austroads Longer Term Research Priorities Heavy Vehicle Management and Regulation Issues – December 2007
- New Zealand Ministry of Transport – Strategic Transport Futures Project *Stage One Report*
- DMR Queensland – Strategic Directions Discussion Paper – January 2008
- National Transport Policy Framework – *A New Beginning* – NTC paper for ATC Volumes 1 and 2.

The discussion concluded that:

- Austroads current strategic plan positions Austroads reasonably well to address current and emerging issues whether they be short term or longer term.
- One area that may need greater attention is climate change and sustainability.
- A document which pulls together the work currently being done by Austroads and identifies any further work that may be required in these areas is to be prepared as a basis for a discussion at the next Council meeting. It will:
 - incorporate input from program managers
 - consider work being done by BITRE on 'peak oil' which is due for release later this year
 - address issues for road authorities emerging from the recently released Garnaut report.

Future meetings

The next Austroads Council meetings will be in Brisbane on 26 June and Perth on 23 October 2008.

At the June meeting there will be a discussion on climate change and sustainability. There will also be a discussion on the relationship between pavement and bridge wear and heavy vehicle regulation and charging, which pulls together the work currently being undertaken by Austroads and others including the Technology, Freight and Assets programs as well as ARRB.