



DELEGATE'S REPORT

14th August 2007

DR1	NATIONAL LOCAL ROADS & TRANSPORT CONGRESS
	FILE: 19 CLR RHM {Folio No. *} }

SUMMARY:

Reporting on attendance at the National Local Roads & Transport Congress.

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DESCRIPTION:

The National Local Roads & Transport Congress was held in Newcastle from 8th to 10th July 2007 at Newcastle City Hall. I attended on behalf of Council with the Director of Shire Services. This was the eighth such Congress and was attended by over 400 delegates from councils across Australia.

The Congress was convened by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) to discuss, plan and fight for the transport needs of our communities. The Congress provides a national focus for local roads issues, guides the development of Local Government transport policy and shapes our advocacy at a national level.

An outcome of the 2006 Congress was the development by ALGA of the Local Government Roads & Transport Strategy 2006 - 2016. This strategy has identified five key areas that require addressing: Local road funding and management; urban transport solutions; mobility and access for regional Australians; freight management; and long-term financial sustainability for Local Government.

Since its inception in 2000, the Congress has played a vital role in highlighting the need for additional funding for local roads. With the recent announcement by the Federal Government to continue the Roads to Recovery Program by another five years to 2014, more than \$3.8 billion of additional much needed funding for local roads will have been provided.

Issues addressed by speeches at the Congress included: the need for improved infrastructure that adds to the productive capacity of our nation; the increasing freight task; the adequacy of public transport; the impact of ageing communities on transport needs; and land use planning, pollution and global warming.

This year's Congress provided a chance to hear and question key members of the Federal Government and Opposition on important issues relating to roads and transport. Keynote addresses were given by Mark Vaile, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Transport & Regional Services; Jim Lloyd, Minister for Local Government, Territories & Roads; Martin Ferguson, Shadow Minister for Transport and Kate Lundy, Shadow Minister for Local Government.

Minister Lloyd confirmed the Government's announcement in the May budget:

- to extend the Roads to Recovery Program to 2014 at the increased amount of \$350 million annually;
- to extend the Black Spot Program to 2014 at the increased amount of \$60 million annually;
- an additional \$250 million in Auslink Strategic Regional Program for 102 new projects and new rounds of funding would be available for 2009 / 10.

Martin Ferguson advised the Congress that a Labour Government would commit to the retention of the Roads to Recovery Program, Blackspot Program and the Auslink Strategic Regional Program for the same period and at the same levels of funding as proposed by the government.

Several speakers gave addresses on the effect of transport on greenhouse gas emissions. Beth Riorden of the Australian Greenhouse Office indicated that transport was the second largest source (14%) of Australia's net greenhouse gas emissions and that there had been a 30% increase between 1990 and 2007. A number of programs have been funded under the Travel Smart Program to encourage travel behavioural change.

Mark McKenzie (Rare Consulting) indicated that road transport was responsible for 90% of the total greenhouse gas emitted by transport. Commercial vehicles represented 20% of the transport fleet but emitted a disproportionate 40% of the greenhouse gases. In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, a three-pronged approach was needed to address the areas of settlement and transport infrastructure, vehicle and fuel improvements and transport consumer behaviour.

Professor Newman, Professor of City Policy of Murdoch University, also spoke of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At the household level 50% of greenhouse gas emissions are transport related. In the United Kingdom all new development was required by law to be '*carbon neutral*' by 2016. An increase in the densities of cities would reduce the amount of fuel required for transportation resulting in cities that were sustainable in the future.

John Howard, Director Jeff Roorda & Associates, spoke of the need for a consistent asset management approach across Australia and the importance of data. Accurate data would show the true position, allow achievable targets to be set, allow performance to be monitored and would demonstrate results. The Australian Local Government Association National Financial Sustainability Study of Local Government reported that 25% of councils were financially unsustainable. In order to address the backlog, specifically relating to roads, a multi faceted strategy is required

to change funding from new works to renewals, source additional revenue and to improve efficiencies.

Delegates adopted a range of resolutions relating to roads and transport issues, including the following:

- Make Roads to Recovery a permanently funded program;
- Dedicated funding of timber bridge maintenance and renewal;
- Funding for asset management systems and the development of national roads data;
- Provision of a fair share of at least 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue to Local Government as an inter-government grant.

A copy of the Communiqué issued from the Congress is attached at [Appendix A – Page F1](#).

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- *Environmental*

Nil

- *Social*

Nil

- *Economic (Financial)*

Nil

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be noted.

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COUNCILLOR R McWILLIAM