2016-17 Budget Submission to the Australian Government

January 2016

About the National Roads and Motorists' Association

Better road and transport infrastructure has been a core focus ever since the National Roads & Motorists' Association (NRMA) first came into being in 1920 when our founders lobbied for improvements to the condition of Parramatta Road in Sydney. Today NRMA continues working with government, advocating for more road funding to improve safety and for solutions to ever increasing traffic congestion. By working together with all levels of government to improve not only road infrastructure but also public transport infrastructure we can give motorists a real choice about how they get around. NRMA believes that efficient roads, public transport and better facilities for cyclists and pedestrians work hand in hand to solve the many transport problems that we face each day.

Comments and Queries

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Contents

Contents 2

Executive Summary 3

Introduction 5

NSW Economy in the National Context 6

The Economic Importance of Roads 6

Investment in the Road and the Transport Network 7

Source Australian Government Budget Papers 2004-05 to 2015-16 8

Safer Road Investment 8

Key Funding Priorities for NSW 10

Sydney Metropolitan Road Infrastructure Priorities 10

Sydney Orbital Road Network 11

Public Transport Infrastructure Priorities 14

Regional Infrastructure Priorities 15

Completion of the Pacific Highway Duplication 15

Upgrade to the Princes Highway south of Jervis Bay Road 15

Newell Highway 16

Upgrade of the Great Western Highway and Mitchell Highway 16

Barton Highway Duplication 17

M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace Upgrade 17

Lake Macquarie – Glendale Integrated Transport Centre 18

Other Road Infrastructure Priorities 19

Crash Reduction Targets outlined in the National Road Safety Strategy 19

Black Spot Program 19

Investment in a National Road Infrastructure Program 19

Tripling of Roads to Recovery Funding for Local Councils 20

Smart Technology – Transport Solution Opportunities 22

Smart Infrastructure Fund 22

Autonomous Vehicle Industry 22

Other Motoring Priorities 23

Consumer Impact of Open Source Vehicle Data – Reducing Cost of Motoring 23

National Audit Program for Vehicles 25

Australasian New Car Assessment Program Funding Extension 25

Alternative Fuels Plan Priorities 26

Tourism Priorities 27

Conclusion 28

References 29

Executive Summary

The National Roads & Motorists' Association (NRMA) has identified key road infrastructure, public transport, other motoring priorities and tourism priority areas that require funding by the Australian Government within the 2016-17 Budget. These include the following:

1. Sydney Metropolitan Road Infrastructure Priorities:
    a. M1 Princes Motorway Extension;
    b. Completing Sydney's missing motorway links;
    c. Western Sydney Road Infrastructure Plan; and
    d. Road upgrades around Moorebank Intermodal Freight Terminal.

2. Public Transport Priorities:
    a. Sydney Rapid Transit – new railway extensions;
    b. Parramatta, Sydney CBD, and Newcastle Light Rail projects;
    c. Northern Beaches Transport Corridor;
    d. Badgerys Creek Airport railway connections.

3. Regional Road Infrastructure Priorities:
    a. Pacific Highway;
    b. Princes Highway;
    c. Newell Highway;
    d. Great Western Highway;
    e. Mitchell Highway;
    f. Barton Highway;
    g. M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace Upgrade; and
    h. Lake Macquarie – Glendale Integrated Transport Centre.

4. Other Road Infrastructure Priorities:
    a. National Road Safety Strategy;
        i. Black Spot Program; and
        ii. National Safe Road Infrastructure Program; and
    b. Tripling of Roads to Recovery Funding for Local Councils.

5. Smart Technology – Transport Solution Opportunities.

6. Other Motoring Priorities:
    a. Consumer Impact of Open Source Vehicle Data – Reducing Cost of Motoring;
    b. National Audit Program for Vehicles;
    c. Alternative Fuels Plan Priorities; and
    d. Tourism Priorities.

NRMA welcomes the Australian Government's commitment to address current deficiencies in road and other transport infrastructure within New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

However, the NRMA urges the Australian Government to provide funding for the above listed projects to improve the quality of the NSW road network from a national perspective noting the economic, safety and mobility benefits that will result. The Australian Government should consider these projects as projects of national importance. This will support the economic development in NSW by accommodating future traffic growth, reducing emissions, and improving the efficiency of passenger and freight movements.

NRMA considers that appropriate investment in the NSW road network is critical to accommodate future growth in both passenger and freight movements. Lack of planning in the past has led to major deficiencies in infrastructure provision, increasing congestion and reducing productivity.

NRMA supports a well-developed integrated road and rail network to more efficiently move freight and passengers in this country. The growing freight task combined with increased urban congestion requires a more integrated approach to transport planning to address these concerns.

The road infrastructure projects identified by NRMA will aid Australia's economic productivity. This is important given the current economic and financial challenges faced by our nation. The Australian Government must commit to effective planning of this infrastructure to accommodate the growing pressures on the road network, and ensure that we do not repeat the current failings. This investment will help stimulate the Australian economy and improve national productivity.

Introduction

NRMA views this Budget submission, along with the current and potential Investment Program and the current Asset Recycling Fund and the current 15 year infrastructure plan being developed by Infrastructure Australia, as a fundamental opportunity to address current deficiencies in road and public transport infrastructure. Traffic congestion within the urban road network and various key regional locations is severely hindering the efficient movement of both passengers and freight.

The link between economic growth and transport activity is well recognised. Empirical evidence clearly shows that investment in road transport infrastructure reduces the costs of moving goods and people between and within regions improving road safety, which in turn leads to productivity and efficiency improvements throughout the economy.

NRMA views the Australian Government 2016-17 Budget in terms of the return NSW and ACT motorists will receive in road expenditure compared with the considerable funds they pay to the Australian Government through the fuel excise levy.

NRMA requests that the Australian Government commit to investing a greater proportion of its fuel excise revenue into Australia's road network. Key road and public transport projects are identified in this submission as priority areas requiring investment.

This Budget Submission, on behalf of the more than 2.4 million Members of NRMA, urges the Australian Government to commit further investment into the nation's road network. It argues that ongoing investment in Australia's road network is essential for the achievement of productivity gains to all Australian firms and industries involved in the distribution of goods and services throughout the Australian economy. In the current economic climate, a commitment to investment in roads would be fiscally responsible and would provide an important signal to Australia's business community, in particular the construction industry.

Finally, this submission aims to:

- Highlight the economic and social importance of the road network;
- Highlight the need to use smart technology opportunities to fund, plan and build transport infrastructure;
- Identify the costs resulting from a sub-optimal road network in terms of both road capacity and road safety;
- Identify current trends in road transport infrastructure funding;
- Critical need to meeting the growing infrastructure backlog in local councils; and
- List specific priority road infrastructure projects for NSW.

This submission will also highlight NRMA's other motoring priorities dealing with consumer access to vehicle data, a national audit program for vehicles, alternative fuels priorities and tourism priorities for the Australian Government.

NSW Economy in the National Context

The New South Wales economy contributes approximately one third of Australia's gross domestic product.[1] It is the largest and most diverse economy in Australia. Sydney alone contributes more to Australia's economy than the whole of the country's mining sector.

Sydney is a major service hub provider in the Asia Pacific region, has 46 per cent of the head offices for ASX 200 companies, provides two international gateways, Sydney Airport and Port Botany, and acts as the junction of the eastern seaboard's transport corridors. Sydney is Australia's premier global city with 30 per cent of national employment in financial and business services and its economy is comparable in size to Singapore.[2]

The NSW population currently represents one third of Australia's population and is predicted to increase from 7 million to 7.6 million by 2018.[3] NSW also continues to attract more overseas migration than any other state or territory, currently absorbing 30 per cent of Australia's net overseas migration. Demographic trends such as the ageing population and urban spread into coastal and new urban areas will further drive demand for infrastructure. Around 70 per cent of NSW's population growth is forecast to occur in the Greater Sydney Region, where 78 per cent of the State's population will reside by 2018.[4]

This growth will accelerate demand for new and upgraded road and other transport infrastructure. How effectively this demand is met will directly impact on economic growth in Australia. NSW's current population growth rate of 1.4 per cent is well above the 1.1 per cent decade growth.[5] Current economic modelling demonstrate that investment in top priority infrastructure projects in NSW could permanently increase real Gross State Product (GSP) by around 3 per cent, equivalent to an increase in today's GSP of $8.8 billion every year.[6]

It should also be pointed out that NSW has recorded one of the weakest trend economic growth rates in Australia over the past four years. NSW is still ranked fourth for construction work done and fifth ranked on economic growth in the latest CommSec "*State of the States"* economic performance report[7]. It is imperative that key Investment in transport including both road and rail will stimulate the NSW economy.

The Economic Importance of Roads

Road networks are of paramount importance to the economic and social activity that takes place in any major city. Roads are ubiquitous in that they provide virtually total connectivity of regions and destinations. Unlike other modes of transport such as rail, the road system offers an infinite range of choices for many users. Furthermore, roads act as a feeder and distributor for the other forms of transport such as road, sea and air transport.

Studies about the economic impacts of roads often concentrate upon the direct impacts. These generally include, lower vehicle operating costs, improved travel times, reduced accident costs, reduced road cost maintenance and lower environmental impacts.

These factors identified above are often considered against the initial costs (and other 'disbenefits') in a cost benefit analysis that is normally required before undertaking additional investment in roads.

In addition, it has been calculated that for every dollar invested under the Australian Government's National Network Building Programme $2.65 is returned to the nation[8]. Clearly this is a real economic productivity benefit to the Australian economy.

It is also being increasingly recognised that the economic impact of road investments 'spill over' into other economic activities. This reflects the fact that most, if not all, economic activity relies on the contribution of road transport at some stage, or to some extent. Increasing the reliability and efficiency of the road transport system, as well as reducing its cost, will generally increase opportunities for other industries.

Capital expenditure will need to accommodate the changing structural dimensions of the population. Expenditure on safety ramps and bridges across roads, ramps, and lifts at railway stations, changes in the design of public transport vehicles and improved signage will no doubt become more prevalent. This will lead to increasing expenditure demand as the population ages and Governments will need to start factoring in this type of expenditure.

Investment in the Road and the Transport Network

NRMA strongly supports the Australian Government spending on road and rail as well as public transport through the Nation Network building approach to transport planning. We agree that transport planning should be undertaken on a cross-modal basis and that investments should be targeted to priorities that deliver high levels of national benefit. The Infrastructure Investment Programme is also positive in that it ensures all levels of government work towards common objectives.

Despite our support for the National Network Investment Strategy, NRMA along with other motoring clubs has an ongoing concern that the national road network is underfunded. Taking into account the additional funds in the order of at least $7.1 billion committed by the Australian Government in the 2015-16 Budget and the $36 billion spent on both rail and road over the period 2008-09 to 2013-14 [9], there remains a number of significant road infrastructure projects with positive cost-benefit ratios that are yet to be funded. We do note that $23 billion has been placed on the table for road investment in the years 2016-17 through to 2018-19 over the forward estimates.

Even with recent increases, road funding by the Australian Government still remains relatively low as a percentage of the Government's petroleum excise revenue. As detailed in Figure 1, total road funding in 2015-16 is projected to be $7.1 billion, while fuel excise collected from petrol and diesel will generate approximately $15.2 billion. This is equivalent to a return of approximately 18.5 cents (or 47 per cent) of the 39.5 cents per litre fuel excise paid by motorists.[10]

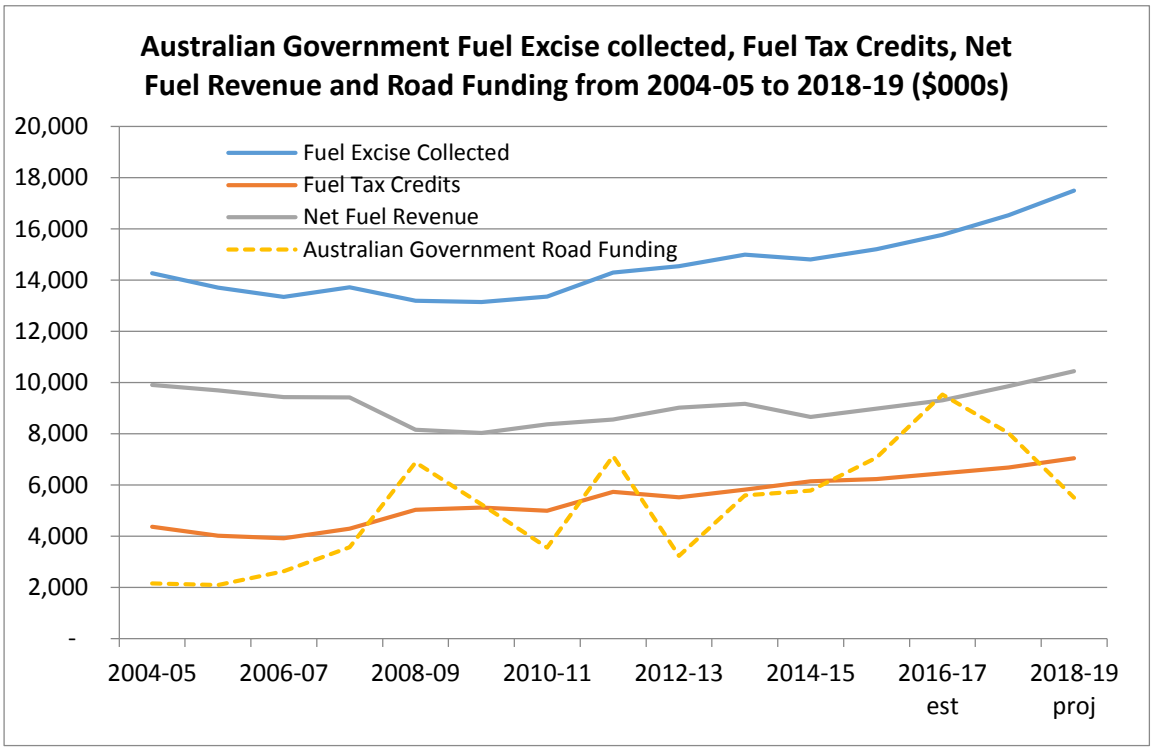
We also note from the 2015-16 Australian Government budget position, restored fuel indexation and that the addition excise collected would be hypothecated back into road investment. The NRMA does not support this position, as motorists already pay more than their share in fuel excise with only a fraction of excise collected returned to the road network. NRMA believes that at least a minimum of 50 per cent of gross excise collected from motorist should be returned to the road network.

Despite recent funding increases, the amount that the Australian Government invests in the road network is not quite one half of the revenue it receives from fuel excise. Consequently, there is a backlog of economically viable road infrastructure projects throughout Australia.

It is also pertinent to note that the introduction of excise duties on transport fuels in 1901 and 1929, were introduced to fund the development and maintenance of Australia's road network[11]. This also highlights the reluctance of successive Australian and State Governments to potentially use long-term Government debt instruments to fund public infrastructure thus encouraging the use of PPPs, tolls and user charges.

In addition, the NRMA also notes the Australian Government's attempts through Infrastructure Australia to reform infrastructure finance and funding reform, to explore options to finance future infrastructure spends.[12]

Figure 1 – Australian Government Fuel Excise Revenue (Petrol and Diesel) versus Road Funding $m for 2008-09 to 2018-19 (est)



Source Australian Government Budget Papers 2004-05 to 2015-16

Safer Road Investment

NRMA also supports the Australian Government spending on roads that improve the safety of the existing road infrastructure and making sure that new roads meet the highest safety standards.

The Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) report released July 2013, details the safety star ratings over the Australian national highway network. This rating methodology measures the inherent safety of a road's infrastructure, that is, the degree to which built-in safety features prevent crashes from occurring and reduce the severity of those crashes which do occur.

Investment is safety countermeasures such as roadside barriers, central median barriers, shoulder rumble strips, skid resistance (paved roads), road shoulder sealing, protected turn roads and additional lanes, can improve road safety thereby reducing deaths and serious injuries.

The report builds a case for investing $4.7 billion in safer roads investment plans, to reduce the percentage of higher risk sections on the national highway network. A plan to upgrade the two lowest star rated roads by spending $4.7 billion on the Australian national highways over a period of 20 years could result in 36,485 less fatalities and serious injuries. The safety benefits derived from this investment would equal $16.5 billion, resulting in a program benefit cost ratio of 3.49.[13]

This represents a modest investment over a 20 year period and could prevent a large number of crashes, reducing the social and economic costs of road trauma. The estimated $27 billion per year in road trauma costs to the community cannot continue. Reducing this figure through infrastructure investment has the potential to reduce the strain on other portfolios within the Australian Government budget, such as the health sector.

Table 1 shows the star rating distribution for the NSW and ACT national highways. The Barton, Great Western, Mitchell, New England and Newell highways have the worst safety star rated roads, that is, having various sections of the highway, rated as 1- Star or 2- Star.

Table 1: New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory Star Rating Distribution by Highway

NSW Highways	Length (km)	Proportion in each Star Rating				
		1-Star	2-Star	3-Star	4-Star	5-Star
A25 Barton Highway	48.5	0%	62%	38%	0%	0%
M1/A1 F3 Freeway	248.6	15%	45%	38%	1%	0%
A1 F6 Freeway	105.7	13%	55%	30%	2%	0%
M23 Federal Highway	131.7	0%	52%	43%	5%	0%
A32 Great Western Highway	137.6	52%	34%	8%	2%	0%
M31 Hume Highway	996.9	2%	27%	67%	2%	0%
A32 Mitchell Highway	176.0	2%	62%	35%	0%	0%
A15 New England Highway	499.4	12%	60%	26%	1%	0%
A39 Newell Highway	975.3	9%	54%	36%	1%	0%
M1/A1 Pacific Highway	839.6	10%	32%	51%	5%	0%
A20 Sturt Highway	562.3	12%	32%	54%	2%	0%
ACT Highways						
A25 Barton Highway	10.3	0%	30%	70%	0%	0%
M23 Federal Highway	6.6	0%	0%	45%	55%	0%
Total	**4,738.5**	**9%**	**42%**	**46%**	**2%**	**0%**

Investment spending on more overtaking lanes, median barriers, wire rope barriers and other safety measures can lead to significant safety enhancement on the national highways and a more efficient road network, with lower journey times for all road users.

For NSW and the ACT an investment of $2 billion over 20 years would generate over $ 7 billion in safety benefits resulting in 15,735 less fatalities and serious injuries.

Key Funding Priorities for NSW

NRMA believes that a number of priority road and public transport infrastructure projects in NSW require investment by the Australian Government. Investment in these projects would be fiscally responsible and support future economic growth.

NRMA estimates that the value of outstanding major road infrastructure projects in NSW is now well in excess of $40 billion.[14] While we recognise that it is not the sole responsibility of the Australian Government to address this backlog of road projects, and it nonetheless has an important role to play given that many of these projects will deliver economic and social benefits to Australia as a whole. For example, improved freight links to Port Botany would increase the productivity of Australia's transport sector, lower the cost of distributing goods and services throughout Australia, and improve Australia's international competitiveness.

It is also important to note that about half the interstate freight task in Australia traverses the NSW road network to deliver goods and services[15]. Investment in the road network leads to economic growth and higher productivity, to the benefit of all Australians.

NRMA has identified a number of key road and public transport projects in NSW that the Australian Government should commit to, with most of these projects on the National Road Network relating to important freight links and transport corridors in both metropolitan and regional NSW.

Sydney Metropolitan Road Infrastructure Priorities

A recent study into Sydney's transport infrastructure estimates the current economic cost of traffic congestion in Sydney at $6.5 billion, which is expected to rise to $9.5 billion by 2030.[16] If this is not adequately addressed via investment in road infrastructure and public transport, Sydney's congestion will worsen and negatively affect the economies of not only Sydney, but also NSW and Australia. Negative impacts are likely to include a loss of productivity in the road transport sector, with increased expenditure due to road traffic crashes and environmental costs.

Sydney is the prime driver of Australia's economy, has around 22 per cent of Australia's population[17] and produces one-quarter of Australia's total economic output. Annually around $41.7 billion of freight moves through Sydney's Port Botany. Accordingly, there is strong merit in the Australian Government investing in Sydney's transport infrastructure.

Within the Sydney metropolitan area, NRMA is concerned about the lack of ongoing commitments to the National Network that can facilitate the growing freight task on the road network and the associated growing congestion.

The need to upgrade the National Network is made all the more urgent by the projected increase in freight. The indications are that the freight task will double in the next 10 years and will double again at some point in the future. The NSW rail system cannot cater for and is unsuitable for accommodating this increase and accordingly it is the road system that will bear the brunt. NRMA urges the ongoing enhancement of the urban road network. Proper planning is essential to identify future transport requirements.

The National Infrastructure Investment Programme is the ideal mechanism for increasing investment to reduce costs to business and the community. Sydney is the biggest commercial hub in Australia and urgent action needs to be taken.

NRMA urges the Australian Government to commit the necessary funds to complete the missing Sydney orbital links, including the new Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan announced in the 2014-15 Australian Government budget, thereby assisting in the efficient movement of freight within the metropolitan region and alleviating the growing congestion areas in Sydney.

Sydney Orbital Road Network

NRMA notes the timetable that has been put in place by the Australian and NSW Governments to build the key missing motorway links for the WestConnex Motorway **and the** NorthConnex Motorway. The funding of these two key projects should be expanded to include the ***M1 Princes Motorway*** extension along the Waterfall to St Peters corridor.

NRMA asks that both the Australian and NSW Governments ensure that the constructions of these missing motorway links are built with adequate capacity to meet future demand. Recent failures to build adequate capacity from the start have seen two additional upgrades to existing motorway links at a significant economic cost to the Australian and NSW economies. This history should not be repeated.

It is imperative that a plan to build the ***M1 Princes Motorway extension*** is put in place, with a timeline for its construction; and that the Australian Government work with the NSW Government to secure funding for the three key projects to complete the Sydney Orbital Road Network.

The ***M1 Princes Motorway extension*** project will be vital in connecting the Princes Highway to the Sydney Orbital Network, relieving congestion on suburban streets in southern Sydney and in the vicinity of Sydney Airport and Port Botany. Ultimately, it will provide an improved passenger and freight connection between Sydney and the Illawarra, including Port Kembla. The *Get Sutherland Shire Moving* report: August 2013, also highlighted quite clearly the benefits of building this motorway extension[18].

Accordingly, NRMA proposes that this project be considered as part of the National Network connecting to the Sydney Orbital Network. The benefits of the M1 Princes Highway extension include reduced journey times, better travel time reliability reduced congestion and environmental and noise emissions and improved road safety.

There is also a growing recognition that Sydney's current transport infrastructure is inadequate to accommodate the future needs for the inner and southern suburbs. In particular, the existing National Network does not adequately service Sydney Airport and Port Botany and there is a need to extend the existing network to improve the connectivity of the Princes Highway with the Sutherland Shire.

The decision by the Australian Government to invest $2.9 billion additional funding over ten years to enhance capacity and improve transport infrastructure, including for the development of an airport at Badgerys Creek, makes it even more critical that the road network in Sydney, is properly developed to meet the longer term needs of Sydney.

Placing the M9 motorway – the North South Outer Sydney Orbital Corridor, as part of the next planning horizon, must be reserved as a future corridor.

NRMA also urges the Australian Government to work with the NSW Government to deliver three key road projects around the Moorebank Intermodal Freight Terminal in South West Sydney.[19] The need to ensure a well-connected road network around the terminal will allow the efficient movement of freight and reduce road congestion to the local communities. The three projects are:

- A solution to the M5 'weave' – a significant source of congestion that affects broader road network performance in Sydney. This weave arises when westbound traffic entering the motorway at Moorebank Avenue crosses paths with traffic exiting the motorway to the Hume Highway. The need and urgency will be further reinforced by the recently completed M5 widening project, and WestConnex Stage 2 due for completion in 2019.

- Cambridge Avenue extension – this would create a new link to the M7 and M5 Motorways to accommodate further traffic growth that will be generated by residential and economic growth and the development expected in the region, particularly in the Campbelltown local government area, and

- Hume Highway upgrade – this would upgrade poorly performing intersections along the Hume Highway between the M5 Motorway and Orange Grove Road.

We recognise that, on their own, new roads alone will not solve congestion in the longer term but we believe there is also a very clear case for providing a well-connected and well-managed road network – fixing the missing and deficient links in the motorway network, along with integration with other transport modes must be part of the solution.

Unless adequate investment is undertaken into the Sydney road network the annual $12 billion [20] estimate for Sydney's congestion costs will increase significantly over the next decade. There are predictions that the cost may double over the next decade. This significant cost is largely the result of:

- A failure by government and local councils to expand road capacity in line with growth in motor vehicle use;

- The inability of Sydney's public transport system to adequately meet the increased travel demands of Sydney's residents; and

- Unsuccessful transport policies designed to encourage the use of other transport modes at the expense of funding additional road capacity.

The expansion of Sydney's motorway network over the past 20 years now requires ongoing investment to maintain and improve efficiency. By implementing Sydney's metropolitan road priorities identified in this submission and completion of the Sydney Orbital Network will help to improve efficiency of the entire motorway network.

This will make a major contribution to delivering the NSW Government's strategy to counter current and future congestion bottlenecks that are constraining economic growth and will cater for projected population increases.

Recommendations: Sydney Metropolitan Orbital Road Network

1. ***Australian Government work with the NSW Government to investigate the economic feasibility of constructing the M1 Princes Motorway extension and identify a timetable for its construction.***

2. ***The Australian Government work with the NSW Government to assess the road networks needs of Western Sydney associated with the development of Badgerys Creek Airport.***

3. ***Australian and NSW Government reserves the M9 Motorway as part of the North South Outer Sydney Orbital Corridor.***

4. ***The Australian Government work with the NSW Government to build key road upgrades around the Moorebank Intermodal Freight Terminal***

Public Transport Infrastructure Priorities

Sydney's current capacity to move passenger and freight is also being tested by the lack of adequate public transport. There is an urgent need to unclog Sydney and other major urban centres including Newcastle and Wollongong/Port Kembla.

Better planning to bring all transport modes together is essential. The current isolationist approach to examining transport projects needs to be addressed to bring about integration of road and rail project opportunities. This will address the current congestion problems and better assess the demands for future demand and growth in the Sydney basin.

The desire of both the Australian and NSW Governments to address not only the long term funding issue for major transport infrastructure projects but to provide a pipeline of projects over the next 15 years is critical to the success of future planning of our cities.

The impending release of Infrastructure Australia's policy on proving a better framework of better cities planning and a proposed pipeline of key infrastructure projects of economic significance is a positive move.

NRMA asks that the Australian Government provide funding commitments for the following public transport projects currently being assessed by various governments, to expedite their timetable delivery:

1. Sydney Rapid Transit – the new railway network linking the currently under construction North West Rail Link service to under Sydney Harbour (the Western Harbour Tunnel), through the Sydney CBD and west to Bankstown;
2. Parramatta CBD Light Rail - provision of a light rail service linking Parramatta with the Inner West corridor;
3. Sydney CBD Light Rail – provision of a light rail service linking the Sydney CBD to Randwick and possible extension to La Perouse;
4. Newcastle CBD Light Rail – provision of a light rail service linking Wickham to Pacific Park;
5. Northern Beaches Transport Corridor – detailed planning to link road, rapid bus and long term rail options that are not serviced by adequate transport services; and
6. Extension of the southwest rail link from Leppington to the proposed Badgerys Creek airport and onto the main western rail line at St Marys.

NRMA believes that the Australian Government's funding commitment to public transport projects be assessed in terms of:

1. Improving affordability to public transport users;
2. Increasing connectivity to use more than one mode of transport to travel around major cities;
3. Fast tracking public transport projects of national significance; and
4. Provide a pipeline of future projects to accommodate future passenger and freight movements in major cities and regional towns.

Regional Infrastructure Priorities

Completion of the Pacific Highway Duplication

NRMA has consistently highlighted the national benefits of providing a minimum dual lane divided carriageway between Hexham near Newcastle and the Queensland border. Significant economic and social benefits would result from completing the duplication of the Pacific Highway. These include direct benefits such as improved transport sector productivity, travel times and reduce the costs associated with road accidents.

Whilst road fatalities have been falling marginally along the north coast corridor, there has been a 30 per cent reduction in road injuries. [21] Any acceleration of work along the 155 kilometre section between Woolgoolga and Ballina, being one of the more challenging sections of the highway, could significantly reduce the cost of road crashes on the highway.

Recommendation: NRMA urges the Australian Government to work with the NSW Government to expedite the current pre-construction timetable to complete the final duplication section between Woolgoolga and Ballina before 2020.

Upgrade to the Princes Highway south of Jervis Bay Road

The Princes Highway links Melbourne and Sydney and traverses a number of important coastal regions of NSW, and is both an important interstate and intrastate transport corridor. Major investment along the highway is currently taking shape between Kiama and Jervis Bay along with the NSW Government's plan to build the Albion Park bypass.[22] However there is an increasing concern about road safety south of Jervis Bay Road turnoff to the Victorian border.

A recent audit of the Princes Highway conducted by the NRMA has revealed that despite its state and national importance of the highway, it still requires significant improvements and upgrades.[23] Investment on the highway north of the Jervis Bay is paying dividends with reduced travel times and much improved safety.

However, south of Jervis Bay Road, there are 16 sections of the highway that are currently considered a persistently high risk to road users. Over the period 2008-2012, there have has been 523 casualty crashes and 22 fatal crashes recorded[2.4] Exposure to this high risk is much greater for the local communities and people travelling on the southern sections of the highway and requires remedial action.

NRMA proposes that the Australian Government work with the NSW Government to prepare an action plan to improve road safety along the 300 kilometre section of the highway and use the recommendations of the Princes Highway Audit as a starting point for proving road funding for the corridor.

Upgrades to the Princes Highway would improve economic, tourism, trade and commercial opportunities for the region. An improved highway would expand the market reach of existing local businesses and facilitate greater access to a greater variety of labour skills. This would improve the competitiveness of the area's industries and communities.

Recommendation: The Australian Government commit $300 million to upgrade the Princes Highway to an acceptable Highway standard south of the Jervis Bay Road

Newell Highway

The Newell Highway is NSW's longest highway at 1,060 kilometres having 54 overtaking lanes spanning 70.8 kilometres along the length of the highway, comprising 29 northbound lanes (42.3 kilometres) and 25 southbound lanes (28.5 kilometres).[25]

Traffic volumes along the Newell Highway vary significantly from around 1,200 to 4,000 vehicles per day in rural areas and exceed 20,000 vehicles per day in Dubbo. A large number of heavy vehicles use the highway, with freight accounting for 52 per cent of all traffic on the route. The freight task is also expected to grow by approximately 67 to 103 per cent from 2009 to 2031.[26]

In the period 2000 to 2014, there were 143 fatalities on the Newell Highway.[27] If one applies an economic value for the loss of a life,[28] the cost to the economy equates to $890 million over 14 years (this does not include the social cost of serious injuries and crashes). There is an urgent need to undertake key road safety projects on the highway.

In addition, a recent Austroads report identified a lack of rest areas along the Newell Highway finding significant gaps between major rest areas on the Newell Highway between Dubbo and Moree, and between Parkes and Dubbo.[29] This is a serious concern given the high volume of trucks using the Highway, which is an average of 52 per cent of total vehicle traffic. Up to 30 per cent of fatal vehicle crashes are linked to fatigue[30] and the infrastructure has not been provided to enable truck drivers to comply with new fatigue legislation.

Given the current traffic status of the highway, the growth in heavy freight vehicles and a doubling of freight tonnages to 2031, there is an urgent need to complete;

1. Construction of the original 57 identified overtaking lane locations as reported in the Newell Highway Potential Overtaking Lane Study 2011, (there are 36 locations sill to be funded),
2. Deliver the remaining 8 rest area sites for heavy vehicles under the Heavy Safety and Productivity Program ,and
3. Build the West Wyalong, Parkes, Coonabarabran and Dubbo town bypasses to eliminate heavy vehicle truck movements through these towns thereby reducing road crashes and fatalities.

Recommendation: That the Australian Government commit $100 million per annum over the next four years (over and above the current maintenance expenditure) in the 2016-17 budget to improve safety on the Newell Highway.

Upgrade of the Great Western Highway and Mitchell Highway

NRMA's 'Central West and Western Plains' Better Roads Panel report (the Maunsell report) clearly identified the need for upgrading the ***Great Western Highway*** between Lithgow and Bathurst, with additional overtaking lanes required.[31] There is also a clear need for both the Australian and NSW Governments' to address the impact of heavy vehicle traffic in Bathurst.

NRMA also remains concerned about the lack of progress for identified projects on the ***Mitchell Highway***. NRMA's Panel report identified the need for extra overtaking lanes between Bathurst and Dubbo as well as general safety improvements.

The Maunsell report also undertook an audit along the Great Western and Mitchell Highways between Lithgow and Dubbo, which identified 11 black spots and black lengths on the Great Western Highway, and 18 black spots and 36 black lengths on the Mitchell Highway. The *Central West Transport Needs Study May 2009,* prepared by Sinclair Knight Merz, for the Australian Government also identified the same road safety upgrades that are deemed as essential in the period 2008 to 2015.[32]

Recommendation: Given the lack of any major Government Budget funding for the Great Western Highway west of Lithgow and the Mitchell Highway, NRMA urges the Australian Government to commit funds as a matter of urgency in the 2016-17 Budget.

Barton Highway Duplication

The existing highway between the ACT Border and the dual carriageway north of Murrumbateman is a single lane carriageway and has a poor safety ranking. According to the latest Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) report released July 2013, 62 per cent of the highway only has a 2 star rating. [33] The lack of overtaking lanes, median barriers and other safety features highlights the need for investment along 33 kilometres of the highway.

Completion of the existing $40 million Barton Highway Safety Works Package with particular reference to the Gounyan Curves Road Realignment has provided part of the preliminary works necessary for duplication. Full duplication of the highway is considered essential to address the poor safety ranking from the Hume Highway to Canberra. NRMA believes it is imperative that funds be available to completely duplicate the highway as an important part of the National Network.

Recommendation: NRMA urges the Australian Government to commit funds to duplicate the remaining 33 kilometres of single lane carriageway on the Barton Highway.

M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace Upgrade

NRMA urges the Australian Government to commit funds to upgrade the Pacific Highway by providing the missing link between the M1 Pacific Motorway, south of John Renshaw Drive and the Raymond Terrace bypass.

The 15 kilometre dual carriageway upgrade would improve: (1) connection between the M1 Pacific Motorway and the Pacific Highway; (2) traffic flow for motorist and freight for more reliable times; (3) accessibility to the surrounding road network; and (4) safety for all road users.

NRMA believes it is imperative that funds are allocated to commence construction of this important part of the National Network.

Recommendation: NRMA urges the Australian Government to commit funds to commence construction of the M1 Pacific Motorway to Raymond Terrace upgrade.

Lake Macquarie – Glendale Integrated Transport Centre

Fast tracking of the Lake Macquarie Integrated Transport Centre at Glendale would encourage public transport usage, reduce car dependency and provide economic and community benefit to the Lower Hunter region including the City of Newcastle.

Indeed, the Australian Government: Department of Infrastructure and Transport report *"State of Australian Cities 2014-2015 Report"* highlights that Newcastle is the 8th largest city in Australia in population terms[34], with the population forecast to grow another 100,000 to 2027,[35] a rise of 17 per cent. The need for an integrated transport hub to sustain this rise is deemed critical to accommodate growth in the Lower Hunter and the Newcastle CBD precinct.

It will provide a new railway station and passenger transport interchange over the corridor of the main northern railway line and at the end of Pennant Street in Glendale. The proposed site, adjacent to Cardiff Industrial Park and Glendale Supacentre, is in close proximity to the M1 Pacific Motorway exit points and major centres including Wyong, Maitland, Newcastle Airport (Williamtown) and the Port of Newcastle.

Recommendation: NRMA urges the Australian Government to assist the Lake Macquarie Council to fast track funding for the new Glendale Railway Station and Transport Interchange to improve the liveability of the City of Newcastle.

Other Road Infrastructure Priorities

The following road priorities are applicable across both metropolitan and regional areas:

Crash Reduction Targets outlined in the National Road Safety Strategy

NRMA supports the National Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) 2011-2020 to reduce the annual numbers of both deaths and serious injuries on Australian roads by at least 30 per cent. We note that the previous target in the 2001-2010 strategy was not met.[36]

Despite ongoing road improvements, safer vehicles, and a range of successful behavioural programs targeting drink driving, seatbelt usage and speeding, road crashes still cause some 1,209 deaths and 32,500 serious injuries each year.[37] Research underpinning the Strategy indicates that 50 per cent of the reduction in road fatalities would come from safer roads. With the annual economic cost of road crashes in Australia estimated at $27 billion per annum it is essential that both Australian and State governments maintain funding levels to provide for safer roads. Permanent funding will ensure that the social costs of crashes are significantly reduced in the longer term.

NRMA fully supports this focus on safer roads - the remedies are well known, such as installing crash barriers, overtaking lanes, better signs and line markings. What is required now is an increased funding commitment from the Australian Government to achieve the targeted reduction. In addition, there should be more evaluation of projects by state and local government, as well as a commitment by the state and local road agencies to ongoing maintenance of any road that receives federal funding. This will help to demonstrate that the Australian Government is receiving value for money.

Black Spot Program

NRMA has been a strong supporter of the Black Spot program. It has generated benefits far in excess of its $60 million a year cost with an overall benefit cost ratio of 14:1. NRMA welcomes the Australian Government's commitment to continue this program over the next four years and maintain the annual contribution at $60 million per annum, with an additional $100 million to be spent in 2015-16 and 2016-17 as part of the Asset Recycling Fund.[38] It generates benefits for national, state, and local roads and in particular is a key source of funding by which local government may implement road safety improvements.

Indeed it has been documented that the Black Spot program has been estimated to prevent over 4,000 accidents and save more than 30 lives each year.[39] NRMA believes that the Black Spot program should be increased permanently to $100 million each year going forward.

Recommendation: NRMA urges the Australian Government to commit additional new funding of $40 million, each year, in the Black Spot program to 2018-19 at least

Investment in a National Road Infrastructure Program

One issue with the current focus on Black Spot program funding is its reactive nature in that it targets clusters of crashes that have occurred at sites rather than searching out known high risks for treatment before people are killed and seriously injured.

One of the side effects of using site specific first year rate of return is that the benefits available from larger proactive programs that eliminate high risks across the network are not generated or captured.

For example, if hundreds of kilometres of wire rope safety barrier were installed along extensive lengths of the National Network or if collapsible roadside poles were installed to replace rigid posts at 10,000 similar sites, the high returns come from the reduction in many deaths and serious injuries across the programme and over their economic life. If the first year rate of return was used then only those sites that had clusters by chance in the recent past would be treated.[40]

A recent Austroads' Technical report on the evaluation of the safety impact of Centre-of-the-Road barriers at three sites along the Pacific Highway between Byron Bay in the north and Macksville in the south, covering a length of almost 300 km of the highway, indicated a net benefit from the introduction of wire rope barriers.[41] It is encouraging that this initial investigation has identified a positive trend that appears to support the use of wire rope barriers in the centre of rural highways.

If the Australian Government is serious about achieving the NRSS 2011-20 targets it must commit significant funding to improve road infrastructure. It should focus on key lengths of road with a history of road trauma. Implementation of a National Safe Road Infrastructure Program is crucial to achieving the Government's NRSS 2011-20 targets.

NRMA also urges the Australian Government to support The United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety: 2011-2020 as an extension of the NRSS 2011-20 targets.

Recommendation: NRMA urges the Australian Government to invest at least $100 million per annum in a National Safe Road Infrastructure Program

Tripling of Roads to Recovery Funding for Local Councils

Local Councils are responsible for more than 657,000 kilometres of local roads across Australia. Local roads are critical for efficient and safe freight movement. For example, the last kilometre from a highway to a port or business is often on a local government road.

In NSW alone there are estimates of at least a $3 billion infrastructure funding backlog and an annual funding shortfall in the order of $600 million.[42] Analysis by the funding local roads report undertaken by NRMA[43] suggests a number of possible solutions to solve this growing problem, including increasing Roads to Recovery funding to local councils. There is a clear need to address this ever increasing backlog of required capital and maintenance expenditure of local and regional road networks.

Roads to Recovery funding is often spent on roads to key local businesses and employment sources (such as a timber mill or factory) which in turn ensure the viability of regional communities with long term national benefits.

To date, local councils have either repaired or upgraded more than 27,000 sites around Australia using Roads to Recovery funding. Providing an appropriate standard of local roads for local connections can also reduce pressure on state and federal road networks. Individual councils, not federal or state bureaucracies, undertake decision making on projects. This ensures faster decision making on priorities with projects being completed more quickly and at less cost.[44]

NRMA has highlighted the lack of adequate funding for regional roads and associated network infrastructure. This situation has been exacerbated over time, with many of the roads in a state of disrepair, especially in regional areas.

Their poor condition has occurred as councils with a limited funding base have been forced to assume more responsibility for managing ageing regional road networks, which had previously been a state government responsibility. This has been further exacerbated in some areas through closure of regional branch rail lines, forcing more freight movements (such as grain) onto these roads, combined with the impact of the extreme weather conditions namely drought and flooding.

NRMA proposes that an additional $1 billion between 2016-17 and 2019-20 be provided to local councils nationally to enable them to address the current inadequacies. Combined with the funding already committed by the Australian Government, this would equate to $5.75 billion in funding to local councils over the next four years.

Recommendation – NRMA urges the Australian Government to triple the current Roads to Recovery funding commitment to local councils to help urgently address the current $3 billion infrastructure backlog and the annual $600 million maintenance shortfall.

Smart Technology – Transport Solution Opportunities

Smart Infrastructure Fund

Technology is rapidly transforming every aspect of our daily lives. From the way we commute to the way we interact with each other, new and disruptive technologies have significantly altered our social and economic landscape, and have opened up endless opportunities for positive and momentous change across all sectors of the Australian economy.

New and disruptive technologies, powered by broadband, smart phones and social media will form the foundation of our future economic growth, creating an innovation ecosystem that encourages and nurtures new and imaginative thinking to solve critical and long term economic challenges such as traffic congestion and transport infrastructure capacity constraints.

The emergence of smart technologies in the road and transport sectors have the potential to revolutionise personal mobility for motorists and commuters and transform the way that physical infrastructure assets are constructed and managed into the future.

With congestion expected to cost the Australian economy $23 billion by 2020, the Australian Government must take the lead and actively promote new and disruptive technologies to help spur the development of next-generation road and transport solutions to address the crippling cost of congestion in our cities.

To help achieve this outcome, NRMA recommends that the Australian Government establish a **$150 million *Smart Infrastructure Fund*** to help local communities tackle key road and transport problems such as traffic congestion, parking, road safety or community transport by trialling and adopting new and innovative technology solutions that could ultimately be replicated across multiple jurisdictions to create a smarter and better connected mobility experience for all.

The *Smart Infrastructure Fund* should be contestable to local councils, with criteria for funding to be determined by whether proposed solutions embrace smart technologies to effectively reduce congestion, improve safety or enhance personal mobility.

Recommendation – NRMA recommends that the Australian Government establish a $150 million Smart Infrastructure Fund to help communities tackle key road and transport problems.

Autonomous Vehicle Industry

In addition to the creation of a *Smart Infrastructure Fund,* NRMA recommends that the Australian Government consider providing financial incentives to State or Territory Governments that actively seek to leverage the economic opportunities associated with the development and testing of autonomous vehicles.

To remain competitive in the global economy, Australia must lay the foundations for an autonomous vehicle future. Autonomous vehicles in partnership with smart infrastructure and intelligent transport systems (ITS) will create a new paradigm for personal mobility, facilitate and accelerate sustainable economic growth, maximise efficiencies in the movement of goods and services, and enhance quality of life by creating new employment opportunities in a transitioning economy.

Other Motoring Priorities

Consumer Impact of Open Source Vehicle Data – Reducing Cost of Motoring

The past decade has seen significant innovation with respect to automotive technologies, helping to reduce vehicle operating costs, reduce environmental impact, improve passenger comfort and driving experience, and improve driver and passenger safety.

At the heart of this evolution have been automotive electronic control systems (e.g. the 'on-board computer(s)'). Electronic control systems are embedded systems that control electrical and/or mechanical systems or subsystems of a vehicle.

In the future, telematics systems (i.e. systems that facilitate the communication of passenger vehicle data) represent an important driver development in the automotive technology landscape. Telematics systems facilitate the communications between a vehicle's on-board computers and third party systems, thereby allowing real time interaction with the vehicle and the driver.

As with any new technology there are potentially unknown impacts. The exclusivity of this communication channel, and proprietary nature of any vehicle data, could potentially lead to consumers becoming 'captive' to the after-market services provided by manufacturer affiliated repairers. Such an outcome would substantially lessen competition and most likely force independent repairers out of business.

NRMA is advocating for the removal of any current or future restrictions on access to vehicle data in Australia. This policy is based on three guiding principles:

- Consumer control and protection of data – Legislation should ensure informed consent on access to a car's data. This means that consumers need to be fully informed about what data is being transmitted and for what purpose. Drivers should retain ownership of the data their car produces and control over how it is used for as long as they own the vehicle.

- Free choice – Drivers should have the right to choose their preferred service provider and match the right products and level of service to their needs. The service providers should also be changeable throughout the lifetime of the vehicle, without any additional administrative burden.

- Fair competition – A variety of service providers should have the right to develop products and functionalities for car data, ensuring fair competition in an open market place. This enables the driver's preferred service provider to access vehicle data and offer associated functionalities via an open, secure telematics platform.

NRMA believes motorists should have the right to own and control the use of data relating to the performance, operation and security of their vehicle. There should be strong competition in the motor vehicle repair industry to ensure that motorists have ample choice as to who repairs their vehicle.

NRMA also believes that there are wider economic implications for the automotive industry and the wider economy that need to be investigated.

Up until the last 10 to 15 years, data generated by automotive systems might have been limited to computer codes or operational data such as speed, engine temperature and fuel consumption. These are usually only accessed via a hard connection point, typically by a trained technician. Advancements in automotive technology now enable a vehicle's various components to interact with computer systems remotely.

The growth and penetration of new communication technologies means that vehicle data is no longer constrained by physical location. This innovation has been ground-breaking for the wider economy generally and the automotive industry specifically where information is increasingly a driver of profitability in old and new markets alike.

A 2014 PwC report suggests that data-driven innovation added an estimated $67 billion in new value to the Australian economy, or 4.4 per cent of GDP, broadly equivalent to the retail sector's contribution.[45]

Every sector in the economy is using data as the basis for growth – from optimising harvesting in agriculture, to improving patient diagnosis and treatment in the health industry, to enhancing the management of remote infrastructure in mining. In the context of the automotive after-market, this indicates that open data driven innovation could potentially have been responsible for approximately $610 million of new value to the wider Australian economy. [46]

Recommendations: Consumer Impact of Open Source Vehicle Data – Reducing Cost of Motoring

1. ***That Australian Government amends the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 to ensure that motorists determine who can have access to their vehicle data, not the manufacturers.***

2. ***Australian Government provides the right platform to evaluate the economic benefits of improving access to vehicle data to support the automotive after-market industry.***

National Audit Program for Vehicles

Currently the Australian Government essentially accepts assurances and information from the manufacturer that its vehicles comply with Australian Design Rules (ADRs), but no detailed testing is undertaken to verify these assurances.

As the recent controversy in regard to VW vehicles' emission levels shows, more oversight of compliance with ADRs is needed, to ensure consumers are purchasing vehicles which have the environmental and safety performance supposedly guaranteed under the ADRs.

Non-compliance with ADRs results in higher levels of air pollution and higher fatalities and injuries in road crashes, with consequent treatment costs and societal impacts.

The Australian Government should establish a comprehensive, technically well-based audit program for emissions and safety compliance to ensure vehicles imported into and sold in Australia comply with at least the most important ADRs.

An emissions audit program could be based on Portable Emissions Measuring Systems (PEMS), which are carried on board the test vehicle. Laboratory testing could be used as a backup in the event that PEMS measurements are highly variable or, for some reason, unusable.

Recommendation – NRMA recommends that the Australian Government implement a National Audit Program for Vehicles.

Australasian New Car Assessment Program Funding Extension

The Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) aims to harmonise with Euro NCAP (ENCAP) by the end of next year. This will bring significant extra costs, including extra and more expensive tests and test dummies. ANCAP's budget will therefore need augmentation from 2016-17, to order the required test dummies and establish the new test procedures ready for use from 2018. Current indications are that the shortfall in 2018 will be $2 million. The Australian Government currently funds ANCAP $1.1 million per year but this funding will run out in 2015-16.

ANCAP acts as a de-facto audit program on manufacturers' compliance with the ADRs. The side impact test that has been conducted by ANCAP for many years is essentially the same as the ADR, and the pole test that has also been conducted for some years is based on an internationally agreed procedure which should shortly be adopted by the Government as an ADR. The frontal offset test that has been used for most of ANCAP's history is conducted at a higher speed than the ADR (64 km/h vs 56 km/h), so it is reasonable to assume that if a subject vehicle complies with the ADR frontal test requirement at 64 km/h it would also comply with at 56 km/h. Essentially, therefore, ANCAP is carrying out a program which strongly supports the Government's responsibilities in ensuring ADR compliance.

Recommendation - NRMA recommends that the Federal Government commit to funding ANCAP at the level of $2 million per annum on a rolling 4 year program.

Alternative Fuels Plan Priorities

National energy security (including liquid fuels) and development of an alternative fuels policy are critical issues that need to be addressed to secure Australia's future energy supplies.

Unless we act quickly to develop a renewable energy strategy, Australia's dependence on foreign oil will increase to more than 90 per cent within 10 years.[45] With domestic refining capacity declining, more imported fuel will be required to meet our growing transport demands. Motorists will be exposed to higher oil prices and global supply interruptions.

Higher fuel prices will be particularly bad for people living in rural and regional communities because they have no choice but to rely on motor vehicles for transport. It will also be a major problem for those people who live on the outskirts of our cities and who do not have access to adequate public transport. Increasing greenhouse gas emissions will exacerbate the impact on the environment.

In 2014, the NRMA released a report highlighting the need for an in depth examination of Australia's current liquid fuel security given a less than satisfactory understanding of this issue[46]. NRMA requests that the Australian Government address the country's liquid fuel security as part of an alternative fuels forward plan.

Recommendation: That the Government develops a renewable energy strategy and an Alternative Fuels Policy to:

- ***reduce our dependence on imported fuel;***
- ***build our capacity to source alternative fuels thereby increasing our liquid security profile and;***
- ***encourage energy security In Australia.***

Tourism Priorities

NRMA is a major tourism and travel stakeholder in NSW and Australia. NRMA has invested more than $280 million in hotels, holiday parks, travel services, and car hire over the last nine years.

Tourism drives significant economic activity in Australia, but this activity whilst showing positive signs in 2014-15 is still underperforming against the broader Australian economy.

Tourism Research Australia's *State of the Industry 2015* report, states that tourism contributed 2.7 per cent ($43.4 billion) to the national GDP in 2014-15. Domestic tourism accounted for $32 billion of this. Tourism also contributes $27.2 billion in exports (8.2 per cent of total Australian exports), and employed 4.6 per cent of Australia's workforce.[47]

Annually, the real long-term average growth for tourism in Australia is forecast at 1.4% from 2009 to 2020, compared with an average of 3.2 per cent for the rest of the Australian economy, suggesting that tourism's share in the economy will continue to decline.[48]

Tourism's importance to regional Australia cannot be underestimated. In 2008-2009, 46 cents of every dollar spent on tourism was spent in regional Australia.[49] Tourism is the lifeblood of many regional communities and attracting investment into these areas to enhance visitor experience and drive tourism should be paramount. NRMA believes that an extensive education and advertising campaign should be funded by the Australian Government to highlight the diverse experiences domestic travellers can have in Australia.

NRMA also believes that lower fuel prices and a falling Australian dollar offers the Australian Government the perfect opportunity to implement marketing campaigns to stimulate regional tourism.

Recommendation: That the Australian Government provides additional funding to encourage domestic tourism.

Conclusion

This Budget Submission requests the Australian Government to move forward in the provision of critical road and public transport infrastructure in major cities and regional towns to deliver substantial economic benefit to the Australian and NSW economies. This will facilitate more efficient movement of both passengers and freight on the road network.

Additionally, NRMA seeks an ongoing Australian Government commitment to invest in Australia's road network. Investments should be directed to those projects where they will result in the greatest net benefit for all Australians.

Better roads will deliver economic benefits. Road transport is the dominant mode of transportation in Australia and is a key input into the distribution of nearly all goods and services. Undertaking the priority road projects identified in this submission will support future economic growth. For example, alleviating congestion and reducing travel times will deliver productivity benefits not only to the transport sector but several other industries that rely on road transportation for the distribution of goods and services.

Better roads will deliver social benefits. The road network supports mobility within and between regions and communities. Roads support social interaction and the delivery of social services such as meals on wheels community transport and home aged care services. In this way, roads make an important contribution to social capital.

Better roads mean safer roads. Funding the priority road projects identified in our submission will result in fewer fatalities and motor vehicle accidents on NSW and ACT roads. This would in turn alleviate some of the considerable burden on the nation's health and welfare systems.

Additionally better transport planning is crucial to address Australia's growing freight task, which is estimated to double by 2020 and continue to grow by 2-3 per cent per annum thereafter. This planning must involve other modes such as rail for the movement of freight to reduce the need to transport bulk freight and grain over long distances, on the road system.

NRMA also urges the Australian Government to establish a Smart Infrastructure Fund to help communities tackle key road and transport problems. The emergence of smart technologies in the road and transport sectors have the potential to revolutionise personal mobility for motorists and commuters and transform the way that physical infrastructure assets are constructed and managed into the future.

It is also imperative that the Australian Government commit funding to tourism that will support both existing and future campaigns to encourage domestic tourism.

The key message of our submission is that better roads will deliver significant economic and social benefits to all Australians. It will also make our cities and regions, more internationally competitive, more liveable, and more prosperous.

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