

Response to the Independent Strategic Review of the Infrastructure Investment Program

Thursday, 16 November 2023

The Australian Logistics Council (ALC) acknowledges the findings of the Independent Strategic Review (the **Review**) of the Infrastructure Investment Program led by Clare Gardiner-Barnes, Mike Mrdak AO and Reece Waldock AM. The ALC welcomes the Independent Panel's review which represents a considered and strategic approach to infrastructure investment in Australia.

The ALC recognises the importance of a realistic, systems-driven approach that supports the end-to-end supply chain needs of Australia and particularly, the significance of strategic systems thinking for the next stage of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy (NFSCS), currently under review. The prioritisation of new infrastructure investments within the NFSCS National Action Plan should be guided by a comprehensive systems approach to ensure holistic and effective outcomes.

We commend the inclusion of the corridor approach and the corresponding funding commitment in the Review. This strategic move indicates a positive shift towards an improved and integrated approach to infrastructure investment. We believe that advancing the corridor and systems approach will better identify investment priorities and contribute to the overall efficiency of Australia's supply chains and we look forward to continuing collaboration with the Government in the development of the next stage of the NFSCS.

Pleasingly, the review rightly emphasises the need for the Government to maintain close consultation with industry stakeholders. For the ALC, it is paramount that close collaboration is maintained to ensure that decisions align with industry needs and significantly enhance the productivity, resilience, and sustainability of Australia's domestic, import, and export supply chains.

The ALC strongly advocates for the inclusion of robust measurement and performance mechanisms in the infrastructure investment framework. Clear accountability and responsibility for the management of infrastructure investments are crucial elements to ensure transparency and effective governance as well as timely and efficient delivery.

Furthermore, we welcome the reset of funding rules proposed in the Review. Specifically, we support the notion of committing funds only for the planning stage of projects, with further disbursement contingent on the finalisation of project costs and timelines. Additionally, the ALC acknowledges the Government's decision for 50:50 Commonwealth contributions and a focus on projects with a minimum \$250 million Australian Government share.

In conclusion, the ALC welcomes the Independent Panel's Review and maintains our commitment to working collaboratively with the Government to contribute to the continued improvement and success of Australia's infrastructure planning and investment strategies.