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MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN LOGISTICS COUNCIL CALLS FOR NATIONAL AMENDMENTS TO BUILD A PRODUCTIVE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT SECTOR

Melbourne, 10 June 2025 – Australia’s freight network is the engine room of our economy. But the systems that support it: workforce development, energy infrastructure, planning and regulation, are no longer fit for purpose. That’s the message from the Australian Logistics Council (ALC), which is calling on governments to deliver coordinated national amendments across energy, infrastructure, workforce and regulatory systems.

Australia’s freight and logistics sector is being hampered by fragmentation, outdated rules and disjointed planning at a time when resilience, affordability and efficiency have never been more important.

In a series of submissions to the Productivity Commission, ALC outlines a comprehensive policy blueprint to strengthen the sector’s role in driving national productivity, decarbonisation and supply chain security. Taken together, the submissions form a bold blueprint - one that sees freight not as a back-end service, but as a strategic asset essential to Australia’s economic, environmental and regional future.

ALC’s National Reform Priorities

To secure a competitive and crisis-ready freight system, ALC recommends:

- Establishing a National Supply Chain Resilience Framework
- Developing a Heavy Vehicle Decarbonisation Strategy and a National Freight Decarbonisation Infrastructure Framework
- Harmonising emissions reporting, planning approvals and vehicle access rules
- Fast-tracking clean energy infrastructure in logistics precincts and ports
- Treating freight energy projects as strategic infrastructure under planning law
- Funding workforce development through nationally aligned training and skills recognition
- Consolidating Scope 3 and emissions reporting under a single national platform
- Enabling 24-hour freight operations and unlocking circular logistics through planning reform
- Strengthening digital freight visibility and cybersecurity across supply chains
- Integrating freight needs into energy, housing and adaptation planning

“Modernising our approach to freight movement is essential if we are to future-proof Australia’s economy, meet growing consumer demands, and keep supply chains resilient in the face of disruption,” said Sheena Fardell, ALC Head of Government and Industry Affairs.

Regulatory Reform: Streamlining Systems to Strengthen Resilience

ALC’s submission on regulatory reform calls out persistent inefficiencies caused by inconsistent vehicle access rules, planning bottlenecks and siloed emergency response protocols. These issues delay freight movements, increase costs and weaken our ability to respond to crises or innovate.

“A fragmented regulatory environment is not just a policy inefficiency - a productivity penalty. Without a national framework for driver licensing, vehicle access and emissions reporting, we are asking supply chains to deliver 21st century outcomes with 20th century rules,” said Ms Fardell.

ALC is calling for harmonised national regulation, risk-based governance and a National Supply Chain Resilience Framework to coordinate infrastructure, energy and workforce policy. The submission also advocates for:

- Enabling 24-hour freight operations through updated planning schemes and noise controls
- Streamlining planning approvals via concurrent environmental and planning assessments
- Fast-tracking freight-related infrastructure using resilience-based criteria
- Embedding circular economy investment through zoning and waste regulation reform
- Nationally consistent digital standards and stronger cybersecurity protections

“Freight operators do not operate within state borders – yet too often, our regulatory frameworks do. ALC is calling for modernisation that enables national operations without duplicative red tape,” Ms Fardell said.

Energy and Infrastructure: Powering a Net Zero Freight Future

ALC’s net zero submission outlines the strategic infrastructure and investment priorities needed to decarbonise freight while improving energy resilience and economic productivity.

With over 90 per cent of transport fuels currently imported, and Australia also falling short of the IEA’s minimum stockholding obligation, we remain exposed to global energy shocks and vulnerable to future disruption. ALC is calling for investment in domestic refining capacity, expanded fuel storage infrastructure, and the accelerated adoption of low-emissions alternatives such as renewable diesel, green hydrogen, and electric vehicle charging networks.

“The freight sector is moving at speed. Regulation is crawling behind - and pulling national productivity down with it,” Ms Fardell said.

ALC is calling for a National Zero-Emission Freight Strategy across all modes, focusing on a modal shift towards lower-emission freight options: This would deliver:

- Nationally harmonised emissions and vehicle standards
- A freight fuel security strategy
- Refuelling and recharging corridors for hydrogen and electric vehicles
- Clean energy upgrades for logistics precincts and intermodals
- Renewable energy integration at ports, including shore power and bunkering

“Ports must also be equipped to handle alternative fuels and shore-side power, aligning with emerging international standards to support decarbonised trade corridors and maintain Australia’s competitiveness in global shipping,” said Ms Fardell.

ALC also recommends freight energy projects be classified as strategic infrastructure and benefit from dedicated fast-track pathways and zoning overlays to support investment confidence.

Workforce Capability: Building a Skilled and Adaptable Freight Workforce

Australia's freight workforce is ageing, undersupplied and poorly supported by current policy. ALC's workforce submission highlights the systemic barriers holding the sector back, including fragmented training systems, inflexible industrial settings and misaligned migration and skills recognition frameworks.

"We are running a modern freight network with an outdated workforce model. The system is slow, fragmented, and blind to the scale of the freight task. That must change urgently," said Ms Fardell.

The scale and pace of workforce transition required for decarbonisation and digital transformation cannot be left to fragmented policy efforts or short-term funding cycles. Without national coordination, the sector risks falling behind.

- National skills recognition for freight occupations
- Investment in industry-led training for zero-emissions technologies
- Strategic workforce planning, especially in regional logistics hubs
- Improved access to training infrastructure and career pathways

"This is not a labour market issue confined to our sector. If freight grinds to a halt, every supermarket shelf, pharmacy, and construction site in the country is affected."

"This isn't about pilots or partnerships that expire with the budget cycle. We need a national blueprint that gets the fundamentals right—skills, access, visibility, and coordination."

Competition and Productivity: Removing Barriers to Smarter, Fairer Investment

ALC's competition submission warns that regulatory duplication and funding fragmentation are suppressing investment, particularly among smaller and mid-sized operators. Inconsistent emissions reporting rules, misaligned tax settings and scattered clean energy grant programs increase compliance costs and deter participation in the transition.

"When data, standards and compliance systems are fragmented, the entire supply chain slows down. We need alignment with global standards, not bespoke processes that add cost and complexity," Ms Fardell said.

To unlock productivity and reduce emissions across the freight network, ALC recommends:

- A nationally harmonised Scope 3 emissions reporting framework
- Consolidation of freight-relevant clean energy funding programs
- Reform of fuel tax credits and FBT settings to enable ZEV adoption
- Coordination of freight and energy infrastructure planning
- Policy settings to support modal shift from road to rail

ALC also calls for standardised approvals and transparent benchmarks to reduce delays in delivering clean freight infrastructure.

“This submission calls for practical, scalable system improvements. We must move beyond incremental change and build a nationally integrated freight network that reflects the scale, complexity, and strategic value of the sector,” Ms Fardell said.

ALC, representing major companies in Australia’s end-to-end freight and logistics supply chain, stands ready to work with all levels of government to deliver a freight system that is clean, connected, skilled and future-ready.

Submission Links

<https://austlogistics.com.au/media-centre/submission-creating-a-more-dynamic-and-resilient-economy/>

<https://austlogistics.com.au/media-centre/submission-building-a-skilled-and-adaptable-workforce/>

<https://austlogistics.com.au/media-centre/submission-investing-in-cheaper-cleaner-energy-and-the-net-zero-transformation/>

<https://austlogistics.com.au/media-centre/submission-national-competition-policy-analysis-2025/>

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About the Australian Logistics Council

The ALC is the national peak body representing Australia’s end-to-end supply chain logistics industry. ALC plays a critical role in advocating for supply chain productivity and sustainability to build resilience supporting Australia’s dynamic future.

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