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Consultation Report

Draft Urban Freight Planning Principles

Australian Government

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The Draft Urban Freight Planning Principles

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1 Focus group consultations

Virtual focus group consultations about the draft Principles were held on:

- Group 1: 17 December 2020 2:00-5:00pm AEDT
- Group 2: 19 January 2021 2:00-5:00pm AEDT
- Group 3: 21 January 2021 3:00-5:00pm AEDT

The objectives of the consultation program were to consult with industry, planning professionals and government representatives to:

- Test consensus on intent of principles.
- Seek feedback on the current draft wording.
- Gain input on how to put the principles into practice.

Fifty-seven participants across the three groups included:

- State, territory and local government representatives
- Freight and logistics peak bodies, including air, road and maritime
- Freight facility and infrastructure operators
- Urban planners
- Transport planners
- Local government peak bodies
- Academics
- Freight and planning consultants

2 High level responses and common themes

2.1 Support for intent

All three groups expressed high levels of support for the overall intent of the draft Principles. While there were clarifications requested and occasional suggestions regarding word changes (see detailed commentary below), overall participants acknowledged the need to support more integrated planning. For example, during the 21 January workshop (the largest group):

- 92% supported the intent behind Principles 1, 2 and 4 (two were unsure, none opposed)
- 96% supported the intent behind Principles 3, 5 and 7 (one unsure, none opposed)
- 100% supported the intent behind Principle 6

2.2 Impact of pandemic

All groups noted shifts occuring in community perceptions about freight and regulator responses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Movement of freight has been recognised as an essential service and many operating restrictions (e.g. curfews) were temporarily lifted to ensure security of suppy for household goods and other essentials. Most curfews have not yet been reinstated.

Participants noted that increased community understanding of supply chain and logistics may reduce opposition to freight operations and facilitate improved regulatory decision-making about future freight operations.

2.3 Definition of freight

Participants in all three sessions raised the potential for re-defining freight, including in the preamble text to the Principles. There is concern that community members and planners assume “freight” refers only to large scale movements (big trucks, airports, ports, trains). However a broader definition could reframe the concept towards access to all goods and services and highlight the essential role of freight supporting everyday community life and work.

2.4 Group perspectives

Participants of the focus groups provided:

- Industry association views,
- Industry, operator, local and state government views, and
- Planner views.

While there was some crossover between participants, the interesting outcome was similarity of views expressed between transport and planning. Both transport and planning groups are seeking more expertise, and a more nuanced conversation; both called for better data and education for planners, and both identified the value of increasing community recognition of the important role played by freight in business and the community.

Transport operators and regulators (Groups 1 and 2) focused particularly on the importance of enabling freight movements as an essential operation in urban environment rather than limiting access and operations.

Participants in Group 2 identified that while the costs (noise, light, loss of amenity) of freight facilities are highly concentrated, the benefits of freight infrastructure are spread broadly, thus requiring a broader approach to planning and education.

Planners (Group 3) viewed education of the community and better information for planners as essential to facilitate better decision-making to facilitate freight movements. All participants identified the importance of understanding and communicating the importance of freight in underpinning business activity and essential services. They noted that businesses and consumers are driving the increase in demand, so all levels of governments and communities need to contribute to solutions, rather than leaving it up to the industry.

3 Feedback on individual principles

The following section summarises comments made by participants regarding individual principles. Examples of potential implementation mechanisms can be found at item 5.

Principle 1

Understand the value, needs and characteristics of freight movement and incorporate in strategic and statutory land use planning.

This Principle was supported by all participants, and identified by many as one of the most important elements. Better information and a more co-ordinated approach to sharing the data were identified as desired outcomes.

Participants identified the importance of understanding future trends and needs, so that planning rules and regulations could facilitate efficient movement. Increased understanding by planners about the role of freight, increased visibility of freight movements, and consistency between state and local strategic plans were also identified as important.

Participants proposed that more transparent, structured sharing of information between layers of governments and industry can support local government community consultation and education processes. Desired information includes:

- Freight origin and destination, especially around first mile/last mile
- What are the routes and what are the modes of transport that are most appropriate for different types of freight
- Economic contribution of freight

The establishment of the National Freight Data Hub will provide additional information, but planners need to be made aware of the data and its potential use.

Principle 2

Safeguarding the resilience of all major freight handling facilities and corridors within and between neighbouring jurisdictions, including local government areas.

Participants identified the need for this principle arising from previous decisions that were taken by individual Councils and not supported by consistent high-level principles. There will always be competing uses in urban environments, so better, more creative design is required, including noise mitigation and planning for changing technology such as electric vehicles.

Some participants emphasised the importance of the Principles being embedded in state planning principles or local regulations to ensure they have impact.

Principle 3

Identify and plan areas for new freight facilities and freight-intensive land uses.

Participants provided numerous examples of forward-thinking planning approaches. Some also proposed expanding Principle 3 to capture more urban environments, last mile movements and hub and spoke models of distribution such as local distribution centres and vertical warehousing.

Principle 4

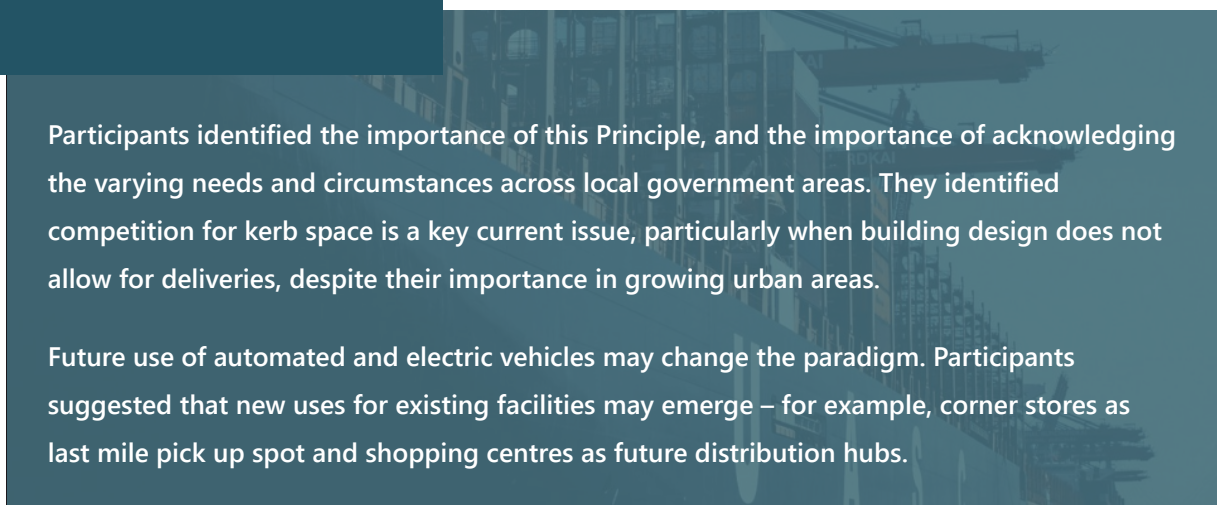
Plan for efficient freight movements and complementary land uses around intermodal freight facilities.

Participants identified challenges in preserving freight networks for future use while developers lobby for residential housing to be built immediately. Several participants across groups proposed strengthening of the language of Principle 4 to include reference to the need to enable continuous (24/7) freight movements for significant precincts, as far as practicable. Others called for identification and mapping existing and proposed intermodal facilities to ensure resilience and access, but also queried how governments could identify future uses without "picking winners" between competing private property development projects.

Participants also called for more focus on overcoming community opposition to heavy vehicle access, including highlighting the environmental and other benefits of higher productivity vehicles. Several participants in Group 3 queried why Principle 4 focused purely on intermodals rather than including major freight and logistics precincts. Many local government areas do not have an intermodal but still have precincts with similar issues.

Principle 5

Promote building and precinct design that considers freight needs.

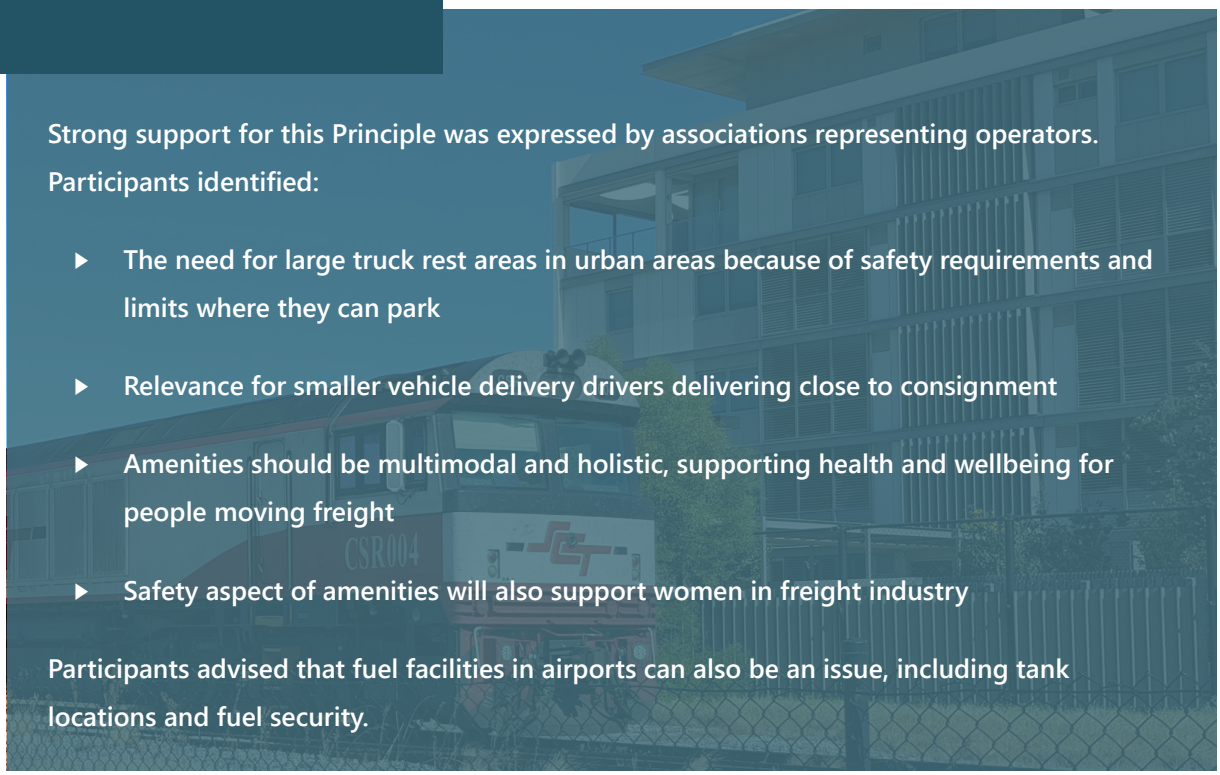


Participants identified the importance of this Principle, and the importance of acknowledging the varying needs and circumstances across local government areas. They identified competition for kerb space is a key current issue, particularly when building design does not allow for deliveries, despite their importance in growing urban areas.

Future use of automated and electric vehicles may change the paradigm. Participants suggested that new uses for existing facilities may emerge – for example, corner stores as last mile pick up spot and shopping centres as future distribution hubs.

Principle 6

Realise the importance of rest and fuel facilities.



Strong support for this Principle was expressed by associations representing operators. Participants identified:

- The need for large truck rest areas in urban areas because of safety requirements and limits where they can park
- Relevance for smaller vehicle delivery drivers delivering close to consignment
- Amenities should be multimodal and holistic, supporting health and wellbeing for people moving freight
- Safety aspect of amenities will also support women in freight industry

Participants advised that fuel facilities in airports can also be an issue, including tank locations and fuel security.

Principle 7

Respond to changes in freight movements, including smaller scale freight movement and emerging technologies.

Participants called for nationally or state-led distribution of information and resources in recognition that local and regional planners do not have the resources and time to understand emerging technologies and future applications.

Participants proposed that planners and transport agencies need to better understand changes in logistics and supply chain, including those driven by customer demand. The goal is not necessarily to create more deliveries but to make them more efficient.

4 Implementation examples

Participants were asked to provide proposed actions for implementation of the National Principles, and these are listed below.

Implementation Option	Relevant Principle
Development of urban freight planning course for use by universities in collaboration with planning industry bodies and educators.	All, especially 1
Education for local government: ▸ Production of guidance materials on implementing Principles and planning for freight for urban planners and local governments ▸ Wider sharing of information ▸ Obtain data across modes and make it available ▸ Advise on future technologies and impacts on freight/planning	All
Review the alignment of current state/territory planning rules with the Principles.	All
Work through the next Infrastructure and Transport Ministers Meeting to get agreement from Transport and Planning Ministers to implement safeguarding; develop model regulation for incorporation into state planning policy; then implement into local government.	2
Local governments prepare a freight and logistics strategy from a traffic engineering perspective based on modelling and then seek Planning teams to adopt as policy changes.	2, 4
Require councils to document how they will facilitate the efficient movement and delivery of freight/goods/services through their local government associations for both its businesses and residents. This strategy/plan would focus on land use and development outcomes.	2, 4

Implementation Option	Relevant Principle
Action on curfews and other restrictions placed on freight operations, for example, ensure continuous (24/7) freight operations.	2, 3, 4, 7
Find new, intelligent ways of using time (e.g. lifting curfews, increasing out of hours delivery opportunities). Allow and incentivise off-peak urban freight pickups and deliveries.	2, 4, 7
Appropriate zoning to prevent urban encroachment in transitional areas identified for future freight needs.	3, 4
Support strategic approach to planning for last mile delivery through inclusion of loading unloading area, waste truck parking etc and also allowing for extended hours delivery.	5
Government strategic plans and route maps to identify gaps in network and address them.	6
Support opportunities to innovate (e.g. spaces for electric vehicle charging/parking in central locations that are accessible).	7
Increase council input into layout of industrial areas to improve freight access.	5
Ensure environmental factors are incorporated into freight planning.	All
Engineering, noise and vibration assessments for local governments, helping improve access to information about freight impacts in land use planning.	2, 3, 4, 5
Coordination and data sharing, including through National Freight Data Hub.	1
Developing guidance on dangerous goods transport in transport and land use planning.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5