QTLC QUEENSLAND TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS COUNCIL

August Newsletter

A word from the CEO

COVID-19 persists, six months on and no closer to an end in sight. Here in Queensland we are living in a bit of a bubble cautiously returning to normal and starting to slip into our old ways. Traffic is beginning to flow (only 6% below 2019 movements) with commuters opting for the car over the bus or train. Restaurants are taking bookings and the Deliveroo bikes have taken over the footpaths.

I cannot imagine how much harder it must be for those in Melbourne under extended lockdown. As the weeks slowly roll by and the number of cases continues to rise it must be very difficult to remain positive about the future especially during Melbourne winter. Sydney-siders are also feeling the pressure that it's only a matter of time before they are shut down again and join in the Melbourne gloom. The Palaszczuk government is incrementally closing Queensland borders and is likely to completely close them again if Sydney's infection rates begin to spike.

It has often been said that Queensland sells agriculture, resources, and sunshine. With an election around the corner I am sure the Queensland Government would prefer to keep the borders open and some tourism keeping the economy going. The lack of tourism income is unlikely to be easily accommodated, and businesses must be pushed to the brink of financial viability. Impacted sectors like tourism create a domino effect rippling out through the economy including the freight sector. For every bar that is shut, the delivery of produce food and drinks is not required. Freight volumes are generally down on last year's figures and sales of new vehicles have also declined considerably. The dramatic reduction in travel has also impacted air freight significantly disrupting Queensland's normally booming market in specialty seafood to China, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

The future is now

COVID-19 has sparked a real shift in people's perspectives and thinking. I have noticed a strong desire to rebuild the world differently. For the first time in my lifetime conservative looking, respectable community leaders from the state's fire and disaster management sector are stepping up and talking about the need to address climate change.

"We had the hottest driest year ever – a year that would not have happened without the impact of climate change" Greg Mullins former NSW Fire and Rescue Commissioner

Businesses are looking to change practices expanding online, establish supply chains in Australia, and considering digital options industry 4.0. The future will be quite different from the past and new opportunities are just around the corner.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's restricted access vehicle portal is another wonder of the new world order. The data collected will facilitate significantly improved freight movement management. As permit numbers continue to increase the portal will grow and the NHVR is implementing further improvements to streamline the system. I urge all road managers to meet with the NHVR team and see what opportunities there are to improve the visibility of freight moving on your road network.

Another example is the introduction of a National Cabinet, who knew COAG could be so easily reimagined. Images of the Prime Minister and Premiers video conferencing, collaborating, and for the time being, putting differences to one side. This gave people confidence and hope in the parliamentary system. Decisions that might normally have taken years to progress have been made in the spirit of unity and the development of a national Protocol for Domestic Border Controls – Freight Movements is a good example of what can be achieved when you collaborate.

Queensland led the way when its borders closed to NSW, flexibly accommodating freight movements with thankfully no incidents. The Queensland Police Service and the Department of Transport and Main Roads should be commended on the process. Now with borders opening and closing depending on the advice from the Chief Health Officer the nationally agreed protocol will help freight movements between states. Although as the Australian Trucking Association has warned the system is not perfect yet, with COVID-19 testing requirements and the availability of facilities varying state to state.

Minister McCormack acknowledged freight operators keep Australia moving and they should not be asked to put their lives at risk as they continue to work through the pandemic. Thankfully, there are many examples of government and industry working effectively together to keep Australia moving.

Renata Berglas
CEO Queensland Transport and Logistics Council
PS if you enjoy reading the QTLC newsletter please refer and share it on social media.

Government Initiatives



Road
The Bruce Highway Trust held its first meeting at the Sunshine Coast launching the Future Proofing the Bruce plan. With QTLC Director Peter Garske as chair the Advisory Council is sure to provide industry voice to the program.

"Members of the Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council have the expertise to assist state and federal governments to achieve the goals of unlocking economic growth, building flood resilience and improving safety through targeted investment on this vital economic spine," Mr Garske said.

Maritime
The Palaszczuk Government will seek to reinvigorate shipping along Queensland's coastline to create new maritime jobs and expand transport operations in the state.

Transport and Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey established a Maritime Jobs Taskforce, which met for the first time last week, to work with industry and maritime unions to remove barriers and identify practical ideas and opportunities that will grow the industry.

Airfreight
Communication with industry shows that the available airfreight is constraining industry capacity by 10-30 tonnes per week. Industry is working with airlines on attracting additional space for this freight which consists mostly of live fish and live crayfish (destination HK/China), with the remainder, made up of aquarium fish, and live corals (destination Europe / US) and a small amount of agricultural produce (destination HK and Singapore).

Toowoomba Wellcamp Airport currently exports approximately 80 tonnes of freight on a weekly basis on the existing service, and there has been freight capacity to support more frequent services for some time. An additional Sunday service starting in June will take total capacity to over 120 tonnes per week.

Rail
Tenders for stage one of the planned Beerburrum to Nambour rail (B2N) upgrade are taking the project from the page to the construction phase. The upgrade proposal has progressed from Building Queensland business case stage in 2016 to Infrastructure Australia's Priority List and now stage one funding has been committed and the much-needed upgrade is progressing.

The North Coast Rail line carries the majority of groceries, beverages, and other freight from Brisbane to Townsville and Cairns. During the peak of the COVID-19 shopping spree, additional services were added and north Queensland's toilet paper supplies were maintained.

The initial stages of the B2N project will focus on improving the passenger services, but necessary freight upgrades should follow. The program is funded by an 80/20 Australian Government and Queensland government split and will greatly improve service reliability.

National Rail
National Rail Action Plan aims to implement changes to the delivery of rail infrastructure and improve the safety and productivity of rail operations. The primary focus is on workforce and common network standards and interoperability. The NTC has established working groups to deliver the plan more information here

Interesting reads

Moller-Maersk sustainable fuel plan for Denmark

Several major Danish firms, including Orsted and Moller-Maersk, have formed a partnership aiming to produce sustainable fuels on an industrial scale.

The goal of the partnership — other members include Copenhagen Airports, DSV Panalpina, DFDS and Scandinavian airline SAS — is to establish a large facility that will provide fuels for maritime, air and road transport in the Copenhagen area.

In a statement, Maersk, the largest container shipping line in the world by market share, said the partners' goal was to build a "ground-breaking hydrogen and e-fuel production facility".
The objective is to have the production operational by 2023 and full-scaled up by 2030, producing in excess of 250,000 tonnes of sustainable fuel for vessels, lorries, aeroplanes every year, making it the biggest facility of its kind in the world.

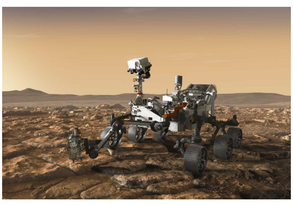
Deloitte and Ballard White Paper

Assesses Hydrogen & Fuel Cell Solutions for Transportation

Randy MacEwen, Ballard President and CEO said, "In less than 10 years, it will become cheaper to run a fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) than it is to run a battery electric vehicle (BEV) or an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle for certain commercial applications."

The paper provides answers to the most pertinent questions from industry executives and laypeople alike, specifically regarding the economic viability of FCEVs and their environmental sustainability.

Final Thoughts



NASSA next-generation Mars rover Perseverance has blasted off from Florida's Cape Canaveral atop an Atlas 5 rocket on a $US2.4 billion ($3.36 billion) mission to search for traces of potential past life on Earth's planetary neighbour.

Perseverance is due to land at the base of a 250-metre-deep crater called Jezero, a former lake from 3.5 billion years ago that scientists suspect could bear evidence of potential past microbial life on Mars.

Space travel is so inspiring!

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Our mailing address is:
Queensland Transport and Logistics Council
1 Eagle Street, Brisbane, QLD 4000

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