

## 6.3 NATIONAL LOCAL ROAD & TRANSPORT CONGRESS REPORT

Submitting Councillor: Cr James

### **MOTION**

*That Council receives the report from Cr James on his attendance at the National Local Roads & Transport Congress, held in November 2017.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

At its 26 September 2017 meeting, Council approved my attendance at the National Local Roads & Transport Congress (NLRTC) of the Australian Local Government Association, which was held in Albany from 6 to 8 November 2017. The assembly was well attended, with over 250 delegates from Councils right across Australia.

The congress provides attendees with an important opportunity to hear from other Councils and industry leaders on emerging technologies and priorities in the Transport sector.

### **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

There were range of interesting speakers over the course of the NGA:

- David O'Loughlin, President of the ALGA and Mayor of Prospect in South Australia, addressed the NLRTC. He spoke of the Roads to Recovery program and the success that ALGA had had in having it reinstated. He stressed the necessity of the local government sector understanding the full impact of driverless cars and how their introduction would transform the way Councils operated.
- Russell Whale, Transport Planning at ARUP spoke passionately about the future of the autonomous vehicle landscape and raised a number of interesting points that would need to be raised and discussed.
  - Autonomous vehicles are basically smartphones on wheels.
  - We need to address how we charge vehicles moving forward. Lack of charging stations means take up will be slow.
  - People are scared of autonomous vehicles but most of the current vehicles on the market are already using a lot of automated features such as lane departure warnings, collision detection systems, automatic parallel parking, etc. Turning the wheel doesn't necessarily mean you are in full control.
  - There are potential problems with shared vehicle fleets (vehicles on demand); who pays for maintenance, insurance and what regulatory changes do we need to address in order to make these work?
  - Who takes ownership of the vehicles? RACV? Insurance companies?
  - Many of the test vehicles use the lines on the road to navigate, but what happens in suburban streets where there are normally no lines near gutters or even down the middle of the road. What will we do about unsealed roads? This will be a massive cost for Local Government.
  - Will streets need to be redesigned and who gets priority on the roads?
  - Safety is estimated to rise from its current levels of 40% to more than 90%.

- Adrian Kemp from Houston. Kemp spoke in depth about vehicle and road analytics and how they can be used to shape Australia's Transport future.
  - Data tracking information on smartphones is available regardless of whether location services are on or off.
  - Can track demographics, where they move and where they go.
  - Sold by telecommunications companies just via tower you are connected to.
  - 2016 was the worst traffic speed year for the road network nationally.
  - By tracking mobile phones, they know speed of traffic in fifteen minute blocks on any road anywhere in the country.
  - Can now identify hotspots for speeding down to a 200m segment.
  - Systematic measures of road roughness are becoming available, built in to new cars.
  - Data shows that urban road roughness is worse than rural roads.
  - Fuel excise revenue is expected to keep declining.
- Donna Wieland, General Manager, Transport Technology Futures Branch, Department of Infrastructure WA.
  - Talked about mobility as a service; train, taxi, tram, boat, bike, bus, car.
  - Stated that, on average, motor vehicles are parked a staggering 96% of the time which takes up almost one third of urban open space. Will autonomous vehicles open up this land?
  - Three capital cities with different smart card systems. Nightmare for travelers.
  - We need to look at introducing Government run custom on-demand bus services or bike share schemes which utilize the existing ticketing system.
  - An estimated 50 billion devices will be connected to internet by 2020.
  - "Big data is what happened when the cost of storing information became less than the cost of making the decision to throw it away" – George Dyson.
  - <http://ntc.gov.au/roads/technology/automated-vehicles-in-australia>.
  - Investigations underway to find out if Government needs to provide additional infrastructure such as GPS, increasing mobile coverage, line markings.
  - Impacts of autonomous vehicles on government.
    - Road related venue – no parking fines, no taxi ranks.
    - What do we do with fuel excise and registration?
    - There are obvious major benefits to elderly and disabled users.
    - Increased urban sprawl and service provisions.
    - Impacts on town planning requirements such as new drop-off zones, etc.
  - Cyber security problematic and investigations are underway. No different to now though where people can physically drive a vehicle.
- Safety at Road Worksites - Dr Dan Sullivan – Austroads (peak organisation of Australasian road transport and traffic agencies)
  - 85% of drivers disobey roadwork speed limits.
  - Compliance is low because of signs left out on public holidays, overnight, etc. so drivers don't take work areas seriously.
  - Police don't want to enforce work zones because they are unenforceable.
- Generally speaking:
  - 11% of roads across Australia are in poor to very poor condition.
  - There's a big push for a Regional Infrastructure fund costing approx. \$300 million a year.

**CONCLUSION**

I believe that other than when Cr Lake was the ALGA President, Monash Council has never sent a delegate to this forum before. It is encouraging to see that we opted to do so this time around.

Although some of the content of the congress is clearly catered towards Rural Councils, the large majority is extremely relevant to Urban Councils as we move towards new and exciting technologies, particularly with data collection, analytics and autonomous vehicles.

I spoke to the ALGA President and suggested that the Board should look into spending the first day holding sessions with all attendees to cover off information relevant to all Councils and then spend the second day splitting the group in to two and holding concurrent sessions for both rural and urban orientated Councils.

Attendance at the NLRTC offers a range of benefits, most notably access to Ministers and industry experts, both national and international, that would otherwise not be accessible.

Discussions with other Councillors and Council Officers was also invaluable as a method of information sharing and will help to further the work I am doing on behalf of Council on MTF, ETC and MAVTC.