

Remote Areas Consultative Group (RACG)

COMMUNIQUE

MEETING 2 – HOSTED BY NORTHERN TERRITORY

Tuesday 17 March 2026

The Remote Areas Consultative Group (RACG) Meeting 2 for the 2025–26 term was held in Darwin on Tuesday 17 March 2026. The meeting was hosted by the Northern Territory Department of Logistics and Infrastructure and chaired by **Dan Cameron**, Executive Director, Precincts, Freight and Logistics.

The meeting brought together representatives from road authorities, national transport organisations and the heavy vehicle transport industry across Queensland, the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia, alongside observers from the Australian Government, emergency services and Defence.

Freight Resilience and Network Disruptions

Members discussed the impacts of recent significant wet season rainfall and flooding events across northern and remote Australia, with a particular focus on disruptions to nationally significant road and rail freight corridors.

Members shared lived experiences of extended road and rail closures, including the Tanami Road, Victoria Highway, Stuart Highway, east–west rail corridors, and other key freight routes across Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Members highlighted:

- The absence of viable alternative routes in remote regions
- Flow-on impacts to supply chains, freight costs, fuel supply and community access
- Increased pressure on remaining open routes, including safety and asset condition risks
- Vulnerabilities arising from single points of failure across the national freight network

Members agreed these impacts reinforce the urgency of strengthening freight resilience planning, particularly for remote and northern Australia.

Seasonal Outlook Briefings

Members welcomed seasonal outlook briefings from representatives of the Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Bureau of Meteorology.

The briefings addressed anticipated weather conditions for the remainder of the wet season and into the dry season, including continued heightened flood risk for parts of northern Australia, bushfire outlooks and the implications for transport networks.

Members discussed the value of coordinated nationally focused seasonal intelligence to support proactive planning for freight operators and road managers. It was agreed that improved access to forward-looking

seasonal information would assist industry and jurisdictions to better anticipate disruptions and prepare mitigation strategies.

Defence and Freight Resilience

Members welcomed a presentation from Major General Jason Walk, Head National Support – Joint Capabilities Group, Australian Defence Force.

The presentation outlined Defence planning for national support and logistics resilience, including the reliance on civilian freight networks, infrastructure and industry capability—particularly in northern Australia.

Discussion highlighted strong alignment between Defence needs and remote freight resilience priorities, including:

- The importance of identifying shared objectives and planning for infrastructure benefitting Defence, industry and communities
- Vulnerabilities arising from reliance on limited east–west and north–south road and rail corridors
- Opportunities to strengthen advocacy by promoting freight resilience as a matter of national security, economic stability and community access

Members supported further work to identify shared priorities and opportunities for coordinated advocacy between Defence, governments and industry.

National Freight and Resilience Plan

Members received an update from the Australian Government on the ongoing development of a National Freight and Resilience Plan.

Discussion focused on the proposed principles-based approach and the need to ensure the Plan delivers practical value for remote freight operations. Members emphasised the importance of:

- Clear visibility of nationally significant freight routes and points of failure
- Recognition of the unique challenges faced by remote and northern supply chains
- Improving coordination, redundancy planning and information sharing across jurisdictions
- Capturing lessons learnt from major disruption events to inform future resilience planning

Industry representatives strongly supported the development of a nationally consistent and operationally useful “playbook” to guide decision-making during major freight disruptions.

Members agreed the RACG is well placed to provide informed, experience-based input into the development of the Plan.

RACG Role and Forward Work

Members reaffirmed that freight resilience will remain a core strategic focus of the RACG for the remainder of the 2025–26 term, and a desire to have continued active input to the development of the National Freight and Resilience Plan.

The RACG agreed to continue supporting collaboration between industry, governments and national agencies, with an emphasis on:

- Evidence-based advocacy
- Practical, nationally coordinated solutions
- Improving outcomes for remote road freight operators and the communities they service

Next Meeting

The next RACG meeting is planned for October 2026, ahead of the 2026–27 wet season. This meeting will be hosted by the Northern Territory and will focus on seasonal outlooks, freight resilience planning and preparedness for the upcoming wet season.

Hosting of the RACG will transition to South Australia for 2027.

Table 1 – Member Organisations in Attendance

Jurisdiction / Organisation	Representatives
South Australia	Livestock & Rural Transporters Association SA; Dept of Planning, Transport & Infrastructure
Western Australia	Livestock & Rural Transport Assoc WA; Western Roads Federation; Main Roads WA
Queensland	Livestock and Rural Transporters Association of QLD, Dept of Transport and Main Roads
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Road Transport Association; Dept of Logistics & Infrastructure
National Organisations	National Transport Commission; National Heavy Vehicle Regulator; National Transport Research Organisation, Truck Industry Council
Observers (online)	Australian Government Dept of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts; Austroads, Australian Defence Force, WA Dept of Fire and Emergency Services, Bureau of Meteorology

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