



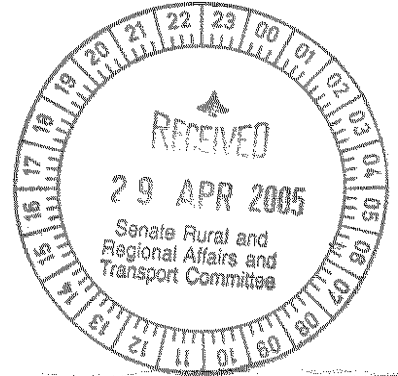
Jon Stanhope MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

ATTORNEY GENERAL MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
MINISTER FOR ARTS, HERITAGE & INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Senator Bill Heffernan
Chair
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs
and Transport Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Senator Heffernan

Thank you for your letter of 4 March 2005 inviting the ACT Government to make a submission to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee about the Auslink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 and the Auslink (National Land Transport – Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2004.

Bilateral Agreements reached with each State and Territory will be of greatest significance in how the Auslink Program is applied in practice. The Territory is currently considering the draft Bilateral Agreement for the ACT provided by the Commonwealth, and I believe that this is the appropriate avenue to influence the way in which the Program is delivered. The ACT will therefore not be making a formal submission.

However, I welcome the opportunity also offered in your letter to make comment on some of the issues which have emerged from the Program.

In general, the ACT considers that the Auslink legislation seeks to transfer some of the risk previously managed by the Commonwealth to States and Territories. The draft Bilateral Agreements sent out for discussion provide examples of this, in particular in relation to the maintenance funds for the Auslink network. Funds to be made available for maintenance are not indexed whilst performance outcomes sought are constant. This will potentially see costs and risk shifted to States and Territories in the longer term.

The establishment of a National Infrastructure Advisory Committee is potentially useful, but its exact composition and powers will dictate whether it will assist in achieving a genuine improvement to national transport outcomes. To what extent, for example, will States and Territories be represented and, in a related context, how will its planning recommendations be translated into outcomes?

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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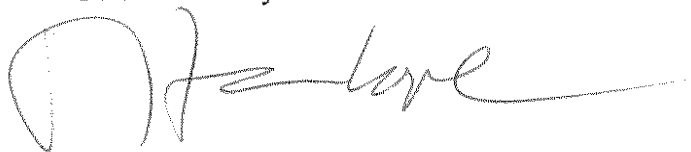
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In relation to the Roads to Recovery Program the ACT supports the Program and considers that the strategic regional network component is a sensible way of achieving improved national transport outcomes at a regional level. However, implementation of the Program will determine how effectively this component is achieved, and the funding mechanisms, the means of achieving jurisdictional agreement and how individual projects are assessed are currently the subject of discussion between ACT and Commonwealth Agencies.

I trust that these comments will be of assistance in the Committee's deliberations on the Bills currently under its consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Stanhope', written in a cursive style.

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

28 APR 2005