

# **ALC Submission to the Inquiry into the Public Health and Other Legislation (Further Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2021**

6 July 2021

The Australian Logistics Council (**ALC**) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Public Health and Other Legislation (Further Extension of Expiring Provisions) Amendment Bill 2021 (**the Inquiry**).

ALC is the peak national body representing major companies participating in the freight logistics industry. ALC's policy focus is on delivering enhanced supply chain efficiency and safety.

Freight affects every Australian, every day, everywhere. Common goods purchased by Australians such as food, clothing, household appliances and medicine all need to be transported by freight operators.

The COVID crisis highlighted the importance of supply chains capable of efficiently moving things as basic as toilet paper to places such as supermarkets.

The regulatory relaxations granted during the pandemic also assisted in the prompt restocking of stores and the efficient provision of out of hours home deliveries, delivering significant amenity benefits to customers and communities.

There have been very few if any complaints received by our members during this time.

Industry is also investing in quiet loading dock technology and EV trucks to minimise the noise of manual handling activities. These measures will contribute to finding the right balance as cities move towards a 24/7 economy.

Responsible business practices such as these demonstrate that liberalisation can be balanced with the needs and expectations of the community.

The ability to make truck deliveries outside of peak hours long-term also assists in terms of easing congestion, as more deliveries could be spread across the day.

ALC expects this will be more important than ever as people return to CBDs via private vehicles and avoid public transport.

[Infrastructure Australia's modelling](#) estimates that congestion cost the Australian economy \$19 billion in 2016 and that without continued infrastructure investment in our cities, this cost will more than double by 2031 to reach \$39.8 billion.<sup>1</sup>

ALC recently undertook research into the impact of the relaxation of curfews, which indicated that only 2 out of 32 focus group participants felt that noise levels had increased since COVID-19 and a majority had not noticed curfews had been lifted in their area –

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/publications/urban-transport-crowding-and-congestion>



indeed, noise from freight was of minimal concern compared to noise from general traffic and construction.

Focus group participants acknowledged that the lifting of curfews could help to remove trucks from roads in critical hours such as during school pickups or the work commute.

They also had a feeling that the world is moving online, and so the pressure on supply chains is likely to increase, although they expressed a strong desire for some restrictions to remain in place, such as those on compression braking around residential areas as well as adoption of new technologies and better loading dock designs.

In NSW, the Treasurer is to lead [a whole-of-government evaluation](#) of targeted regulatory relaxations implemented at the height of the pandemic to assess their costs and benefits, with the Government saying:

By retaining the best of these reforms, the Government will promote a stronger recovery.<sup>2</sup>

This is because, as the NSW Productivity Commission said in its 2021 [White Paper](#):

Flexible, outcomes-focused regulation can quickly adapt and respond to changing social, economic, and technological circumstances. The NSW Government acted quickly at the onset of COVID-19 to provide further flexibility for businesses and consumers. Continuing this good work will help with our economic recovery too.

Emerging technologies can boost productivity and enhance the lives of NSW residents. Some regulations are currently constraining, rather than encouraging, the use of certain emerging and innovative technologies in New South Wales.

Frequent review of regulatory regimes ensures they remain fit-for-purpose and continue to deliver the intended benefits at the least cost to businesses and consumers.

A new and strategic approach to regulation in New South Wales will help reduce the compliance, administration, and efficiency costs of poorly designed and administered regulation.<sup>3</sup>

The Productivity Commission has therefore recommended that the success of the extended COVID-19 regulatory changes should be evaluated and the changes retained unless it can be shown there is no net public benefit.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/0920-01\\_Budget%20Paper%2020-21%20Glossy%20Overview%20A4\\_Design.pdf](https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-11/0920-01_Budget%20Paper%2020-21%20Glossy%20Overview%20A4_Design.pdf): 25

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.productivity.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/Productivity%20Commission%20White%20Paper%202021.pdf>: 21

<sup>4</sup> Recommendation 4.1

The Treasurer committed to reporting to the NSW Government every six months on the implementation of the Productivity Commission's recommendations.

The Queensland Productivity Commission has integrated into the Queensland Treasury to establish the [Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction](#) with a focus on:

the economic challenges facing Queensland in a post-COVID world, developing policies to promote economic recovery.<sup>5</sup>

Full retail shelves benefit all Queenslanders whilst the ability to efficiently move freight improves productivity outcomes and in time reduces prices, without necessarily reducing residential amenity.

**ALC recommends:**

- 1. the Office of Productivity and Red Tape Reduction:**
  - (a) conduct a whole of government evaluation of the practical effect of the relaxation of regulatory changes that are contained in the Bill, such as amending the effects of environmental legislation to permit the movement of freight without, for example, the imposition of delivery curfews; and that**
  - (b) the changes be retained unless it can be shown they have no net public benefit; and**
- 2. the Government report periodically to the Parliament on progress of this review.**

ALC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry, should you have any questions regarding this submission and the issues raised, please contact me on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Smith  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.qpc.qld.gov.au/>