

# **Roads Australia Report on Technical Specifications and Procurement**

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## **Key Recommendations**

***Recommendation 1 – That RA and other associated organisations work with Austroads to develop and monitor a delivery plan for asphalt and pavement specifications and harmonisation.***

Issue: Harmonisation of asphalt and pavements road technical specifications was discussed at all workshops nationally and continue to be a discussion point among the private and public sectors. AAPA and other associated bodies are also well-placed to facilitate these ongoing discussions.

***Recommendation 2 – That industry stakeholders and policy makers:***

- (a) NOTE that RA's first workshop in Sydney was a precursor to ASBAP implementing a number of process reforms due to concerns raised,***
- (b) ESTABLISH a safety barrier working party to address road barrier installation issues nationally, and***
- (c) CONSIDER Sector Schemes as a potential solution to accreditation for installers.***

Issue: Road barrier safety and accreditation continues to remain an issue for both the public and private sectors. Sector Schemes has been identified as a potential solution, however, more work is required to address issues/concerns within industry.

***Recommendation 3 – That traffic control at work sites be standardised nationally and that a timeline for consultation with industry and implementation options be identified.***

Issue: Traffic control at work sites was raised at all workshops by a number of members. It remains an ongoing issue for work sites and safety of workers. Consistency and standardisation of traffic control would address these issues.

***Recommendation 4 – That road line marking be standardised across Australia.***

Issue: Road line marking is an area that could be harmonised and would assist all state/territory governments and the private sector. Currently all states/territories have different requirements for road line marking.

***Recommendation 5 – That a medium to long term pipeline be identified to consider harmonisation of specifications over a 2 – 6 year period.***

Issue: There are a number of specifications that could/should be considered in the medium and long term future. Any changes need to be worked through systematically with agencies and key stakeholders.

***Recommendation 6 – That RA in consultation with agencies and associated bodies review delivery mechanisms across Australia and identify specific actions to pursue the harmonisation of procurement practices and standardisation of common contracting arrangements.***

Issue: Procurement and contracting remains an ongoing discussion with RA members (public and private).

## **Executive Summary**

As part of Roads Australia industry consultation, a series of workshops were held across Australia in 2014 to help identify potential technical specifications that could be harmonised and/or standardised, and to consider procurement and contracting enhancements at a national level.

Having now completed the consultative phase, this paper makes recommendations as to what steps RA should take to facilitate implementation.

## **Key Recommendations and Actions**

### ***Recommendation 1 – That RA and other associated organisations work with Austroads to develop and monitor a delivery plan for asphalt and pavement specifications and harmonisation.***

Issue: Harmonisation of asphalt and pavements road technical specifications was discussed at all workshops nationally and continue to be a discussion point among the private and public sectors. AAPA and other associated bodies are well-placed to facilitate these ongoing discussions.

#### **ACTION:**

- (a) RA organise a meeting through road agency representatives to convene technical specialists, AAPA and asphalt industry members to define practical steps to harmonise asphalt mix design and placement specifications.
- (b) RA to convene a meeting with road agencies and relevant bodies to progress harmonisation of pavement gravel supply and placement specifications.

### ***Recommendation 2 – That industry stakeholders and policy makers:***

- (a) NOTE that RA's first workshop in Sydney was a precursor to ASBAP implementing a number of process reforms due to concerns raised,***
- (b) ESTABLISH a safety barrier working party to address road barrier installation issues nationally, and***
- (c) CONSIDER Sector Schemes as a potential solution to accreditation for installers.***

Issue: Road barrier safety and accreditation continues to remain an issue for both the public and private sectors. Sector Schemes has been identified as a potential solution, however, more work is required to address issues/concerns within industry.

#### **ACTION:**

RA to set up a safety barrier working party and workshop with road agency representatives, contractors, ASBAP and road barrier specialists to build a national platform for the accreditation of road safety barrier installers.

### ***Recommendation 3 – That traffic control at work sites be standardised nationally and that a timeline for consultation with industry and implementation options be identified.***

Issue: Traffic control at work sites was raised at all workshops by a number of members. It remains an ongoing issue for work sites and safety of workers. Consistency and standardisation of traffic control would address these issues.

#### **ACTION:**

RA to liaise with Austroads and road agency representatives to agree specific steps regarding traffic control at work sites, and pursue the national standardised approach already initiated within Austroads.

***Recommendation 4 – That road line marking be standardised across Australia.***

Issue: Road line marking is an area that could be harmonised and would assist all state/territory governments and the private sector. Currently all states/territories have different requirements for road line marking.

**ACTION:**

RA to convene a meeting with road agency representatives, Austroads and the Roadmarking Industry Association of Australia to define the practical steps towards the harmonisation of road line marking specifications.

***Recommendation 5 – That a medium to long term pipeline be identified to consider harmonisation of specifications over a 2 – 6 year period.***

**ACTION:**

- (a) RA to work with road agency representatives to agree a priority list of specifications to be reviewed for standardisation and harmonisation.
- (b) RA to convene a meeting with all relevant parties to progress the established priority list of specifications.

***Recommendation 6 – That RA in consultation with agencies and associated bodies review delivery mechanisms across Australia and identify specific actions to pursue the harmonisation of procurement practices and standardisation of common contracting arrangements.***

Issue: Procurement and contracting remains an ongoing discussion with RA members (public and private).

**ACTION:**

RA to undertake the 2015 Procurement and Tendering Survey with industry, report back to individual agencies and continue to liaise with state/territory governments on feedback/improvements.

## **Purpose**

Roads Australia, the national peak body of road industry stakeholders, facilitated an annual policy session with road agency representatives in January 2014 to align policy priorities.

Representatives provided insight into each agency's policy priorities for the year ahead. Participants then aligned and voted on a set of priorities that Roads Australia and agencies can collectively take forward and drive outcomes nationally.

2014 priorities include:

1. standardisation and harmonisation of technical specifications and procurement, including incentives, insurance and materials;
2. maintenance / asset management;
3. reducing the cost of infrastructure / value for money / general cost efficiencies; and
4. pipeline of projects/program and investment and funding.

### **Standardisation and harmonisation of technical specifications**

Standardisation and harmonisation of technical specifications remains an issue among companies working across Australia in all states. Achieving standardisation and harmonisation can provide cost savings to all parties.

Roads Australia will work with road agencies, Austroads and industry to:

- Reduce duplication of specifications, where appropriate
- Drive cost savings through harmonisation of specifications
- Improve competition
- Achieve best practice
- Share knowledge and resources across states and industry
- Harmonise procurement and contracting, where appropriate, and
- Improve skill levels.

As part of Roads Australia industry consultation, a series of workshops were held across the country to help identify potential technical specifications that could be harmonised and/or standardised and consider procurement and contracting enhancements at a national level.

The technical specifications and procurement workshop series was the first step to begin the conversation with road agencies, Austroads, ARRB, Standards Australia and RA member companies.

The aim and objectives of the workshops was to involve all relevant players within the industry to provide feedback and real life examples to consider which technical specifications could be standardised and/or harmonised to drive innovation, reduce the cost of infrastructure and work collaboratively across jurisdictions.

A series of roadshow workshops across Australia has helped form the basis for this end-of-year report to Austroads and State Agency reps for consideration of standardisation and harmonisation of technical specifications across jurisdictions where possible.

Roads Australia undertook this initiative in collaboration with all relevant players in the industry.

## Workshops

Workshops were held in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth during 2014 with more than 400 people attending.

All workshop minutes, outcomes and presentations can be found at [www.roads.org.au/policy](http://www.roads.org.au/policy)

As a first step, RA prepared an industry survey to gather initial feedback as a starting point for these discussions. We also wanted a balanced response so the questions were framed around specifications:

- Practicality
- Value for Money (VfM), and
- Alignment with best practice.

To access the 2014 RA Technical Specifications Survey Results, please visit [www.roads.org.au/news/publications](http://www.roads.org.au/news/publications)

Attendees included key public sector representatives - Chief Executives, Directors and Deputies, Austroads, Standards Australia – as well as senior private sector representatives – Managing Directors, CEOs and key technical experts. There was a broad range of participants from a variety of organisations and companies from the overall transport sector, including suppliers, contractors, consultants, industry associations etc.

Each workshop provided the opportunity to hear from key senior public and private sector executives about the current state of play in their respective states and identify opportunities to harmonise specifications, where possible to drive value for money for all parties.

Industry representatives were asked to work in groups and clearly identify which specifications they felt could be considered as part of this process and to outline barriers to drive innovation etc.

Participants were then asked to report back to all workshop participants and make the case for their recommendations/views.

Each participant was also asked to identify opportunities and barriers in procurement and contracting, and what could we do better to reduce the cost of infrastructure to government and taxpayers.

It was clear from each of the workshops that both agencies and industry are positive and receptive to changes with specifications and procurement to reduce the cost of infrastructure and drive real changes that will benefit all players of industry.

## Industry input

Participants worked in groups on specified questions to identify which specifications could be considered for standardisation and in what order of priority they would list them. Other questions asked for examples of duplication of specs, examples from international jurisdictions, new and/or recycled materials, pavement specifications and general comments.

Key technical specifications identified in these sessions included:

- Roadside barriers/wire rope safety barriers/temporary barriers
- Traffic management/control at worksites
- Asphalt specifications

- Pavement specifications
- Signage/line marking
- Recycled/warm asphalt

The workshops clearly identified the top three areas for harmonisation/standardisation as:

1. Roadside barriers/wire rope safety barriers/temporary barriers
2. Traffic management/control at worksites, and
3. Signage/line marking.

While participants identified asphalt and pavement specifications as very high priorities, it was noted that these specifications would require extensive consultation between each state/territory and industry over a longer period of time. It was also noted that AAPA has been working closely in this space with workshops on asphalt specifications and safety at worksites. RA will continue to support AAPA and other associated bodies to consult widely on these specifications and provide technical advice where possible.

## **Procurement**

Participants were also asked to complete a worksheet on procurement providing examples and feedback on the briefing process up to close of tender, after close of tender, assessment and award of contracts. Please refer to the attached outcomes and analysis document for detailed responses.

Key themes raised as part of these sessions included:

- Dual ECI in QLD is successful and slowly being adopted by other states
- Too many addenda
- Open, honest and specific feedback very useful
- Non-price criteria feedback is sanitised and limited in scope
- Generally feedback after close of tender is robust and helpful
- Standard of documentation is generally good, however, it is not always provided at the beginning of the process
- Involving suppliers and consultants at design stage will provide better value for money
- More transparency as to the evaluation criteria and weighting
- Consideration of pre-qualification for consultants similar to the contractors, and
- Consider models such as Alliances.

A number of questions were identified by members and technical specifications that could be harmonised, a short list has been identified below:

- Consideration of performance based standards
- Traffic control at work sites

- Road safety barriers
- Pavement materials
- Standard conditions of contract
- Asphalt and seal spray
- Duplication/regulation (concrete specs, are we over prescribing?)
- Noise walls
- Specifications provide VfM and sometimes need to be prescriptive
- Wire rope posts
- Guard rails/heights of posts
- Roadside, equipment and civil costs
- Consideration of Australian approval authority for roadside furniture, safety barriers etc.
- Concrete pipes, and
- Fast track approval for new products.

Please refer to the Outcomes and Analysis reports which provide greater detail from each group/participants at each of the workshops – [www.roads.org.au/policy](http://www.roads.org.au/policy)

## **Outcomes**

### Asphalt Specifications

Queensland Transport and Main Roads (QTMR) and Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) has worked closely on achieving harmonisation of asphalt specifications over the past 18 months, with QTMR harmonising their heavy duty asphalt specifications to align with RMS.

QTMR has also taken great steps to reduce the cost of infrastructure overall and in the case of traffic management is transitioning from high cost, risk averse, prescriptive to engineer – approved, site specific solutions.

***Recommendation: That RA and other associated organisations work with Austroads to develop and monitor a delivery plan for asphalt and pavement specifications and harmonisation.***

### **ACTION:**

- RA organise a meeting through road agency representatives to convene technical specialists, AAPA and asphalt industry members to define practical steps to harmonise asphalt mix design and placement specifications.
- RA to convene a meeting with road agencies and relevant bodies to progress harmonisation of pavement gravel supply and placement specifications.

### Safety Barriers

A key outcome from the first workshop held in Sydney was due to member feedback on the panel assessment process for safety barriers in Australia.

The Austroads Safety Barrier Assessment Panel (ASBAP) listened intently to the discussion and immediately took on the feedback. ASBAP has now implemented process reforms to reduce the time taken to issue a determination on the status of safety barrier products.

The existence of the Panel avoids the need for safety barrier suppliers to make submissions to separate jurisdictions.

By implementing these and other process reforms, the Panel has been able to issue 14 determinations since June 2014.

The key process reforms are:

- **Products are assessed only once.** The Panel will make a considered judgement based on information supplied by the safety barrier supplier. If the crash tests and information provided do not provide sufficient information for confidence in performance and operation, then the barrier system will not be accepted.
- **Acceptance of crash tests prescribed in the USA or Europe.** The tests required by the USA Federal Highways Authority or a representative of the European Union will be accepted as the totality of tests required for safety barrier assessment. Additional tests will not be requested by the Panel. However, if the tests submitted do not provide sufficient information to provide confidence of safe operation and safety for workers then the product will not be accepted.
- **Assessment outcomes are “Accepted”, “Not accepted”, “Legacy” or “Phase out”.** “Interim acceptance” will no longer be issued. “Legacy” status allows retention in service until the end of service life. “Phase out” will remain in service to a fixed date. The date fixed for phase out will allow sufficient time for manufacturers, users and hire companies to amortise their investment and adjust their business model. Sudden changes in acceptance status will be avoided unless a critical safety issue emerges.
- **No expiry date on new acceptances.** Safety Barrier acceptances will be issued without an expiry date. However, the Acceptance Conditions preserve the right of the Panel and Road Authorities to re-assess the product and withdraw or modify acceptance conditions at any time. This would generally be in response to an incident or adverse reports from maintenance and operational personnel.
- **Retain existing time limited acceptances.** Existing product acceptances will retain the current time limited acceptance. Re-assessment as expiry becomes due will provide an opportunity to re-consider the suitability of the product in the light of current circumstances and check the consistency of acceptance conditions.
- **Remove assessment criteria not related to performance.** Assessment criteria that are not related to performance have been removed from the assessment process. Assessment criteria cover safety for road users, operational performance, durability, safety and efficiency in maintenance and Safety in Design.
- **Leadership team.** Panel business is managed by a leadership team based in Melbourne and Sydney, rather than a Chairman. This improves access to the Panel for safety barrier suppliers and control preference engineering.
- **Generic template.** Under our federated system of government the Panel Acceptance Conditions have no status until ratified by each Road Authority. The Panel will issue Road Authorities with an Acceptance Condition document that does not contain references to any particular jurisdiction. This will help harmonisation of conditions applied by each jurisdiction, although there may be some variations due to local issues.

### Safety barrier installations

While suppliers and agencies are happy with the outcomes derived from the ASBAP process, installation of safety barriers – both temporary and permanent – remains a concern within the public and private sectors.

RA understands that road agencies, Austroads and industry has set up a small group to look at how this issue is addressed in other countries. A solution to consider Sector Schemes in Australia has been raised by industry and agencies. RA understands that this group is working through a number of questions from the Austroads Chief Engineers Group.

RA considers the information provided on Sector Schemes as a potential solution in the Australian market, however, we would recommend further consultation and a wider working group (of select participants) be established to consider all possibilities and impacts on the greater supply chain.

***Recommendation: That industry stakeholders and policy makers:***

- (a) NOTE that RA's first workshop in Sydney was a precursor to ASBAP implementing a number of process reforms due to concerns raised,***
- (b) ESTABLISH a safety barrier working party to address road barrier installation issues nationally, and***
- (c) CONSIDER Sector Schemes as a potential solution to accreditation for installers.***

#### **ACTION:**

RA to set up a safety barrier working party and workshop with road agency representatives, contractors, ASBAP and road barrier specialists to build a national platform for the accreditation of road safety barrier installers.

### Traffic control at work sites

Standardisation of traffic control at work sites is an area that all participants would like to see improved. It is clear that safety at work sites is different in each state/territory. Harmonisation would not only assist public sector organisations, but clearly drive better safety for workers. It is also a cost burden on traffic management companies with multiple differences between states/territories.

***Recommendation: That traffic control at work sites be standardised nationally and that a timeline for consultation with industry and implementation options be identified.***

#### **ACTION:**

RA to liaise with Austroads and road agency representatives to agree specific steps regarding traffic control at work sites, and pursue the national standardised approach already initiated within Austroads.

### Line marking

There are many differences in road line marking across the country, with individual states having separate requirements for line marking, including the brightness of lines and requirements for worker's safety gear. This can be problematic particularly with cross border works.

Standardising line marking in Australia would drive cost savings for the public and private sectors. What is currently in place is 'waste' that could be avoided for all parties.

***Recommendation: That road line marking be standardised across Australia.***

#### **ACTION:**

RA to convene a meeting with road agency representatives, Austroads and the Roadmarking Industry Association of Australia to define the practical steps towards the harmonisation of road line marking specifications.

## Other specifications to be considered for future harmonisation – medium and long term

There are a number of other specifications that could/should be considered in the future. However, it is important to remember that any changes need to be worked through systematically with agencies, Austroads, Standards Australia and industry. Some specifications may be considered in the medium term (2 – 4 years) while others may be long term objectives (4 – 6 years).

***Recommendation: That a medium to long term pipeline be identified to consider harmonisation of specifications over a 2 – 6 year period.***

### **ACTION:**

- (a) RA to work with road agency representatives to agree a priority list of specifications to be reviewed for standardisation and harmonisation.
- (b) RA to convene a meeting with all relevant parties to progress the established priority list of specifications.

## Procurement

All participants had a view on current procurement and contracting including suggestions for improvements. Commentary included too many addenda, more dual ECIs, open and honest feedback, consideration of Alliance models where appropriate and non-price criteria. All comments from workshops can be found at

[www.roads.org.au/policy](http://www.roads.org.au/policy)

***Recommendation: That RA in consultation with agencies and associated bodies review delivery mechanisms across Australia and identify specific actions to pursue the harmonisation of procurement practices and standardisation of common contracting arrangements.***

### **ACTION:**

RA to undertake the 2015 Procurement and Tendering Survey with industry, report back to individual agencies and continue to liaise with state/territory governments on feedback/improvements.

## Appendices

Appendix 1	Survey
Appendix 2	Sydney minutes
Appendix 3	Sydney outcomes and analysis
Appendix 4	Brisbane minutes
Appendix 5	Brisbane outcomes and analysis
Appendix 6	Melbourne minutes
Appendix 7	Melbourne outcomes and analysis
Appendix 8	Perth minutes
Appendix 9	Perth outcomes and analysis

All appendices can be downloaded via [www.roads.org.au/policy](http://www.roads.org.au/policy)