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ABOUT FTA/APSA

Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) is the peak body for the international trade sector representing 430 businesses including Australia's largest logistics service providers and major importers.

On 1 January 2017, FTA was appointed the Secretariat role for the Australian Peak Shippers Association (APSA) being the peak body for Australia's containerised exporters and importers under Part X of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 as designated by the Federal Minister of Infrastructure and Transport.

FREIGHT COMMUITY SYSTEM (FCS)

FTA/APSA appreciate that the NSW government undoubtedly has an interest in obtaining goods origin and destination data to support infrastructure planning and the like.

FTA/APSA is of the view that this could potentially be achieved via the receipt of data from key stakeholders without attempting to solve other perceived industry problems as presented at a Transport for NSW online forum on 15 July 2021.

Based on preliminary observations and member feedback, FTA / APSA offer the following observations in line with the Freight Community System (FCS) objectives and in context of the movement of international trade between the border and importer / exporter premises:

A neutral and open electronic platform which is independent of established supply chain interests.

- As discussed during the most recent Freight & Logistics Advisory Council (FLAC) meeting on 26 July 2021, the Freight / Port Community System concept is not new and was attempted by Tradegate. Despite being the recipient of significant industry funds, Tradegate failed to deliver sustainable industry solutions and was dissolved in 2010.
- FTA/APSA are also aware that other Australian ports have previously examined development of Freight / Port Community Systems without any progressing to development.
- FTA/APSA is not privy to the results of these reviews and was declined detail upon request during the 15 July briefing. It is recommended that Transport for NSW identify lessons learnt from others' experiences and share outcomes with stakeholders.

Business to business communication between enterprises

- In a modern communications environment, new opportunities exist allowing industry to adopt innovative solutions, largely negating the need for another layer of communications in the form of an FCS.
- B2B communications exist significantly reducing the complexity of legacy international freight logistics processes.
- Many international freight forwarders, customs brokers, importers and exporters have sophisticated software solutions interfacing with other air and sea freight supply chain stakeholder systems.

- These systems already encompass guiding principles being examined in an FCS including: 1) ease of use 2) delivering value by integrating statutory reporting / declaration, operational, financial, commercial and customer interface solutions; and 3) efficiency via seamless integration to external systems.
- It is acknowledged that common data standards could be improved and to that end we suggest Transport of NSW engage with GS1 Australia to facilitate improvements for the benefit of industry and regulators.
- Whilst a level of information remains requiring manual data entry, the introduction of 'bots' are increasingly being used to overcome decreasing scenarios whereby electronic data is unavailable.

Facilitates commercial interactions between commercial supply chain participants

- Current B2B software solutions protect commercially sensitive information.
- As has been identified during the Transport for NSW led Empty Container Park Working Group, some major shipping lines continue to fail to supply Electronic Delivery Order (EDO) data to facilitate supply chain processes at empty container parks. In preference to establishing an FCS, we recommend that Transport for NSW introduce measures to incentivise or mandate this supply of data to facilitate increased efficiency in B2B processing.

Key stakeholders are freight sector operators and their customers (importers, exporters & distributors)

- In a highly competitive environment, third party software providers continue to improve functionality across all modes of transport, with national application and interfacing with all key stakeholders.
- The imposition of state based or modal systems would add an unnecessary additional layer of bureaucracy to logistics processes.

NEXT STEPS

During the industry engagement sessions on 15 and 26 July 2021, the offer was made for focussed industry engagement. FTA/APSA would greatly value such an opportunity to explore in more detail the viability and potential benefits of an FCS to support Transport for NSW in determining any need to progress to a Final Business Case.

For your consideration

Paul Zalai

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Secretariat, Australian Peak Shippers Association (APSA)
Director, Global Shippers Forum (GSF)