



NEWS RELEASE April 7, 2019

Federal Government funds National Freight Data Hub

The [iMOVE](#) Cooperative Research Centre has released its [Federal Government-commissioned report](#) recommending establishment of a National Freight Data Hub to track freight use and identify choke-points and congestion - across Australia.

On Saturday (April 6), Federal Transport Minister Michael McCormack confirmed iMOVE's Freight Data Hub recommendation had been accepted, and will be established with more than \$8m in funding (see the Minister's press release [here](#)).

The hub will act as the nation's central collector and disseminator of freight data, in the same way that the Australian Bureau of Statistics provides a vital information for managing the economy.

"The expanding population and the growing popularity of online shopping are dramatically increasing the national freight task," iMOVE managing director Ian Christensen said.

"iMOVE expects this to increase by 75% in 20 years (2011-2031) and that means, more trucks, more freight trains, and vehicles operating more hours every day.

"That growth in truck movements is ringing alarm bells. It brings with it the unenviable prospect of more congestion, more air pollution, more noise and more truck accidents; unless we do something about it," Mr Christensen said.

The new hub will harness cutting-edge technology, to monitor freight use of the country's transport system.

It means, for the first time, there will be central, neutral collection point for data of all freight transport system users – private companies, regulators, state transport departments and other government agencies.

“In a country as large, and yet as intensely urbanised as Australia, freight supply chains play a key role,” Mr Christensen said.

“They connect our mining and agricultural resource basins to our cities and ports and, in the reverse case, receive and distribute containerised merchandise and vehicles sourced from overseas. The efficiency of these freight supply chains materially impacts on our productivity performance and, ultimately, living standards.

“These new datasets will provide valuable information about current and future congestion choke-points and where scarce public investment should be best directed,” he said.

Mr Christensen said the economic gains from making better use of freight data were significant.

“The contribution of Australia’s freight supply chain industry to GDP is well over \$100 billion annually. Our study found that a 0.1% (that is, a one-tenth of 1 percent) improvement in industry productivity would be substantial. iMOVE is pleased that the Federal Government has recognised the importance of the freight sector to the national economy, and the importance of data flow to the efficiency of the transport system.”

Mr Christensen added:

“Going forward however, it is not just individual freight operators that have to perform well, but now all the parties in a supply chain must coordinate their actions to deliver end to end efficiency. That means, despite each organisation’s fierce independence, we are all parts of a system and have to work together. Australia’s success depends on the performance of that system.”

The reforms build on the 20-year National Freight and Supply Chain [Strategy](#), which recommends benchmarking freight performance through identifying, collecting and sharing data.

Interviews

iMOVE managing director Ian Christensen is available for interview.

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iMOVE CRC is a consortium of 44 industry, government, and research partners engaged in a concerted 10-year effort to improve Australia’s transport systems through collaborative R&D projects.