

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Issued by the authority of the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Fuel Tax Act 2006

Fuel Tax (Road User Charge) Determination 2017

Heavy vehicles with a gross vehicle mass of more than 4.5 tonnes and used on public roads for business purposes are charged to recover that part of the road construction and maintenance costs that are attributable to heavy vehicles (cost recovery). A portion of the costs are recovered by states and territories through heavy vehicle registration charges and a portion by the Commonwealth through the fuel based Road User Charge.

The *Fuel Tax Act 2006* (the Act) establishes a mechanism for the collection of the Road User Charge by reducing the fuel tax credit provided to eligible businesses and non-profit bodies.

Division 41 and 43 of the Act provide that businesses registered or required to be registered for Goods and Services Tax and non-profit bodies are entitled to a partial fuel tax credit for fuel used on a public road for business purposes in registered vehicles with a gross mass of more than 4.5 tonnes. The fuel tax credit claimable is equal to the amount of the effective fuel tax (excise) that is payable on the fuel *minus* the Road User Charge.

In November 2015 the Transport and Infrastructure Council (the Council) agreed to hold heavy vehicle charges revenue constant at 2015-16 levels for an initial two years. Subsequently, on 4 November 2016, the Council approved a reduced Road User Charge of 25.8 cents per litre to apply from 1 July 2017, to give effect to the decision to hold revenues constant.

Subsection 43-10(8) of the Act provides that the Transport Minister may determine, by legislative instrument, the rate of the Road User Charge. The Fuel Tax (Road User Charge) Determination 2017 (the Determination) sets the rate of the road user charge at \$25.8 cents per litre.

Public consultation on the level of the Road User Charge was undertaken by the National Transport Commission (NTC) as part of its development of the 2014 Heavy Vehicle Charges Determination. The NTC undertook further public consultation in 2016 on '*Options for improving the accuracy and stability of the PAYGO heavy vehicle charges methodology*'. During those consultations, industry stakeholders were generally supportive of a reduced Road User Charge and were also generally supportive of further changes to be considered by governments in the future. States and territories have also been consulted.

The Determination revokes all previous road user charge determinations. This is consistent with subsection 33(3) of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*, which provides that if an Act confers a power to make any instrument of a legislative or administrative character, the power is construed as including a power exercisable in like manner and subject to the like conditions to repeal, rescind, revoke, amend, or vary any such instrument.

The Determination is a legislative instrument for the purposes of the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*.

Authority: Subsection 43-10(8) of the
Fuel Tax Act 2006

Statement of Compatibility with Human Rights

Prepared in accordance with Part 3 of the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011

Fuel Tax Act 2006

Fuel Tax (Road User Charge) Determination 2017

This Disallowable Instrument is compatible with the human rights and freedoms recognised or declared in the international instruments listed in section 3 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*.

Overview of the Disallowable Legislative Instrument

Subsection 43-10(8) of the *Fuel Tax Act 2006* provides that the Transport Minister may determine, by legislative instrument, the rate of the Road User Charge.

In accordance with section 43-10(8) of the *Fuel Tax Act 2006*, this Disallowable Instrument determines the rate of the Road User Charge applied to taxable fuel used on a public road for business purposes in registered vehicles with a gross mass of more than 4.5 tonnes.

Heavy vehicle charges are based on a combination of a fuel-based Road User Charge, collected by the Commonwealth, and registration charges, which are collected by the states and territories.

Human rights implications

This Disallowable Instrument does not engage any of the applicable rights or freedoms.

Conclusion

This Disallowable Instrument is compatible with human rights as it does not raise any human rights issues