Safe Freight Networks
Australia

# Milestone 14

# END OF PROJECT ACTIVITY REPORT

## NHVR Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative


**Period Q2 2020 – Prepared by John Ernst – Safe Freight Networks Australia for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.**

# Contents





Cover Picture -where it started - Partners in Road Safety Police, Trainers, Operators, and drivers.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safe Freight Networks Project funded under the round two funding by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to enable the progressive roll out of twenty new networks in the areas identified as having significant numbers of crashes involving heavy vehicles. The program was to engage with local operators and stakeholders involved in Road Safety in sub-regions. Determining the regions to prioritise required some research into the local conditions and crashes involving heavy vehicles. While it did not achieve twenty stand-alone networks it did achieve fourteen local networks. Many of these groups overlapped into other areas, hence the influence of the networks would have included at least another ten regions if not more. An example being the Baw Baw Network which worked with operators in both Cardinia and Casey areas. Using community development principles these groups have maintained a strong focus on local road safety outcomes.

The model used to engage with local stakeholders is outlined in the attached appendix 3 and outlines the groups that are brought together under local networks. These networks are unique in that they bring several transport types together with road owners, police, and where applicable local government.

Road owners also responded by working closely with networks. Where local road owners have been fully engaged and understood the importance of a safer roads in contributing to reduced crashes. Some networks have focused on improving road infrastructure and road furniture using existing budgets and incorporating information gleamed via their networks to inform their priority projects. These are outlined in the report and represent tens of millions of dollars of targeted roads infrastructure investment. The dividends will take years to assess fully but already we have evidence of reductions in crashes and improved productivity through reductions in travel times and vehicle damage caused by road surfaces. The networks have also provided road owners with a important point of reference and referral when decisions need to be made about prioritising road spending or even when natural disaster are occurring.

We have seen networks directly involved in supporting road owners manage heavy vehicle alternative routes during floods and bushfires and now the COVID 19 pandemic. Safe Freight Networks is a important part of the communication network of road owners to gain access to a diversity of local transport operators. This in turn leads to better decisions being made and many times significant cost savings for the road owners.

Supporting drivers through encouraging feedback and ensuring access to ongoing training and professional development has been part of the network's activities. Exploring issues around on-road near misses and how these can be incorporated into safer outcomes has enabled companies and individual drivers to become more aware of safer ways to operate. Driver training has been a major issue for most operators, from the most basic feedback provided through sharing of knowledge around the table at network meetings to more formalised training opportunities provided to individuals and groups of drivers. These have also been quantified by major companies and examples are given on how this has been measured by companies as part of the benefits of driver training to providing safer outcomes for all road users.

Many of the crashes involving heavy vehicles were found to have been caused by light vehicle drivers. As such, the truck networks have been keen to run local programs which would reduce these crashes. The industry peaks had developed very good resources and when they were considered useful, they were accessed by networks in support of community education campaigns. These are mentioned in the report. More importantly strategic alliances between local Safe Freight Networks and other regional groups have been developed to access specific demographics in the community. Elderly light car drivers were found to be overrepresented in truck versus light car crashes, as such to work with these people networks formed local partnerships with local Probus Clubs and Men's Sheds. The Victorian networks in Gippsland and Portland partnered with the Victorian Men's Shed Association and developed and ran Caravan Safety Awareness Programs and Older Drivers Forums.

Having cross-industry involvement on networks has resulted in lessons learnt being easily applied to improve road safety. This sees around a table local representation by log truck operators, milk tanker operators, mud trucks, livestock, grain, bulk fuel supplies, quarry trucks, agitator trucks all sharing knowledge.

Watching crash statistics over such a large area has also allowed the networks to respond in one area to the problems in another. This may be as simple as understanding how to engage local road owners, as occurred in Toowoomba, when a truck rest area was being significantly impacted due to its use by main roads as materials dump for road making. Another example was areas with similar conditions and problems such as times of limited visibility in fog and how one area's solution was then applied in another by developing a communications protocol between the transporters operating in low visibility.

The need for ongoing local engagement of drivers and operators is starting to be recognised as an important mechanism to reduce casualty crashes. It was good to see that NHVR, NSW RMS and NSW Police all adopt the practice started ten years ago in Eastern Victoria of education and engagement. The strategy has been so successful for the RMS that they are noticing a decrease in road deaths in NSW. This comes as no surprise to the Networks as they have seen similar dramatic reductions in crash rates as driver engagement is increased.

What the Safe Freight Networks Project has demonstrated is that local solutions to local problems are the most likely to bring the greatest improvements in road safety. While national campaigns are useful it is only when locals are given the opportunity to affect local change that we see a sustained change in behaviour and safety outcomes.

***Caravan Safety Workshop run for Men's Shed Association by local truck drivers and Police***

## SAFETY NETWORKS COINCIDE WITH OTHER SAFETY INTERVENTIONS.

The Safe Freight Networks have operated for a period of just under three years. During this time, several major additional safety initiatives occurred. This includes the Chain of Responsibility (CoR) was established, the NHVR Portal was established and vehicle primary safety equipment accelerated particularly in the PBS vehicle fleets. This means that attributing safety initiatives to a single point of difference is not possible. What we have been able to do is look at the evidence over time from networks that existed prior to 2017 and some of the safety outcomes over an extended period.

Where available, local networks worked with other groups such as Learner Driver Mentor Program (L2P) in Victorian and Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Program (RYDA) in NSW to achieve broader road safety objectives and with the support of truck drivers. Truckies Lighting up for safety initiated by Gippsland networks nearly ten years ago have been used by other networks and groups as a mechanism to highlight road safety issues across the country.

## INNOVATION AND SHARING THE KNOWLEDGE

The idea of the Safe Freight Networks was born in East Gippsland as result of the high number of the log trucks involved in roll over crashes. TSS officers from Vic Roads had already adopted an engagement and education strategy to better understand the underlying causes of many of the crashes they had been attending. They were able to establish that the dynamic forces at play when moving heavy loads with high centres of gravity resulted in inherent instability in the trailers which was not able to be detected by the drivers. It was found that other parts of the heavy freight industry also had rollover issues including milk tankers and livestock carriers. A common theme emerged, and a training package for logistical and driver training was developed with the support of the industry partners.

The training was very successful and was mapped by the company HVP over the next couple of years (2017 - 2019). It didn't eliminate the problem until this network started to work with operators and drivers on a regular basis. HVP and the companies that it engaged worked tirelessly to better engage with all those involved in the freight task and within eighteen months they managed to reduce the rollover and tip over rate to zero. (Figure 1)

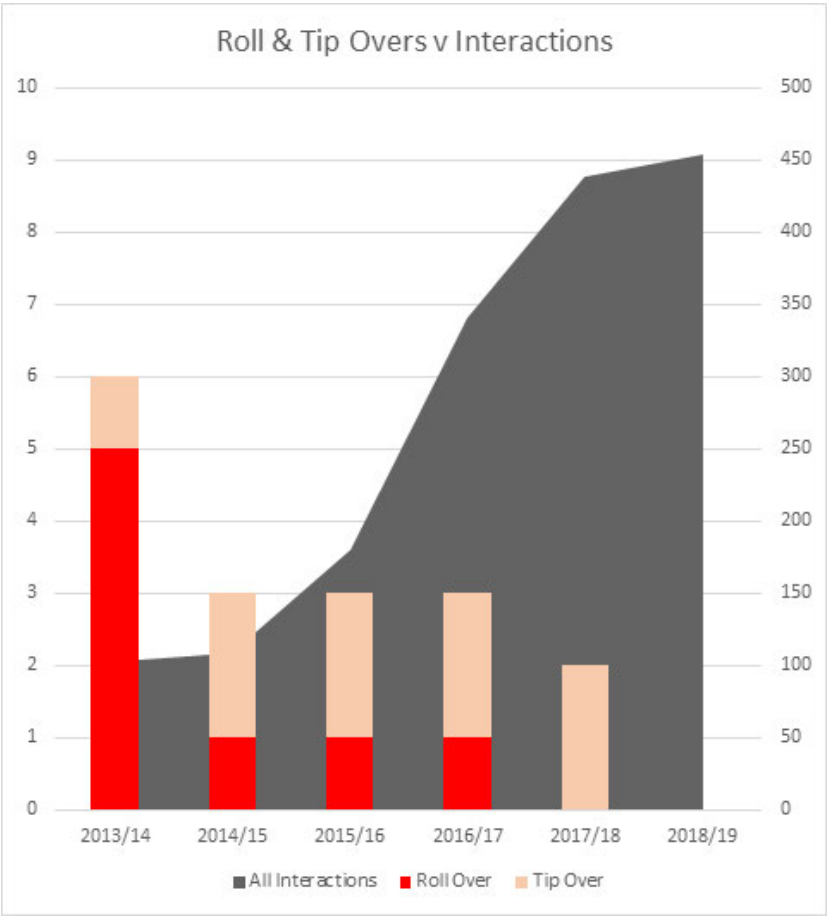



***Figure 1. Provided by Jack Barnes from HVP Victoria.***

Clearly what they are seeing is that there is a direct correlation between engagement/training and safer outcomes. This hasn't only been about changing driver behaviour it has also seen significant investment in plant and equipment in many of these companies in research and development to improve safety for entire sectors.

**Innovation by design**

The Network partners have shared their knowledge freely and kept improving the safety of drivers through their investments in safer plant and equipment as well as developing new systems which have been incorporated in the CoR documentation.

A couple of award-winning examples which highlight this investment. The first is the load restraint systems and procedures developed and tested by the HVP cartage partners, particularly ANC Logging and Daryl Sutton – this local network worked with all members of the timber carting section to develop a restraint system which uses chains and double leverage restraints and less interaction with drivers to tie down. It won an award through Worksafe Victoria and resulted in other companies sharing the knowledge.

***Field training.***

The other area of improvement in the log industry came about as result of discussions about the role the centre of gravity was playing in the numerous Roll Overs that had been occurring. Again, working through the network partners, the industry worked with the trailer manufacturers and developed lower centre of gravity trailer. As these replaced the existing trailer fleets the number of rollovers reduced. Again, through their local road safety networks this information was shared.

Using the relationship between networks means that an idea developed in one part of the country can quickly be adopted by another. The trailer designs and load restraint systems are good example of this as we see other networks outside Gippsland adopting both of these ideas. North East NSW, the Green Triangle and even North East Victoria are seeing these changes. As the networks in Tasmania come to see what is happening on the mainland and the changes occurring, we are confident we'll see a positive change in the crash rates and rollovers involved log trucks in that State as well.

The other example of an award winning design has been network members and active members of the Livestock Transport associations Mick Debenham and John Beer in developing safe systems for Cattle Loading and award-winning work being done by network members in engineering solutions which minimises drivers and loaders from being exposed to cattle inside stock crates. These ramps come up alongside the trucks and provide operators with access to all decks on the trailers without having to climb in with the cattle. Again, this initiative was developed by our network members and further developed and shared through the networks and their respective industry associations.

**Innovation through diversity**

Policy partners drove some initiatives. A high-speed crash between two trucks in heavy fog resulted in Police being able to develop innovative solutions with operators which would minimise the possibility of trucks presenting at 90 degrees to the oncoming traffic during low visibility events. This became known as the fog protocol a copy is included in the appendix and it outlines the key responsibilities of all involved when a low visibility event occurs (could be fog, smoke or smog). It allowed for drivers to make their situation safer for themselves and other drivers entering an area. Again because of the networks interaction with other networks

this work could be shared with other networks and through industry peaks. Similar protocols have now been adopted in similar areas of low visibility such the Darling Downs Toowoomba Networks and parts of South Australia.

## ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY SAFE FREIGHT NETWORKS JULY 2017 - JUNE 2020

Clearly there is strength in numbers and to see the level of engagement achieved in less than three years is staggering. This engagement has resulted in millions of dollars in Federal and State roads money being targeted locally to achieve safer outcomes for all road users. It has seen fleet operators as well as owner drivers recognise that their investment in safer vehicles pays dividends. It has seen both large and small fleet operators invest time and effort into training their drivers, loaders and all people involved in the supply chain. It has seen innovation that is designed to make the freight task safer.

Many of these initiatives may have occurred over time anyway, but there is substantial evidence that the catalyst for this has been around table discussions which then provided people with the permission to move forward with their ideas. The ideas discussed more than ten years ago by Allan Pincott, Peter Harbridge and others which sought to engage with the industry and educate and understand the challenges has led to where we are today.

It is gratifying to see that organisations like, NSW RMS, "discovered" that they can achieve better safety outcomes through education and engagement than they have from many years of predominately enforcement.

The activities of the networks can therefore be summarised into two categories, these being, those where the networks have directly organised and engaged in local safety activities and the second being where network discussions have seen individuals and organisations go on to do their own safety programs and adopt similar engagement strategies.

Looking at the activities of the network in the short period it has operated across several states provides a small insight to the level of commitment by those involved in the regions.

The work of Safe Freight Networks Australia was therefore to use the resources provided the NHVR Grant to conduct the following project activities, including:

- Development of new Truck Safety Networks as identified through crash statistics using the community engagement model as outlined in the appendix.
- Facilitate regular network meetings.
- Report on the outcomes of these meetings and ensure activity areas identified during meetings are acted on where appropriate.
- Providing direct communication channels between road owners and owner drivers and fleet owners.
- Work with industry peak bodies at a State and National level to integrate the work of the networks and provide open communications channels.
- Following through with the road safety "action" items with road owners particularly with respect to near miss reports and pro-active vegetation clearance to facilitate trucks.
- Transition the management of Safe Freight Networks to suitable local groups where they exist.

- Action near miss reports.
- Host industry workshops for safer roadside repair and maintenance activities.
- Continue to support stakeholders attending local truck safety networks to include road engineers and owners.
- Use support resources such as the ATA SafeT360 Truck program in network activities.
- Work with State and Freight Associations to enable action on Regional areas of concern.
- Work with road owners in support of identified road infrastructure improvements.
- Develop a codesign framework to ensure that truck driver infrastructure meets the needs of truck drivers
- Advocate for structural changes with road owners – Bridge assessment process in Victoria and truck rest area standards.
- Collate company data where it has been made available in support of applications for road infrastructure upgrades and rectifications work.
- Developing strategic partnerships with road owners and community groups.
- Implement safety programs for older drivers and caravan and motorhome operators using local resources and partnerships with community organisations such as Men's Sheds and Probus.

Additional activities that had not been anticipated:

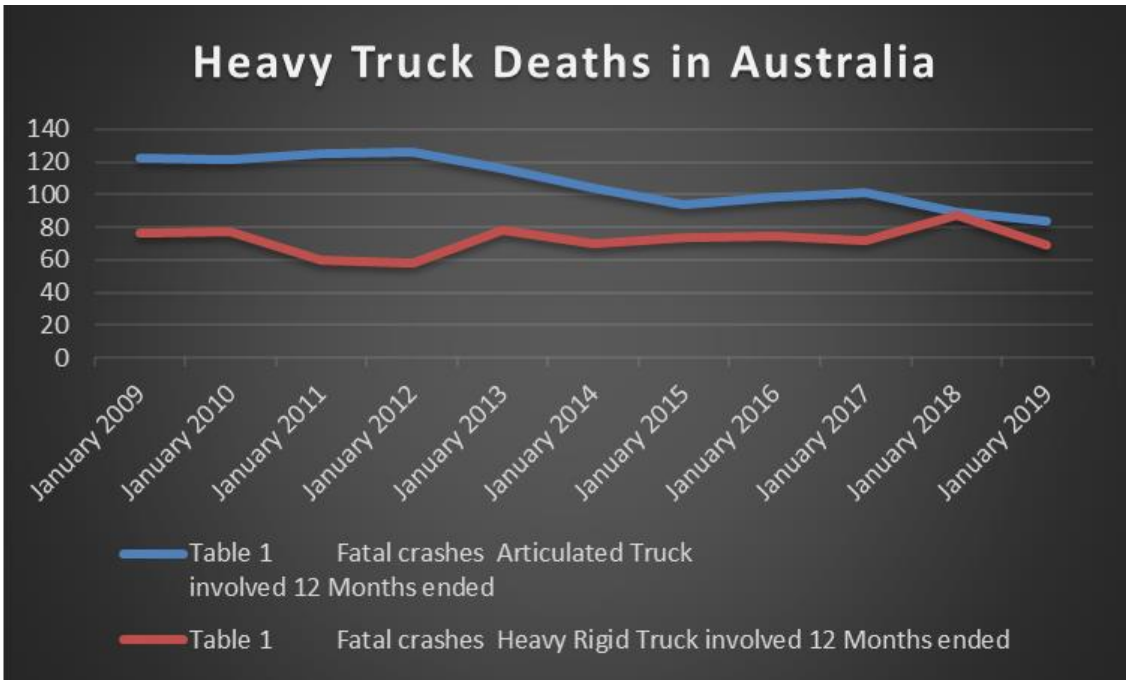
- The role the networks would play in Emergency management situations such as the North West Queensland Floods of 2019 and the bushfires in 2019 and 2020.
- Work directly with the Local, Regional and State EMO's to provide a communication channels regarding local truck movement advice and resources.
- Providing advocacy support for drivers having problems with fatigue management due to closure of facilities during COVID19 pandemic.
- Communicating directly with both State and National peak bodies in relation to above issue for them to action – during both the Bush Fire emergency and now the COVID19 pandemic.
- Maintaining Social Media content for the safety of driver across the country who are not subscribed to NHVR Social Media platforms or other National Peaks due to not being members of such peaks.
- Use of the networks email lists for purposes of information dissemination regarding emergency responses.
- Partnerships with Men's Sheds and Probus Groups to achieve education outcomes for Caravaners and Older Drivers.
-

## SAFE FREIGHT NETWORKS.

### WHAT ARE THE SAFETY OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF CRASH RATES?

When measured on the single metric of road deaths and casualty crashes the results would appear mixed. The data would need to be looked at over a much longer period and without the extra ordinary events that have punctuated the period of this program. This has included the largest and most extensive flood event in far north west Queensland and the most disruptive fire events in history.

The data presented is part of the dataset BITRE Figure 2 have been collecting in relation to Heavy Vehicle deaths for several years and while the overall trend is certainly heading in the right direction the rate of change would be considered slow. There is one caveat and that is while the rate of reduction in road deaths involving heavy vehicles is slow the number of heavy vehicles on the roads and the average kilometres travelled has increased.




***(Source BITRE Figure 2)***

Annual counts of registered (heavy) vehicles, 2009—2018

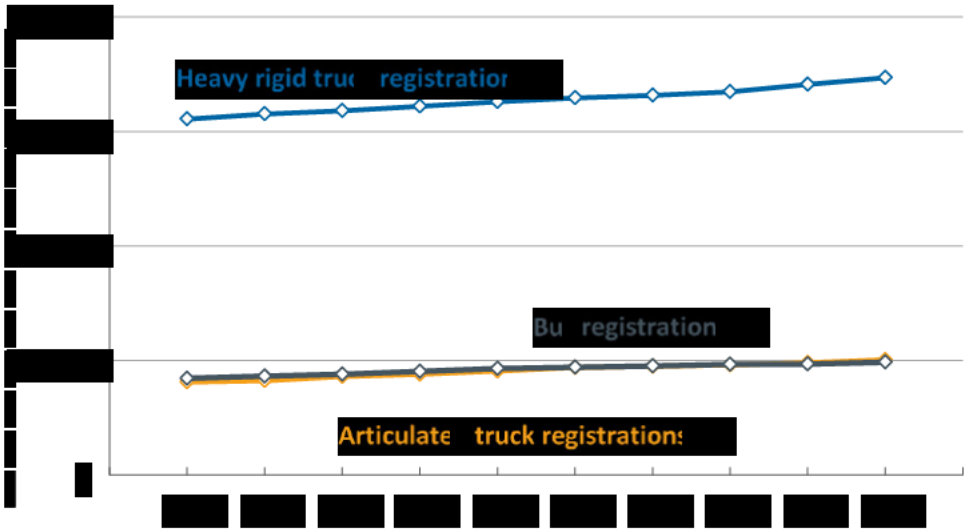



***Figure 2 – Total Truck Registration versus Calendar year.***

For the purposes of this report we have used State Based Data, the way data is collected in each state varies and it is beyond the resources of SFNA to provide detailed analysis of the data so where this has been completed it will be included. Fatalities by Police Region in Queensland, Regional Data NSW, TAC Data in Victoria, Regional Data in South Australia, and State Data in Tasmania

The regions supported in Queensland (by Police district):

- Small part of South East & Western Brisbane
- A large part of Northern Region
- A large part of South Eastern Region

The regions supported in NSW:

- Orange LGA
- The Northern Rivers Area
- Murray Lower Darling
- Snowy Monaro

The regions supported in South Australia:

- Limestone Coast (Green Triangle)
- Eyre Peninsula

The regions supported in Victoria:

- Gippsland Region
- South West
- Western District

Tasmania received initial support for three place-based networks:

- Hobart
- Burnie
- Launceston

This role was then quickly taken on by the excellent team at TTR with project support provided by Safe Freight Networks project support included:

- Input into the NHVR funded Rest Area Project
- Support for organised driver training in logging industry for rollover training
- Input into driver training initiatives

The important work being done through the networks has always been to reduce all road deaths not just those involving Heavy Vehicles. For this reason, the networks have been involved in all aspects of the Safe Systems approach to road safety. This includes safer road infrastructure, with many focused on good sight lines and road surfaces as well as rest areas. The have looked at light vehicle driver behaviour through education campaigns and general awareness for all road users, including programs for children in both Primary and Secondary Schools, programs for older drivers and programs for caravan owners and recreational vehicle owners. The other part of their work has been looking at how speeds can better be managed through communities, again this includes community engagement and working with fleet managers to use technology to geo-fence vehicles in areas identified by communities as requiring particular consideration.

***The Data presented here is based on both the BITRE crash data which identifies crashes where trucks have been involved. The rollover data where it is available has been collated by the networks via their network partners where police have attended. Police noted that if there was no injury at a crash they were not always notified.***

**Queensland Data:**

Table 1

| Queensland Fatalities by Police Region | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |
| YEAR | | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | % |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Brisbane | | 11 | 22 | 13 | 16 | 13 | 13 | -13.30% |
| Central | | 33 | 31 | 39 | 37 | 28 | 36 | 7.10% |
| Northern | | 30 | 21 | 24 | 17 | 23 | 22 | -4.30% |
| South Eastern | | 13 | 8 | 21 | 23 | 9 | 14 | -5.40% |
| Southern | | 30 | 34 | 20 | 24 | 25 | 32 | 20.30% |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Areas where Safe Freight Networks Operate. | | | | | | | |

Network Data Queensland:

Table 2

| Queenslands Remote | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Fatal Crashes | 3 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Rollovers | 16 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 8 | 6 |

Table 3

| Queensland Networks in South East | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| 2018 | 2019 | |
| Fatal Crashes | 10 | 6 |

**NSW Data:**

Table 4

Orange Network

| Orange LGA | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | |
| Fatal | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| Inury | 25 | 22 | 16 | 22 | |

Table 5

North East NSW Network (all of region figures network only operated in sub-region)

| Northern Rivers all truck crashes | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | |
| | | | | | |
| Fatal | 11 | 15 | 12 | 17 | |
| Injury | 230 | 228 | 235 | 254 | |

Table 6

Network very active in crash hotspots to the eastern part of this Region.

| Murray/Lower Darling all truck crashes | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | |
| | | | | | |
| Fatal | 14 | 11 | 15 | 8 | |
| Injury | 48 | 73 | 53 | 74 | |

Table 7

Network operates throughout this region began at the end of 2017 as an extension of the Victorian East Gippsland Network activity.

| Snowy Monaro all truck crashes | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| | | | | | |
| Fatal | | 7 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Inury | | 51 | 30 | 38 | 44 |

**South Australia Data:**

South Australia does not distinguish between Regions. However, it can separate Rural and Metropolitan the data provided is Regional Data only. The other important feature of the South Australian Data it provides and year on year comparison be the number of licenced drivers and vehicles registered. The networks in these areas aimed to reduce rollover crashes.

Table 8

| South Australian Limestone Coast | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 end of June |
| Rollover Crashes | | 14 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| Fatal Crashes | | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 |

Table 9

| South Australia Eyre Peninsula | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | 2014 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Fatal Crashes | | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 |

**Victoria Data:**

Table 10

| Victoria Gippsland Regions (includes 4 networks) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Fatal Crashes | | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Rollovers | | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

Table 11

| Victoria South West (includes Green Triangle Network) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | 2015 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Fatal Crashes | | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Rollovers | | 10 | 6 | 4 | 2 |

**Tasmania Data:**

Table 12

| Tasmania North East/East/Hobart | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Fatal Crashes | | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Rollovers | | 28 | 20 | 16 | 22 | 15 | 14 |

### WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

The rollovers in regions has decreased in the places where truck safety networks have been established. Road deaths have stayed the same except for a slight dip in the Queensland areas where networks are active. While no conclusions can be drawn over such a short time duration, we are confident that with continued engagement that the results achieved by HVP in Victoria and the Green Triangle should be achieved in other areas.

## DATA LIMITATIONS

It will be noted that the data presented may appears ad-hoc this is because data mining requires additional specialist resources – it also requires some base lines be established. All networks have operated from local crash data to develop their local initiatives, unfortunately, this data is based on the basic assumption that a person in a crash is either killed or injured. There is no other official data kept with respect to road safety.

Rollover data is an important link in understanding causes of crashes, yet, unless a driver is injured or killed there is no mechanism to gather this data in any official capacity. Where rollover data has been provided in this report it was gathered by Police or from company records. We know now that rollovers are often the outcome of a number of failures prior to the event, if it would be possible to record the number of roll overs and the circumstances which led up to them appropriate changes can be made. Where companies have kept this data (HVP and Vic Forests) it has provided a great resource to put in preventative measures. Through the networks we have heard and seen many examples where this information has been applied. This includes driver and loader training, restraint system improvements, road design changes and even the way we design trailers.

Using only a single metric such as road deaths or injuries safety activities can end up responding to past events in the hope that we can prevent them into the future. The partners at the various Safe Freight Networks have access to a huge rich and deep resource of data which includes additional metrics, such as near miss reporting, road condition wear and tear on trucks, the impact of road furniture on driver fatigue. By applying this additional data, we can design better and more robust evidence-based safety initiatives.

***Network meeting Green Triangle***

***South Gippsland Safe Freight Network winning TAC Toward Zero Award***

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### GREEN TRIANGLE MOUNT GAMBIER & HORSHAM


This group was formed early in 2018 and is a group made up of a cross-section of local industries as well as people for Vic Pol and Vic Roads (now RRV). The major industries in this area operate across the Victorian and South Australian border region.

Since forming this group has been working closely with the Victorian and Local Government Road owners to identify priority areas for road safety improvements. The road owners see the role of these networks as vital in providing them with timely advice and support in relation to this work. A highlight of the effectiveness of this partnership with road owners happened during 2019 when a major bridge failed. While the normal process would have been to put in bypasses for trucks and maybe take in excess of twelve to eighteen months to complete the rectification works, this time was reduced to less than three months with the works completed between network meetings. This happen as the Regional office of Rural Roads was able to work with the industry in support of a joint submission for funds to enable rectification works to be expedited.

This network has also:

- Gained support for major vegetation removal works and had these completed
- Co-designed new intersections with the road owners and had them built
- Supported driver rollover training with over three hundred drivers and loaders trained
- Provided workshops for drivers and mechanics involved in roadside repairs
- Prioritised future roadworks and road widening programs in the area
- Prioritised school-based programs to educate children regarding safety around trucks
- Worked with Police to build a local data base of crash hotspots.
- Livestock Loading Ramps Project supported the discussions about how to engage with sales yards to achieve this

- Effluent discharge onto roads – looking at creating free dump points at sale yards


***Training session run to improve visibility with roadside breakdowns***

## GIPPSLAND SAFETY NETWORKS.

### SOUTH GIPPSLAND:

Co-design work has resulted in works commencing on what was a $30million Black spur alignment project will now cost $115million this is the single largest project this network has played a direct part in lobbying for and succeeding. This is the site of the last truck road death crash and will improve the safety for all road users. The meeting held in March was informed of the works program and the impact on local traffic.

Other discussion was with Shire representatives discussing their upcoming works as well as the future of some areas where landslips had closed roads. The network agreed to support the shire in applications for funds to repair those sections as the road trip to avoid the slips added considerably to journey times.

The North South Corridor group is still meeting and hopes to have a route proposal ready for the SEATS meeting later in the year.

Local Safety initiatives with L2P and Older Drivers has been part of ongoing support from local truck drivers and continues.

This group is one of several networks that have worked with local Government road owners in support of bridge upgrades and replacements. They have discussed where they can support applications for funding and have been extremely successful in achieving great outcomes for all road users with several million dollars of projects funded under these initiatives.

### BAW BAW:

Also working on the North South Corridor, it appears previous housing development decisions has not taken in to account the number of truck movements through the area. This is pushing trucks further out while those trucks still requiring access to the central locations in Drouin are having to mix with a lot of pedestrian traffic and extremely slow-moving vehicles. Again, they are hoping to have a handle on a proposed alternative route by their next meeting.

The Shire also informed the group of the works it will be doing on another road that had been earmarked as a problem this being the Waterloo Road between Trafalgar and Yarragon.

The upgrade works program is being communicated to the Network.


***SafeT360 at National Scout Event hosted by Baw Baw network at Lardner Park 1,500, 16 to 26-year-old attended***

This group also worked with the ATA to have the SafeT360 truck attend the largest Scout Gathering to be held in Australia in 2020. This occurred at Lardner Park at the end of February and was attended by over 1500 young people between the ages of 16 through to 26 years. The ATA reported the event on their Facebook Page and via media. The was two NHVR Road Safety Initiative programs working together for safer outcomes on the road.

This group also had good working relationship with their Shire and have also been supportive of shire initiatives seeking funds for road improvements.

## LATROBE:

The fires in far-East Gippsland have a significant impact on log truck movements in the area as well as truck movements out of East Gippsland coming through Latrobe. This group holds regular phone and video conference meetings between various stakeholders, and this seems to work well for them.

Local issues they are discussing with road owners is traffic density issues around Traralgon and plans for more traffic lights. It was seen that there is a need for priority movement of trucks through some of them. Road owners have indicated this can be accommodated.

This group has achieved significant infrastructure invest during the period they have operated with road upgrades to major freight corridors a major part of their work. The also developed the attached Fog Protocol – in order to support drivers at times of low visibility.

## EAST GIPPSLAND

The East Gippsland Networks has not met since the fires however the Network has been used extensively by road owners and police to communicate with local companies and drivers.

Massive increases in truck movements in this area with no major incidents reported by police. That is trucks and produce that would normally use the coast road to Sydney and Canberra headed west via Melbourne while convoys of stock feed and hay headed East. Great communication with NHVR and Vic Police using all communication channels including the SFNA Networks across the region contributed to maintaining timely information for drivers and companies. The contingency plans discussed at meetings in Q4 2019 were enacted and we are sure contributed to the smooth operations during the crises and with increased traffic.

There continues to be dialogue with Transport Victoria in relation to the barriers along the Princes Highway East of Sale and this has now reached an impasse with the department not prepared to do any further

remedial works. Unfortunately, this may have contributed to a serious truck crash resulting the total loss of the prime mover, fortunately on minor injuries were sustained by the driver. Police are investigating, but initial evidence suggests that the righthand front steer tire may have failed and wedged itself under the guard rail getting the truck stuck – this in turn ruptured the fuel tank causing a fire. The driver needed to escape via the passenger side as the right side of the truck was wedged under the solid barrier. The State Government has recently been asked by Auditor General to explain the program and identified similar problems to those identified by the freight network.

### HORSHAM

This group met with the Mount Gambier Group as planned and hosted a road safety workshop for drivers and repair people involved when a truck breakdown. The group also held a teleconference during the social isolation period and have identified road owners that they are inviting to be part of their group. The example of the Green Triangle Group and the relationship they have with the Road Victoria is one that the Horsham group are keen to duplicate. With strong association with Livestock transport in the area heading right through to Southern Grampians the members of this group often attend and work with the livestock transporter operating in the South West.

## QUEENSLAND: (3 NETWORKS)

### MOUNT ISA/CLONCURRY/JULIET CREEK:

The face to face meetings which was planned at the end of March was turned into a phone hook-up because of the isolation measures resulting from the COVID 19 outbreak. The meeting sought to better clarify the situation with road closures due to flooding. The Mitchell highway had been cut to cars in several places and was still “officially” closed in some sections north of Bourke. The truck drivers understand the need for safety but also want separate rulings for them which identify when flooded roads remain safe for trucks, but many not be for cars. The Mitchell Highway was an example of this, were the flooded areas are well known and can be safely navigated by trucks, even during floods provided levels are not above a certain height.

Other issues discussed was the wave of grey nomads driving in close convoy and the danger that may cause for themselves and truck drivers. They also noted the large number of backpackers that seem to use truck rest areas as free campsites with many setting up camps for several days at these locations. There was a call for the Department of Main Roads to look at this issue.

The major achievement in this area was the building of a major truck rest area near the sale yards toward the north of the main town. The location provides ideal access to all trucks and has been popular for long haul as well as those needing to do a load check for local runs. Being close to major truck facilities and some of the major companies’ depots has enabled drivers to get mechanical work done locally as well. The facility was developed with the support of the Mayor of Cloncurry (also a truck driver) and with funding support from QMR and Federal funding. It is an all-weather facility that has toilets and showers as well as shaded BBQ area with fridge.

### TOOWOOMBA:

This group has been championed by some of the larger transport companies and has concentrated on local issues. They have worked on truck movement on and off the new Toowoomba range bypass and access to the depots on the southern part of the town of Toowoomba. Recent challenges have been worked through and generally this group is working well with QMR. Initial problems during the range bypass construction which saw a significant rest area severely impacted as QMR used it for a materials dump site for road construction

material, the process to remove the material opened a doorway to better communications and involvement by main roads.

The new rest area has been applauded by drivers and is a direct result of good consultation with the end users – the truck drivers, it again is a clear demonstration of best practice when designing driver infrastructure.

## NSW

### ORANGE

This network has only operated for a short period of time and is predominately made up of livestock operators. They have been working on their CoR compliance and fatigue management issues. Local roads in the areas have been an ongoing feature of this group and they have a sympathetic council who have provided engineering support when requested.

***Truck rest area near Orange.***

This group has unfortunately not been able to be meet this year due to COVID 19 restrictions. They are largely independent and have used the facilitation of the group to form informal working groups and networks. They participate in the Social Media pages and seem to prefer to share information between each other this way.

### CLARENCE VALLEY NETWORK

This network was formed in response to local roll over training provided in the areas and the desire by those in attendance at the training to continue to network around issues of road safety. They work closely with local road safety groups and have a strong focus on the log truck cartage industry. They have run campaigns around safety during the period focusing on light car drivers. They also have developed their own near miss reporting systems and all operators working in this network encourage drivers to use this system to report on road issues.

The 2019/2020 fires have significantly impacted the work of this group as the movement of trucks associated with timber cartage has been significantly impacted. This group is largely a Timber Industry Group and is working to expand its base however they have been concentrating on supporting each other in sharing local safety practices. This has included a lot of work in relation to driver mental health as well as skills development. The incidents of serious truck crashes and deaths has significantly reduced in each company, however road deaths involving light car drivers has increased and this is a concern for the group. They are keen to involve other industry types in their networks and have worked with Livestock transporters, hence, their focus will be to encourage participation by other industry type.

### DENILIQUIN NETWORK

This group holds regular meetings which now include several of the major State Government Agencies including Police and RMS. There have been some major changes in the ownership of the companies that had championed the road safety projects, the new owners are not based in Deniliquin so they are not sure if they will participate to the same extent. What is clear is that the new owners may have a lot more clout when it comes to engaging with the various stakeholders as they are much larger companies.

Unfortunately, the local Government have decided to remove their earmarked funds for the truck rest area, and this means the project has again been delayed. We will see if they maintain this position after the next meeting as the new company owners will be part of this.

The group has decided to devote a lot of time to community education particularly to emerging and younger drivers. Several industry champions have been working with the local schools and the area now hosts a annual Road Safety Week. Through contacts with the network members they were able to work with the NHVR funded ATA Safety360 truck to have the new look truck attend their safety week activities.

This group has had a significant impact on reducing casualty crashes in their region particularly among younger drivers. Singling out local champions is important, and this work is entirely as result of the energy and drive of Jenny Fellows from Fellows Transport.

## TASMANIA (3 NETWORKS)

Initial meetings in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie indicated a mixed enthusiasm for the holding network gathering in Tasmania. Further informal meetings with individual members of peak organisation indicated a lot more support however to sustain the network in Tasmania would require the ongoing backing of the State peak. It was agreed by these groups that they would instead become more involved with the TTA and support their activities. The Safe Freight Networks did encourage individuals outside the TTA to support the rest areas review and the members also supported a submission by the Safe Freight Network toward this review.

Following discussions with the TTA it has been decided that the role of supporting local truck safety networks would continue through the TTA. The reason for this is that more and more industry types are getting behind the TTA as peak body for the State. Following the Victorian Livestock Transporters Association Conference last year, the SFNA was approached by several members of the Tasmanian group. Meetings with these people resulted in them being encouraged to work with the TTA as we knew their interest would be well served with that group.

It was decided that to sustain the work of the regional Truck Safety Networks beyond the NHVR safety initiative funding period that a peak body such as the TTA was in the best position to provide this support and advocacy. SFNA would continue to work closely with TTA but providing access to mainland networks and resources as well as working cooperatively on initiatives such as the truck rest areas.

## MAINTAINING SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT FOR THE SAFETY OF DRIVER ACROSS THE COUNTRY WHO ARE NOT SUBSCRIBED TO NHVR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS OR OTHER NATIONAL PEAKS DUE TO NOT BEING MEMBERS OF SUCH PEAKS.

Comment was made at several network meetings that Social Media was a tool that many drivers used to remain in touch with what was happening in various areas. As part of the previous work of the SFNA they had developed a campaign around "trucks lighting up for safety". This included the creation of a Facebook Page. This page developed a significant following with over 3,000 people subscribed, many of whom are owner drivers with no affiliation with any organised group such at the various state and national peak bodies. It also seems to capture those that for some reason don't subscribe to the NHVR Facebook Page. We have resisted expanding the Social Media presence into other platforms as it was not a core part of our work. Fortunately, it has been useful during both the bushfires and the pandemic to quickly relay messages from other sites to this cohort. With one post in relation traffic movements around fire zones getting over 11,000 views. Often the content is not created it is simply shared.

## DRIVER EDUCTION AND PATHWAYS

The driver shortage in Australia was an ongoing issue in all networks. Recruitment of safe knowledgeable drivers was a challenge. The few good drivers we have get on the merry-go-round and move from one company to another. They are recommended by previous employers or are actively pursued. The networks identified barriers for new drivers which included relevant driving experience, age and the necessary skills set and qualifications.

The TTA has done a great deal of work in this respect and should be acknowledged as clearly leading the way when it comes to providing pathways to employment for new and emerging drivers. This model has the potential to be adopted by the rest of the country but unfortunately hasn't due to a lack of vision from the larger peak organisations.

The Safe Freight Networks have addressed the training issue in a previous report to the NHVR and identified possible partnerships that could be explored in order to provide formal recognition of the current drivers and operators by provided a skills based audit and recognition of prior learning. The other partnership that was identified was with those education providers that already hold licences to deliver formal qualifications for those seeking to be part of the heavy transport industry. There are already clear and identified pathways into the industry that are not being pursued, this is puzzling given the opportunities that exist but don't appear to be seriously explored.

## CONCLUSSION

Safe Freight Networks is a concept that has been operating in this format for a little over two and half years. It has demonstrated that the partnership model to road safety can achieve better outcomes for all road users particularly professional drivers.

The model has enabled millions of dollars of road infrastructure funding to be better targeted to the areas of highest need and more importantly, infrastructure is designed to enhance road safety for truck drivers.

The investment made by your NHVR of just shy of $300,000 over three years has unlocked an estimated $211,000,000 of both National and State priority funding. In addition to this there has been several million dollar of funding applications supported for local governments seeking local road upgrades including bridges

renewal funding. This mechanism to quickly gather a local think tank and access the pool of people involved locally in transport has become known as Investment Logic Mapping Process. The process has also resulted in a massive shift in thinking by road owners and as result we are seeing better facilities such as dedicated fit-for-purpose rest areas.

The role that local knowledge plays in bushfires was articulated in the Ash Wednesday Royal Commission. During the two and half years these networks have operated they were able to develop road transport contingency plans which have been enacted twice. This included planning around moving vital supplies into danger areas as well as allowing operators to move freight away from danger areas and safely around roads that are closed. This planning included effective communications between emergency services and operators. The floods in Northwest Queensland and the bush fires on the east coast including two fire events in Victorian. The 2020 summer fires highlighted the importance of having this local communication network.

Safe Freight Networks Australia has been a proud partner in this project and looks forward to standing with the industry in any future endeavours.

Appendix 2 explains the regard and importance given to networks and demonstrates how regular maintenance budgets can be directed toward industry safety priorities.

## APPENDIX 1

**Low Visibility Protocol (Fog Protocol)**

**Intention:**

During low visibility situations the following companies have agreed to use the following protocols. The protocols have been developed to ensure the safety of truck drivers and other road users.

The purpose of having this protocol is to ensure that trucks do not present to each other at right angles on high speed roads.

**The protocol:**

- First Driver into an area that notices a low visibility situation* will notify their dispatching office providing:
    - Place (road)
    - The area involved (how long it goes for)
- The dispatcher will then notify the other companies involved with the protocol via a phone call or text message.
- Farm pickups and deliveries will be delayed until the low visibility situation is resolved.
- All other non-farm vehicles will immediately be geo-fenced to lower speeds with warnings provided to drivers operating in the low visibility areas.
- The moment the situation normalizes the dispatcher will be notified and an all-clear message will be provided.

***What is low visibility:**

Low visibility situations may be caused by a range of environmental factors and may include but are not limited to:

- Fog
- Smoke
- Dust/Smog

Low visibility situations for the purposes of this protocol are when drivers have their visibility reduced to less than 30 meters.

This protocol will operate throughout the year and will be accompanied by an internal communication strategy, to be decided by each company and communicated with protocol partners.

**Emergency Situations:**

From time to time emergency services will require reduced traffic on a road due to collisions or other undisclosed reasons – they will be able to access this protocol through the agreed communications strategy -

APPENDIX 2

# Tree trimming, Portland-Casterton rd ~ 20km to 30km

Inbox

**Glenn Blundell** Wed, Apr 1, 7:03 AM (13 days ago)

to me, [redacted]

Hi John & John,

I hope you are both well.

The VicRoads / Fulton Hogan Alliance have just completed some extensive vegetation clearing along the Portland – Casterton Road between the 20km – 30km chainages.
See attached photos.

Again, these works have been undertaken and funded (given a higher priority) due to the Freight Group which I must say that I'm proud to be a part of.
We all know there are many other areas on other arterial roads that need similar works so we hope to keep 'chipping' away with these works.

John G,
Do your drivers use the Portland – Casterton Rd? If so, any feedback would be most welcomed.

Regards

**Glenn Blundell**
Senior Traffic Engineer / Officer South Western
Regional Roads Victoria

29 Jamieson Street Warrnambool, 3280
[redacted]
**Part of the Department of Transport**

***Clearing works completed***

NRSPP
NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY
PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM

QUICK FACTS

# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPING NETWORKS

## Benefits of Partnerships and Networks

Improved safety for the industry and the surrounding community

Sharing of knowledge, resources, expertise, information and practices

Providing access to broader networks

Improved industry efficiency and quality of industry outcomes

Sharing of risks

## The theory of group development

**Forming** → Setting the stage through orientation, testing and dependence

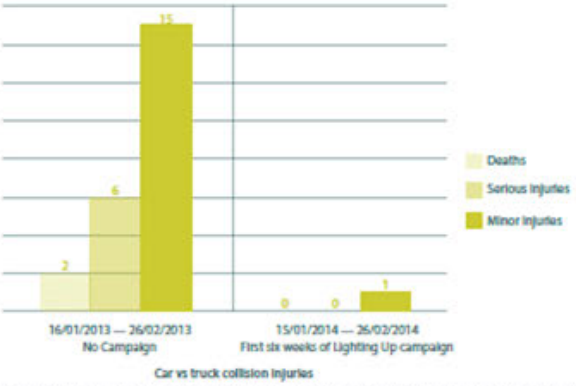
**Storming** → Intragroup conflict and tension based on resistance to group influence and task requirements

**Norming** → Openness to other group members, the development of in group cohesiveness, new roles being adopted leading to the success

**Performing** → Roles become more flexible, functional and supportive

## Statistics

As can be seen from this graph, injuries in car vs truck crashes were significantly reduced through the implementation of a safety network campaign.




## Essential people to have in a Transport Safety Network

- Road Managers
- Local Government
- Major industry groups
- Local highway patrol police representative
- Local, State and federal government representatives
- A facilitator
- Road Safety Experts

For more information on Building Partnerships and Developing Networks, see the NRSPP's Discussion Paper developed in collaboration with the Gippsland Safer Freight Network.

nrspp.org.au



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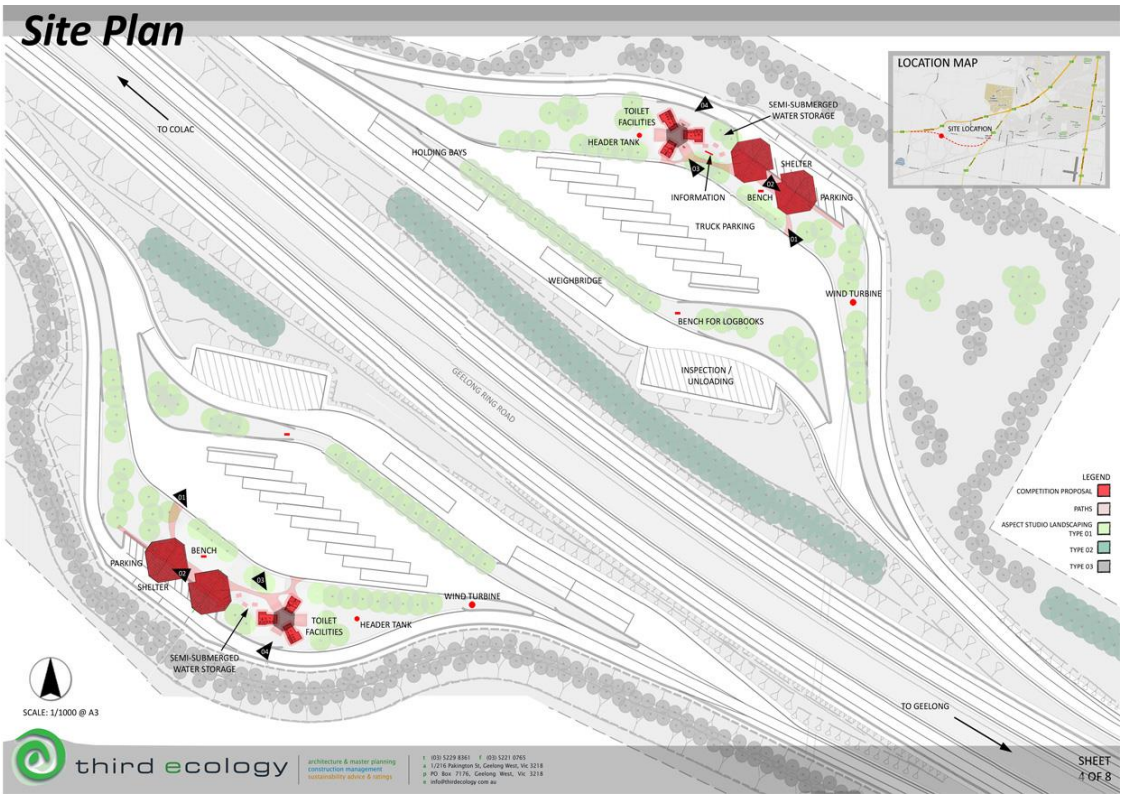
## EXAMPLES OF CO-DESIGN WORK WITH DRIVERS AND ROAD OWNERS




Truck Rest Area discussed with drivers at network meetings.

Old road re-purposed as a truck rest area.

NHVR Weighbridge open 24/7 for public use with digital read out for both East and West traffic.

Addressing local sight line issues with road owners.

Another rest area built with truckies in mind in Cloncurry showers/toilets/BBQ area with a fridge.


Truck drivers engaging with Caravan Owners to share the knowledge partnerships with Men's Shed provided access to many caravaners.