

## IPAC-27 | Heavy Vehicle National Law PBS updates

Audience: PBS Assessors and Certifiers

Effective Date: 1 August 2026

This IPAC provides advice regarding:

- The Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) changes that affect PBS and its processes.
- Design Approvals (DA) and Vehicle Approval (VA) changes.

A review of the HVNL, led by the National Transport Commission (NTC), commenced in 2019 and aimed to update the existing law to improve safety and productivity for Australia’s heavy vehicle sector. The review identified a series of reform options to enhance the effectiveness of the HVNL for governments, industry and the broader community.

This process resulted in the development of the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025 and the Heavy Vehicle National Amendment Regulations 2025 (together, the 2025 Amendment Package), which was passed without amendment by Queensland Parliament on 18 November 2025.

The amended HVNL will commence on 1 August 2026.

A number of these changes will affect DAs and VAs.

### General Mass Limit uplift

The HVNL amendments will remove Concessional Mass Limits (CML) from the HVNL and uplift General Mass Limits (GML) masses to match what CML allowed.

### Mass Table labelling

All DAs and VAs issued before the HVNL implementation date will be referred to as legacy VAs and will still be valid and can continue to be used.

All CML masses on legacy VAs will be considered GML after the HVNL implementation date.

DAs and VAs issued after the HVNL implementation date will have their mass tables updated to reflect the updated legislation.

In the case of a DA or VA including both GML and CML, references to pre-implementation date GML in the mass tables will be relabelled GML 1, and CML will be relabelled GML 2. This labelling will be replicated in the payload tables and tyre lists as required.

### Example 1. Mass table updated to meet HVNL requirements

Mass Limits	Level 2	Axle Group Masses	Level 2		
			GML 1	GML 2	HML
GML 1 (t)	82.5	Steer (t)	6.0	6.0	6.0
GML 2 (t)	84.5	Drive (t)	16.5	17.0	17.0
HML (t)	85.5	Lead Trailer (t)	20.0	21.0	22.5
Bridge Assessment	Tier 2/3	Dolly (t)	20.0	21.0	22.5
		Rear Trailer (t)	20.0	21.0	22.5

Quad Axle Combinations will have their GML updated to GML 1 and their QML 1 updated to GML 2.

### Example 2. QML mass table updated to meet HVNL requirements

If there are already multiple GML labels, the labels will continue with the next number in the sequence.

DAs will be updated only if a variation or amendment is submitted.

### VA numbers

To reduce the instances an operator needs to update their access permit, the VA mass table labelling will not change for the following VA application types:

- Adding identical vehicles, removing operator names, and modifications that do not involve a VA number.
- The VA mass tables will be updated for all other VA application types that involve a VA number change.

### Future DAs

DAs that have been assessed under the amended HVNL (from 1 August 2026) must not contain references to CML.

Mass tables may continue to contain multiple mass case references if the PBS assessor deems this necessary; however, the expectation will be to only have GML and HML in most cases.

### Example 3. Expected Standard Mass table from 1 August 2026.

Mass Limits	Level 2	Axle Group Masses	Level 2	
			GML	HML
GML (t)	84.5	Steer (t)	6.0	6.0
HML (t)	85.5	Drive (t)	17.0	17.0
Bridge Assessment	Tier 2/3	Lead Trailer (t)	21.0	22.5
		Dolly (t)	21.0	22.5
		Rear Trailer (t)	21.0	22.5

## Bridge Loading Standard

When using the PBS bridge formulae, the previous version of the PBS Scheme - The Standards and Vehicle Assessment Rules stated that for vehicles operating under the CML scheme, axle groups are to be treated as though they are laden to GML.

To avoid PBS vehicles being negatively impacted by the increased GML in the upcoming Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation (MDL), the Bridge Loading standard has been revised.

The revised Bridge Loading standard keeps the methodology consistent with that used by the MDL when determining mass limits relating to axle spacing. The following wording is used in the standard:

For the purposes of determining compliance with the bridge formulae, axle groups are to be treated as though they are laden to the reduced mass amount of the general mass limits.

The reduced mass amount is calculated by subtracting the applicable axle mass deduction amount stated in Table 1 of Schedule 1, Part 3 of the Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation from the general mass limit of the axle group.'

This change will allow the bridge formulae to continue to function as they did prior to the amended law commencing on 1 August 2026. The amended PBS Scheme - The Standards and Vehicle Assessment Rules will be released on 1 August 2026, but will be made available to PBS Assessors and Certifiers prior to this date.

## Heavy Vehicle Accreditation (HVA)

From 1 August 2026, the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) will be progressively replaced by the Heavy Vehicle Accreditation (HVA) scheme following the implementation of the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025.

From 1 August 2026, all newly issued DAs and VAs will no longer contain the NHVAS Mass Management Accreditation CML condition.

The condition listed on legacy VAs will be disregarded after the amended law commences on 1 August 2026, and NHVAS Mass Management Accreditation will not be required to run at the CML masses listed on their VA.

Other PBS combinations, including but not limited to split-axle and quad-axle combinations and vehicles with a tri-axel group wanting to run at HML, will still be required to be accredited with either the NHVAS or HVA.

Existing NHVAS operators will not be required to transition to the new HVA scheme immediately when the amended law commences on 1 August 2026. They will be able to operate under the NHVAS scheme up until the expiry of their NHVAS accreditation.

All DAs and VAs issued after the amended law commences on 1 August 2026 will contain updated conditions referencing both the NHVAS and HVA accreditation.

## Increase of GML length from 19m to 20m

The HVNL has been updated to allow the following combinations that are up to 20m to run as General Access Vehicles (GAVs):

- truck and dog
- truck and pig
- truck and tag trailer
- prime mover and semitrailer.

The additional length allowances come with additional conditions. Compliance with these additional conditions is not covered in the PBS certification process, and therefore, exemptions will continue to be applied in the same manner both pre and post 1 August 2026.

## Euro VI complying steer axle vehicle condition changes

### PBS road train combinations

From 1 August 2026, PBS road trains will be permitted to run as Euro VI vehicles without the Pavement Vehicle Loading (PVL) Safety Standard Exemption.

All VAs issued before 1 August 2026 with the PVL exemption will be considered compliant with the standard, and the exemption is to be disregarded.

All VAs issued on or after 1 August 2026 will not contain the PVL exemption, even if the DA that the VA was certified against still contains the exemption.

Operators may request the conditions be removed from their VA by contacting their PBS Certifier to complete a modify application. No VA number change will result.

DAs will be updated when any amendments or variations are issued.

### Tri-axle drive group prime movers and the Euro VI mass transfer allowance

From 1 August 2026, the HVNL and PBS will no longer permit Euro VI eligible prime movers with tri-axle drive groups (including tridem or tri-drive) to utilise the Euro VI mass transfer allowance.

Any VAs issued before 1 August 2026 that contain the mass transfer allowance will be grandfathered and can continue to be used; however, access may still be blocked by Road Managers.

All VAs issued after 1 August 2026 will not contain the mass transfer allowance, even if the DA still contains the condition.

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DAs will be updated when any amendments or variations are issued.

### Component ratings and tyres

As of 1 August 2026, Euro VI complying steer axle vehicles will no longer be required to have components fitted that are rated to 7.0t or tyres that are at least 315 mm wide, or 11.5t on twin-steers with 275 mm wide tyres.

However, to remove roadblocks for industry, the NHVR will administer and enforce the Euro VI mass provisions in line with the approved policy intent before the official implementation in the HVNL. These changes have been implemented as of 13 March 2026.

Please see [IPAC-22 Euro VI Vehicles and PBS Design and Vehicle Approval Applications](#) for more information on component ratings and tyres required.

### Contact

This IPAC was produced by the PBS Vehicle Approvals Team. For queries, please contact [pbs@nhvr.gov.au](mailto:pbs@nhvr.gov.au).

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