

Building a foundation for consistent inspections

National Roadworthiness Baseline Survey Overview

National Heavy Vehicle Roadworthiness Program

The National Heavy Vehicle Roadworthiness Program was established in late 2014 to improve the safety and efficiency of Roadworthiness in Australia.

The program aims to find ways to reduce the safety, economic, and environmental impacts of unroadworthy heavy vehicles.

To do our job better we need to improve our understanding of the mechanical condition of heavy vehicles throughout Australia.

The heavy vehicle health check

From August through November 2016, the NHVR coordinated the first ever health check of the Australian heavy vehicle fleet (except Western Australia). During the National Roadworthiness Baseline Survey (NRBS) transport inspectors assessed a range of vehicle types, including rigid trucks, semi-trailers, B-doubles, road trains, buses and special purpose vehicles (SPV). Each vehicle/combination was inspected at roadside check points and buses and plant equipment were inspected in depots. Some vehicle/combinations were inspected at jurisdiction facilities following a request for them to be presented. A number of businesses invited inspectors to their depots to undertake inspections showing the high level of industry support the survey received (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: NRBS vehicle selection methods



Each vehicle/combination was subject to a comprehensive visual inspection and a roller brake test, with the data from each vehicle unit of the combination being recorded. Inspections were based on the National Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual (NHVIM); the first time ever that a single national standard has been used for this purpose.

Training to achieve consistency

Inspectors taking part in the survey were provided with training about random vehicle selection, the level of inspection required, the use of the NHVIM for reporting findings and electronic data collection.

Those who did not receive training directly from NHVR were trained by an inspector who attended the training on the job or through the same training package presented during the formal training sessions (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Training methods



There were 11 training sessions conducted around the country and each session was followed up with a pilot day to trial the practical conduct of a NRBS inspection (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: NRBS training & pilot sessions

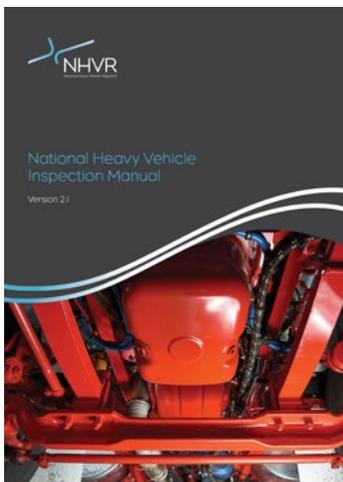


Using the NHVIM

The NHVIM formed the basis of the health check inspection and will continue to support consistent reporting of inspection outcomes nationally. Our aim is that heavy vehicle operators no longer face the frustration of inspectors applying different standards in different states and territories.

The NRBS provided an opportunity for a large number of inspectors nationwide (including NT) to be exposed to the NHVIM.

As a result of the national health check, inspectors reported the outcome of each inspection in the same way, which provided vital information to the NHVR to monitor the industry and to continually improve the health of the heavy vehicle fleet.



Post-NRBS evaluation

Following the completion of the NRBS activities, the NHVR sought feedback from each jurisdiction about the NRBS operation which will be collated and used to develop future health checks (should another occur). This feedback will also be used to develop a more consistent way of inspecting, that is, inspecting the right vehicles for the right reasons.

Support for a consistent inspection approach

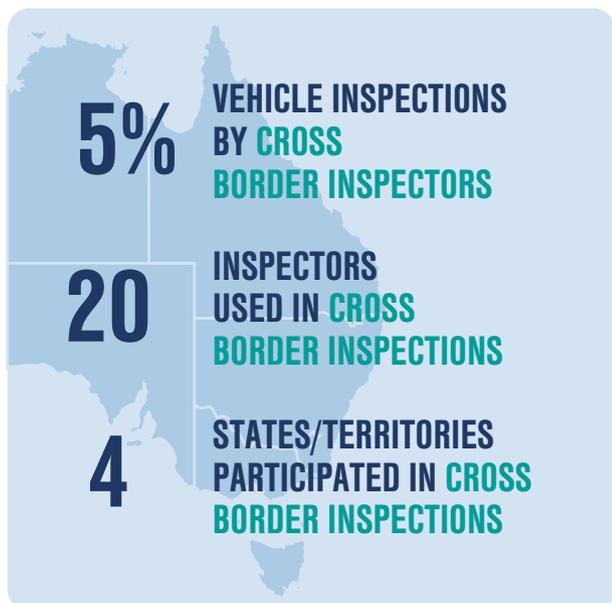
Industry bodies such as the Australian Trucking Association (ATA), National Road Transport Association (NatRoad) and Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association (ALRTA) fully supported the idea of the NRBS with the aim of simplifying standards for trucking operators crossing state borders.

One set of rules based on realistic criteria is easier for the industry to understand and easier for the NHVR to administer. More importantly, it will be easier for industry to comply with these rules without compromising safety: a big benefit to everyone using the nation’s roads.

Cross border activities

Inspectors working in other states and territories was well supported and provided opportunities for inspectors to see different ways of inspecting, operating and being exposed to different technologies. Cross border activities were identified as a positive outcome of conducting the NRBS by all states and territories involved in this resource allocation.

Figure 4: Cross border activities



Inspectors working across borders supports the consistent inspection approach the NHVR is working toward and has significant benefits for progressing the expertise in every state and territory in heavy vehicle inspections.

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 Telephone: 1300 MYNHVR (1300 696 487)*
 Email: info@nhvr.gov.au

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