

NHVR Agricultural Industry Operators Group (IOG) Communique'

23 September 2016

The NHVR Agricultural Industry Operators Group (IOG) met at the NHVR offices in Newstead, Brisbane on Friday 23 September 2016.

The Agricultural IOG is a key group of industry representatives for the NHVR. It comprises representatives from across the heavy vehicle industry in the Agricultural sector, the CEO and senior members of the NHVR.

This communique' highlights key issues from the 23 September 2016 meeting. This meeting was attended by Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR, Executive Director Regulatory Compliance NHVR, Executive Director AccessCONNECT NHVR, Manager National Harmonisation NHVR, Communication & Engagement Specialists NHVR, Policy and Planning Advisor NHVR; Manager Access NHVR; Fatigue Specialist NHVR; and representatives from the Agricultural industry including: AgForce Qld, Canegrowers, Cotton Australia, Grain Handlers Association, NSW Farmers; and Australian Fodder Industry Association.

Apologies noted for the record include CEO NHVR, Director Access NHVR, Executive Director Regulatory and Legal Services, Peanut Company Australia, National Farmers Association, Primary Producers South Australia, Agforce Grains; and Victorian Farmers Federation.

Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR officially opened the meeting, welcoming members with introductions made around the table.

Justin Crosby of NSW Farmers Association chaired the meeting.

The following communique' outlines the key points discussed.

Membership and administration

Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR raised membership of the group moving forward encouraging wider participation to get the most out of these meetings. The frequency of the meetings was discussed and members agreed to have bi-annual meetings.

Agricultural Industry Items

(1) National Agricultural Vehicle Notice(s)

NHVR identified this notice as one of the CEO agreed top four new national notices being driven out of the new National Harmonisation team Managed by Matthew Bereni, Manager National Harmonisation.

With regard to the scope of the notice, the NHVR confirmed wide consultation with everyone will happen. Complexity of this notice is high and wide consultation will be essential to understand what is required – this will be the key to success. Due to the complexities, the first iteration of the notice will capture the most common vehicle types. This will then set a foundation to work on other vehicles.

Cotton Australia raised question around Form 14 remaining or do the existing guidelines get replaced. Manager National Harmonisation NHVR advised the existing guidelines will exist in the background so industry's current business practices are not hampered or disrupted by new guidelines.

NSW Farmers expressed the need to consider trends to meet the needs of the future, i.e. bigger and more complex vehicles. Manager National Harmonisation NHVR acknowledged this need and the work that Victoria is doing by leading in this space, referencing the work being done on the revised Agricultural Victoria Notice.

Canegrowers added that communication strategies are key. Manager National Harmonisation NHVR acknowledged the importance of communication and summarised NHVR's consultation, engagement and education process.

NSW Farmers commented that it will and can tap in to all networks to communicate however industry need to understand timeline/work plans/guidelines/progression/phases so that industry can lobby with ministers and councils too.

NSW Farmers asked how industry and NHVR can manage Road Managers to better understand and manage their assets. Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR advised the NHVR does this every day. The NHVR holds forums and educates councils regularly. The products the NHVR champions also contributes to these learnings such as the AccessCONNECT program, Road Manager Portal and with ongoing access improvements which work hand in hand with road managers, especially councils to identify and rectify road blocks. Comparative analysis also assists in this process. Manager National Harmonisation NHVR added the NHVR also undertakes learnings with road managers such as: webinars, face to face meetings, workshops with ALGA and state branches; and Engineers across Australia which provides a network for all states.

NSW Farmers asked about timeframes for the National Ag Vehicle Notice. Manager National Harmonisation NHVR advised project scope expected by end-December 2016 which will be followed up with a workshop end-January 2017 to discuss timing and milestones.

Cotton Australia suggested early and more targeted workshop for agricultural industry. Manager National Harmonisation NHVR confirmed with Justin Crosby NSW Farmers that Justin is the go to person and filter down communication to members.

(2) NSW Escort Vehicle Driver Scheme

NSW Farmers raised issues regarding Escort and Pilot Driver Schemes:

1. Harmonisation of schemes
2. Highlighted inconsistent cross border requirements
3. High risk movements
4. Accreditation

Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR acknowledged these real issues of ongoing concern and advised Pilots and Escorts is on the NHVR's forward list, however is not a priority focus and encouraged NSW Farmers write to the NHVR to formally convey concerns.

(3) Primary Producer exemption

Fatigue Specialist NHVR raised primary producers work diary exemption. Update provided:

- Changes to the exemption to remove BFM and AFM were deliberate as the written work diary is an essential component of the accreditation holder's monitoring activity.
- The NHVR has met with and provided support to Primary Producers South Australia and its members on numerous occasions since the changes were introduced.
- Recognise some concerns in SA in the lead up to the grain harvest so we are working with Grain Producers South Australia and Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia to develop further explanatory materials.
- The NHVR recognises that the 160 km radius for the notice is shorter than the 200 km radius that applied in Queensland prior to the NHVR being created.
- The NHVR based the 160km radius on how far could be travelled within 2 hours (based on average industry speeds) as the risk of fatigue increases significantly after 2 hours of work/driving.
- NHVR will distribute the local area work template to members.
- NHVR to have offline discussion with Agforce regarding the 200 km radius.

(4) National grant funding scheme to assess road networks/bridges

To move industry, NSW Farmers encouraged greater support regarding the need for a National Grant Funding Scheme for councils to assess road networks and bridges. Industry is concerned around the technical competence or lack thereof in resourcing and funding for the assessment of infrastructure. Industry expressed the general state of infrastructure is a looming issue, with examples around degraded road surfaces due to rain etc.

Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR advised Tasmania undertook a program and this could be investigated to see how successful it was.

Access – Operational and Permits

Manager Access NHVR provided opportunity for industry to discuss issues. These included:

- Cotton Australia raised an example of a permit application expressing ongoing frustrations with turnaround timeframes.
- Manager Access NHVR advised the NHVR continues to work with councils. As part of this work we are developing a process to assist councils become more proactive (that is, rather than reactive; a move away from being triggered by permit applications).
- The NHVR has also developed heat maps to assist identify areas requiring more focus. In addition, we continue to work on pre-approvals with a key focus on industry hot spots for example during harvest seasons.
- NSW Farmers asked about industry lobbying for better and faster permitting/consenting practices, in particular with first and last mile access.
- Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR reminded industry to work with the NHVR and to talk to us directly so we can work with councils to identify benefits and seek outcomes.
- NSW Farmers Federation raised issue around definition of divisible and indivisible items.
- Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR advised we will look into the best process to progress this with government.

Industry Codes of Practice

Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance) NHVR provided an update on the status of the draft guidelines and the process for Codes of Practice. A presentation followed providing the following key points:

- Ministers have asked for a move towards and a closer alignment with WH&S approaches, and therefore a consistent national risk-based approach; which supports co-regulatory arrangements for industry to manage their own risks and adopt safe business practices
- Providing consistent industry standards to improve safety, referencing ISO 31000
- Benefits include: national consistency, improved compliance and safety, education and guidance for industry and clarity for courts
- Manages statutory obligations and provides opportunity for red tape reduction.
- Provides a framework for auditing, but the auditing is not done by the NHVR.

The NHVR are holding an Industry Reference Forum (IRF) on 5 October to focus on progressing the guidelines to develop a final Draft.

Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance) NHVR discussed and clarified more broadly the process of development of codes by industry.

Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance) NHVR shared a positive note that larger grain companies have gotten together and formed a safety committee to look at the development of codes.

Cotton Australia provided the example of movement of OSOM vehicles over short distances (for example, farm gate to farm gate) and that council are still working on pre-approvals in this space and asked if a code of practice would help expedite the process?

Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance) NHVR advised having a code would assist convince councils that you are taking a risk management approach which in turn would be a good advantage to work with councils to get more access.

NSW Farmers raised question about the incentives of codes when existing safety management systems and other existing practices are seen as sufficient.

NSW Farmers and Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance) NHVR shared sentiments that education in this space with industry continue and would discuss further outside this forum.

Executive Director (Regulatory Compliance) NHVR reminded industry of the Chain of Responsibility survey.

AccessCONNECT and Portal

Executive Director AccessCONNECT NHVR provided an update on the Customer component of the NHVR Portal which went live on 1 August 2016 with a 95% uptake as of 14 October 2016.

The migration of existing permit data is well underway and will also provide efficiencies in the long run. NHVR is decommissioning more redundant technology such as emailing applications and is encouraging industry to register with the portal, however will continue to provide support to those who are yet to transition.

The NHVR Portal is a web-based solution that is focused on reducing administrative burden for the heavy vehicle industry and government organisations involved in heavy vehicle access management.

The key objectives that are guiding the design of the NHVR Portal include:

- Reducing administrative overheads for all stakeholders
- Improving business intelligence and operational performance for Access issues
- Allowing improved oversight of the Access Management tasks
- Providing regulatory transparency and decision making
- Storing consent records centrally, in a secure, auditable and traceable repository
- Improving decision making abilities for governments.

NSW Farmers will work with NHVR regarding ongoing improvements in the data and mapping space.

NSW Farmers asked for further communications for industry members on the Portal so they can be distributed more widely. Executive Director AccessCONNECT NHVR advised will look into these communications.

Open discussion

Cotton Australia raised issue around transporting 4.6m high cotton bale road trains for next season. Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR advised will follow up and get back to Cotton Growers.

NSW Farmers Federation advised they are working with RMS regarding 1A road train standard access as part of a national harmonisation project priority.

Zachary Whale (Agforce Qld) shared positive feedback from Mackay Regional Council. Following the Local Government Forum jointly hosted by the NHVR, LQAQ and LGNSW, Mackay Regional Council sought a range of industry groups and road users to better understand their needs and ways to improve network access.

Members agreed to have biannual meetings which will continue to be held at NHVR offices (with the option of teleconference facilities) with industry to chair.

Zachary Whale (Agforce Qld) and Justin Crosby (NSW Farmers) will discuss membership moving forward. Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR advised to get in touch with operators in your industry regarding membership.

Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR thanked members for attending and for contributing to productive discussion.

The Chair closed the meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled for early 2017 (approximately February/March, to be confirmed).

The agenda for the first meeting in 2017 is yet to be confirmed.