

NHVR Oversize Over Mass (OSOM) Industry Operators Group (IOG) Communique'

22 September 2016

The 5th meeting of the NHVR Oversize Over Mass (OSOM) Industry Operators Group (IOG) was held at the NHVR offices in Newstead, Brisbane on Thursday 22 September 2016.

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

This communique' highlights key issues from the 22 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 and representatives from the OSOM industry including, Russell Transport (Chair of OSOM IOG), Queensland Trucking Association (QTA) and L. Arthur Pty Ltd.

Apologies noted for the record include: Andy's Earthmoving, RL Harding, TransTrac Australia, Tasmanian Heavy Haulage, NPVDA.

Manager Industry Stakeholder Engagement NHVR officially opened the meeting, welcoming members with introductions made around the table. 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 the meetings. The frequency of meetings was discussed and members agreed to hold the meetings bi-annually.

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 safe business practices
- Providing consistent industry standard 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.

The Chair summarised the intention of the guidelines so that industry at the table could relate them to their business in the real world and clarified for members the role the guidelines can play for industry.

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

Industry raised the example of interpretation of 'best practice' complying with a code referring to 'all reasonable steps' and WH&S investigating the same matter under WH&S law and how a potential prosecution may come about and using an adopted code as a defence. In response, the NHVR has and will continue to consult with WH&S, noting they support NHVR's approach and stating that the approach was consistent with WH&S law

acknowledging the laws are not fully interoperable as they are two different pieces of legislation. Codes are voluntary and importantly can be used in industry's defence in court should a case reach that point. Benefit exists for the adopter by adopting a code and applying it by identifying their own specific risks, developing specific treatments, implementing the treatments and demonstrating they have treated the risks; and then continuing to review effectiveness of the treatments. All of these steps would support industry should industry need to defend themselves in court.

Permit Timings

Industry shared its ongoing concern with permit timings being a real issue. Example from industry included their experiences in permit turnaround timeframe delays particularly in Queensland; and with some council hotspots when it comes to the Mass Import Management Scheme (MIMS) and the renewals of permits.

Manager of NHVR access advised the permit renewal process was a 14 day turnaround (providing applications are received by the NHVR prior to expiry).

Industry perceive road managers are focusing on their assets and are leaning on assessments with their infrastructure to make decisions before approving routes and in turn holding up the permit approval process.

The NHVR acknowledged an action to send further communications to industry around educating industry on applying for permits, particularly surrounding applications that are received by the NHVR that do not require a permit in the first instance (40% of applications received never require a permit in the first place).

Industry has experienced delays through the new portal and wants to identify the blockages being experienced. The NHVR has reported substantial improvements in the application process through feedback from industry more broadly and is continuing positive work in this space. Even so, industry expressed further ideas that could improve the application process at the front-end that could assist those applicants applying for permits unnecessarily (e.g. a pop up notification advising an applicant that they could run on a notice based on the information provided with their application).

The NHVR shared the positive work being done with road managers and in particular highlighted the LG Forum recently held in QLD with councils, LGAQ, jurisdictions and industry.

AccessCONNECT and Portal

Executive Director AccessCONNECT NHVR advised the NHVR Customer Portal went live 1 August 2016 with uptake continuing to increase. The Portal was designed as a user-friendly solution to improve the NHVR's existing online application channels. The Portal provides for better quality applications with fewer errors and is proving to reduce permit times. The Portal has new features with integrated help and online tours. It provides customers with a single location to apply for permits, track case status and store application material for reuse. The implementation of the Customer Portal has been successful for the NHVR with the online application channel having had a 95% uptake as of 14 October 2016. Other forms of application are now being phased out.

The NHVR has been implementing a new national technology platform for access management. 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.

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.

Industry provided further system enhancement suggestions, such as building in a vehicle build number and copy feature which could reduce the amount of time applicants need to spend on submitting applications. The NHVR acknowledged a suite of system design improvements in the application lodgement space and the types of suggestions being raised by industry are being incorporated in the future state system.

Some of those improvements include: automatic case number creation, copy features and more personal and customer focused avatar features.

All in all the feedback regarding the Portal has been positive and well received; the evidence is reflected in the uptake of registrations in the Portal.

The AccessCONNECT Program has now entered the next phase with the detailed engagement, design and development of a Road Manager component of the NHVR Portal (Road Manager Portal). The NHVR has been working closely with key representatives in state and local government organisations to develop a Road Manager Portal Engagement Plan and Implementation Approach.

Access – Operational and Permits

Industry re-raised permit turnaround timeframes and in particular PBS permits.

The NHVR acknowledged the recent challenges in receiving an influx in permits particularly in the PBS space and that the timeframes should improve in the next month.

Industry made the suggestion for the NHVR to consider priority permits. Industry elaborated further by suggesting a tiered permit system be considered for priority permits. A higher fee could be paid for priority applications/permits.

Other business

Industry raised the issue on the policy of tolerances with regard to correct procedures being followed at weighing stations and where DTMR and NHVR stand on that issue. NHVR acknowledged the issue and advised it was meeting with DTMR to seek an outcome, but that to this point the NHVR was not aware of making any direct decisions on the issue.

Industry raised the issue of harmonisation of pilots, in particular with the number of pilots to loads. Defence has raised this issue with the NHVR as a concern to the different requirements in states. Industry expressed the need to further harmonise in this space and encouraged ongoing discussion with pilot and escort groups.

The NHVR indicated that there was an AustRoads project around the accreditation of pilots and this is now with the NHVR in its work program. The harmonisation of pilots to loads was a concern for the NHVR. The NHVR will work to prioritise industry concerns.

Industry and the NHVR discussed the future direction of this group. Agreement was reached to increase representation of the group and to continue to share information.

The group agreed that industry would continue to chair the meeting; that the meeting would be bi-annual and would communicate future agenda items in advance so as direction of the meeting could be agreed and that a national focus be at the top of the agenda.

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