



# Local Government Information Pack

2016



# About the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR)

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is an independent statutory authority established in 2012 pursuant to the *Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012* (Qld) and is responsible for regulating all vehicles over 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass in a way that:

- ✓ **Promotes public safety**
- ✓ **Manages the impacts of heavy vehicles on the environment, road infrastructure and public amenity**
- ✓ **Promotes industry productivity and efficiency in the road transport of goods and passengers by heavy vehicles**
- ✓ **Encourages and promotes productive, efficient, innovative and safe business practices**

The NHVR administers the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), aims to minimise the compliance burden on the heavy vehicle transport industry and reduce duplication and inconsistencies across state and territory borders.

The NHVR opened for business on January 21, 2013, managing accreditation under the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) and administering the Performance-Based Standards Scheme (PBS).

The national law commenced one year later on 10 February 2014 in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, replacing six different sets of legislation with one national rule book. The NHVR will continue to engage with government and industry in Western Australia and the Northern Territory with a view to those jurisdictions ultimately adopting the HVNL.

The Regulator is governed by the NHVR Board and has more than 170 staff working across eight functional units on a range of heavy vehicle policy and operational initiatives and ministerially-endorsed projects.

It reports directly to responsible Ministers through the Transport and Infrastructure Council (TIC). This usually comprises the ministers for roads, transport and infrastructure in each jurisdiction and the Commonwealth, and is chaired by the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Darren Chester MP.



# Responsibilities of the NHVR

- **33% of the national freight task**
- **Road freight of over 2 billion tonne per year**
- **The safe and efficient movement of over 500,000 heavy vehicles**
- **Liaison with over 400 road managers, utility providers and rail authorities to coordinate heavy vehicle access**
- **Heavy vehicle access on all of Australia's 870,000 kms of roads except those in WA and NT.**

## NHVR Strategic documents

In May 2016 the NHVR released its 10-year blueprint *Strategic Directions 2016* as a signal to the heavy vehicle industry, regulatory partners and other stakeholders of the major regulatory challenges and the actions the NHVR will take to address them.

The NHVR's document *Setting the Agenda 2016–2020* is a plan that will allow the NHVR to deliver reforms in the areas of Safety, Compliance and Assurance, and Productivity over the next five years.

The role of road managers is increasingly important to optimise local freight tasks to keep local economies strong.

## Local Councils and Access

The NHVR manages the access of heavy vehicles to ensure a safe, efficient and sustainable road network for industry. The NHVR is not a road owner.

Road funding and maintenance responsibilities still belong with state, territory and local governments.

Under the HVNL, councils are responsible for decisions regarding heavy vehicle access to their road network. This includes deciding which heavy vehicles access their road network and the conditions under which they will operate.

A road manager must determine if the use of certain heavy vehicles will cause damage to road infrastructure or have adverse impacts on the community and whether the heavy vehicle can be used safely on its road network.

## Local government and the NHVR

The NHVR has simplified its engagement with local government, ensuring a more holistic approach to councils regarding what is possible, what is being achieved and what is planned to further assist local government fulfill its obligations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL).

The NHVR has a multi-pronged engagement approach, working with individual councils, groups of councils as well as local government peak bodies. The NHVR's strategy to optimise the freight network considers gazettal of routes as the ultimate destination, but recognises that for some councils, this will be a staged journey.

In such cases, the NHVR will strive for permitted access where no access currently exists, with the aim of converting permitted access into pre-approvals, and then converting pre-approvals into notices to further reduce red tape for industry and councils.

This boosts local government understanding of its responsibilities under the HVNL and maximises access for heavy vehicles on local government roads. Ultimately, this should lead to flexibility in movements for trips, faster turnaround times with consent requests, and improved relationships with local government focused on growing their regional economies.

## What are the opportunities for local government?

The HVNL presents both obligations and opportunities for local government. Ownership of the roads hasn't changed under the HVNL. The HVNL highlights council's role as road managers to provide consent to their local road networks.

The NHVR recognises the resource limitations of councils and emphasises that industry is keen to develop good working relationships. There is also a comprehensive range of tools and information available on the NHVR website to assist councils. [www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/local-government-road-managers](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/local-government-road-managers).

Opportunities for local government:

- First and last mile access – mainly council roads
- Consideration to build heavy vehicle movements into planning arrangements (e.g. industrial estates)
- Potential to support newer, safer technologies
- Help local businesses grow by encouraging use of higher productivity vehicles
- Utilise all access options: permits – pre approvals – notices (for more information on gazettals and notices see page 5).



# Local councils and heavy vehicle access

## What can councils do to facilitate access?

- Pre-approve or gazette a route which currently needs permits
- Host a heavy vehicle forum with industry to identify your local freight priorities
- Identify which routes you could change to Higher Mass Limits
- Sign up road networks to the NHVR Performance Based Standards truck and dog trailer notice
- Sign up road networks to the NHVR Special Purpose Vehicle notice e.g. cranes, concrete pumps
- Sign up road networks to the NHVR Oversize and Over Mass notices
- Set a target for turnaround of consent requests for heavy vehicle access
- GIS map local freight routes to identify key pinch points (the NHVR can provide map data)
- Talk to your neighbouring councils to ensure a regional approach

## What is a route assessment?

'A route assessment provides information of the impacts, or likely impacts of relevant restricted access vehicle use on road infrastructure in the areas or on the routes requested in the application for access. This can include structural assessments on bridges, pavements, culverts and tunnels, as well as geometrical assessments such as swept paths at intersections, stacking distances and overtaking provision.

A road manager may conduct the route assessment using its own staff or by engaging a contractor.

A road manager may also allow an applicant to engage a contractor to conduct the route assessment consistent with any policies and legislation of that road manager.

## Are there time limits for decisions when operators apply for a permit?

A road manager has up to 28 days to respond to a request from the NHVR to consent to the use of a restricted access vehicle on its roads. This may be extended by agreement with the NHVR for up to six months if the road manager considers that a route assessment is necessary to decide whether to grant the consent.

This is the maximum time allowed for a request. Most heavy vehicle access applications that are reasonably straightforward should be responded to well within this timeframe. For example, the average handling time for over 4000 access applications lodged with the NHVR from April to June 2016 was under 4.5 days.

## What is being done to improve access permit arrangements?

The NHVR is working closely with road managers to expand the range of routes registered for pre-approval. To date, this work has realised over 1100 pre-

approval and gazette requests from road managers. This makes it faster and easier for operators to access pre-approved routes, particularly roads within the critical first and last mile of journeys.

The NHVR has also established a Customer Portal to improve heavy vehicle outcomes for operators. The Customer Portal is the new online way for customers to prepare, lodge and track access permits on line across the country. There is a simple sign up process and just a few easy steps for users and businesses to lodge permit applications.

## How will the road manager portal make things easier for councils?

The NHVR is working on improving the way road managers process heavy vehicle permit consent requests with the development of a new online Road Manager Portal.

The Road Manager Portal will be an online system for efficiently processing heavy vehicle access consent requests. It will link directly to the current Customer Portal to ensure a seamless exchange of application request and approval information.

The Road Manager Portal is expected to begin early system pilots in late 2016, with a full staged roll out in early 2017.



## How do heavy vehicles access the road network?

In relation to accessing the road network, heavy vehicles fall into two categories; General Access Vehicles and Restricted Access Vehicles.

- General Access Vehicles (GAV) – are vehicles that comply with mass and dimension requirements and do not require a notice or permit to operate on the road network. These vehicles have general access to the road network unless the road or infrastructure (e.g. bridge) is sign-posted otherwise.
- Restricted Access Vehicles (RAV) – are Class 1, 2 or 3 vehicles that operate under a notice or permit and vehicles operating under higher mass limits (HML), which can only access specified parts of the road network.

## What are the different classes of heavy vehicles?

The HVNL provides for three classes of heavy vehicle as a means of managing the different access requirements of different types of heavy vehicles.

Examples of the different types of heavy vehicle in each class include:

- Class 1 heavy vehicles – Special purpose vehicles, Agricultural vehicles, Oversize and Over Mass vehicles

- Class 2 heavy vehicles – Freight-carrying vehicles (B-doubles, B-triples, Road Trains), Buses, Vehicle carriers, Livestock vehicles, Performance-Based Standards (PBS) vehicles.
- Class 3 heavy vehicles – Vehicles which, together with their load, do not comply with prescribed mass or dimension requirements.

## What is a notice?

Notices are legal instruments which the NHVR uses to authorise travel by Restricted Access Vehicles on specified roads or to grant certain exemptions to the HVNL, while still promoting safety, productivity, efficiency and the protection of road infrastructure.

## What is gazettal?

Gazettal is the process by which access to a road is made broadly available for access by a certain vehicle class. This removes the need to apply for access for each trip, and greatly reduces the administrative burden on councils and industry. Gazettals can be easily amended by road managers.

## Who is responsible for issuing notices?

The NHVR is responsible for issuing all new notices under the HVNL.

## Who is responsible for issuing access permits?

The NHVR coordinates access permit applications from start to finish, liaising directly with road managers (including state, territory road authorities and local government) to manage applications and issue permits.

Some states and territories continue to process Class 1 and Class 3 intrastate permits on behalf of the NHVR.

## What is pre-approval?

Pre-approval is when a road manager advises the NHVR that it approves access for particular vehicles on certain roads. This means the NHVR then does not need to seek council consent for such access, which frees up council resources. Importantly, councils still retain full visibility of vehicle movements as the NHVR sends copies of all issued permits to councils. Councils can also amend pre-approvals at any time.





## What systems can local councils implement to facilitate access?

- Have multiple access by all team members dealing with applications.
- Check access applications regularly to start progressing new applications quickly.
- Have clear roles for the team dealing with applications.
- Set internal targets for turnaround of access requests and review performance against them.
- Code local roads and capture on a spreadsheet to allow easy comparison of new applications with previous decisions.
- Delegate within council to minimise the type of access applications needing higher level approval.

Improved access has benefitted Moree Plains in New South Wales, Bundaberg in Queensland and Greater Dandenong in Victoria for instance, by reducing the need for permits and creating a fast turnaround to deliver a large volume of access consent requests.

For more case studies of councils benefitting from improved access go to [www.nhvr.gov.au/access-benefits](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/access-benefits).

## What can local councils do to keep local economies strong?

- Identify your road network, green, orange and red routes. For further information go to [www.ravrat.com](http://www.ravrat.com)
- Work with and understand your logistics industry and the businesses that use them – the NHVR will assist you.
- Before you say no to an access request think of the alternative. Approval of an access request could mean fewer trips with more productive vehicles, therefore a lesser overall impact on infrastructure.
- Pre-approve routes to reduce the admin burden to council and industry.
- Review internal systems to turn around heavy vehicle access consent requests quickly, and if you have approved a vehicle before on a road, why not pre approve that route?
- Consider potential for high productivity vehicles – this could mean less truck trips by safer vehicles with improved amenity for residents.
- Sign up to approved network for certain heavy vehicles e.g. for high productivity Performance Based Standard (PBS) vehicles, cranes, oversize.

## What is the NHVR doing to help councils?

- We have a range of tools and videos on the NHVR website to assist councils [www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/local-government-road-managers](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/local-government-road-managers).
- We conduct regular events to share ideas and experiences and start discussions between industry and councils, e.g. Local Government Access Forum and heavy vehicle demonstration day.
- We work with councils and industry to identify opportunities to allow appropriate access to local government road networks.
- We use performance data to better understand the Local Government task to access and help councils to make better decisions.
- We liaise with existing councils groups to discuss local freight task with councils, Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs), Regional Roads Groups and others.
- We share information and knowledge to support local council road managers.
- We are supporting the ARRB on-line route assessment tool – [www.ravrat.com](http://www.ravrat.com).
- Our dedicated Engagement team with Stakeholder Specialists support Local Government to promote good practice.



# Performance-Based Standards Scheme

## What is the Performance-Based Standards (PBS) Scheme?

The NHVR helps industry achieve higher productivity and safety through the PBS Scheme, which approves innovative and optimised vehicle designs.

The basic principle of the PBS Scheme is to maximise the safe use of higher productivity vehicles, by matching the right vehicles to the right roads. PBS vehicles are designed to perform their tasks as productively, safely and sustainably as possible, and to operate on networks that are appropriate for their level of performance.

## What are the benefits of PBS?

PBS vehicle combinations can be designed for a specific freight task and the optimised design and greater efficiency means fewer trucks, less congestion and better safety outcomes that have less of an impact on infrastructure and the surrounding community.

## How are PBS vehicles designed to be safe?

The vehicles are tested against 16 stringent safety standards to ensure that they can stop, turn and travel safely and four infrastructure standards to ensure the protection of the road system. The wider the access to the road network sought for a PBS vehicle, the tougher the safety standards it must meet. For example, turning, stability and road space consistent with road characteristics such as lane width, traffic volume and others.

## How can PBS vehicles access the road network?

Once vehicles are approved, road managers decide what access will be allowed to PBS vehicles.

If a vehicle is assessed as complying with the performance standards for a particular PBS level it will be granted access to all approved PBS routes at that level and below (e.g. A Level 2 vehicle can travel on Level 2, 3 and 4 routes).

The scheme specifies four different performance levels. The on-road performance of the truck is matched to the environment it is travelling in.

- Level 1: equivalent to General Access
- Level 2: equivalent to B-double routes
- Level 3: equivalent to Double road train routes
- Level 4: equivalent to Triple road train routes





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