

MAV and Department of Transport - IMPROVING FIRST AND LAST KILOMETRE ACCESS

The Department of Transport (DoT) and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) collaborated to deliver the following action from the Victorian Freight Plan, *Delivering the Goods*:

- *Work with local government to remove or reduce first and last mile impediment.*

First and last kilometre access is a long-standing issue with varying perspectives and understandings so building a shared understanding is a key outcome.

Three engagement sessions focussed on one of the following three categories:

Network Access (Wednesday 20 October 2021)

- Vehicle restrictions - National heavy vehicle permit requirement
- Road restrictions including “no trucks”, local law curfews and load limits

Infrastructure (Wednesday 10 November 2021)

- bridge strength, road geometry, pavement strength and condition
- farm gate access
- loading facilities

Property access (Wednesday 24 November 2021)

- Planning permits
- Construction management plans
- Loading zones

Following an introduction and context setting, each engagement posed a series of questions to participants that they could individually respond to through an interactive presentation tool, *Mentimeter*, allowing all views to be captured and analysed

KEY FINDINGS

Fundamental elements to ensure good first and last kilometre access include:

- A fit-for-purpose road network
- Any restrictions on network access are soundly evidence based, carefully targeted and regularly reviewed
- Clear and accessible advice on any network restrictions, including permit requirements, is readily available to all key stakeholders
- Trained and adequately resourced people are available to assess any permits in a timely and informed manner
- Effective communication and engagement with key stakeholders inform and clarify changes to network use and management

The outcomes sought from good first and last kilometre access are that safety is ensured and that undesirable impacts of freight, such as infrastructure damage or degraded amenity, are minimised.

1. Main first and last kilometre access issues include:

- Road network conditions, infrastructure and geometry
- Poor transport integration with land use, either as result of poor planning or changes to land use or transport over time

2. Key barriers encountered when working with stakeholders:

- Lack of knowledge about heavy vehicle regulations and requirements
- Resourcing of appropriately skilled and available people
- Understanding of key stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities

3. Collaborative relationships between industry and government add value and support improved access

- Improved knowledge and understanding between key stakeholders enables more informed advice and decision making

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4. *Improved first and last kilometre access includes:*

- Well planned access that minimises safety, amenity and other impacts on roads and adjacent land uses
- Good information easily available about any permit or network restrictions
- Efficient and productive logistics operations

5. *Priorities for improving first and last kilometre access include:*

- Shared understanding and improved collaboration between industry and government
- Better asset and freight vehicle data, and systems for recording, analysing, accessing and sharing information

6. *Opportunities for personal action to improve first and last kilometre access include:*

- Improving collaboration, engagement and communication
- Advocacy
- Training and development

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the key findings, the following recommendations have been identified to improve first and last kilometre access and overall supply chain access and efficiency. DoT and MAV are considering these findings and recommendations as part of future work programs and will likely require further engagement with key stakeholders.

a. *Build local government capability*

- Develop and deliver an “introduction to the management of heavy vehicles” course specifically for Victorian local government in conjunction with DoT and National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR)
- Promote access to the NHVR suite of educational resources and people
- Identify, share and maintain a system of “key contacts” to facilitate response of questions
- Facilitate field days where prioritised by industry and local government to improve knowledge and understanding of heavy vehicle operations and requirements
- Improve consideration of freight requirements in land use planning

b. *Foster collaboration between key stakeholders, including community*

- Support, promote and continue the quarterly regional NHVR engagements with local government and Regional Roads Victoria
- Consider expanding the regional NHVR engagements to metropolitan councils
- Consider local government participation in state-sponsored industry engagement activities and forums

c. *Expand available “as of right” network access*

- Continue DoT working with priority councils to expand road access through appropriate gazettal of priority roads for heavy vehicles
- Continue expansion and promotion of gazettal of state and national routes to encourage heavy vehicle access to use state and national routes
- Work with EPA to clarify appropriate noise requirements for loading and related facilities

d. *Improve access to information for route selection*

- Continue to support the development of centralised mapping and route planning with appropriate governance and engagement from local government. (Acknowledging the limited resources of some rural and regional councils)

e. *Improve availability of local government asset data to enable network access*

- Support the ongoing work of Strategic Local Government Asset Assessment Project
- Increase focus on opportunities to efficiently capture and analyse local government asset data, particularly bridges and culverts, to facilitate safe and evidence-based expansion of heavy vehicle access on priority routes