Development and Implementation of the Heavy Vehicle Access Framework

Background

- Road network is built to varying standards and capacity based on road use
- Major transport reforms over past 2 decades have focused on maximizing network capacity
- National transport and vehicle regulations formalized concept of Restricted Access Vehicles (RAV) to allow use of available network capacity by heavier and larger vehicles
- This encouraged greater use of RAV’s with ever increasing demand for network expansion in a seemingly ad hoc manner

Emerging problems

- Government does not have enough resources to keep pace with demand for route assessment and access
- Requests for RAV access (mainly B-Doubles) were becoming unrealistic e.g. residential streets and tourist routes not designed for heavy vehicles
- No defined plan, strategy or process to manage this situation

Key issues to be addressed

- Need policy direction
- Guidelines for RAV network development
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Address issues of seasonal access
- Clarify rules for assessment and network upgrading
- Improve regulatory regime and reduce red tape
Solution

- Develop a Heavy Vehicle Access Framework
- Concept endorsed in mid January 2004
- Draft concept framework developed Dec 2004 and distributed for internal comment
- 1st draft prepared and distributed for consultation in April 2005 to LGA’s and Councils, Industry and operators
- 2nd draft distributed June 2006
- Approved by the Minister for Transport 11 July 2006

Document content and availability

- Divided into 2 parts
  - Part A – Policy and Guidelines
  - Part B – Route network maps and categories
- Available on DTEI website for easy updating and access
- Document will be periodically updated to reflect ongoing changes
- Stakeholders advised of updates by email

HVAF elements

- Strategic approach to network development
- Authorised assessors for route assessment
- Auditing and review of approved routes
- Defined funding responsibilities
- Development of commodity routes
- Improved regulatory regime

Strategic network development

- Identify freight task
- Match route network and vehicle type to freight task
- Identify deficiencies or gaps in network
- Develop funding strategies to rectify
- Consistent with Federal Government approach for funding under AusLink

Authorised Assessors

- Increase available resources for route assessment on a user pays basis (e.g. DTEI, Councils or private assessors)
- Ensure accurate and consistent assessment across the State
- Manage risks and liability to State and Local Government
- List of assessors available on DTEI website

Auditing and review of approved routes

- Monitor use to ensure routes are maintained to desired standard and continue to provide intended function
- Need to review to maintain relevance to the freight task
- Manage risks and liabilities
  - Road safety
  - Infrastructure damage
**Funding responsibilities**

- Key routes – 24 / 7 Auslink and State arterial roads
  - Federal Government and DTEI
- General freight routes – 24 / 7 State and Local roads
  - DTEI and Councils
- Commodity routes – seasonal or low use access
  - Local roads (some State roads)
  - User may need to contribute to cost of upgrading

**Commodity routes**

- Fit for purpose networks matched to freight task related to seasonal or low frequency use
- No compromise on safety - risk assessment for infrastructure
- Specific commodity route guidelines used as distinct from national guidelines for key and general routes
- Typical conditions of access
  - Reduced speed limits and time restrictions
  - Driveway and sight distance improvements

**Improved regulatory regime**

- Conversion of permit to gazetted routes
- Eliminate unnecessary repetitive annual clearances and permit process – red tape reduction
- Implement a defined and transparent route assessment and approval process
- Consistent with national transport reform agenda
- Permits retained only for exceptions on technical grounds

**Key principles**

- Minister for Transport/DTEI responsible for approval of routes and ensuring RAV’s only operate on safe and suitable routes
- Roads will not be approved or gazetted without the agreement of the road owner/ manager (DTEI and Councils)

**Status of implementation**

- Review of permit routes – reduction of 3000 permits by December 2007 (was July 2007)
- Linked to gazettal of commodity routes
- Established list of Authorised Assessors
- Refining process for route assessment and approvals in consultation with local government
- Developing GIS data base for managing auditing and review process