

**Submission  
No 33**

## **INQUIRY INTO HEAVY VEHICLE SAFETY AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY**

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I often hear that the government put safety first; yet in Australia, we are allowing heavier and heavier trucks to travel in our towns and cities, without any means to protect us from out of control trucks.

At bridges, sharp bends, motorway and (sometimes) schools, there are guard rails and crash barriers separating trucks from people, homes and other cars travelling in the opposite direction. Most of these barriers are only designed to withstand the crash force of a ute. Only a few barriers may hold back a 36 tonne truck, and these barriers can only withstand a grazing hit at a reduced speed (~80 km/h) from the truck.

These are overseas design standards, however in Australia we have some of the world's longest and heaviest trucks. From the Australia's National Heavy Vehicle Regulator website, I found that a 'common' 19 meter semi trailer can already weight 42.5 tonne. A 'common' 25 meter B-Double can reach 62.5 tonne. These trucks already exceed the design limit of the crash barriers, so these trucks might crash through the barriers and into someone's home.

Yet the risk might escalate further. I have heard there are plans to allow road trains to operate east of the Newell Highway, along Pacific Highway and Hume Highway. These trucks can be 36 meter long, and weight more than 82 tonnes. As NRMS has pointed out, they weigh 74 times more than a family car, and that overtaking one is the equivalent of passing nine cars.

Some people might say these road trains are 'the safest truck on the road', however there are no such thing as a perfect truck driver. When the truck driver lost control of this road train on the Hume Highway, can any crash barrier stop this road train from crossing the median and into the opposite traffic? What about the homes along the motorways in Sydney?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-25/roadtrains-to-hit-suburban-nsw-roads/8843880>

Until there is a way to protect everyone else from an out of control truck, long distance freight should stay on the safer transport: train.

I have also noticed submissions from garbage truck industry, and the recent crash in Dee Why come to mind. As shown in NSW Centre for Road Safety 'Be Truck Aware' video, trucks have huge blind spots. London decided to tackle this problem directly, by proposing to ban trucks with poor driver vision from 2024. Trucks with good driver visibility are already available, as shown in this Transport for London webpage. NSW should follow this example.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/deliveries-in-london/delivering-safely/safer-trucks>