



Transport for NSW

Responses to post-hearing questions

Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport and the Arts

Pressures on heavy vehicle drivers and their
impact in New South Wales

Hearing Date – 5 October 2023

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTION 1.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might direct some of my questions regarding the heavy vehicle engagement report that you included as part of your submission. In particular, you speak of a comprehensive audit of the rest stops against the Austroads guidelines. Within that comprehensive audit, how many of those rest stops actually complied with the Austroads guidelines for heavy vehicle rest stops?

SCOTT GREENOW: So far the results that we have relate to the regional part of New South Wales; the gap analysis for Greater Sydney is still being completed. But from a regional sense, it was identified that there was the opportunity for 486 potential new rest stops and—

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I am asking more about the existing rest stops. How many of them actually complied with the guidelines? You say in the engagement report that you did a comprehensive audit of heavy vehicle rest stops against the Austroads guidelines. To me, that says you looked at the rest stops, looked up the guidelines and said, "Do they match up? Are those rest stops actually adhering to what Austroads says is best practice in design?" That's what I'm trying to get at: How many of those existing ones actually comply? We had evidence from truck drivers today that they seem to think that none of them really do. I would rather take some evidence from a comprehensive audit if it has been done that provides a bit of clarity to that evidence we received earlier. If you don't have it, I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

SCOTT GREENOW: I don't have the figure in that format. I do have a number that have been identified for a potential upgrade. I don't have the exact answer to your question, but I can tell you that 356 rest stops out of the assessed rest stop network were identified as requiring a potential upgrade.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Is that implying that because they need an upgrade they don't comply with the standards, or is it just that they might be rundown—the toilet might be broken or the like? On notice, can you—

SCOTT GREENOW: Absolutely, yes.

ANSWER:

In 2022, an assessment of the State Road network was undertaken within Regional and Outer Metropolitan NSW utilising Austroads' guidance. 876 sites were assessed including formal and informal rest stops. The assessment found:

- 520 existing rest stops provided a level of service consistent with Austroads guidance.
- 356 existing rest stops were assessed as having a level service deficiency according to the Austroads guidance.

QUESTION 2.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Talking more broadly about road construction, we've heard evidence to suggest that obviously the quality of the road impacts a driver's experience and potential fatigue on the road. Some of the evidence suggests that in road construction there seems to be a bit of a disregard for the guidelines as well from Transport for NSW in terms of design. Can you explain why Transport for NSW, when in designing roads and then contracting it out to your contractors, would disregard the guidelines? Can you give us an explanation as to why you would do such a thing? Given that Austroads has come and told us that what they are putting out is best practice, it seems strange that you would ignore best practice.

SCOTT GREENOW: Unfortunately I don't have the information to be able to answer it fully at the moment. What I can say is that roads are designed in relation to the Austroads guides, and there are many factors that are taken into account when those decisions are made. I can provide extra information outside of this.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can you provide examples as to why roads would be built outside those guidelines? People who are more passionate about the guidelines than I am have bombarded me with examples of roads that don't meet those guidelines. I'm just trying to get my head around why, broadly speaking, you would disregard the guidelines and do something outside of it.

SCOTT GREENOW: I understand the question. I wouldn't be able to provide a sufficient response, but on notice I can provide information for you.

ANSWER:

Austroads is an association of the Australian and New Zealand transport agencies, representing all levels of government, including Transport for NSW (TfNSW).

TfNSW utilises the resources made available by Austroads, including:

- strategic research to address current and emerging issues.
- technical guides and tools for the design, maintenance and operation of road networks.

For the design of roads, TfNSW has adopted the 'Austroads Guide to Road Design' and other Austroads Guides with minimal exceptions as outlined in the TfNSW supplement. The supplements can be found on the TfNSW standards portal:

<https://standards.transport.nsw.gov.au/search-standard/>.

While TfNSW is committed to applying the Austroads Guides (with the exceptions listed in the TfNSW Supplement), it is worth noting that:

- The Austroads Guides are developed as guides for use by practitioners, not standards. Included in the Austroads Guides are recommended values for road design parameters.
- The Austroads Guides are developed primarily for the State network, and the application for the local government network is limited and outside of the control of TfNSW.
- Existing roads are built to the standards applicable at the time of design and construction and for the traffic volume and traffic mix projected at the time of design and construction.

It is not always possible to design roads to the recommended values included in the Austroads Guides and the TfNSW Supplements.

Factors that contribute to the decision to depart from these recommended values include:

- a. Physical constraints due to location: adjacent land use, geographical situation, property boundaries, and other constraints often make a compliant solution technically impossible.
- b. Resource constraints: it is not always practical, feasible or economical to build a conforming solution as this would not present the best outcome for the NSW community.

TfNSW has adopted a rigorous concession application and approval process for the authorisation of departures against its standards, including the Austroads Guides and the TfNSW supplements, to ensure:

- safety risk management, demonstrated by an argument with evidence that safety will be ensured so far as is reasonably practicable (SFAIRP) and that appropriate and effective controls have been identified and incorporated.
- value creation, demonstrated by an evidenced argument of optimal asset management outcomes across the 'whole-of-life' of the asset.

QUESTION 3.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: In line with that, how often does Transport for NSW audit their contractors in terms of their skills and knowledge and expertise in building roads? Obviously Transport for NSW has contracted a lot of that out. How often does Transport for NSW actually audit the people who are actually building the roads as to whether they've got the necessary skills and expertise to do so?

SCOTT GREENOW: Unfortunately, I don't have the detail at hand to be able to provide it to you. However, I understand that there is a robust process that Transport for NSW undertakes whenever they engage —

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Perhaps, on notice, could you give us an outline of that robust process?

SCOTT GREENOW: On notice, I can provide more information, yes.

ANSWER:

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) ensures that all contractors meet the National Prequalification System standards under the Traffic Signal Prequalification and Registration Scheme for Construction Industry Contractors.

Civil construction companies are able to apply for suitable categories listed under the Scheme, at their own discretion.

An applicant's technical capability is assessed against the standards. Once prequalified, the applicant contractor is listed on the TfNSW website. Each prequalification is valid for three years and all prequalified companies are required to submit a full application to renew their prequalification after this period.

TfNSW specifies the minimum prequalification standards in our tender advertisements on the eTendering website and in tender documents. All tenderers must meet the minimum prequalification requirements to submit a conforming tender. After a tender closes, the Tender Evaluation Committee assesses each tender submission and considers relevant prequalification when identifying a preferred tenderer. Post tender meetings are also organised with potential tenderers to clarify any matters of concern TfNSW may have prior to a relevant tender proceeding to award.

TfNSW monitors all contractors throughout each project and prepares a Contractor Performance Report (CPR) in line with the specific contract requirements. Typically, this would be every six (6) months. All CPRs include the following:

- Milestone completion;
- Collaboration;
- Community & stakeholder engagement;
- Contract management;
- Work, health and safety outcomes;
- Quality control;
- Environmental risk management;
- Subcontractor performance, and
- Traffic management.

TfNSW continually engages with contractors to raise and address issues, audit performance and non-conformances, and ensure lessons learnt are aggregated. This work is also considered in conjunction with CPRs during the assessment for prequalification of future contracts.

QUESTION 4.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: That's a bit longer than some of these. I am just intrigued that back last year, before the election, they weren't included on that stakeholder engagement list. We have heard a lot today about training. Mr Faraway asked a question about competency-based training, which is very important, and where things are going with the Austroads consultation. Could you explain current practice around training for heavy vehicle drivers, any involvement that Transport for NSW has in that?

SALLY WEBB: Certainly. I understand there are 16 RTOs who are engaged and additionally drivers can undertake testing at service centres if they don't have access to an RTO.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: And what is Transport for NSW's role? Overseeing it?

SALLY WEBB: I understand that we are overseeing it, but I will need to take that on notice to obtain further information for you regarding the exact role of the team in that.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: That would be great.

ANSWER:

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) administers the Heavy Vehicle Competency Based Assessment (HVCBA) and provides readiness resources for drivers seeking to undertake Heavy Vehicle driver testing through a Service NSW centre.

TfNSW contracts 17 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to deliver the HVCBA program and is responsible for determining minimum training course times conducted under the program. Participants are required to log mandatory training and assessment hours before they can take the Final Competency Assessment (FCA). The following training course hours are required under the HVCBA:

Licence Class	Minimum Training Course Hours
LR	5 hours
MR	5 hours
HR (Auto/Synchro Gearbox)	5 hours
HR (Manual Gearbox)	6 hours
HC (Auto/Synchro Gearbox)	6 hours
HC (Manual Gearbox)	6 hours
MC	8 hours

RTOs determine their own pricing schedules for heavy vehicle training and assessment costs. TfNSW conducts audits of RTOs under contract, and a procurement process for RTOs to deliver the HVCBA is undertaken every 3-5 years.

A TfNSW heavy vehicle driving test is required to gain a licence in areas without access to HVCBA, annually to renew an MC licence when the driver is aged over 70 and annually to renew any heavy vehicle licence when the driver is aged over 80.

QUESTION 5.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: I wanted some more information. When I was reading your submission, you say there are over 1,350 heavy vehicle rest stop locations that are classified as either formal or informal. Do you know how many of each there are?

SCOTT GREENOW: Unfortunately, I don't have that detail here, but I can provide that after.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: If you can take that on notice, that would be great.

ANSWER:

There are 585 formal and 912 informal rest stop locations.