

# Heavy Vehicle Access Policy

Corangamite Shire

June 2023



**CORANGAMITE  
SHIRE**

# Council Policy



## Heavy Vehicle Access

### Introduction

The use of B-doubles, Higher Mass Limit, oversize and overmass vehicles on local roads within Corangamite Shire is dependent on the operator obtaining a permit issued by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR). Within the process the NHVR refers the permit application to Council for consent.

High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs), such as B-Doubles and Higher Mass Limit Vehicles, are important to the efficiency of the freight task in Corangamite Shire. The larger capacity of these vehicles reduces the number of vehicles required for a given amount of freight.

Access to the local road network should be considered where it can be demonstrated by consistent assessment that these vehicles can operate safely with other traffic and where road infrastructure is suitable.

### Purpose

This policy will provide a clear direction and process to ensure consistency in assessing access to the local road network by B-Doubles, Higher Mass Limit Vehicles, oversize and overmass vehicles.

### Scope

This policy applies to the assessment of all applications from companies or individuals for the use of HPFVs (e.g. B-Doubles or Higher Mass Limit Vehicles) and oversize and overmass vehicles on the local road network in Corangamite Shire.

### Definitions

**NHVR** is the “one stop shop” agency established by the Federal Government following the passing of the Heavy Vehicle National Law. for each state and territory. It is the point of contact for heavy vehicle operators for all heavy vehicle enquiries and road access applications. The NHVR considers requests for heavy vehicles access and makes the final decision after referring to councils for consent when local roads are proposed to be accessed as part of the applications.

**High Productivity Freight Vehicles** is the umbrella term for vehicle configurations that are permitted to operate after gaining approvals through the national Performance Based Standards (PBS) scheme. These vehicles must comply with approved safety and infrastructure protection performance measures.

HPFVs represent the next generation in freight transport, with the ability to shift more freight more efficiently with greater environmental and safety performance. HPFVs can range from specialist rigid trucks, through to multi-combination articulated configurations and B-Doubles. Longer B-Doubles are examples of next generation HPFVs

**PBS** is a national management scheme to ‘match’ vehicles to roads. It offers the potential for heavy vehicle operators to achieve higher productivity and safety through innovative vehicle design.

PBS sets minimum vehicle ‘performance’ standards to ensure trucks are stable on the road and can turn and stop safely. These standards focus on how well a vehicle behaves on the road rather than its overall length or mass. PBS vehicle approvals are issued by the NHVR following assessments by accredited PBS assessors and reviews by a PBS Review Panel.

A **B-double** is defined as a combination consisting of a prime mover towing two semitrailers. The prime mover and the two trailers are combined by two turntable assemblies. The double articulation is the main distinguishing feature of a B-double.

From 1 July 1999 mass limit increases were implemented in Victoria. Higher Mass Limits allow for increases to general axle mass limits provided the vehicle is fitted with road friendly suspensions. These include some air and steel suspension types.

### References

Road Safety Act 1986

Heavy Vehicle National Law 2016

Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation

### Policy Detail

When Council receives an application from the NHVR for heavy vehicle access to the municipal local road network by HPFVs, oversize or overmass vehicles:

- Council’s Assets Planning team will assess the travel route of each application on its merits, based on the NHVR’s Approved Guidelines for Granting Access. The route assessment for the heavy vehicle will take into consideration, but will not be limited to, the following:
  - The vehicle’s ability to interact with surrounding traffic
  - The vehicle’s ability to interact with the infrastructure and road environment
  - Dimensions of the road such as its width and length of stretches of road
  - Location of infrastructure on or near the road pavement
  - Usual traffic conditions of the road – such as what vehicles use the road eg. school buses.
  - The use of properties near the road – for example does the road pass a property used by vulnerable road users such as children
  - Sight distances for other road users
  - Clearance zones for the road
  - The results of road safety assessments, audits and road accident history
  - Load capacities of bridge, major culverts and road pavements
- Council will engage in a consultation process with relevant stakeholders where it is deemed necessary; and
- Council will respond to NHVR with either consent to the application subject to appropriate conditions being added to the permit, recommendation of an alternative route or consent not given with reasons provided.

For the more heavily trafficked strategic freight routes on the local road network Council’s Asset Planning team will add where suitable these roads to pre-approved NHVR lists of routes where a permit is not required to be applied for B Double and HML vehicle travel.

In relations to requests from NHVR for Council consent for use of alternative HPFV with HML greater than the current load limits, the same permit application process as described above will be applied. In addition to the assessment steps detailed above, Council will also take into consideration with the alternative HPFV and increased loads:

- the proposed configuration of axles of the vehicle
- its individual axle loadings
- its swept path when turning
- its potential impact on road surfacing when turning.
- whether or not approval has been provided by VicRoads to the HML increase on the arterial road network

As part of this assessment Council will also undertake strength tests of relevant bridges and major culverts where required to confirm whether or not they have the capacity to cater for the increased loadings.

External funding, including contributions from business and industry where there is a commercial benefit, will be sought to support undertaking these assessments.

Should an increase in HML be warranted across the network or specific roads, approval by Council's Asset Planning team will be provided.

Routes which are identified as requiring assessment and /or upgrade and as a consequence funding, will be discussed with Council during the annual budget development.

### **Reference to Guidelines**

Approved Guidelines For Granting Access – National Heavy Vehicle Regulator – February 2014.

### **Review Date**

June 2026

It is considered that this Policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)*.

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires Council to undertake gender impact assessments when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service which has a direct and significant impact on the public. This policy will not have a direct and significant public impact and a Gender Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

