

HEAVY VEHICLE SAFETY STRATEGY

2021 - 2025





Foreword

We're seeing encouraging trends in heavy vehicle road safety, with an average of almost four per cent fewer lives lost in heavy truck crashes each year over the past three years. However, we believe there's much more that can be done to drive this number down.

Significant safety gains lie ahead – provided we, the industry and its supply chain, government and the community work together to make them happen. Effective partnerships will be pivotal to delivering improved safety outcomes – not just for industry but for all those who use our roads.

The *NHVR Heavy Vehicle Safety Strategy 2021-2025* (the Strategy) sets out our strategic ambitions to lead industry towards a safer future. It supports our agenda to create positive change in individual behaviour and industry safety culture, and to drive uptake of a modern, safer heavy vehicle fleet that reduces the likelihood and impact of crashes.

The Strategy not only encapsulates all that we're currently doing, it also plots a course for the next five years.

As a modern, risk-based regulator, we target the greatest safety risks on our roads by using data-driven intelligence. This enables us to better identify non-compliant behaviours and reduce the rate of repeat offending. Greater data-sharing between entities will increase this capability and provide a more complete national picture.

However, we recognise that education and the encouragement of better safety management practices are just as powerful as enforcement, and so we're increasing our efforts in this regard. We're also focusing more attention on promoting the adoption of safety technology by industry and ensuring regulation supports ground-breaking, life-saving innovation.

Furthering our initiatives to educate light vehicle drivers how to safely share the road with heavy vehicles will also be a key priority into the future.

Together we can make a difference, and we look forward to working with our customers, regulatory partners and communities to save lives on Australia's roads.

The Hon Duncan Gay
Chair of the Board

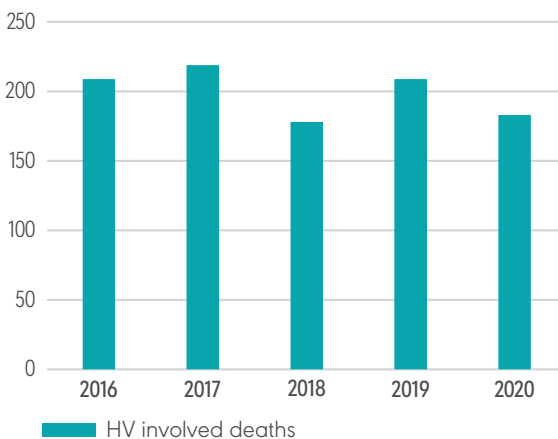
Sal Petrocchio
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

A NHVR primary objective is to promote public safety.

Through its commitment to reducing the number of crashes, fatalities and serious injuries across the heavy vehicle road transport industry and its supply chain, the NHVR will contribute to achieving the targets outlined in the *National Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030*.

Heavy Vehicle Involved Fatalities – Australia



Source: BITRE, Fatal Heavy Vehicle Crashes Quarterly Bulletin, October to December 2020

The NHVR is setting an ambitious agenda to:

Create positive change in individual behaviours and culture to improve safety.

Drive uptake of a modern, safer heavy vehicle fleet that reduces the likelihood and impact of crashes.

Influence road network design and use to support road safety.



Partnerships - The NHVR approach to heavy vehicle safety

The NHVR delivers a regulatory model that provides clear accountabilities, and encourages and empowers the entire heavy vehicle industry, including buses and specialist vehicles, to embrace a positive and innovative safety culture.

The NHVR focuses on:

- partnering with industry and the supply chain to lead behavioural and cultural change that improves safety
- collaborating with industry, regulatory partners, including jurisdictional transport agencies and police, and government to drive a consistent national safety approach
- acquiring, sharing and using data to lead decision-making in relation to safety
- educating the broader community about shared responsibility for road safety
- targeting regulatory activities towards unsafe and high-risk drivers, operators and Chain of Responsibility parties.

Road safety is not simply a road transport problem. Transport safety outcomes are determined by many factors, including the:

- actions of transport workers
- decisions of transport operators
- functioning of the transport supply chain
- state of heavy vehicles and equipment
- adequacy of road infrastructure
- behaviours of people outside the transport industry, including the general public.

The responsibility for improved safety outcomes is shared across industry, the supply chain, government and the community. Other enforcement and regulatory partners have key powers and responsibilities, and collect key information, that can deliver improved safety outcomes for the public in relation to heavy vehicles.

Data-driven, risk-based enforcement underpins the Strategy. However, the shared accountability for road safety highlights the need for greater collaboration and cooperation between the NHVR and other road safety stakeholders to achieve improved heavy vehicle safety outcomes.

The Strategy lays the foundation to move beyond reliance on traditional compliance and enforcement approaches to embrace new types of regulatory activity that will deliver long-term safety outcomes for the heavy vehicle industry and other road users. For the NHVR, this means expanding its efforts beyond traditional regulatory responses, to include greater collaboration with key regulatory partners, delivering promotional and education campaigns, proactively influencing policy changes, and other non-traditional approaches to dealing with heavy vehicle road safety.

Collaboration and understanding across the supply chain are critical to influencing road safety outcomes. The NHVR is uniquely positioned to 'join the dots' to help improve safety in the heavy vehicle industry.



Create positive change in behaviours and culture to improve safety

NHVR priorities:

- Support industry to manage human factors that contribute to heavy vehicle crashes, with a specific focus on fatigue.
- Educate, inform and empower operators and the supply chain to improve their organisational safety culture:
 - support the uptake of safety management systems
 - address driver health (including mental health and acute health) and other human factors that play a role in heavy vehicle safety
 - enable Chain of Responsibility parties to successfully discharge their legislative safety duty obligations.
- Undertake visible and consistent compliance activities:
 - ensure the right person is held legally responsible for non-compliance with the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL).
- Improve road users' understanding of driving safely around heavy vehicles and promote road safety awareness initiatives about sharing the road.

The role of human factors in heavy vehicle safety

Human factors contribute to almost all heavy vehicle crashes. Motivations, habits, external factors and context-specific triggers all contribute to how people behave. Changing specific unsafe behaviours can be difficult. The NHVR is seeking to enable industry to lead behavioural change in key human factors areas that affect heavy vehicle safety.

Human factors that relate to heavy vehicle operation include driver fatigue, being distracted while driving, driver fitness and impairment, pressure to complete a driving task within a specified timeframe, driver competency and situational experience and awareness.

Mental health is a significant issue impacting the Australian road transport industry and broader community. Mental health issues can have widespread impacts upon a person's life, including their employment. The NHVR supports an 'industry-for-industry' approach to addressing mental health issues. It will partner with organisations to advocate for the prevention and control of mental health disorders in truck drivers and logistics workers nationally, and promotion of healthier options around diet, exercise and individual wellbeing.

The link between human behaviours and industry and supply chain culture

The behaviour of individuals is strongly influenced by the culture that exists within their organisation, industry or society in general. A positive safety culture can result in improved organisational safety and performance outcomes. Expectations, rewards and consequences are all components of workplace culture that can impact on individual behaviours. A positive safety culture thrives when employees know the appropriate safety behaviours that lead to rewards.



Organisational cultural change is often necessary to support individual behavioural changes that reduce the risk of crashes and crash severity. The NHVR recommends that all operations should have established safety management systems, suited to the size and complexity of their business operations.

Long-term, sustainable and ongoing improvements to safety outcomes in the heavy vehicle industry depend on behavioural change, underpinned by organisational cultural change, that:

- supports drivers to manage their fatigue
- improves the physical, mental and acute health of drivers
- improves driver fitness, including the management of impaired driving
- improves competency in driving and loading tasks
- improves driver awareness of vulnerable road users, including cyclists and pedestrians
- reduces distraction from drivers' work environments
- reduces time pressures on drivers that contribute to unsafe on-road behaviour
- encourages drivers to drive at appropriate speeds.

How the NHVR will change behaviours and industry and supply chain culture

The NHVR will empower industry participants to deliver behavioural and organisational cultural change that leads to continuous improvement in safety by promoting:

- effective fatigue risk management systems to provide flexibility to industry and better manage fatigue safety risks
- the uptake of fatigue and distraction detection technology.

It will also provide clear guidance to individual parties on:

- the roles and obligations they have under the HVNL safety duty
- tools to embed a positive safety culture and to successfully fulfil the safety duties for which they are responsible.

The NHVR wants to embed road safety thinking as business as usual for everyone, by including working in partnership with stakeholders to change behaviours to align with safer practices across industry and the community.

Implementation and appropriate use of a safety management system can be one of the most effective ways for organisations to embed a positive safety culture and comply with their legislative safety duty obligations. Because industries and organisations vary significantly, there is no one-size-fits-all safety improvement system that meets the needs of all organisations.

Delivering visible, targeted, compliance activities

The NHVR will implement a national regulatory model that delivers a risk-based, intelligence-led regulatory approach that targets the greatest safety risks.

The NHVR's risk-based approach to regulatory activities involves setting priorities based on the likelihood of adverse outcomes and the potential seriousness of these outcomes. Once a risk has been identified, the NHVR's activities are tailored and deployed in proportion to the safety risk.

The NHVR recognises the importance of consistent application of the HVNL. It will ensure visible, targeted enforcement is deployed and directed at those drivers, operators and supply chain parties that are not willing to comply with the HVNL, and pose a serious safety risk.

Influencing other road users' behaviour around heavy vehicles

The NHVR will undertake education and information campaigns with other parties aimed at non-heavy-vehicle road users to improve driving behaviours around heavy vehicles.

Lack of understanding about driving a light vehicle near a heavy vehicle, including required stopping distances and field-of-vision limitations, can contribute to on-road interactions that increase safety risk. Light vehicles overtaking heavy vehicles, when heavy vehicles are turning or travelling on a motorway, also create situations where the risk of a crash is increased.



Drive uptake of a modern, safer heavy vehicle fleet that reduces the likelihood and impact of crashes

NHVR priorities:

- Enable industry to increase heavy vehicle safety technology uptake.
- Support the uptake of newer, safer, more-productive vehicles.
- Target operators that do not properly maintain heavy vehicles.

Increase industry uptake of safety technology

The NHVR will:

- implement the NHVR *Vehicle Safety and Environmental Technology Uptake Plan*
- identify changes to Australian Design Rules that may expedite safety technology uptake.

As heavy vehicle designs evolve, the development of new technology is playing a growing role in improving safety in the heavy vehicle industry. Technology specifically intended to assist the driver to safely operate the vehicle has also emerged and is becoming more common in heavy vehicles. Safety technology systems have the proven potential to assist the driver of a vehicle to operate the vehicle in a safer manner, and to reduce the number and severity of road crashes.

While the available technologies have progressively increased over recent years, the adoption of these technologies into the heavy vehicle fleet remains slow. The NHVR strongly supports the uptake of new technologies in the Australian heavy vehicle market, and the reduction of operational barriers to help industry, and the community realise the benefits of a more modern fleet.

Continue to support the uptake of safer and more-productive vehicles

The NHVR will empower industry to increase the range of innovative, safer vehicles adopted via a reformed Performance Based Standards scheme (PBS).

PBS vehicles deliver significant safety and productivity benefits. Supporting the industry to innovate in this area is a key priority for the NHVR. The NHVR will implement key improvements to incentivise industry uptake and accelerate growth in the PBS scheme.

To ensure the heavy vehicle industry can meet the country's growing freight demand, an enhanced focus on a reformed PBS scheme will allow more goods to be delivered with fewer vehicles, in a safe manner. The NHVR will build the new scheme on the established PBS scheme.

Vehicle maintenance

The NHVR will establish a national heavy vehicle inspection framework to identify and target operators that do not maintain heavy vehicles appropriately.

Ongoing maintenance of heavy vehicles plays a role in reducing the likelihood of a crash occurring. Ensuring vehicles comply with heavy vehicle maintenance standards is fundamental to heavy vehicle safety, and is therefore an essential part of the national heavy vehicle regulatory regime.



Influence road network design and use to support road safety

NHVR priorities:

- Collaborate with decision-makers to help design and deliver infrastructure that is safe for heavy vehicles:
 - provide information and advice to jurisdictions on heavy vehicle interactions with infrastructure to help inform future safety-related infrastructure decisions.
- Partner with stakeholders to improve the number and quality of rest areas.
- Work with road managers to improve network access and road use to support heavy vehicle and other road user safety.

Safe network design

The NHVR will seek involvement in, and provide input into, related policy decisions that affect improved and innovative safety outcomes.

Road network design and infrastructure are key factors in facilitating safe heavy vehicle movements.

Design standards should be progressively and suitably updated to provide access to modern vehicles that are safer, more productive and better for the environment.

Number and quality of rest stops

The NHVR will provide advice to road transport agencies on the availability and quality of facilities that assist heavy vehicle drivers to manage fatigue.

Fatigue is a problem for many heavy vehicle drivers in the long-distance transport industry. While there are a range of initiatives that are directed at heavy vehicle drivers to address fatigue-related issues, it has been proposed that good-quality rest stops could reduce cases of heavy vehicle crashes caused by driver fatigue, inattention, and vehicle or load-related issues.

Safe heavy vehicle road use

The NHVR will work in collaboration with industry and governments to identify safe and consistent access solutions for the current and future freight task.

Industry and road managers have a role to play by ensuring the right heavy vehicles are using the right road at the right time. A range of factors may lead to operators taking unlawful actions and using roads without an appropriate authority/permit. Inappropriate road use can lead to increased risk to community safety and may compromise infrastructure, including bridges.

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