

**John Graham**

Special Minister of State Minister for Roads Minister for Arts Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy Minister for Jobs and Tourism



## Media Release

# Overheight truck Taskforce to reduce tunnel breaches

Friday, 23 June 2023

The NSW Government has established a Taskforce responsible for reducing the number of overheight truck incidents in Sydney's road tunnel network.

The Taskforce stands up as Transport for NSW has taken possession of its first referrals of overheight heavy vehicle breaches following a deal with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) that allows Transport to pursue more offenders and get trucks off the road for up to six months via registration suspensions.

Led by Transport for NSW, the Taskforce brings together representatives from NSW Police, the NHVR, Road Freight NSW and the Transport Workers' Union to drive strategies to reduce overheight breaches, educate truck drivers on load and route management, and improve operational responses to get traffic moving when incidents do occur.

Established under direction of Minister for Roads John Graham, the group will meet each fortnight and will initially run for six months but can be extended if necessary.

Areas of focus are improving operational responses and enforcement when breaches occur and traffic is affected, as well as improving industry education and communication to get the Government's zero tolerance message through to more drivers.

The Taskforce has been established as the NSW Government moves to cancel the registrations of more trucks that breach height restrictions and repeatedly interrupt traffic, particularly around the Sydney Harbour Tunnel.

Under an agreement with the NHVR, all overheight breaches are being automatically referred to Transport for assessment of sanctions that include removal of a heavy vehicle's registration for up to six months.

The NHVR has referred four overheight cases to Transport since the agreement was struck:

- A June 2 incident in which an articulated flatbed truck closed traffic on two southbound lanes of the Warringah Freeway near the entrance to the Sydney Harbour Tunnel for 19 minutes. The truck was measured as 4.42 metres which is above the allowable height of 4.3 metres. Transport is assessing the matter
- A June 13 incident at the Sydney Harbour Tunnel HT, which was a detection but not determined as an incident

- A June 13 incident at the Cooks River Tunnel in which an eastbound truck was stopped at the airport tunnel on June 13. The driver pulled into the breakdown bay and did not affect traffic or damage infrastructure. This incident has been assessed as not meeting the criteria as “aggravated” and will not lead to a loss of registration
- A June 16 incident in which a truck became stuck in the northbound entrance to the Cooks River (Sydney Airport) Tunnel. The vehicle hit sprinklers, activating a deluge system and was later measured as 4.7 metres which is above the maximum 4.4 metre clearance of the tunnel. Transport is assessing the matter

The NSW Government recently approved the deployment of \$5 million in infrastructure upgrades, which will include moving sensors further back along the Warringah Freeway to ensure heavy vehicle drivers can take earlier evasive action to avoid blocking traffic at the Harbour Tunnel portal.

The overheight truck Taskforce will consider surveillance and other technologies that could be further deployed to detect heavy vehicles from getting close to tunnel portals before being stopped.

**Minister Graham said:**

“I thank Police, the freight industry, the union and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator for joining Transport to take action against what has been one of the most persistent problems on Sydney’s roads for years on end.

“We are determined to keep the focus on this issue and drive down the number of overheight truck breaches around tunnels and I welcome the first referrals by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

“We need to send a message loud and clear that there are severe consequences for going overheight into a tunnel. No company or individual can afford to have an income-making heavy vehicle off the road for six months.

“The public has lost patience with these unnecessary incidents that are repeatedly bringing traffic to a halt.

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