

**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****Removing registrations of overheight trucks to improve tunnel compliance**

Thursday, 8 June 2023

The NSW Government is working to get overheight trucks off the road by enforcing registration stripping of heavy vehicles that close Sydney tunnels.

The Government is also strengthening advance warning systems and raising awareness through driver education and roadside compliance operations.

Minister for Roads John Graham said the Government is taking action against overheight trucks that are repeatedly compromising the safety of motorists and testing the patience of the entire city.

The NSW Government has this week asked the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) to work closely with Transport for NSW to initiate more investigations and bring charges against trucking companies and owners under “aggravated circumstances” provisions.

Mr Graham said prosecutions of companies under the rules, including heavy vehicle chain of responsibility provisions, had so far been limited and the NSW Government was keen to see more action and referrals from the NHVR that allows Transport to take an offending truck off the road for up to six months.

Since August 2022, when heavy vehicle regulatory functions were transferred to the NHVR, just four registration sanctions have been completed against trucking companies by Transport for NSW on referral from the NHVR for overheight breaches in relation to tunnels in NSW and of these one was thrown out by the court.

To enhance warning systems for the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, the NSW Government has approved the immediate deployment of \$5 million in infrastructure upgrades, sensors, signage and enhanced slip ways for trucks that approach tunnels with overheight loads.

For the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, this will involve moving warning signs and sensors further back along the Warringah Freeway to ensure heavy vehicle drivers can take earlier evasive action to avoid blocking traffic at the tunnel portal or worse.

This work will start in July and is intended to be fully completed by December.

Police will continue to focus on roadside compliance on overheight trucks, targeting key corridors such as the Sydney Harbour Tunnel.

A social media education campaign in collaboration with the NHVR was recently launched.

The NSW Government has ruled out closing the Harbour Tunnel to trucks altogether because the majority of heavy vehicles are already prevented from crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge due to mass constraints.

Closing the tunnel to heavy vehicles would precipitate truck drivers using alternative routes across Sydney that in some cases would add 42 kilometres to the current route between Port Botany and the M1 at Wahroonga and involve many more truck movements through Sydney suburbs.

Recently a number of penalties for over-height vehicles were increased, some were doubled. These include:

- On-the-spot fine for over height trucks entering Sydney tunnels: \$4,097
- Demerit points for the offence are 12 (of maximum 13 points for a heavy vehicle driver)
- Suspension period for a driver's licence up to six months
- Registration suspension period for trucks up to six months.

**Minister Graham said:**

“Good drivers know the height of their truck and stick to the tunnel height limit.

“Unfortunately, a small minority of drivers are holding the city to ransom.

“They are neither professional nor responsible, and they are continuing to ignore the message about overhead height restrictions. They are threatening the safety and the patience of motorists.

“My message to that handful of bad drivers and their truck companies is you will be hit with the harshest penalties possible, more often.

“We have agreed to work with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to increase awareness amongst truck drivers, but also to crack down on trucking companies who breach these rules. We will be taking their trucks off the roads.

“One thing I do not want to do, is to close the Harbour tunnel for the vast majority of good truck drivers. That would simply send trucks into our suburbs, creating city-wide chaos and congestion.”

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