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Win for Higher Productivity Freight Vehicle Access to the Bolte Bridge

After months of discussions and significant infrastructure assessments, conditions have been published for access to the Bolte Bridge by Higher Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs) during the longer-term closures of Wurundjeri Way as part of the West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP) construction works.

The HPFV detours will be in place from the **night of 6 October 2023 to the morning of 2 December 2023** due to the continuous closure of the Wurundjeri Way / Dudley Street intersection. Wurundjeri Way is due to close again in early 2024 for further works at the Dudley Street intersection (dates to be advised).

“This is a **significant “win” for CTAA and the container logistics road freight sector.** The alternative would have been severely restricted vehicle weights for carrying containers between the Swanson Precinct / the western suburbs and Webb Dock in the Port of Melbourne on alternative routes such as the weight-restricted West Gate Bridge.” observed CTAA Director, Neil Chambers.

“CTAA and our Alliance companies worked closely with the West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP) team, Transurban, the Victorian Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA), the Department of Transport & Planning (DTP), the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) and the Port of Melbourne to achieve these route detour outcomes.”

“We didn’t get everything we wanted. However, having unrestricted access for HPFVs such as A-doubles and Super B-doubles up to 85.5 tonnes Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) will maintain transport productivity for many container transport operators during the traditional peak container season.”

“In turn, this will benefit freight forwarders, importers and exporters by holding transport costs lower than they otherwise would have been.”

“It’s disappointing that HPFVs operating above 85.5t GVM (up to 117t) will not be able to use the detour during the day and will be restricted to using windows of nighttime hours of operation.”

“This means that the operators of these combinations, who mainly transport heavier export & import containers between the Swanson Precinct of the Port of Melbourne and Webb Dock in the south, will need to adjust their operations to either reduce their gross loadings per vehicle to less than 85.5t or try to utilise the night access windows granted at the higher weights.”

“Unfortunately, this will mean more truck trips for the given freight task, and more coordination of vehicle booking system slots with the container stevedore terminal operators.”

“However, the concerns about safely allowing access to the Bolte for these combinations prevailed. These combinations will need to use the Higher Loading Platform (HLP) lanes on the Bolte Bridge, and Transurban will need to deploy traffic safety measures each night to safely guide these combinations to/from the HLP and the detour routes, while segregating other vehicle traffic.”

“CTAA is committed to working closely with Transurban and the Victorian Government to closely monitor compliance with the access conditions granted. Transurban, DTP, and the NHVR will have access to weight and vehicle type monitoring devices, and enforcement penalties will apply for non-conformance.”

“If compliance is good however, Transurban and DTP have committed to reviewing the access arrangements including possibly broadening the operating hours for the HPFVs above 85.5t GVM.” Neil Chambers concluded.

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Queries about this Media Release should be directed to Neil Chambers, Director, CTAA, 0413 662 263 / neil.chambers@ctaction.com.au

About CTAA: Container Transport Alliance Australia (CTAA) is strong Alliance of leading businesses engaged in the container transport logistics industry. CTAA Alliance companies account for the majority of containerised freight handled in capital city ports in Australia.