

Heavy loads impacting region's ageing bridges

Heavy vehicles have a vital role to play in keeping NSW open for business. However, overloaded freight vehicles are having a negative impact on some roads and bridges on key transport routes.



Heavy vehicles vital to state and national economy

Heavy vehicles are critical to NSW's economy, delivering freight across the state, interstate and around the nation.

With NSW state roads carrying over 60 per cent of the state's total freight and expectations that this will rise by a further 28 per cent over the next 20 years, heavy vehicles can have a significant impact on ageing infrastructure such as roads and historic bridges.

Ageing bridges are of particular concern, given the age of many structures and lengthy detour routes needed if bridge access is removed. Load restrictions have been introduced to some critical bridges to protect them from further issues.

Research has found some structures are being subjected to heavy vehicle loads and combinations in excess of those for which they were originally built. This non-conforming and inappropriate use of bridge infrastructure is having a detrimental effect.

Overloaded vehicles speeding up deterioration of ageing bridges

Bridge overloading can result in structural fatigue and speeds up deterioration. A single overloaded vehicle can affect both the short-term behaviour of the bridge as well as the long-term performance.

Non-compliant vehicles are extremely high risk and jeopardise key road corridors. They have the potential to lead to the sudden closure of critical transportation links with major economic impacts to the region.

What can heavy vehicle operators do?

A key to slowing down asset deterioration is industry self-regulation and responsible behaviour. Awareness about the impact of non-compliant heavy vehicle traffic on the road network plays a significant role in improving road safety and optimising infrastructure.

Restricted roads and bridges can be found on Roads and Maritime's Restricted Access Map: www.rms.nsw.gov.au/restrictedaccess. Operators are reminded it is an offence to travel on routes that are unapproved for the combination they are using.

Roads and Maritime Services is accountable for ensuring everyone using NSW roads does so safely, while still allowing the transport industry to operate as efficiently as possible.

Contact

If you have any questions, please contact operations.southwest@rms.nsw.gov.au



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