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MEDIA RELEASE

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VTA and MTAG welcome Smart Freight Partnership – Inner West

The Victorian Transport Association (VTA) and Maribyrnong Truck Action Group (MTAG) have welcomed progress on implementation of their proposal to incentivise freight operators to upgrade to lower emissions trucks, as a condition for using curfewed roads in Melbourne's inner west for longer hours.

The [*Smart Freight Partnership – Inner West*](#) announced by the Victorian Government today evolved from the [*Maribyrnong Cleaner Freight Initiative*](#), developed by the VTA and MTAG and proposed to government in 2017.

A key aim of the proposal was to lessen the environmental and amenity impacts of trucks in the community, whilst providing an economic and productivity incentive for freight operators that invest in new trucks with lower emitting, 'cleaner' engines.

The Smart Freight Partnership is an Australian first in terms of encouraging freight operators to modernise their fleet and is seen by industry and the community as one way of reducing the age of Australia's aging heavy vehicles. With an average age of 14.9 years Australia has one of the oldest truck fleets in the developed world, prompting industry groups to come up with incentives for operators to transition to new trucks that are quieter, safer and use less fuel.

The initiative is also an example of how traditional adversaries can work constructively together to achieve solutions that benefit residents and operators.

As part of the Smart Freight Partnership, an Environment Freight Zone covering Somerville Road and Moore, Francis and Buckley streets in Melbourne's inner west would be established. Access times to these roads would be reduced for trucks that don't meet current emission control standards, resulting in a reduction of two hours per day for the first two years, followed by a further two-hour reduction per day in subsequent years. In its plan, the Government has not included curfews for Williamstown Road and Buckley Street, which the VTA and MTAG included in the original proposal and see as essential for signing a final agreement.

Trucks manufactured on or after 1 January 2010 that meet stricter emission control standards (Australian Design Rule 80/03 or EURO V equivalent) will have three hours more access on weekdays than the older trucks and two hours more time on Saturdays.

Industry-led training is a key element of the program which includes measures to deliver driver awareness training on local access, safety and amenity issues.

VTA CEO Peter Anderson said: "Industry and community groups can achieve great things when they work together and acknowledge their individual needs and interests can be achieved through compromise and mature discussions. It is encouraging that the Victorian Government has recognised the merits of the visionary plan we developed with MTAG by establishing the Smart Freight Partnership, which we look forward to implementing in conjunction with operators, residents, Freight Victoria and local and state governments."

MTAG President Martin Wurt said: "We are pleased the Victorian Government continues to recognise our community needs solutions to the issue of trucks on residential streets in the inner west. We will continue to work with all stakeholders to achieve a final agreement that reflects verbal discussions between MTAG and the VTA, and senior executives from VicRoads, Freight Victoria and Maribyrnong City Council, and Ministers Pulford and Horne."

Ends...

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