



MEDIA RELEASE

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VTA calls to keep the supply chain open in post-COVID Victorian recovery

The Victorian Transport Association has recommended heavy vehicles be given greater access to Victoria's road network at night and times when the general public is less likely to use it, in its consultations with the Victorian Government on re-opening the state's economy.

The Association is advising the government ahead of Sunday's announcements on an anticipated phased approach to exiting stage 3 and 4 COVID restrictions. It has suggested several ideas on how the transport industry can safely support businesses getting back to work.

"The freight transport industry is moving around the community on a regular basis every day, has had very few COVID cases, and has not been a mode of spreading the virus," said VTA CEO Peter Anderson.

"Our industry has conscientiously responded to COVID with operators embracing directions and restrictions, exceeding minimum standards, and applying additional measures to ensure drivers are protected and disciplined in their daily activities to prevent the virus spreading."

Anderson said the industry had maintained an impeccable safety record since temporary changes to the Road Safety Act were made allowing greater heavy vehicle access to the road network, and that letting trucks use roads at night had been instrumental in keeping supermarket shelves stocked and averting panic buying.

"As an essential service the transport, freight and logistics industry has been operating on a 'green' light since COVID restrictions were enacted in March, except for some exceptions around warehousing and distribution centres. We need our customers to get back to work as quickly as possible and we will be there to support their logistics needs."

Consistent with its petition to extend temporary changes to the Road Safety Act, the VTA has recommended the government not re-instate curfews for select sectors of the transport industry so that waste collection, supermarket, food and fuel deliveries, and manufacturing, construction and home deliveries can continue unabated.

"Extending changes to the Act would go a long way towards ensuring continuity in the replenishment of goods for Victorian consumers. It is essential our industry can make deliveries to supermarkets, pharmacies and essential retailers, and support businesses and the economy as they start to re-open," Anderson said.

Other recommendations include manual or electronic 'track and trace' work diaries so drivers can record personal contact with individuals outside their own base, and a review of current warehousing and distribution restrictions to one that takes into account the size of the building and number of workers, rather than just the blanket restrictions now place.

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