



MEDIA RELEASE

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Inner west road bans short change freight industry

The Victorian Government's decision to discriminately ban trucks from roads in Melbourne's inner west from 2022 will put additional pressure on an industry already under financial attack from disproportionate CityLink toll increases, higher registration and user charges and razor thin operating margins.

"Freight operators already shoulder a disproportionate share of the cost of building and maintaining infrastructure, and today's announcement forces them to use a road that has yet to be built, and whose user costs have yet to be established," said Victorian Transport Association Peter Anderson.

"While we absolutely understand the need to strike a balance between amenity for residents and economic fairness for operators, a permanent ban is not the right way to go about it, and sends a message to operators that their contribution to society isn't valued or appreciated."

Mr Anderson said trucks are vital to the economic lifeblood of communities.

"Trucks are also workplaces for normal family people who suffer the same frustrations as others with the vagaries of chaos, confusion and congestions on the roads. We need to harmonise the creation of new roads, the use of existing roads, integrate rail systems and ports and convince the community that transport is vital to our economy and way of life. Imposing a ban sends an entirely wrong message."

While the VTA has appreciated the opportunity to consult with state and local governments on a range of important industry issues, Mr Anderson said the permanent ban announced today were a lost opportunity to develop common sense, long-term solutions for balancing community amenity and economic prosperity.

"We presented the Government with a number of alternative ways to reduce truck movements on local streets without increasing costs to operators and the supply chain, and regrettably they were ignored," he said.

"These included exempting modern vehicles that are quieter and more fuel efficient from curfews, improving the roads on preferred freight routes to make them safer, using technology to enforce restrictions, and a certification system allowing access only to sanctioned vehicles.

"We are also encouraging them to introduce toll reductions and multi-user discounts on existing and future toll roads as an incentive for operators to use toll roads. What is the point of having high-tech, efficient toll roads if operators can't afford to use them?" Mr Anderson said.

Today's announcement comes one day after CityLink tolls for heavy vehicles increased by as much as 125%.

"We will continue to press the case for the government not to allow highly disproportionate road user costs on existing and future toll roads, such as the Western Distributor, whose completion will trigger the inner west curfew.

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For further information, please contact Brian O'Neil on 0411 055 284.