

Why Bigger Can Be Better

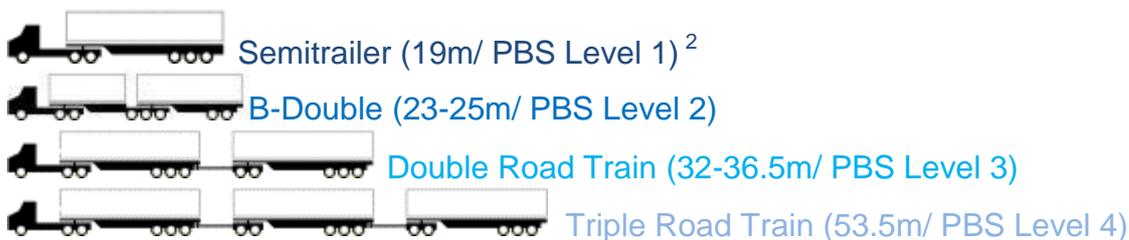
Trucks are an important part of our transport landscape. They play a critical role in providing goods to Australian businesses and the general community, as well as delivering goods to ports and airports for overseas export.

There is a community perception that large trucks are unsafe and should not be used at all. There are, however, compelling safety and productivity arguments why reasonable access for these vehicles should be facilitated as provided under new Performance Based Standards (PBS) regulations.

How big?

The shape and size of a truck is task dependent, with larger vehicles using only allocated routes. Larger trucks with a higher PBS level, such as typical Double and Triple Road trains, are restricted to travel on only selected routes. Access to lower lever PBS routes is limited to smaller trucks or those meeting world-class performance standards.¹

RAV Recognition Guide/ Usual Performance Based Standards (PBS) Level (maximum length)



Why use big truck combinations?

The use of big trucks provides many benefits:

Efficiency

The geographical nature of Australia with its open spaces and long transport distances, combined with its relative isolation from key export markets means that we must have the most efficient transport system possible to be able to compete on an international stage.

¹ <http://www.ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?documentid=1229>

² Note: Semitrailers are General Access Vehicles – they can legally travel on all roads without weight or height restrictions.

Big truck combinations provide this efficiency, lowering freight transport costs to benefit local businesses, keeping the price of household consumer goods to a minimum and improving our international competitiveness.³

Reduced Road Congestion

The use of multiple trailer combinations decreases the number of trucks on our roads, making them safer for all road users. A semi can carry only one or two export containers, while a B-Double can carry up to three. A Double Road Train can carry twice the load of a Semi and a Triple Road Train can carry three times as much.

Studies have shown that the reduction in road congestion due to the use of larger vehicles lowers crash rates between trucks and cars by approximately 18%.⁴

Higher Safety Regulations

The safety systems aboard multiple trailer combinations are strictly regulated through registration requirements and Australian Design rules thereby ensuring bigger trucks adhere to higher safety standards than smaller trucks.

Environmental Responsibility

The use of larger trucks means fewer trucks are required for the same transport loads. Fewer trucks require less fuel, which consequently lowers greenhouse gas emissions.⁵

Large trucks also have financial incentive to be environmentally responsible. Under the Fuel Tax Act 2006 diesel vehicles over 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass are eligible for a fuel tax credit by meeting specific standards.⁶

Better for everyone

The use of big trucks is not appropriate in every situation and on every street, but they do have their place. The controlled use of these high productivity vehicles on designated highways and main roads benefits the entire community.

³ http://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/91/Files/BITRE_TruckProductivity_March2011.pdf

⁴ <http://www.ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?documentid=1321>

⁵ <http://www.ntc.gov.au/filemedia/bulletins/OptionstocutfreightcarbonemJul08.pdf>

⁶ http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/environment/fuel_tax_credit/pdf/Fuel_Tax_Credit-Environmental_Guidelines.pdf