LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING.
PLANNING FOR FREIGHT

Prepared for

Municipal Association of Victoria
Victorian Freight and Logistics Council

Prepared by

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1 Executive summary

The Challenge

Freight is central to the economic and social prosperity of Victoria. All activities undertaken in daily life by individuals and businesses rely on materials carried on the freight network. Efficient delivery of freight supports employment, health, education, social and many other outcomes.

The efficiency of freight operations depends on the quality of the total freight journey from origin to destination. A freight journey can use arterial roads, local roads, intermodal terminals, railways, vessels and/or aircraft. The location and design of freight origins and destinations, and the design and operation of intermodal terminals are all part of the freight task. If any of these elements presents a barrier to efficient freight movement this can impact through the total logistics chain and ultimately to the communities and businesses. This means that land use and transport decisions are equally critical to efficient and sustainable freight operations.

In Victoria considerable progress has been made in planning for and management of freight on the declared road network and Victoria’s commercial ports. Some progress has been made in upgrading the rail network but this sector continues to be seriously underutilised. There has been less progress and less consistency in how freight is managed on local roads, sites of high freight activity and the interface between road/rail freight routes and other activities. This lack of progress is due to a combination of factors that together impact on the approach to freight matters adopted by councils, and on their ability to undertake freight planning even when councils recognise its importance.

The Municipal Association of Victoria, in association with the Victorian Freight and Logistics Council, has undertaken consultation to identify the major barriers to effective freight planning within local government, and has identified co-ordinated actions necessary by governments and industry to increase the capacity of local government to plan for freight. The major barriers identified are:

A lack of understanding of the role of freight in the economy.

Across local government there is a low level of recognition of the strategic importance of freight to local, regional and national economies and the leadership role local government can play in facilitating freight movement while protecting council infrastructure and communities. This lack of understanding is recognised by many councils in the area of road freight, but is even greater in the area of rail freight where many councils do not consider they can play a role in contributing to this mode.

A lack of strategic freight and network planning.

Strategic network planning provides the ‘glue’ which brings together local and state economic and community needs, sets frameworks for ongoing transport and land use development and identifies regional priorities. Strategic plans provide a basis for resource allocation and bidding for funds.

In many councils freight is considered primarily as road freight and it is considered at the level of an individual vehicle or section of road, rather than at an industry and network scale. Freight is rarely considered as a multi-modal task where the best modal choice from a combined community and industry perspective should be supported. This is symptomatic of a reactive approach that assumes freight is something to respond defensively to, rather than something to plan actively for.
Organisational drivers work against comprehensive freight planning.

Setting in place planning processes and tools will not in themselves be enough to improve freight planning if organisational barriers and attitudes are not supportive of proper planning. Although much work has been done at the state and national levels on freight strategies and policies there is a lack of understanding and ownership of these initiatives within councils that is reflected in a lack of commitment to integrated freight planning and industrial land use planning.

Councils are often ill equipped technically and structurally to deal with freight related matters that are becoming increasingly complex and which span many areas of council responsibility.

Decision-making tools are not available.

Appropriate, credible and usable tools are required for councils to undertake rigorous analysis and make robust decisions. Although considerable work has been done to improve tools they can be unknown by council practitioners, difficult to access, difficult to use or unavailable. Existing tools need to be made more usable, gaps need identified and priority gaps filled.

The accumulated result of the multiple barriers is that local government currently has a low capacity and/or commitment to plan for freight, and where organisational barriers make the fast adoption of improved freight planning approaches problematic.

The Way Forward

In this report discrete actions have been identified for project management purposes. However, there is no single action that can address all of the barriers identified and complementary actions in the following four broad areas need to be undertaken together to achieve meaningful progress. Priority actions are:

- **Improve the understanding of freight issues by councillors and council staff**;
- **Develop a freight planning and evaluation toolbox**;
- **Develop regional multi-modal freight strategies**; and
- **Develop land use and transport guidelines for the design of freight generating areas**.

A number of additional actions have been identified and are listed in Section 4.3.

The freight related issues being faced in Victoria are common across Australia and so the nation will benefit from improvements in freight planning that result from these Victorian initiatives. There is a strong case for elements of work to be undertaken at a national rather than state level in this area, provided that achieving national consensus this does not delay action.

The benefits for local government, industry and state government deriving from implementation of the identified actions include:

- greater consistency and alignment between actions at local, state and national levels;
- local government freight planning will be more strategic, multi-modal and forward looking; and
- local government will assume greater ownership of and commitment to freight matters.
## Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Improving council understanding of freight</th>
<th>Adopting strategic freight thinking and network planning</th>
<th>Supportive organisational drivers</th>
<th>Appropriate decision-making tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve the understanding of freight issues by councillors and council staff.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a freight planning and evaluation toolbox.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop regional freight strategies.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop land use and transport guidelines for the design of freight generating areas</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Alignment between priority actions and barriers.
2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to assist the Municipal Association of Victoria and Victorian Freight and Logistics Council to identify actions that can be taken by government and industry that will increase the capacity of local government in Victoria to plan for freight.

2.2 Background

The freight and logistics sector is central to the strength of the Victorian economy and to the quality of life of Victorians. The central objective of the sector is to efficiently bring together products and users, so that economic and social outcomes are achieved. A range of existing and emerging pressures are shaping how the industry operates and how well community and business outcomes are achieved. (Figure 1)

It’s not about trucks

It’s about jobs, quality of life, sustainability and delivering the goods. We are at a watershed in relation to transport in Victoria.

The pressures

Declining workforce
Loss of manufacturing
Constrained infrastructure
Energy supply

traffic congestion
population
port container trade
freight volumes

In the next decade

Carbon cap and trade system
Global trading competition
Search for transport efficiencies

Outcomes

Innovation/improved technology
Productivity – more with less
Improved industry practices
Investment in infrastructure and equipment
Economies of scale
Multi-modalism
Customer fulfilment

Figure 1. Freight industry trends and outcomes.

Source: Victorian Freight and Logistics Council, Higher Productivity Vehicles, 2008.)
Substantial growth has occurred in the sector over many years and freight growth is expected to continue into the future. Changes in industry operations mean that the mix of modes is expected to change over time, with rail and maritime playing a larger role. Even with this change to other modes, road-based freight will remain a major element of the freight task, either on its own or as part of a multi-modal logistics movement.

Freight networks include all modes, and the roads used by freight come under both state and local government control. A key challenge for local government is to recognise its role in the planning of freight supportive assets at the local level through the management of freight on its networks, how it supports rail freight and its land use practices. Each of these areas can have a significant impact on the operation of the freight sector and hence on local and regional economies and communities.

The Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Freight and Logistics Council have recognised the need to identify what assistance local government may require in undertaking strategic and statutory planning for freight nodes, corridors and access arrangements. This project’s objectives are to develop an understanding of the application of strategic and statutory planning frameworks to regional freight and logistics activities, and to identify tools that will assist local government in developing these frameworks.

2.3 Methodology

The major issues influencing the ability of local government to plan for freight were identified through a series of workshops and interviews held by the Municipal Association of Victoria in 2010. These interviews were supplemented with interviews held with local government, industry and agencies, and analysis carried out for Austroads in 2008.

3 Issues

3.1 Results

The issues identified fall within four broad areas. Appendix A provides a detailed analysis of the issues. The observations represent an overview of the situation in Victoria. The issues identified will not be applicable to every council in the state but they are widespread enough to warrant comment.

Understanding freight.

- Low recognition of the strategic importance of freight within councils
- Confusion over the implications for councils of identifying freight networks
- Misunderstandings and lack of knowledge of freight matters
- Lack of understanding of the importance of achieving consistency in both transport and land use actions at each stage along the total logistics chain, from the origin of a freight trip to its destination, including intermodal locations

Strategic freight and network planning.

- Local focus of thinking
- Lack of regional freight plans
Lack of actions by councils to support greater rail freight use eg. through active land use planning to support intermodal sites, industrial land planning, road network planning to maintain high quality access to sites and management of land adjacent to access roads/rail lines to reduce conflict between freight and other activities

**Organisational drivers**

- Perceived lack of relevance and actual lack of ownership of state freight and industry plans
- Lack of councillor involvement in freight matters
- Funding concerns drive thinking on freight
- Reactive approach to freight
- Councils are not equipped technically to deal with freight related matters eg. determining road classifications, assessing HPFV access, PBS
- Lack of integration across groups within councils

**Decision-making tools.**

- Lack of freight data and analysis
- Lack of freight relevant knowledge of the road system
- Lack of confidence in assessment tools
- Lack of understanding of access control mechanisms

**3.2 Impacts of the barriers**

The barriers outlined above work against sound decision-making and the achievement of sustainable outcomes. The consequences of these avoidable shortcomings include:

- adoption of ad-hoc responses to freight issues based on perceptions that are heavily influenced by local and short term political pressures;
- lack of consistent infrastructure and operating conditions along logistics chains that lead to industry inefficiencies and unnecessary community costs;
- decisions are made from a road freight perspective and not a multi-modal perspective;
- default to conservative and defensive positions/stances, and an unwillingness to negotiate with industry on asset improvements to facilitate access;
- conflict between incompatible land uses and freight operations;
- planners are effectively regulators – if councils cannot gain enough certainty they fall back on risk avoidance and status quo;
- lack of a credible basis for funding bids, poor investment decisions and poor priority setting;
- slow progress in implementation of nationally important freight reform; and
- lack of consistency between State policies/objectives and local actions.
3.3 Principles for freight planning

Organisations such as Infrastructure Australia and Austroads have identified principles for the planning for freight. These principles have common elements, including:

**Focus planning on the movement of goods, and not on the movement of road vehicles.** Part of a rigorous decision-making process is to identify the most appropriate mode(s) to perform the freight task and, if road is used for all or part of the task, the vehicle type most suitable from an industry and community perspective. The total freight task from origin to destination is to be considered, including intermodal transfers.

**Every road carries freight, but not every road is a freight route.** As well as general freight movements that are an everyday activity on all roads, there are strategic road and rail networks identified where freight movement is encouraged. Just like strategic passenger routes and services these networks serve the areas of high demand and provide a basis for concentrating facilities in a cost effective way. While some strategic freight routes have national significance, this approach is also applicable for routes of regional and local significance. These strategic routes can be a combination of different modes and include the intermodal points between modes.

**Focus on networks and routes, not vehicles and links.** Freight vehicles operate over large areas and so consideration of a small part of the network in isolation will provide an incomplete picture of the situation, and may result in actions being taken that have undesirable ramifications over a wide area. Similarly, the impacts of actions can flow across council boundaries and a regional or broader perspective is necessary to properly understand the demands of freight and the implications of actions.

**Provide consistency of transport and land use actions.** Consistency in policies and actions along the full length of a logistics chain is essential as a restrictive action at one point along the chain could limit a particular vehicle type or load from operating along the whole chain. Similarly efficiency gains made on parts of the network through the operation of more productive vehicles could be undone if land use planning does not allow efficient loading and unloading of goods at origins, destinations and intermodal points.

4 Priority actions

The previous section identifies a range of barriers that together will impede the ability of local government to plan rigorously for freight and to make reasoned decisions. A small number of high benefit actions have been identified that together will make a significant contribution to improving the ability of local government to understand and respond to freight drivers.

4.1 Priority actions

Although discrete actions have been identified, if gains are to be made in decision-making processes then actions in the four issue areas should be undertaken together. For example, new analysis tools will not be effective if attitudes have not changed and councils do not undertake strategic freight planning. Similarly, encouraging the development of regional plans will be ineffective if the skills and approaches to develop these plans are not understood and applied correctly.
Initial scoping has been undertaken for each of the priority action areas. Once government and industry agreement on the broad approach is reached then the actions would be scoped in detail.

4.1.1 Improve the understanding of freight matters by councillors and staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Improve the understanding of freight issues by councillors and council staff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most councils recognise that freight is important but for different reasons:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- freight supports local and regional economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- freight vehicles can create strong community reaction when transport activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impact on amenity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Even when its importance is recognised freight is not given the attention to match its</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impact on communities. This is illustrated by some councils developing transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>plans that do not consider freight, while others do not have strategic network plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Due to the lack of understanding and consideration, council attitudes can be reactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rather than proactive, that is, to protect communities from freight intrusions rather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>than proper planning that recognise the strengths and weaknesses of freight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking is focussed on the issuing of permits for individual freight vehicles and not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the logistics task.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is uncertainty as to where councils can access information about freight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>matters. Some use VFLC, others VicRoads or DOT. The potential of other sources,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>such as AustRoads, appear to be poorly understood.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To date the freight industry has primarily focussed its communications on state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agencies and politicians, and industry consultation directly with councils is patchy.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Councils perceive that they are expected to respond to state imposed directions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rather than be an active participant in shaping freight directions. There is great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>potential for the freight industry and government to increase its level of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication with individual councils or groups of councils. Where possible this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consultation should have a strong representation of local businesses who can</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>demonstrate impacts and benefits that are relevant to the council(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is an opportunity to refocus freight planning as part of economic and regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development thinking within councils. Councils may not be willing to commit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resources to freight planning but may for an integrated transport plan or economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This work requires approaches that meet both councillor and staff needs. A common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>approach would be feasible for many elements but there will be some tailoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>required providing a higher level of technical content for staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VFLC will be developing the Freight in the Community program during 2010/2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DOT to engage metropolitan councils in a conversation on the implications for local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>government of Shaping Melbourne’s Freight Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MAV – facilitate and support the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VFLC – organise presenters and local companies to attend council briefings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DOT/VicRoads – support the process, attend meetings and explain relevance of state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strategies to councils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.1.2 Develop a freight planning and evaluation toolbox.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Develop a freight planning and evaluation Toolbox.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Rigorous and consistent decision-making cannot be achieved if the tools necessary to inform this process are not available and used correctly. Although considerable material has already been prepared at national and state levels it is often not in an accessible form or available in a single location. The large amount of work already done nationally could form the basis of a freight planning and evaluation Toolbox. This existing work should be built on, potentially as a national project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>The Toolbox could be an evolving ‘virtual’ resource that comprises material held in multiple locations and forms, where parts are updated as required by the responsible organisation(s) but which has an overarching framework to help guide users through the different processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps</td>
<td>The stages would be to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- identify the tools and data required by councils to assess freight networks and the impacts of freight on local areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- scope the content of the toolbox;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- identify potential partners eg. ARRB, Austroads, ARA;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- audit existing tools and identify what material is available to meet the identified needs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- identify gaps and the feasibility/cost of addressing each;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- establish priorities for overcoming key gaps;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- prepare the overarching framework and user ‘how to’ guide within each of the specific tools sits; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- determine the most appropriate form(s) of presentation eg. web based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key participants</td>
<td>Transport Ministers – determine if this is to be a national project. MAV, VFLC, DOT, VicRoads – scope the toolbox and oversee its development. ARRB, Austroads, ARA/RISSB – incorporation of material they have developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.1.3 Develop regional freight strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Develop freight strategies and identify priority actions for all regions of Victoria.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Efficient freight movement is critical to the economic development of Victoria’s regions. Freight can have significant interactions with communities, council infrastructure and land use. Due to the patterns of freight networks, and its multi-modal nature, a regional perspective is required when planning for freight. This applies equally in urban and regional areas. This is due to the regional nature of many freight movements, and the need to determine the location of key infrastructure, such as road/rail intermodal hubs, on a regional rather than local basis. Some councils do not see freight as a core responsibility of local government and so an education campaign will be required in some regions to build support for freight planning. The focus of this approach could be on the economic importance of freight to regional economies and the ongoing benefits for communities/councils from better management of freight. Ownership of the process by councillors, council staff and state agencies is important to achieve commitment to the outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Strategies would: - cover all freight modes and intermodal activities; - consider rail, local roads and the declared network; - consider land use and economic policies and their interactions with freight; - provide a regionally based strategic framework for development and management of freight activities, and identify regional investment priorities; and - identify local road B-double and potentially HPFV routes in each municipality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps</strong></td>
<td>Identify regional groupings of councils; Advocate/consult with councils on the benefits from the studies; Identify priority areas of the state where freight pressures are high or change is occurring; Compile existing information and tools to assist in the studies; Prepare a model study brief; and Undertake studies as resources allow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key participants</strong></td>
<td>Regional groups of councils (staff and councillors) – lead the studies. MAV – advocate and facilitate the process, liaison with councils DOT/VicRoads – develop a study framework, develop tools, contribute to the studies. VFLC – provide industry liaison and intelligence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.4 Develop land use and transport guidelines for the design of freight generating areas

**Action**
Develop land use and transport guidelines for the design of freight generating areas.

**Discussion**
Land use decision being made today can have long-term consequences for network planning and operations. For this reason providing assistance for land use planning in the short term is a high priority to reduce the continuation of building in future problems.

Guidelines would provide a resource for councils when they undertake industrial land planning.

As the issues associated with freight and land use planning occur across Australia this activity could be undertaken as a national project through the Planning and Transport Ministers. Alternatively, for simplicity and speed, Victoria could take the lead and develop the guidelines, which could then form the basis of national guidelines.

Once developed these guidelines could become an element of the ‘Toolkit’.

**Scope**
The guidelines would cover strategic, network and operational aspects of location selection, site design, 24/7 operations, site access and route management of freight generating activities.

**Steps**
- Establish a group to oversee the project;
- Scope the project and appoint consultants/project team to complete the work;
- Consult with councils, logistics companies, planners and land developers on the guidelines; and
- Finalise after consultation.

**Key participants.**
- DOT – development of guidelines
- DPCD/MAV/VFLC/VicRoads – oversee development of the guidelines

### 4.2 Alignment with the issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Improving council understanding of freight</th>
<th>Adopting strategic freight thinking and network planning</th>
<th>Supportive organisational drivers</th>
<th>Appropriate decision-making tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve the understanding of freight issues by councillors and council staff.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a freight planning and evaluation toolbox.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop regional freight strategies.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop land use and transport guidelines for the design of freight generating areas</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Alignment between priority actions and barriers.**
4.3 Additional actions

As well as the highest priority actions identified above there are a number of other initiatives that would complement these and further improve local government’s ability and willingness to plan for freight.

- DOT/VicRoads to provide assistance to councils on the analysis of bridge strengths
- DOT to engage councils directly in discussions on *Shaping Victoria’s Freight Futures*
- Identify priority assessment tools required by local government and scope their development
- Identify priority freight data and means for its generation and dissemination
- Develop a proposal for Commonwealth funding of key local area and multi-modal freight initiatives
- Tertiary institutions be approached to increase the teaching of logistics related material in engineering, planning and logistics courses

4.4 Outcomes from priority actions

Implementation of the priority actions in an integrated program will have a number of benefits for councils, industry, communities and the state. These benefits include:

- Consistency will be achieved between national, state and local government planning and management for freight. This will lead to productivity gains as freight vehicles will be able to operate with certainty and consistency over the entire network.
- Freight planning will be more strategic and forward looking, rather than being local and reactive.
- Local government will increase its understanding of freight and take ownership for its part of the freight planning process, in partnership with the state government.
- The capacity of local government to plan for freight, so that decision-making is robust and consistent, will be enhanced.

5 Next steps

A Project Control Group is being established under the auspices of the VFLC to ensure that momentum is maintained in this critical area for local government, the freight industry and Victoria, and that the priority actions are delivered efficiently and in an integrated way. The Project Control Group will initially comprise MAV and VFLC, and the involvement of the State Government as a project partner is being sought.

As a first step the Project Control Group will develop detailed project scopes for the four Actions identified in this report. These projects will expand on the barriers and identify the necessary actions, the delivery steps, the potential role of the three levels of government and industry, the cost implications and delivery timing. This work will be integrated, where possible, with the national Local Government Reform Fund projects currently being scoped.
The freight related issues being faced in Victoria are common across Australia and so the nation will benefit from improvements in freight planning that result from Victorian initiatives. There is a strong case for elements of work to be undertaken at a national rather than state level in this area, provided that this does not delay action.
## 6 Appendix A. Analysis table.

The following table summarises the results of the MAV surveys and workshops conducted in 2010, supplemented with analysis undertaken for Austroads in 2008. The results provide an overview of the situation across Victoria and so there will be some councils where some of the barriers do not apply. However, the barriers identified are considered to be common and important enough to warrant attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Potential responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Understanding freight.** | Most councils recognise that freight is important but this can be for very different reasons:  
- its support for economic development  
- to minimise negative impacts of freight vehicles on the community  
The level of attention given to freight within councils does not match the stated importance. This is illustrated by some councils developing transport plans that do not consider freight, while others do not have strategic network plans.  
Council thinking on freight is focussed on road matters, with little attention given to opportunities for council to support rail freight.  
Many councils have ad-hoc contact with freight industry, and this contact is usually around permit applications or in reaction to resident complaints. | Freight is not given the thought and attention to match its economic importance to local communities.  
Thinking is focussed on the impact of freight vehicles and not the total logistics task.  
Due to the lack of understanding and consideration, council attitudes can be reactive rather than proactive. For example, protecting communities from freight intrusion rather than proper planning that recognise the strengths and weaknesses of freight.  
There may be an opportunity to refocus freight planning as part of economic and regional development thinking within councils. Councils may not be willing to commit resources to freight planning but may for an integrated transport plan or economic development plan. | Freight industry to demonstrate that it is aware of community perceptions and concerns regarding freight.  
Freight industry to develop a communications program to improve the understanding of the role of freight by officers and councillors.  
VFLC/MAV develop a program of industry visits to all councils or regional groupings of councils, preferably by freight operators who operate in the council area.  
State agencies and MAV to develop a communications plan and resource material to improve understanding of freight and its links to economic development by officers and councillors. |
| Confusion over the implications for councils if freight networks are identified. | Some of the misconceptions on the consequences of identifying freight networks include:  
- freight volumes will increase on local roads once a route or network is identified  
- identification of freight routes for one type of vehicle will open them up to use by larger vehicles  
- pressure will increase from communities to ban freight from roads not identified as part of the freight network  
The desired attitude is 'Every road carries freight, but not every road is a freight route'. | Decisions are made on the basis of perceptions rather than facts.  
Councils will not identify preferred freight networks.  
Complementary and targeted road management, investment and land use planning cannot occur. | Through all contacts with local government reinforce the messages that:  
- freight network planning matches the appropriate vehicle with the appropriate route. It does not lead to open access of inappropriate vehicles  
- network planning gives councils greater control over vehicles and land use, and allows more effective targeting of actions, including directing freight where council prefers freight to travel  
- councils retain control of their roads  
- all roads (unless certified as structurally inadequate) remain open to General Access Vehicles  
Incorporate this discussion in the "Toolbox" and MAV and government presentations. |
| Misunderstandings and lack of knowledge. | There are many negative assumptions made about freight vehicles, their operation and the attitudes of the freight industry that can colour council thinking.  
There is uncertainty as to where councils can access information about freight matters. Some use VFLC, VicRoads or DOT. | Inaccurate assumptions can bias decision-making, or in some cases result in a blanket ban on high productivity vehicles.  
Inappropriate or narrowly based decisions are made or planning work is not undertaken due to a lack of knowledge or confidence to proceed.  
Industry frustration due to difference in | Improve the level of understanding on issues of concern to councils.  
Incorporate in the regional workshops, use material developed for Austroads forthcoming Guidelines for Assessing Heavy Vehicle Access to Local Roads.  
Improve the ease of access to information within government and clarify access paths. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strategic freight thinking and network planning</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local focus of thinking.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Access conditions are not consistent along freight routes.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Include information on how to access organisations and information in the Toolbox and regional forums.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of regional freight plans</td>
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## Organisational drivers.

| Lack of relevance /ownership of state plans. | Most councils know of *Freight Futures* and *Victorian Transport Plan* as high level policy documents. Councils do not see the relevance of policies such as *Freight Futures* to their strategic planning or day-to-day operations. State strategies are seen as relating to arterial roads and railways, and not having relevance to local government. Councils do not feel ownership of state strategies or policies as they were not involved in their development. Even when these are negotiated with peak bodies, such as MAV, individual councils are not engaged. | Councils are not considering the implications of state strategies on their areas or undertaking the detailed planning necessary to prepare locally for externally introduced changes eg. development of multi-modal interchanges. State strategies, programs and policies are perceived as imposed from outside with little regard to local needs eg. extension of B-double networks to local roads. This can cause a negative response in councils to the strategies. | Active program of DOT/VicRoads to explain the rationale and demonstrate the concrete implications for local government of state strategies. Focus this liaison at regional groupings of councils to reinforce the network focus. DOT/VicRoads to identify the practical implications of state strategies on local government eg. development of freight routes to intermodal terminals, identification of B-double networks. DOT/VicRoads to more actively involve individual councils or groups of councils in the development of future strategies and policies. Directly engage regional groupings of councils in discussion on *Shaping Melbourne’s Freight Future*. |
| Lack of councillor involvement in freight matters. | Councillors require an understanding of the freight task and a council/regional view of freight if they are to make informed and consistent decisions on freight related matters.  
Councillors are unwilling to take a regional perspective or spend time on freight matters.  
Unless there are community concerns freight matters are unlikely to rank highly in councillor priorities. | Ad-hoc decision-making can lead to undesirable freight and community outcomes.  
Business cases for funding are weak.  
No basis for council priority setting, or rejection by council of inappropriate funding proposals.  
Lack of advocacy on freight matters within council. | Encourage (or require) regional transport plans, including freight plans, to be developed by all councils.  
Use freight industry visits and regional workshops to increase councillor understanding of freight.  
Build on existing management and coordinating structures to oversee process eg. CEOs, planners  
VFLC/MAV develop a program of industry visits to all councils or regional groupings of councils, preferably by freight operators who operate in the council area. |
| Funding concerns drive thinking on freight. | Decisions on network planning, such as new B-double routes, is distorted by real or perceived concerns on the implications of innovative vehicles for structures and road maintenance. Many councils do not know the structural integrity of their pavements and bridges under increased vehicle mass and dynamic loads. The high cost of engineering assessments can work against councils undertaking network analysis or approve freight routes. | Councils are unwilling to undertake network planning, or support access by higher productivity vehicles, until funding commitments are made. Focus is on minimising the cost for council, and not necessarily finding the best triple bottom line solution for a community. Uncertainty on the strength of structures is used to prevent freight access. Reforms in road pricing and improvements in vehicle tracking technologies provide the potential to better understand the impacts of vehicles on local roads and target investments to where impacts are occurring. | Demonstrate to councils the benefits when bidding for funds from a strategic regional approach eg. IA program, state programs. Educate councils on the actual performance of different types of freight vehicles, their impact on local roads and safety. Investigate the potential of state/commonwealth funding program targeted at 'last kilometre' and modal interchange issues. State, local government and industry to support a submission to the Commonwealth that a funding program be established to improve strategic freight related infrastructure on local roads where this is identified through a regional freight strategy. Investigate the network efficiency return possible from state support for assessments of structures on local roads, such as bridges. |
| Reactive approach by councils to freight matters. | Freight is seen as a state government issue and not an issue on which council should take the lead. Councils respond to government or private sector actions rather than take the initiative. There is a risk of council adopting a suspicious and defensive response when freight matters are raised. | Council approach can be defensive and antagonistic towards freight because the approach is to 'defend' local areas from freight intrusion. System planning necessary to facilitate freight, protect sensitive areas or assets and set priorities is not undertaken. | Encourage (or require) regional transport plans, including freight plans, to be developed by all councils. Demonstrate the benefits to councils from taking a pro-active approach. Introduce a program for DOT and VicRoads to work with councils to develop regional integrated freight plans and to identify freight related priorities for the whole of Victoria. VFLC/MAV develop a program of industry visits to all councils or regional groupings of councils, preferably by freight operators who operate in the council area. |
| Lack of integration across groups within councils. | Freight interacts with many different areas of council. There is little coordination between engineering, planning and economic development | Freight matters are not considered holistically. Decisions made in one area of council or government can have negative DoT, VicRoads and DPCD to demonstrate integrated decision-making in their activities. DOT and DPCD to development technical guidelines for councils on planning land use. | DOT, VicRoads and DPCD to demonstrate integrated decision-making in their activities. DoT and DPCD to development technical guidelines for councils on planning land use. |
| Councils are not equipped technically or resourced adequately to deal with freight related matters. | Reasons for the lack of adequate skills and tools in councils are broad, and include: - lack of access to assessment tools by council officers - assessment tools are not easy to find, difficult to use or not used consistently - lack of skilled staff or the focus of staff is on day-to-day tasks at the expense of systemic actions - increasing complexity of processes is not matched by information and resources eg. HPFVs, IAP, PBS - the low number of freight related activities and dispersed knowledge within councils means staff skills cannot be developed - staff turnover means corporate knowledge is lost - lack of generic strategic planning understanding and skills - freight seen as a low priority issue | Councils are reactive on freight matters. Inappropriate decisions are made due to a lack of knowledge. Lack of strategic thinking has the potential to build in long term problems for councils, communities, industry and the state when: - planning transport networks - land use planning - supporting economic development Delays in assessing proposals or inconsistent outcomes. | Develop practical and consistent assessment tools. Maximise the return from available skills available to councils – through joint studies, support services, training, consultants, assistance by state agencies. Develop a freight planning and evaluation Toolbox. Bring together existing material, convert this to user friendly form if necessary and provide a 'how to' process(s). Involve councils in the development of the toolbox. Improve access to assessment tools eg web applications, assessment portal, "how to" toolbox. Disseminate information on Austroads, ARRB and ARA tools. Provide training - design and deliver a travelling freight seminar with MAV, VFIC, DOT, VicRoads and DPCD. Present to regional groupings of councils and target engineers, planners and councillors. Cover industry perspective, relevance of state strategies to the region, how to undertake a regional plan, tools etc. DOT/VFIC to talk to universities to identify where freight matters can be reinforced during professional engineering, logistics and planning courses. |
For example, land zoning for freight generators leading to freight/housing conflicts on access roads.

### Decision-making tools

<p>| Lack of freight data and analysis. | Councils have difficulty obtaining data on current freight demands, trends and scenarios. | Action is not taken, or is taken based on assumptions, due to lack of data. Focus in planning is on the immediate observable issues and not on trends, such as increasing use of rail and multi-modal logistics chains. Little consideration of long term challenges eg. impact of reduced fuel availability or changing production methods. | Identify freight data needs and feasibility of generating data, for arterial and local roads. DoT to develop and disseminate state-wide freight estimates at a level useful for regional freight planning. Identify data to be collected by the state and councils. Identify freight estimation tools that could be applied by local government on a regional basis. |
| Lack of knowledge of the performance of road structures. | Data on bridge and pavement strength and their ability to carry heavy vehicles may not be available. Analysis of structures by consultants may be expensive. | Lack of data leads to conservative approach to decision-making. Councils are less likely to allow freight vehicles on a network if the impact on structures is not known. | DOT/VicRoads provide assistance to councils on the analysis of bridge and pavement strengths. |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Solution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence in assessment tools.</td>
<td>There is suspicion in local government on the assumptions made about the impact of larger vehicles on pavements and structures.</td>
<td>Development and auditing of tools by independent and credible organisations eg. ARRB, universities. Understand council concerns/perceptions and directly address them through analysis and reporting. Identify priority assessment tools required by local government, scope and prioritise their development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding of access control mechanisms.</td>
<td>There is a lack of understanding of the appropriate use of access conditions to manage the impact of heavy vehicles.</td>
<td>Educate councils on the role of access control conditions and their appropriate use. Incorporate in the regional workshops, use material developed for Austroads forthcoming Guidelines for Assessing Heavy Vehicle Access to Local Roads.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Access control conditions can be applied in an unnecessarily restrictive way in situations where they are not warranted, or appropriate applications for access by freight vehicles may be rejected through lack of knowledge of how access conditions could be used to address legitimate concerns.</td>
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