IAP—MYTHS & FACTS

AUSTRALIAN TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

MYTH – IAP provides me with assurance that trucks operating at higher mass limits in our shire only use approved roads

Why? Councils are not provided with information about IAP compliance. Heavy trucks may be allowed to travel on roads at general mass limits, but not at higher mass limits. There is no way an IAP system can determine the mass of a truck. It relies on the self-declaration of the driver to say whether it is loaded or not. If other trucks can use roads and are assumed to be acting in a responsible manner, why wouldn't all drivers be treated the same way? It's assuming that drivers of a particular class of truck are dishonest! How un-Australian!

MYTH - Vehicles at higher mass limits create more wear on roads

This is not the case. Vehicles that have road friendly suspension, and which operate at higher mass limits, cause no more wear to roads than vehicles that do not use this type of suspension and which operate at general mass limits.

Imagine the productivity gains your community may be missing, based on someone's lack of understanding!

MYTH – Drivers of large heavy vehicles drive further, and are therefore at a higher risk of fatigue related incidents

Incorrect. Drivers of vehicles over 12 tonnes are subject to stringent fatigue laws, which govern the amount of work a driver can complete in a day, a week, or a month. These laws are about ensuring that truck drivers have taken adequate rest so they are not a fatigue risk to the general community. Drivers of vehicles under 12 tonnes are not subject to these laws.

Modern prime movers are safer and provide a much better working environment for the driver, with improved sleeping facilities and better driving comfort, meaning a decrease in fatigue. Many rigid trucks do not provide the same level of comfort for the driver.

MYTH – Big trucks cause more wear to our roads and bridges than small trucks

Wrong. Let's say a supermarket needs 1,000 tonnes of freight to come into the store. The table below shows how many trips would be needed by the different types of trucks to get the freight to the supermarket:

Type of truck	No. of trips	Measure of wear*
B-double, higher mass limits	23	173
Semi-trailer, higher mass limits	37	226
Semi-trailer, general mass limits	42	257
Three axle rigid truck	77	316

**Note: Lower 'Measure of wear' number is better for infrastructure*

Increasing the number of trips by using smaller trucks also means exposing your community to more trucks. Our aim is, and your aim should be to reduce risk to your community.

MYTH – Bigger trucks are more polluting to our environment than smaller trucks

Wrong again. Larger trucks use less fuel than small trucks to deliver the same amount of freight. This means our B-double example above when compared to the three axle rigid uses just 69% of the fuel required to complete the same freight task, resulting in less emissions.

IAP on longer, safer, more productive combinations is unjustified and does not ensure the safety of your community.

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FACT – B-double drivers have a higher level of training than drivers only licensed to drive smaller trucks

Drivers of longer, safer trucks, more productive trucks like B-doubles, need to undertake more training to drive these vehicles. In some cases, they must also undertake medical checks. Companies ensure their drivers are competent and appropriately trained before sending them off in a major asset like a B-double.

FACT – Accidents involving trucks and other vehicles are often the fault of the other driver

Recent studies by National Transport Insurance (NTI) show that in fatal crash incidents involving a truck and another vehicle, the other driver was at fault in 82% of the accidents, not the truck driver. Better education of car drivers, along with improved roads, would go a long way to reducing the number of fatal crashes on our roads.

FACT – IAP is expensive for operators to use

The costs for an operator to become registered with IAP and to maintain the system are prohibitive. Many transport companies operate on a 3% to 5% net profit margin. Maintaining an IAP system reduces this profit margin even further.

FACT - Operators who use their vehicles at higher mass limits are subjected to ongoing reviews and audits

In order to show enforcement agencies that the vehicles are being loaded to the correct weights, operators are required to undertake internal reviews and be audited by an approved auditor. Records are required to be maintained showing the vehicles are being correctly loaded.

FACT – IAP is not being used in the way it was intended

IAP was designed as a tool for governments to remotely manage potential risks to sensitive infrastructure, like bridges. Very heavy vehicles, plant, and equipment may cause damage to infrastructure due to unusual unit mass and mass distribution. IAP was also developed for use in Supervisory Intervention Orders for systematic or persistent offences in the mass, dimension and load restraint area. Now, it has been applied to prescriptive modular combinations, and those wanting to operate at higher mass limits, where there is no increased risk to roads.

FACT – NSW government's implementation of IAP was inconsistent

The previous NSW government implemented IAP in an ad hoc manner. In NSW, longer, safer combinations like B-doubles (operating at higher mass limits), B-triples and AB-triples (which provide productivity and safety gains when compared to traditional road trains and semi-trailers) are required to have IAP. Road trains operate without monitoring and on any road in a prescribed area of NSW, and semi-trailers are generally unrestricted. Hence, the better, safer combination is disadvantaged, denying NSW much needed productivity, environmental and, importantly, safety gains.

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