

11 April 2023

## CTAA Calls for Safer West Gate Tunnel Project Heavy Vehicle Detours – Bolte Bridge Should Be Alternate to Access Webb Dock

Container Transport Alliance Australia (CTAA) is calling on the Victorian Government and toll-road operator Transurban to agree to safer heavy vehicle detours during the next phases of the West Gate Tunnel Project construction, including use of the Bolte Bridge for access to Webb Dock for heavier High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs).

CTAA Director, Neil Chambers noted that “CTAA has been working collaboratively with Victorian Government departments, agencies & industry representatives to try to minimise disruptions to heavy vehicle operations caused by the construction phases of the West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP).”

“To date, the heavy vehicle access disruptions to and from the Port of Melbourne have had a negative impact on landside container logistics efficiency and productivity, but they have been manageable because they have been temporary.”

“However, container transport operators have significant concerns about longer-term road closures earmarked in the forward WGTP construction timetable and their associated heavy vehicle detours. The most significant of these is the complete closure of Wurundjeri Way in Docklands in the third quarter of this year for an extended period.”

“Wurundjeri Way is the major permitted route for High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs) around 30 metres in length carrying up to four Twenty Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) and operating at gross vehicle mass (GVM) weights above 68.5 tonnes (up to 109 tonnes GVM).”

“There are dozens of HPFV movements day and night accessing Webb Dock from the Swanson Dock precinct of the Port, and from the west. These vehicles cannot use the West Gate Bridge above 68.5t GVM due to bridge weight restrictions.”

Temporary night closures of Wurundjeri Way commenced on 31 March and continue until late April. The heavy vehicle detour between the Swanson Dock precinct of the Port of Melbourne and Webb Dock during these closures is as per the map below:



The route funnels High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs) through Harbour Esplanade and Bourke Street in the Docklands area.

“Container transport operators have a major concern that is that this detour route is wholly unsuited for the extended period of the closure of Wurundjeri Way later this year.” noted Neil Chambers.

“The detour route throws HPFVs into a potentially dangerous mix of narrow carriageways adjacent to a tram route, elevated tram stops, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian interaction in a residential and major sporting arena location.”

“Longer heavy vehicles are having to make tight left-hand and right-hand turns at the signalled intersection at the corner of Harbour Esplanade and Bourke Street while pedestrians and bicycles are crossing.”

“CTAA has written to Victorian Government Ministers, Jacinta Allan (Minister for Transport and Infrastructure) and Melissa Horne (Minister for Ports and Freight) respectfully suggesting that when Wurundjeri Way is closed for an extended period for WGTP construction later this year, the heavy vehicle detour route should be via Footscray Road, the Bolte Bridge and Todd Road to access Webb Dock.”

“A detour via the Bolte Bridge would eliminate the potentially dangerous interaction between larger and heavier vehicles and pedestrians / bicycles in the Docklands area.”

“CTAA understands that Transurban and the West Gate Tunnel Project (WGTP) are considering this option, in conjunction with the Victorian Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA) and VicRoads (Victorian Department of Transport).”

“However, we’d urge that this route and bridge analysis be fast-tracked and approved to protect the safety, efficiency and productivity of vital port-related freight movements associated with the Port of Melbourne.”

“In the longer term, the container transport sector would prefer access for heavier permitted loads between the West Gate Tunnel, the Swanson Dock precinct of the Port, and Webb Dock to be via the Bolte Bridge.”

“Access across the Bolte Bridge would maintain segregation between these vital port-related freight movements and the commercial, sporting and residential areas in Docklands and Fishermans Bend.” Neil Chambers concluded.

-- ENDS --

Queries about this Media Release should be directed to Neil Chambers, Director, CTAA, 0413 662 263 / [neil.chambers@ctaction.com.au](mailto:neil.chambers@ctaction.com.au)

***About CTAA: Container Transport Alliance Australia (CTAA) is strong Alliance of leading businesses engaged in the container transport logistics industry. CTAA Alliance companies account for the majority of containerised freight handled in capital city ports in Australia.***