

Changes to the Main Roads Technical Standard 02 (MRTS02) – Provision for Traffic

In response to concerns about the increasing cost of traffic management at road works, the Department of Transport and Main Roads commissioned the ARRB Group to undertake a review of work site traffic management practices. The project brief emphasised that safety is paramount (and would not be compromised) and sought to identify opportunities to improve value for money and efficiencies by:

- using engineering judgement and experience of traffic control standards to achieve a safe and legally defensible outcome
- encouraging innovative (cost saving) solutions.

ARRB's recommendations have resulted in some significant amendments to MRTS02, as follows:

- Encouraging innovation in the design and implementation of traffic control at work sites. An additional section has been added to emphasise TMR's willingness to consider innovation in the application and development of traffic management treatments at roadworks. Examples have been provided describing the broad areas in which innovation may apply.
- Recognising that level of service considerations provide an opportunity for contractors to submit alternative traffic management treatments that have greater traffic impacts where there are substantial cost benefits.
- Removing the need for TMR approval of Traffic Guidance Schemes (TGS). TMR will now only approve Traffic Management Plans and the placement of speed limit signs within TGS that are submitted to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) for enforcement. Guidance on the referral arrangements is currently being developed in conjunction with QPS.
- Permitting variations to the standard MUTCD treatments through use of innovative treatments that result in a safer working environment without impacting on traffic flow through the worksite. Variations include treatments that are either in excess of, or less than, those required by the MUTCD. MUTCD practice exceptions must be supported with a documented risk assessment prepared in consultation with affected parties and certified by a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ) with at least level 3 traffic management competency.
- Allowing a combined TMP and TGS to be submitted for simpler work.
- Emphasising that speed limits are to be strictly applied in accordance with MUTCD Part 3. MRTS02 allows for financial penalties for non-conformance.
- Reinforcing the fact that the requirements of the MUTCD are designed to provide optimal outcomes. In the past, there has been confusion that the MUTCD nominates minimum requirements and that providing traffic control devices in excess of the MUTCD requirements would result in safer outcomes for road workers.
- Considering items such as variable message signs, police and attenuator trucks as additional optional devices that should be justified through a risk assessment. This reverses the onus where they were previously documented as standard items.

- Permitting record keeping through drive-through video recording rather than maintaining a paper based checklist. TMR's expectation is that video will be able to achieve exactly the same result as we do with the current manual record keeping approach - signs will need to be legible, be able to be located (the recording system will need to include GPS data) and the data file be indelibly time stamped.

Should you have any questions regarding the changes to this document or wish to discuss a particular scenario, please contact the Traffic Engineering and Data Unit within Engineering and Technology via email at

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