

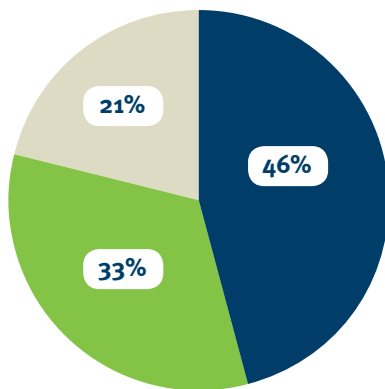
Type 1 road train access to Rockhampton abattoirs

Project overview

Background

The Central Queensland agribusiness sector transports in excess of 500,000 cattle annually to the Rockhampton abattoirs, located in North Rockhampton. This task requires thousands of cattle freight vehicles travelling the region's roads every year in a mix of vehicle combinations including semi-trailers, B-double and road train configurations.

A review of Central Queensland cattle freight operations in 2015 identified that the most prevalent transport configuration used by industry to access Rockhampton abattoirs was the Type 1 road train.



Vehicle breakdown to Rockhampton abattoirs

- Type 1 road train accessing via CQLX
- B-double truck
- Semi-trailer/Rail Service

In Queensland, the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) manages the size and type of heavy vehicles which use the state's highways and state-controlled roads through the *Route Assessment Guidelines for Multi-Combination Vehicles in Queensland (October 2013)*.

In Central Queensland, these guidelines currently restrict Type 1 road trains from travelling the Capricorn Highway, east of the Central Queensland Livestock Exchange (CQLX), near Gracemere.

To deliver their load to Rockhampton abattoirs, Type 1 road trains are required to stop and breakdown (also known as 'decouple') to a semi-trailer configuration before continuing onwards to one of the abattoirs in North Rockhampton. After this initial trip, operators return to either decouple/recouple the second trailer or transfer cattle between trailers in a procedure referred to as 'crossloading'. These cattle are then taken into the abattoirs by the same prime mover performing a second trip.

Heavy vehicle configurations

B-double



A B-double may be up to 26 metres long and operates at a Gross Combination Mass (GCM) of 62.5t.

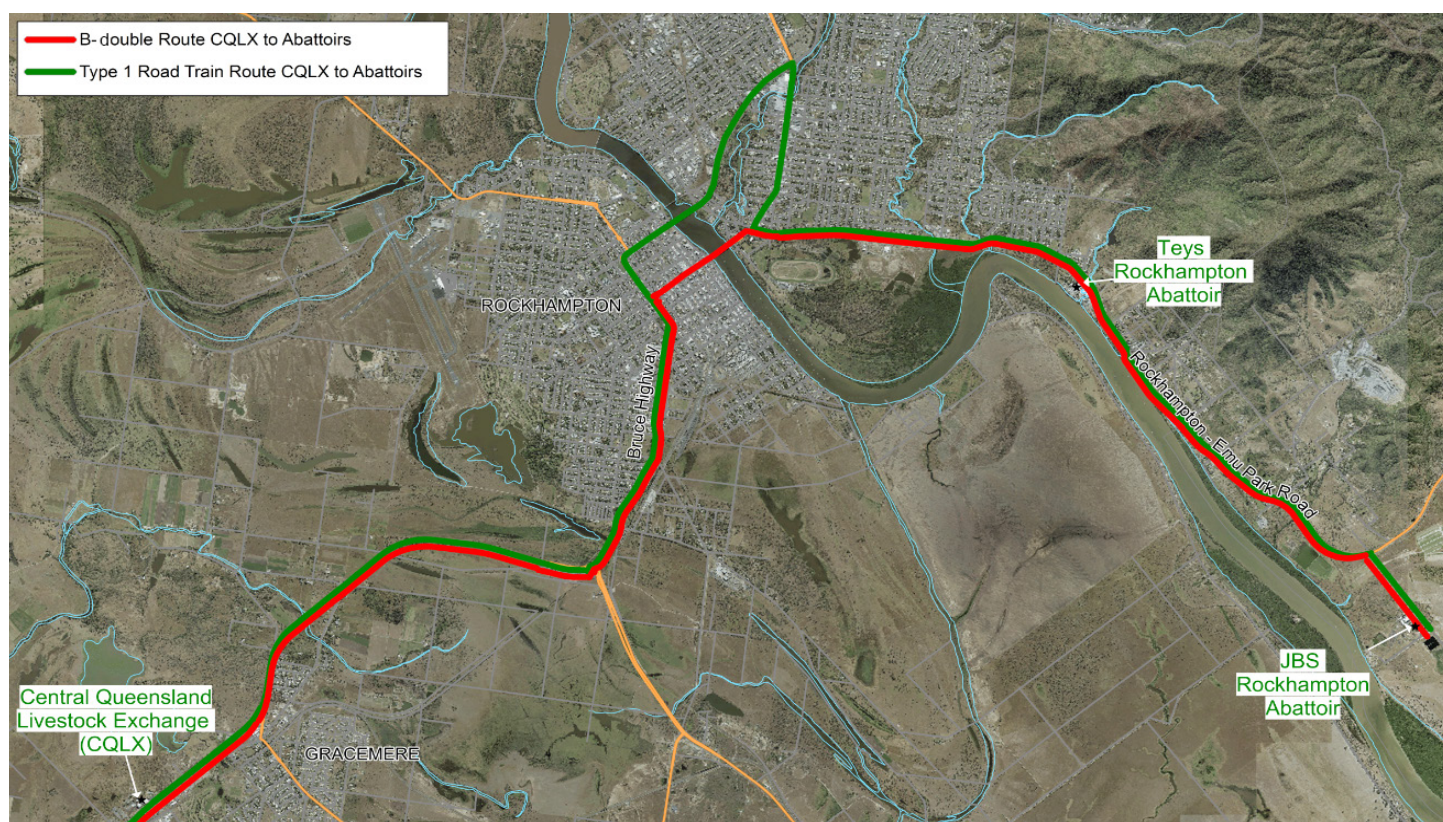
Type 1 road train



A Type 1 Road Train operates at an overall length of 36.5 metres (or less) and GCM of between 79t and 82.5t depending on whether the vehicle is fitted with Road Friendly Suspension.



Heavy vehicle routes



Administering Type 1 road train access through Rockhampton

The proposal to allow Type 1 road train access to Rockhampton abattoirs will be under restricted permitting conditions overnight, between 7pm and 7am.

When operating as a Type 1 road train configuration, during the permitted hours, these heavy vehicles will be required to travel a designated heavy vehicle route through Rockhampton, which traverses:

- Capricorn Highway
- Bruce Highway (Gladstone Road, George Street, Albert Street, Neville Hewitt Bridge, Moores Creek Road)
- Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road (Musgrave Street, Queen Elizabeth Drive)
- Rockhampton-Emu Park Road (Lakes Creek Road).

Outside of these restricted operating hours, the maximum size heavy vehicle which can travel between CQLX and North Rockhampton abattoirs, without a permit, will remain a B-double truck.

A Type 1 road train arriving at CQLX prior to 7pm will continue to have the option of decoupling and/or crossloading cattle to access the abattoirs in a B-double or smaller heavy vehicle. This long-standing practice is supported by upgraded facilities provided by the state government at the CQLX breakdown facility.

The introduction of Type 1 road train access into the North Rockhampton abattoirs will be administered by TMR.

When changes are introduced to allow restricted access operations for Type 1 road trains, freight operators will require a permit from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) to travel directly to Rockhampton abattoirs. The conditions of the permit, including operating hours and route restrictions, have been established by TMR.

Operational conditions

- Type 1 road train access permits issued to operators will restrict operating hours to between 7pm and 7am, seven days a week.
- Restricting operating hours to these times will reduce the overall impact on other road users, particularly during daytime peak traffic.
- Operators will be directed as to the approved travel route and the set speed limits for the route through Rockhampton.

Conditioned access for Type 1 road trains travelling the designated route to the North Rockhampton abattoirs is expected to commence in mid-2017.

The ongoing enforcement of Type 1 road train access operations through Rockhampton will be a combined effort by TMR, Local Government and Queensland Police Service.

Infrastructure upgrades

In March 2016, the Queensland Government committed

\$10 million through the State Infrastructure Plan to facilitate access for Type 1 road train access from Central Queensland Livestock Exchange (CQLX) to North Rockhampton abattoirs.

This funding commitment will deliver Stage 1 of the infrastructure upgrades required to facilitate access between CQLX and the abattoirs located in North Rockhampton.

Stage 1 infrastructure works include:

- Moores Creek Road/Musgrave Street intersection upgrade (completed February 2017)
- Queen Elizabeth Drive/Lakes Creek Road intersection upgrade (completed February 2017)
- Rockhampton-Emu Park Road/St Christopher's Chapel Road intersection upgrade (completion June 2017)
- Rockhampton-Emu Park Road/Dorly Street intersection/rail crossing safety improvements (completion June 2017)
- Capricorn Highway/CQLX intersection safety improvements (completion June 2017)



Benefits

The benefits to industry and motorists of permitting road trains access to the abattoirs in North Rockhampton include:

Reduced operational cost and transport time for industry

Due to the operational limitation of Type 1 road trains ending at CQLX on the Capricorn Highway, Type 1 road trains have had to stop and breakdown to a semi-trailer configuration before continuing onwards to one of the abattoirs in North Rockhampton. Upon returning to CQLX with the empty trailer, operators decouple/recouple the second trailer, or crossload cattle, for transport on a second return trip through Rockhampton.

- Permitting Type 1 road trains access during set operational hours will allow freight operators to travel directly to the abattoirs and will no longer require an extra round trip between CQLX and the abattoirs.
- As a result, the distance required to deliver cattle by road is reduced, overall transport times are reduced and the operational cost to industry also decreases.
- The estimated time saving by replacing two semi-trailer trips from CQLX to the abattoirs with one Type 1 road train movement is approximately two hours for every consignment.

Remove crossloading operations

The work practice of crossloading is considered one of the most dangerous activities in the cattle transport supply chain. The process of crossloading sees operators position trailers together, and, with the use of sliding gates, transfer cattle from one trailer deck to another.

The agriculture and freight industry have long-standing concerns about the crossloading practice including animal welfare risks and safety of drivers/operators who climb on trailers to move cattle.

- Permitting Type 1 road trains to travel directly between CQLX and North Rockhampton abattoirs during restricted hours provides freight operators and the broader industry the opportunity to eliminate the work practice of crossloading cattle.
- This outcome is overwhelmingly supported by industry and individual operators.

Reduced heavy vehicle traffic

Permitting Type 1 road train configurations to directly access Rockhampton abattoirs will result in the immediate reduction of heavy vehicle traffic through Rockhampton by removing the need for these vehicles to complete two separate trips to complete the freight task.

- An assessment of 2015 cattle freight operations determined that the immediate reduction of heavy vehicles through Rockhampton will be approximately 20 heavy vehicles per day.
- A further reduction in heavy vehicle traffic is anticipated to see freight operators who use B-double or semi-trailer vehicle configurations transition to using higher productivity Type 1 road trains.
- Industry has indicated that the transition to larger road train configurations could be as high as 30% of road freight originating from western Queensland. This transition to larger vehicle operations will result in the overall reduction in transport operations and heavy vehicles travelling the regions roads.



Further information

For more information on the project, visit www.tmr.qld.gov.au and search 'Rockhampton road train access'.

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