# Collaborative Development of an Alcohol and Other Drug Risk Management Resource for Trucking Companies

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## Abstract

Heavy vehicles are involved in 18% of road deaths in Victoria, and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) are a preventable risk factor in heavy vehicle crashes. The majority of drivers do the right thing, but a small group who take AOD and drive cause a disproportionate amount of harm.

This extended abstract describes the development of a resource kit to support organisations that employ truck drivers to manage the risk of AOD use in their business.

A key factor in the project's success was broad consultation across Government, subject matter experts and industry representatives.

## Background

This project is a component of the Victorian Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan: *Towards Zero 2016 // 2020.*

Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) recognises that truck drivers face pressures that increase their risk of driving while fatigued, and engaging in risky behaviours to meet deadlines and maximise remuneration. Chain of responsibility in the HVNL addresses these issues, and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator provides guidance and resources to support risk management of speed and fatigue. Therefore, guidance on best management practice is already available for driving hours and speed. However, there is no similar guidance on managing the risks of AOD.

The project aim was to have an impact on road safety by supporting trucking organisations to manage the AOD risk within their business.

## Method

### Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement was crucial. The knowledge necessary to deliver this project was held across government agencies and industry, and it was important to capitalise on this. VicRoads initiated an advisory group of stakeholders who:

- Guided the project towards consistency with national heavy vehicle safety frameworks and approaches, and with best practice work health and safety

- Brought subject matter expertise to technical, policy and industry issues

- Grounded the development of objectives and outputs in operational reality

- Guided promotion and dissemination of the resource to industry

### Consultation, co-design and development

VicRoads engaged:

- the Australian Road Research Board to interview Victorian companies that employ/contract truck drivers about their AOD policies, how well policy components worked and what would make them more effective.

- a co-designer to better understand end users and how we could meet project objectives and user needs. Consensus converged on a resource kit with a model policy that could be adapted to suit organisations' needs, and resources to support implementation including online training.

- the Alcohol and Drug Foundation to develop the resource kit, taking into account the knowledge gathered earlier in the project.

VicRoads' legal and work health and safety groups reviewed the policy.

### *Issues*

Many businesses already had an AOD policy, but the content of policies was highly variable. The industry is dominated by smaller operators whose resourcing capacity is limited. Businesses consulted felt that the implementation of policies was their greatest challenge. In particular, addressing breaches could be challenging, and training for supervisors and managers is likely to be beneficial. Guidance on implementation is provided in the resource, and users are reminded there are training programs to support supervisors and managers with strategies and skills to address challenging behaviours and policy breaches.

### *Dissemination and Evaluation*

The resource kit was piloted, revised and then launched. VicRoads' Strategic Communications team developed a plan to ensure wide distribution among the target group. Evaluation was built into the dissemination plan to measure reach, usefulness and usability. Preliminary results will be available by the time of the ARSC Conference.

### Conclusion

Thorough stakeholder engagement resulted in a quality resource built on work health and safety expertise in AOD, and grounded in operational realities. This resource will support trucking companies to manage the AOD risk to their business.