



## Vehicle Technical Bulletin VTB-111A

# 14.63 m Long Semi-Trailers

### Background

The Department of Transport (DoT), in conjunction with Main Roads WA, has allowed the conditional licensing (registration) and use of 14.63 m long semi-trailers in WA for a number of years.

**Recently, national dimensional limits for the length of a semi-trailer have changed. DoT has amended the vehicle condition code 167 to reflect the changes.**

## Compliance with nationally accepted dimensions

Recently, Australian Design Rule (ADR) 43/04 has allowed an increase to the distance from the point of articulation to the rear end upto 13.2 m for **non-road train trailers**. The following dimensional limits have not changed and apply irrespective of the semi-trailer length:

- Maximum overall length of the prime mover and semi-trailer combination must not exceed 19 m.
- Maximum width of 2.5 m.
- Maximum S dimension of 9.5 m (where 'S dimension' is the distance between the centerline of the king pin and the centerline of the rear axle group of the semi-trailer).

## Length requirements for general access combinations

The overall length of a general access semi-trailer combination must not exceed 19 m and the length of the semi-trailer must not exceed 14.63 m (see Figure 1 overleaf).

It is essential that operators and drivers pay careful attention to the overall dimensions of semi-trailer combinations. This is particularly important in WA due to the high proportion of long wheelbase, bonneted prime movers. Depending on the wheelbase of the prime mover and the location of its fifth wheel, it is possible for many bonneted prime movers to tow the 14.63 m semi-trailer and still remain within the maximum legal dimension of 19 m.

## Requirements for approval and registration

1. Semi-trailers, up to 14.63 m long without a rear tow hitch, are now allowed by the ADRs and will be registered as class A without any conditions.
2. The ADRs do not allow a semi-trailer with a rear tow hitch to be more than 13.73 m long and therefore, semi-trailers more than 13.73 m long and up to 14.63 m long with a rear tow hitch can only be registered under the following conditions:
  - These semi-trailers must receive approval from the federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) prior to construction, in keeping with the present requirement for the construction of over dimensional vehicles. Vehicles approved for construction will be issued with an exemption\* by DoT as required by the *Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014* (The Regulations). Each application requires the payment of a fee for the exemption (fees and charges are available on the DoT website listed overleaf). The Regulations allow for more than one vehicle to be included in each application.
  - Newly constructed semi-trailers must display a compliance plate that indicates the vehicle is non-standard. This is required by the DITRDCA for the certification of non-standard vehicles.
  - Semi-trailers for use in road trains must be constructed to the relevant ADRs, including but not limited to, ADR43 and ADR63 specification.
  - Semi-trailers approved under this policy will be registered as a class B vehicle with following conditions:
    - 001 - Licence to be carried in vehicle at all times.
    - 167 - When coupled to a prime mover, in a semi-trailer configuration, if the overall length of the resultant combination exceeds 19 m, condition 024 applies.
  - Provided the vehicle combination does not exceed 19 m in overall length and contains no trailers other than the semi-trailer, a Main Roads approval or permit will not be required.

\*Only Performance Based Standards (PBS) approved trailers are allowed to be registered with a rear tow hitch.

## B-double and road train use

Under present national standards, the use of semi-trailers longer than 13.73 m is not permitted in B-double or road train combinations. The use of these semi-trailers in certain multi-combinations will be allowed in WA, but will be restricted as follows:

- Not to be used in B-double configuration.
- Only one 14.63 m semi-trailer in a combination is allowed as the last trailer on a road train.
- Road train combinations must not exceed the currently allowed overall combination lengths in their respective Main Roads WA permits.
- The trailers must track in a safe manner. Road trains that have excessive sway or similar unsafe characteristics will be issued with a compliance notice.

## Related documents and links

- DoT website: [www.transport.wa.gov.au](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au)
- Main Roads WA website: [www.mainroads.wa.gov.au](http://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au)
- The *Road Traffic (Vehicles) Regulations 2014* can be accessed on State Law Publisher website: [www.slp.wa.gov.au](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au)
- Australian Design Rules are available on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts website: [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au)

## Correspondence and enquiries

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## Figure 1

### 14.63 Semi-Trailer

