

Reducing truck numbers

The previous Labor government had a target of 30% of port related freight to be on rail by 2010. They abandoned the target when it became clear they weren't going to meet it

Currently none of the container freight trips which have origins or destinations in metropolitan Melbourne are on rail, and these are 70% of the total trips to and from the Port.

If 30% of these trips were on rail – quite achievable if we had intermodal transport hubs in Somerton, the Dandenong region and the western region – this would then translate into a 20% reduction in port truck traffic overall. This target is still accepted as achievable in the current state Freight Strategy. In fact many in the industry think it would be quite possible to reach 40% if not more.

Given that in 2007 the Port generated 2000 truck movements a day¹, and some 11% of the traffic on the Westgate bridge in the morning peak is trucks² this is a not insignificant reduction.

Furthermore if not just 30% of freight was on rail but each port related truck journey carried an average of 1.0 container each instead of 0.8, then the current truck movements could be reduced from 2000 trucks a day to 1120.

Or alternatively, the projected increase in freight movements could be absorbed by these measures for at least the next decade. (And this would give us time to assess whether these projected increases are in fact going to occur given the reality of climate change and peak oil.)

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¹ pers comm. Data from Western Transport Alliance Freight Forum, June 2007. It will be considerably more than this now

² Vicroads' 2005 *Westgate Freeway Traffic Demand Study*