15 October 2012

TDT 2010/07
SF2012/033192/1

Mr Nick Tobin
General Manager
WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL
PO Box 57
CHATSWOOD
NSW 2057

Dear Sir/Madam

Use of Trailer Mounted/Portable Variable Message Signs (VMS)

I write to inform all Sydney councils regarding the use and placement of trailer mounted/portable variable message signs (VMS).

The primary purpose of a portable VMS is to provide road users with information about road and traffic conditions. They have the ability to display individual messages for the purpose of directing, warning or guiding road users during an unplanned road incident or to give information on upcoming changes to traffic conditions as a result of planned events and road construction or maintenance. In some cases VMS are also used to inform and direct large numbers of pedestrians during major events.

Easy access to portable VMS and relatively low hire charges has led to a proliferation of portable VMS throughout Sydney. Unfortunately in many instances the VMS are poorly positioned, in conflict with other road signs or contrary to Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) policy and guidelines.

To assist councils in the correct and compliant placement of portable VMS I have enclosed a copy of Technical Direction TDT 2010/07 “USE OF VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS – RTA POLICY” and Appendix A “PORTABLE VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGN CONSIDERATIONS”. I would appreciate it if these documents could be circulated widely to council staff, in particular those working in the areas of traffic, road safety, construction and community events.

Whilst I urge you to read the documents in there entirety, I wish to highlight the following important points, contained within the documents: (NB in the documents, all reference to RTA means, Roads and Maritime Services - RMS)
• Any variable Message Signs (VMS) used on State Roads must be approved by the RMS and these approvals must include a condition requiring compliance with this policy.
• VMS within the classified road reserve must not be used for advertising; be it promotion of community events or commercially based advertising. (road reserve is generally defined as the space on the roadway between opposing property front boundary alignments, and includes, road shoulders, footpaths, green strips and median islands)
• Under the Roads Act 1993, RMS reserves the right to (and will) remove an unauthorised VMS located within the classified road reserve.
• Portable VMS locations, VMS messages and use of a VMS for non RMS business within the road reserve of a State Road, in the greater Sydney area, requires the approval of the Executive General Manager, Transport Management Centre, 25 Garden Street, Eveleigh, NSW 2015.
• The RMS may remove a VMS outside the road reserve that is deemed to be a traffic hazard in terms of either location or messaging.

When positioning VMS on local roads, councils need to be mindful of the VMS proximity and line of sight to traffic lights and traffic signs and to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists using footpaths and shared paths. The use of red, yellow and green display within close proximity or line of sight to traffic lights is also strongly discouraged.

I am also writing to plant hire companies within Sydney explaining their obligations regarding the use of VMS for private commercial use.

If you require further information please send your enquiry to Feli.Mella@rms.nsw.gov.au. Thank you for your co-operation on this matter.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Robert Picone
Manager, Traffic Engineering Services
Sydney Region
APPENDIX A

PORTABLE VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGN CONSIDERATIONS
A1. Portable VMS Signs

Portable VMS are trailer-mounted signs that should only be used when they are necessary to improve traffic management relating to an incident or major event. They can also be used for the display of road safety messages related to specific campaigns (Refer to TDT 2002/11a).

Portable VMS are used for traffic management purposes in the following circumstances:

- at road construction and maintenance sites;
- in the areas surrounding major events;
- for incident management where permanent VMS are not available or are inoperative, or where the spacing of permanent VMS is unable to give adequate warning of a major incident; and
- to encourage lower speeds in local streets.

Portable VMS are generally used at roadworks sites or in association with major events to:

- pre-warn motorists of road construction or maintenance activities, or events, that may cause delay during some future period;
- advise motorists of likely delays and suitable alternate routes during the duration of the works or event.

This information enables motorists to plan their trips during the works event so that they use other routes and do not contribute to congestion or other problems in the area immediately surrounding the works or event.

The use of traffic control devices for works on roads is covered in AS 1742.3 and its associated handbooks. AS 1742.3 includes vehicle mounted flashing arrow signs, however, no other electronic signs are included. It is important that VMS used at roadworks sites complement the standard signing arrangements provided in Australian Standards.

The following conditions apply to the deployment of portable VMS:

- drivers are required to do something in response to the VMS message (e.g. change travel speed or lane, divert or be aware of a change in current or future traffic or road conditions);
- static signs that can effectively convey the required message are not readily available;
- information can be confirmed from a reliable source;
- the portable VMS should not tell drivers something they already know; and
- traffic conditions can be monitored so that the mobile VMS can be removed or the message changed as soon as necessary.

The principles for legibility, location, sign and message design that apply to permanent VMS also apply to portable VMS. However the following aspects require consideration in using and locating portable signs:

- adequate reading distance should be available, allowing for any obstructions;
- the lateral placement should be such that the sign is easily read;
- where practicable, they should be placed on the verge behind any shoulder that may exist;
- where possible, they should be placed outside of the clear zone corresponding to the prevailing traffic speed;
- the signs should be located clear of any roadside furniture, side streets and driveways, so that required visibility to permanent signs, and sight distances for entering drivers, are not compromised;
- at least 300 m from the nearest permanent VMS;
- when placed in footways, adequate horizontal and vertical clearance should be provided for cyclists and pedestrians, including those persons in wheelchairs;
- they should not be placed on both sides of a carriageway at the same location. If separate signs are needed for each side of the road (e.g. different messages or visibility problems);
- signs should be turned 3 to 5 degrees away from the perpendicular to the edge of the carriageway to reduce glare;
- if use is intermittent throughout the duration of an incident or event, the sign should be turned away from drivers when it is not being used for messages; and
- the sign trailer should be anchored to prevent it moving under wind loading.
USE OF VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS (VMS)

RTA POLICY
Use of Variable Message Signs (VMS) - RTA Policy | December 2010

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

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POLICY STATEMENT

Any Variable Message Signs (VMS) used on a State Road must be approved by the RTA and these approvals must include a condition requiring compliance with this policy.

INTRODUCTION

Background
The primary purpose of VMS is to communicate information about traffic and road conditions specific to trips undertaken by road users, drivers and riders.

The main reasons for using VMS are outlined below:

- to provide instructions on what actions should be taken in the event of unplanned traffic incidents, (accidents, weather and unforeseen road and traffic conditions).
- to provide current and real-time information on general traffic conditions to enable road users to make informed decisions about their journey (travel time).
- to give information on upcoming changes to traffic conditions as a result of planned traffic incidents (planned events and road works).

When there is no need to communicate such specific messages, VMS may be used to display stand-by messages, relevant to travel by road users, drivers and riders.

Why have a VMS policy?
This policy provides guidance in the development, use and communication of messages to be displayed on all VMS on State Roads. It supersedes the March 1998 interim policy Use of VMS (98/2) and is based on the findings of qualitative research carried out by the RTA in February 2001.

What are VMS?
VMS are signs that display electronically generated messages. They are located either over or adjacent to the roadway. VMS are widely used in Australia and internationally to provide road users with information about road and traffic conditions. All VMS have the ability to display a large number of individual messages that can be seen by road users.

Types of VMS
Two variations of VMS can be located in the road reserve:

- Permanent VMS
- Portable VMS

Each type of VMS has different capabilities which are discussed in this document.

Permanent VMS
Permanent VMS are installed over or adjacent to the roadway and may be:

- owned and operated by RTA
- owned by Local Government and RTA operated (eg City of Sydney) or
- owned and/or operated by private motorway companies or other agencies, eg. the M2, Eastern Distributor and Sydney Olympic Park Authority.

Portable VMS
Portable VMS are mobile plant items located temporarily in the road reserve.

Portable VMS are used in various circumstances, including:

- in the vicinity of road construction or maintenance sites
- in association with special events to inform, warn and direct road users to take action because of changed traffic conditions
- for unplanned traffic incidents
- during holiday periods along major tourist routes
- for pedestrian traffic management
- for specific road safety campaign messages.

**Target Audience**
The messages displayed on VMS are directed to drivers of all classes of vehicles and bicycle riders using NSW roads. In some circumstances portable VMS can be used to display messages directed to pedestrians.

**VMS MESSAGE PROTOCOL AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Message Priority**
It is important to establish a priority when using VMS to ensure that important or urgent messages are communicated clearly and rapidly. The following table illustrates priorities for VMS applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Priority</td>
<td>Unplanned traffic incidents and unexpected road conditions such as major crashes, closures and diversions, flooding, bush fires and weather affecting road use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Priority</td>
<td>Active planned traffic incidents such as road closures and diversions for road works and special events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Priority</td>
<td>Current information regarding real-time traffic conditions such as real-time travel time services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Priority</td>
<td>Future planned traffic incidents such as road closures and diversions for upcoming road works and special events and specific road safety campaign messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Priority</td>
<td>General information about road safety and traffic management such as stand-by messages: How fast are you going now?: Don't queue across intersections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Message Protocols**
Since there are a number of different configurations for VMS, protocols have been established for both Permanent and Portable VMS.

In addition, a set of procedures has been developed for drafting of all VMS messages. The following pages offer guidance on message construction, tone, relevance, abbreviations, and new and revised messages.

**Message Capacity and Configuration**

**Permanent VMS**
A total of two frames per message is the maximum number of frames permitted on permanent VMS. This ensures that all road users can view and comprehend a message in the time it takes their vehicle to approach the VMS when travelling at the speed limit.

When a message is displayed over two frames, each frame must be able to stand alone. In other words, a driver/rider seeing only one frame should understand its meaning. Moreover, each frame should make sense regardless of the order in which the frames are presented to the road user. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOUBLE DEMERITS</th>
<th>ANZAC DAY MARCH ROAD CLOSURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THIS LONG WEEKEND</td>
<td>ROAD CLOSURES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW FAST ARE YOU GOING NOW?</td>
<td>CBD ROAD CLOSURES 8AM TO 1PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Use of Variable Message Signs (VMS) - RTA Policy | December 2010 UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED*
Portable VMS
Although portable VMS have a significant capacity, the preferred message configuration is:
- Eight characters including spaces per line; and
- Three lines per frame.

The same protocols apply as for Permanent VMS: a total of two frames per message is the maximum number of frames permitted since this ensures that road users can view and comprehend the message in the time it takes their vehicle to approach the VMS when travelling at the speed limit.

Also, each frame must be able to stand alone when messages are displayed over two frames. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Frame</th>
<th>Second Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEFT LANE CLOSED</td>
<td>MERGE RIGHT NOW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Message Development
A set of procedures has been established for drafting new or revised messages. These should be followed at all times as described below.

Construction
Always state the issue first and then the action that drivers/riders are to take. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROADWORK NEXT 6KM</td>
<td>REDUCE SPEED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICE TARGETING SPEEDING</td>
<td>HOW FAST ARE YOU GOING NOW?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VMS Messages used for road works should be based on the standard terminology and text adopted in the RTA's manual *Traffic Control at Work Sites* and AS1742.3

This standard format ensures that messages are consistent and effective to all road users throughout NSW. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROADWORK AHEAD 1KM</td>
<td>PREPARE TO STOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGED TRAFFIC CONDITIONS AHEAD</td>
<td>REDUCE SPEED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tone
VMS messages should be written in a directive tone and should state the action or behaviour that drivers/riders must take. For example:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEFT LANE CLOSED</td>
<td>MERGE RIGHT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELAYS DUE TO EARLIER ACCIDENT</td>
<td>SLOW DOWN NOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEXT DRIVER REVIVER 12KM</td>
<td>STOP. REVIVE. SURVIVE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relevance
Each message displayed on a VMS should be appropriate to the location, time of day, road environment and prevailing road conditions.

Road users should be able to relate the messages to the trip they are undertaking. When preparing messages about future events, such as road works/closures and parades, allow one to two weeks notification prior to the event.
In most cases, phone numbers and website addresses should not be included on VMS messages. A rare exception to this ruling is when the message offers information provided through phone or website, or is relevant to the trip being undertaken. Only the home page of the website address should be displayed, e.g. www.rta.nsw.gov.au.

**Maintenance and Construction Messages**
Under no circumstances should a VMS be used on its own to display a regulatory direction to road users. This ruling applies to all VMS messages, including sites where construction or maintenance is underway.

A VMS should only be used to supplement a standard regulatory sign that conforms to the NSW Road Rules and is shown in the RTA’s manual *Regulatory Signs*.

**Abbreviations**
This list of abbreviations is acceptable for frequently used words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>ABBREVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALTERNATIVE</td>
<td>ALT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCIDENT</td>
<td>ACDNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVENUE</td>
<td>AVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOULEVARD</td>
<td>BLVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN NOT</td>
<td>CAN'T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO NOT</td>
<td>DON'T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTRANCE,</td>
<td>ENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTER</td>
<td>ENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREEWAY</td>
<td>FWY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION</td>
<td>INFO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT IS</td>
<td>IT'S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAINTENANCE</td>
<td>MAINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORMAL</td>
<td>NORM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROAD</td>
<td>RD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE</td>
<td>SERV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIPPERY</td>
<td>SLIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STREET</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILL NOT</td>
<td>WON'T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTORWAY</td>
<td>M'WAY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abbreviations in Conjunction with Other Words**
The following abbreviations are more easily understood and comprehended when they appear in conjunction with a word commonly associated with them, e.g. road, lane, ahead etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>ABBREVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRIDGE</td>
<td>BR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONDITION</td>
<td>COND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASTBOUND</td>
<td>EAST BND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL</td>
<td>LOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KILOMETRE</td>
<td>KM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHBOUND</td>
<td>NTH-BND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVERSIZED</td>
<td>OVERSIZE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHBOUND</td>
<td>STH-BND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPORARY</td>
<td>TEMP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEHICLE</td>
<td>VEH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WESTBOUND</td>
<td>WEST-BND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unsuitable Abbreviations and Contractions
Certain abbreviations are confusing because a different word may be abbreviated in the same way.
Do not use these abbreviations to avoid confusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>INTENDED WORD</th>
<th>MISINTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRNG</td>
<td>WARNING</td>
<td>WRONG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>ACCIDENT</td>
<td>ACCESS (ROAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLY</td>
<td>DELAY</td>
<td>DAILY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>LIGHT</td>
<td>LEFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAD</td>
<td>STANDARD</td>
<td>STADIUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>LANE (MERGE)</td>
<td>LEFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARK</td>
<td>PARKING</td>
<td>PARK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RED</td>
<td>REDUCE</td>
<td>RED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>POLLUTION</td>
<td>POLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDR</td>
<td>FEEDER</td>
<td>FEDERAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLRS</td>
<td>CLEARS</td>
<td>COLOURS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advertising on VMS
VMS within the classified road reserve must not be used for advertising (community or commercially based). Advertising on VMS will undermine the credibility of the message or information.

Road Safety and Traffic Management campaign messages are permitted however they should be individually assessed before appearing on VMS. Such slogans must meet the message development criteria in this policy. The critical question to ask is whether the campaign message is relevant to the driving conditions, the trip being undertaken or the road the VMS is located on.

The RTA reserves the right to remove an unauthorised VMS located within the classified road reserve. The RTA may remove a VMS outside the road reserve that is deemed to be a traffic hazard in terms of either location or messaging.

Stand-by Messages
The following examples illustrate the protocols for developing relevant stand-by messages. The Executive Director, Transport Management Centre administers the list of messages and their protocols.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Messages</th>
<th>Protocol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOW FAST ARE YOU GOING NOW?</td>
<td>Never in peak periods particularly in peak traffic flow direction. Never during protracted periods of slow moving traffic, eg. On freeways and roads carrying heavy volumes of traffic returning from / going to holiday destinations. Only on weekdays in the CBD VMS at low traffic times, eg. Between 10.00 pm and 6.00 am. On weekends no time restrictions On long weekends only where traffic flows freely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICE TARGETING SPEEDING HOW FAST ARE YOU GOING NOW?</td>
<td>Never in peak periods particularly in peak traffic flow direction. Never during protracted periods of slow in peak periods particularly peak traffic flow moving traffic, eg. On freeways and roads carrying heavy volumes of traffic returning from / going to holiday destinations. Only on weekdays in the CBD VMS at low traffic times, eg. Between 10.00 pm and 6.00 am. On weekends no time restrictions On long weekends only where traffic flows freely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STOP. REVIVE. SURVIVE. EVERY TWO HOURS</td>
<td>Never in peak periods particularly in peak traffic flow direction. Only during holiday periods and on weekends, not on normal weekdays. Also on corridors to snowfields in the snow season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON'T GET BUSTED IN A BUS LANE or DON'T GET BUSTED IN A BUS LANE FINE OF $211</td>
<td>Only during times when bus lanes are operational. Only on roads where bus priority lanes operate. Only on immediate approaches to roads where bus lanes operate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN SCHOOL BUS LIGHTS FLASH SLOW TO 40KM/H</td>
<td>Only during hours when warning signs and lights for school buses operate. (that is, between 7:00 am and 9:30 am and 2:30 pm and 5:00 pm).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DON'T QUEUE ACROSS INTERSECTIONS.</td>
<td>Only in peak periods both on weekends and weekdays. Only in areas with intersections, not on motorways, freeways, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEEP LEFT UNLESS OVERTAKING.</td>
<td>Only on roads where the speed limit is 80km/h or greater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEEDING FINES UP TO $2200 CHECK YOUR SPEED</td>
<td>Never in peak periods particularly in peak traffic flow direction. Never during protracted periods of slow moving traffic, eg. On freeways and roads carrying heavy volumes of traffic returning from/go ing to holiday destinations. Only on weekdays in the CBD VMS at low traffic times, eg. Between 10.00 pm and 6.00 am. On weekends no time restrictions. On long weekends only where traffic flows freely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINES UP TO $2200 CHECK YOUR SPEED LOSS OF LICENCE</td>
<td>Never in peak periods particularly peak traffic flow direction. Never during protracted periods of slow moving traffic, eg. On freeways and roads carrying heavy volumes of traffic returning from/go ing to holiday destinations. Only on weekdays in the CBD VMS at low traffic times, eg. Between 10.00 pm and 6.00 am. On weekends no time restrictions. On long weekends only where traffic flows freely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATIGUE KILLS TAKE A BREAK EVERY TWO HOURS</td>
<td>Never in peak periods particularly peak traffic flow direction. Only during holiday periods and on weekends, not on non-holiday weekdays. Also on corridors to snowfields in the snow season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAR SEATBELTS IT'S THE LAW</td>
<td>No restrictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ROAD IS THERE TO SHARE. WATCH OUT FOR CYCLISTS</td>
<td>Only in areas used by cyclists. Only in areas where bicycle traffic predominates. In other areas as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLOW DOWN IN THE WET</td>
<td>During periods of heavy continuous rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL DRINK DRIVING MESSAGES</td>
<td>Displayed Monday to Wednesday only between 6pm and 6am. Thursday to Sunday anytime. Particular attention should be paid to Drink Driving messages to ensure they are relevant to the trip ahead. eg. Police targeting this road Don't Drink and Drive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Message Protocols During Holiday Periods**

VMS used during major holiday long weekends and school holiday periods should reflect the dynamic nature of heavier travel at such times. This applies to the relevance of all messages whether for planned traffic management, unplanned incidents or for use as a stand-by message.
LOCATIONS AND OTHER REGULATIONS

Locating Permanent VMS
The location and placement of permanent VMS must be in accordance with RTA Policy PN028 and its associated guidelines.

Locating Portable VMS

On the road
Portable VMS must be placed at safe locations that do not present an accident risk to road users. Suitable road locations include:

- where minimum approach site distance is available for the prevailing speed
- sites that are clear of signalised intersections, roundabouts and interchanges
- where there is a minimum of 300 metres from the nearest permanent VMS
- where road users have enough time to read, comprehend and adopt the specified action given in the message/s
- on a straight and unobstructed road
- sites with mobile phone coverage where remote access is required
- sites for rural areas that comply with the clearzone criteria (Clearzone criteria as defined in the RTA’s Road Design Guide).

In locations with a safety barrier, the VMS should be located behind the barrier but not directly behind end terminals.

On paths used by pedestrians and cyclists
For safety reasons, it is recommended that VMS are not located on footpaths or on medians with mountable kerbs where they may obstruct access for pedestrians, cyclists or other footpath users.

If a Portable VMS has to be used on the footpath, shared path, bicycle path or nature strip, it should not impede travel or reduce safety.

Take care when using portable VMS, trailer-mounted or otherwise, that safe, unrestricted passage is allowed for:

- pedestrians on footpaths, shared paths and nature strips
- pedestrians with disabilities, including but not limited to, mobility, intellectual or vision impairment on footpaths, shared paths and nature strips
- cyclists who may legally ride their bicycles on footpaths, shared paths, bicycle paths and nature strips.

All portable VMS, trailer mounted or otherwise, must be positioned on a footpath or nature strip so that an absolute minimum envelope of 900mm x 2000mm of unobstructed clear path of travel is maintained for the entire length of the VMS unit, trailer and associated plant (see Figure 1).

All portable VMS, trailer mounted or otherwise, must be positioned on a shared path or bicycle path so that an absolute minimum envelope of 2000mm x 2000mm of unobstructed clear path of travel is maintained for the entire length of the VMS unit, trailer and associated plant (see Figure 2).

Where a sealed footpath, shared path or bicycle path is adjacent to an unsealed nature strip, all portable VMS, trailer mounted or otherwise, must be positioned so that they do not obstruct pedestrian and cyclist access to the full width or minimum width as shown in Figure 1 or Figure 2 of the sealed portion of the path.
Regulations when using portable VMS

All portable VMS used by the RTA must conform to the following as a minimum:

- Trailer Mounted LED, or LED Enhanced Flip Disc VMS.
- Approximate dimensions of 3.2m wide by 2.0m high for road applications and 1.15m wide by 1.88m high for pedestrian applications.
- Solar powered with minimum power storage of 30 days.
- Full matrix display with Minimum of 3 lines of 8 text characters.
- Remote (ie via modem) and on-site message changing capability.

Approval for portable VMS locations

Locations of portable VMS must be approved as part of the Transport Management Plan as follows:

- The Executive Director, Transport Management Centre in the greater Sydney area.
- The relevant Regional Traffic Operations Managers.
**Flashing Lights on VMS**

Flashing lights on VMS should be used only for unplanned incidents and unexpected road conditions, that is, Priority I messages. They should not be used with planned events and stand-by messages.

Flashing words should not be used as part of any VMS display.

**Exposure**

Each message should be exposed for a set period of time;
- unplanned incident messages are shown for the entire duration of the incident.

In the absence of an unplanned incident, planned incident warnings will be displayed for 50% to 100% of the time, depending on the number of messages. Any remaining time will be devoted to stand-by messages.

Except in cases of failure of VMS, normal maintenance and/or test, VMS shall be operational twenty-four hours a day 7 days per week.

**VMS Message Approval**

New and revised messages for upcoming events/road works and for stand-by messages proposed for VMS, must be submitted for approval. Messages will be reviewed to ensure they are congruent with existing policy, procedures and local guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Approval</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Sydney Metropolitan area</td>
<td>Executive Director Transport Management Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern NSW</td>
<td>Road Safety, Traffic and Development Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Highway</td>
<td>Pacific Highway Traffic Impact Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western NSW</td>
<td>Road Safety, Traffic and Development Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast and Illawarra</td>
<td>Road Safety and Traffic Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern NSW</td>
<td>Road Safety and Traffic Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Road Safety and Traffic Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once approved, messages are to be forwarded to:
- The Transport Management Centre for message and placement approval and display on permanently fixed VMS; or
- The RTA officer responsible for hiring the portable VMS; or
- The person requesting approval in the case of non-R TA VMS.

**Approval to Use a VMS for Non RTA Business**

VMS use by agencies aside from the RTA must be approved by

- The Transport Management Centre in the greater Sydney area; or
- The relevant Regional Traffic Operations Managers,
- The Pacific Highway, Traffic Impact Coordinator (for the Pacific Highway)

The location and wording must comply with this policy

**Variation to Policy**

The policies contained in this document may be suspended or varied for specific purposes or situations, at any time, by the Chief Executive of the RTA.

**ACTION**

This revised policy is to take effect immediately.
UPDATES
To ensure that this *Technical Direction* and any related guidelines remain current and relevant, minor updates may be made from time to time. Any updates may be obtained from the RTA website using the Traffic & Transport Policies & Guidelines Register which can be found at:


Printed copies of this *Technical Direction* are uncontrolled, therefore the Register should always be checked prior to using this *Technical Direction* or any related guidelines.

Approved by:  
Craig J Moran  
General Manager  
Traffic Management

Authorised for use by:  
Mikê Veysey  
Director  
Network Services