

ITEM A

LORD MAYORAL MINUTE - NOISE FROM HEAVY VEHICLE ENGINE COMPRESSION BRAKES

Noise from heavy vehicle engine compression brakes is a significant and on-going cause of complaint for many NSW residents, including many in Wollongong.

The Transport for NSW (Roads and Maritime) website notes that:

Engine brakes are devices fitted to the engine of heavy vehicles to slow the vehicle down. They are often referred to as 'auxiliary braking devices' or 'secondary retarders.'

A driver switches on the engine brake and it engages on release of the acceleration pedal. Engine brakes operate by causing the engine to act as a compressor when braking. The compressed air is released in short bursts which cause the characteristic engine brake 'bark'. It is mostly the nature of this noise, rather than its volume that causes annoyance.

Engine brakes improve vehicle safety by reducing the load on service brakes on a steep descent, but their use elsewhere provides little safety benefit. They can also extend the life of the vehicles service brakes and reduce maintenance costs.

Trucking is an important business. But the constant use of noisy engine brakes is hurting the industry's image.

The worst problems occur when drivers use their engine brakes unnecessarily near built up areas, especially at night when residents are trying to sleep.

<https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/about/environment/reducing-noise/#Regulationofheavyvehiclnoise>

Truck operators should reduce engine brake noise around residential areas by installing a muffler that is specially designed to reduce engine brake noise, ensuring a trucks exhaust system is in good condition and turning off engine brakes in built up areas to reduce disturbance, especially at night. This disturbance is very evident on the M1 between Gwynneville and Haywards Bay and on Northcliffe Drive

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that Wollongong City Council write to the Minister for Transport and Roads to request:

- 1 A review of the controls, limits and enforcement of Heavy Vehicle Engine Brake Noise Reduction in built up residential areas.
- 2 The clear identification of roads in residential areas or precincts where noisy "auxiliary braking devices" or "secondary retarders" are not permitted unless there is a situation of extreme danger or an emergency exists.
- 3 That Transport for NSW act on and enforce its own advice, outlined on the Transport for NSW (RMS) website, for reducing engine brake noise around residential areas.
- 4 Copies of this correspondence be sent to State Members of Parliament for their reference, follow up and support.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.