

**PLAN TO CUT HEAVY
VEHICLE NUMBERS
ON FREEWAY**

TOLL TRUCK



A toll on heavy vehicles using the freeway has been recommended to cut the number of trucks on the route to allow for the introduction of a rapid bus service.

By Elisa Rose

Freight companies could be charged to use the freeway as part of sweeping reforms recommended to help solve the region's transport issues.

Two reports released today by the Hills Fleurieu and KI and Adelaide Metropolitan Regional Development Australia boards recommend a trial of the toll to incentivise trucks to bypass the Hills, freeing up more space on the freeway for a rapid bus service.

According to the reports the fee could be reduced during off-peak times to encourage truck drivers to avoid the freeway during the most congested periods.

The reports outline the findings of two working committees focused on freight and passenger transport solutions for the Hills.

They also recommended more road upgrades along the freight bypass route – from Murray

Bridge to Adelaide's north via Truro – along metropolitan truck routes like Cross Road, and a possible over or underpass at the Glen Osmond intersection.

A rapid bus service between Mt Barker and the city was touted as the best option for passenger transport. According to the reports, those bus services should run every 15 minutes and have limited stops.

It could involve using the left hand lane of the freeway between Stirling and the Toll Gate as a shared bus and truck lane, with additional dedicated bus lanes created at congestion points like traffic lights to allow buses to "jump the queue".

Regional Development Australia Hills, Fleurieu and KI chief executive Damien Cooke said removing trucks from the freeway via bypass upgrades and a potential toll would be necessary to introduce a successful rapid bus service.

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Plan to cut heavy vehicles from using freeway

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"The Government is showing no appetite at this stage to look at any sort of mandating or toll roads or anything else, but my feeling is that it's something that we're going to have to seriously consider and look at implementing within the next two to five years," he said. "We need to get this mass rapid bus system up and running, the only way you can

really do that is significantly reduce the heavy transport that's going down the freeway between Murray Bridge and the city now.

"Things like the Truro bypass – all those sorts of things – need to be accelerated.

"They're already in the pipeline to happen but they need to be brought forward, and the only way we can do that is to find some alternative

way to fund them." Mr Cooke said the toll collected from freight freeway users could help to pay for upgrades along the bypass route.

While rail transport was ruled out as a short or medium term passenger transport option, Mr Cooke said it should be explored by the State Government in the longer-term.

"You look at over the next 40

years what's going to happen to the population base in Mt Barker I think buses aren't going to cut it," he said.

"I think we do need another solution, but we just don't have the capacity to actually do that piece of work at this point and I think that's where there's a responsibility for perhaps the State Government to step up and do that piece of work."