

# Guide to use of Portable Variable Message Signs for Temporary Traffic Management on NSW Roads

Variable Message Signs (VMS) are signs that display electronically generated messages. Typically, portable VMS are mounted on a trailer and can have the messages changed remotely. This document serves as a guide for the use of portable VMS in relation to the placement and operation these devices to ensure the health and safety of workers and all road users in accordance with relevant Legislation, Standards and Guidelines.

When planning to utilise a portable VMS within a road related area, careful consideration must be given to where the portable VMS will be located and the message content that will be displayed. The sign must meet its intended purpose whilst ensuring that the amenity and safety needs of all road users is considered and accommodated.

The use of any portable VMS must be included as part of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) and any associated Traffic Control Plan (TCP). A TMP should demonstrate that all traffic and transport impacts associated with proposed works have been properly identified, assessed and managed with a view to minimise disruption to the road transport network and its users. TMP's and TCP's should be reviewed and accepted for use by the relevant road authority.

In accordance with the [State Environment Planning Policy \(SEPP\) No 64](#), '*.A person must not display an advertisement on a trailer parked on a road or road related area...*' This document does not cover the use and placement of portable VMS for advertising purposes in any capacity. For information on this refer to the [Transport Corridor Outdoor Advertising and Signage Guidelines](#).

The below table describes the required performance criteria when considering utilisation of portable VMS within a road related area.

Considerations	Performance Guidelines
<b>Is the portable VMS required?</b>	Consider whether the benefits of using a portable VMS outweigh the risks it might introduce or costs of implementing. Consider if the use of other communication mediums such as internet or social media, could achieve the same outcome.
<b>Purpose of the portable VMS</b>	<p>If the portable VMS is being used for special events, consult the <a href="#">Guide to Traffic and Transport Management for Special Events</a> and the Roads and Maritime (RMS) <a href="#">Traffic Control at Worksites (TCAWS) Manual</a>.</p> <p>For a road works project, refer to the <a href="#">AS 1742.3 Manual of uniform traffic control devices Part 3: Traffic control for works on roads</a> and the RMS <a href="#">TCAWS Manual</a>.</p>

Considerations	Performance Guidelines
<b>Message content</b>	It is important that messages on VMS are easily read and comprehended. The content of new and revised messages must be approved in accordance with standard procedures for each road authority. Refer to <a href="#">Austroads Guide to Traffic Management (AGTM) Part 10: Traffic Control and Communication Devices</a> and <a href="#">RMS Supplement to AGTM Part 10</a> .
<b>Portable VMS location along roadway</b>	<p>A portable VMS must be located in a lawful parking location. In accordance with the <a href="#">Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 4A: Unsignalised and Signalised Intersections</a>, a portable VMS should not be located less than the safe sight distance from an intersection, merge point, exit ramp, traffic control signal or sharp curves. If this cannot be achieved, the portable VMS must be placed in a position that does not obstruct road user sight lines.</p> <p>A portable VMS should only be placed on a road where there is adequate time for the driver to view and comprehend the message. A greater distance is required for multiple message screens and higher traffic speeds.</p>
<b>Offset from Traffic Lane</b>	<p>The portable VMS must be placed outside the clear zone in an acceptable location in accordance with <a href="#">Austroads Guide to Road Design Part 6: Roadside Design, Safety and Barriers</a> or behind an RMS-approved crash barrier.</p> <p>If clear zone requirements cannot be achieved, a risk based approach must be taken to ensure that the safest possible location is determined for all road users. This must be justified in the Traffic Management Plan.</p>
<b>Cyclists &amp; Pedestrians</b>	<p>The portable VMS must be located to provide for the safe movements of cyclists and pedestrians and should not be placed on a footpath or footway. If this cannot be achieved a safe alternative route must be provided for these road users.</p> <p>Portable VMS should not be placed where they will restrict safe stopping sight distance to pedestrians at crossing points (eg refuges, pedestrian crossings, signalised intersections). Ensure portable VMS placement caters for the needs of all types of pedestrians, inclusive of mobility and vision impaired pedestrians.</p>
<b>Site Safety</b>	<p>A site specific risk assessment should be undertaken and include consideration of safe portable VMS deployment, use and removal. This includes identification, assessment and management of risks associated with the proposed location such as traffic, overhead electricity lines, culverts, medians or steep embankments.</p> <p>Consideration must also be given to ensure there are no other site safety risks are introduced to any road users during the operation of the portable VMS.</p>

The information in this guide is subject to updates. Always check for the latest version of the notice available on the RMS website through the links <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/business-industry/partners-suppliers>