



**COMMON ROADS  
COMMON SENSE**

**Case Study**

## **Case Study 1: Jason Mellings**

**As a grain grower in Victoria’s Wimmera region, there are times when Jason Mellings has no choice but to drive tractors, harvesters and other large farm machinery on roads which are shared with the public.**

This also means he’s witness first-hand countless occasions where the driving decisions made by motorists have been panicked and fuelled by confusion or a lack of understanding of what these Large Agricultural Vehicles (LAVs) do, and how to safely interact with them.

“Transporting machinery on main roads is necessary for commercial business and an important operational element of producing the food and fibre farmers provide to all Australians, and we appreciate that sometimes this may be inconvenient or daunting for others on the road,” Jason, who is also a representative on the Victorian Farmers’ Federation Grains Council, said.

“I often see that a driver’s first instinct is to panic, react and to try to pass straight away. That feeling of anxiety seems to be a key issue, but it can be reduced by learning how to safely drive around farm machinery.

“This is why the ‘Common Roads, Common Sense’ campaign and the ‘Look out, Slow down and Take care’ message are so important as a guide to help both farmers and other road users develop a rapport, and to guide safe interaction between vehicles.

The NFF’s Common Roads, Common Sense, three-step approach includes:

1. Look out: Roads are built for all Australians and not all vehicles travel at maximum speed. Be aware of farmers, cyclists and trucks that might be slower.
2. Slow down: Most accidents with LAVs in Australia are rear-end collisions due to differing travelling speeds. Slow down when you see a slower vehicle ahead.
3. Take Care: When overtaking, make sure it is safe to do so and you have enough space – take a moment to evaluate the situation. When an LAV heads your way slow down and give the oncoming vehicles plenty of space.

Jason said there was a propensity for encounters between LAVs and other vehicles to occur on unsealed roads which made taking a common sense and calm approach even more imperative.

“Farmers generally try to avoid highways as much as possible to minimise interactions with other road users, but often this means that when we do meet general traffic it happens on narrow or dirt roads.



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“There is greater difficulty seeing past the LAV, and drivers can be even more likely to make unsafe decisions in relation to driving speed and attempts at passing. It’s good to remember that in these conditions, it’s also more difficult for the machinery driver to see you.

“Most farmers will try to get out of the way and move off the road, so please be patient with us. Approach large farm vehicles safely, and pull over whenever you can.

Jason also urged other farmers to make sure they comply with state regulations including having correct lights, signage and pilot vehicles (where required), before driving on main roads.

“All this is important because it alerts upcoming road users to our presence, and the earlier they’re made aware, the more they can prepare.”

**For more information, visit [farmers.org.au](http://farmers.org.au).**

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### **About ‘Common Roads, Common Sense’**

Sometimes, Australian farmers need to drive large agricultural machinery on public roadways to move from farm to farm, which can seem confusing, frustrating or overwhelming for other drivers.

Farmers are aware of the issues this can cause, and want to work with all road users to make interactions between these machines and other traffic calm and safe.

The National Farmers’ Federation’s ‘Common Roads, Common Sense’ campaign outlines simple steps to help guide driver behaviour – Look out, slow down and take care.

This project is part of the National Farmers’ Federation’s Sharing the Road Campaign (agricultural industry), funded by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator’s Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiatives Program, with the support of the Commonwealth Government.



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