

MEDIA RELEASE



18 February 2011

25 National Circuit
FORREST ACT 2603
Tel: (02) 6253 6900
www.atatruck.net.au

TEST SAFE RATES AGAINST OTHER SAFETY MEASURES

The Australian Government should compare the safety benefits and costs of safe rates against other road safety measures before going ahead with the concept, the Chief Executive of the Australian Trucking Association, Stuart St Clair, said today.

Mr St Clair was releasing the ATA's submission in response to the Government's Safe Rates Directions Paper. The directions paper examines three models for regulating payment rates in the industry further, on the grounds that this would improve truck safety.

Mr St Clair said the Government needed to prepare a thorough regulatory impact statement into safe rates, and evaluate its costs and safety benefits against allocating similar resources to other road safety measures.

"The directions paper asserts that a great deal of research has already been done in this field, but none of it compares the effectiveness of safe rates as a safety measure against other road safety measures," Mr St Clair said.

"We know, for example, that every dollar spent on building divided roads generates about five dollars in safety benefits. Every dollar spent on sealing rural shoulders generates up to forty dollars in safety benefits. Speed cameras have a benefit cost ratio of twelve to one.

"To get the best value for the community's safety dollars, the Government will need to evaluate the safe rates models against these proven ways of improving road safety," he said.

Mr St Clair said the Government also needed to ensure that the industry's existing safety regulations are rigorously applied, with an emphasis on the chain of responsibility regulations. Under chain of responsibility, trucking companies and the industry's customers can be held to account if their actions, inactions or demands lead to unsafe situations on the road.

"The model heavy vehicle driver fatigue and speeding legislation already has provisions that give enforcement agencies the ability to take action against parties that impose unsafe contracts or working arrangements," Mr St Clair said.

"These regulations need to be enforced. The planned National Heavy Vehicle Regulator needs to be given the resources, expertise and authority to take direct carriage of major chain of responsibility investigations."

Mr St Clair called on the Government to provide trucking companies with regulatory incentives to join the ATA's TruckSafe safety management program.

"TruckSafe accredited vehicles have half the crash rate of non-accredited vehicles, as independent research shows. The Government should support TruckSafe, and not the introduction of new accreditation schemes as proposed in the Directions Paper," he said.

The ATA submission can be downloaded from www.atatruck.net.au. The Transport Workers' Union, an ATA member organisation, did not agree with the submission.

Media contact: Bill McKinley 02 6253 6900 / 0488 292 823
National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry