

MEDIA RELEASE



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SAFETY STRATEGY SHOULD EMPHASISE CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY

The final version of the 2011-2020 National Road Safety Strategy should give the planned National Heavy Vehicle Regulator the resources, expertise and authority to take direct carriage of major chain of responsibility investigations, the Chief Executive of the Australian Trucking Association, Stuart St Clair, said today.

Mr St Clair was releasing the ATA's response to the draft strategy.

"Under chain of responsibility, trucking companies and the industry's customers can be held to account if their actions, inactions or demands result in unsafe conditions on the road," Mr St Clair said.

"The chain of responsibility laws are a vital key to improving the safety of the trucking industry. They make it an offence for the industry's customers to impose unsafe working arrangements or schedules that could only be achieved by speeding or working illegal hours.

"But chain of responsibility investigations are currently fragmented between the state road enforcement agencies. They don't have the resources or forensic expertise to investigate national companies for breaches of the law across several states.

"As an important safety measure, the National Road Safety Strategy should give the planned National Heavy Vehicle Regulator the resources, expertise and authority to take direct carriage of major chain of responsibility investigations and prosecutions," he said.

The ATA submission says the strategy should include measures to support the increased use of high productivity vehicles.

"The final version of the strategy will need to recognise the freight task will increase dramatically over the next twenty years. As the Government pointed out in its draft National Land Freight Strategy, released this week, the best way to accommodate this growth is to allow the industry to use more productive, safer vehicles like B-triples," Mr St Clair said.

The submission calls on governments to provide regulatory incentives for trucking companies to join the TruckSafe safety accreditation program. Companies in the TruckSafe program are required to adopt strong safety management and driver health systems. They are then audited regularly.

"Independent statistics show that TruckSafe accredited companies are twice as safe as non-accredited companies," he said.

The submission also argues that speed compliance measures such as point-to-point speed cameras should target all road users, not just truck drivers. This week, it was revealed that 94,271 speeding motorists in New South Wales have escaped without penalty because the state's point-to-point speed cameras are only used on trucks.

The ATA submission on the draft National Road Safety Strategy is available at www.atatruck.net.au.

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