

MEDIA RELEASE



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USE ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANTS TO IMPROVE BUSINESS PRACTICES

The Australian Government should extend its planned energy efficiency grants to help small firms improve their business practices to cope with the carbon price, the Chief Executive of the Australian Trucking Association, Stuart St Clair, said today.

Mr St Clair was releasing the ATA's submission on the draft guidelines for the Energy Efficiency Information Grants Program.

Under this \$40 million program, the Government will provide industry associations with grants to provide information to small and medium businesses about the impact of the carbon tax and how they can reduce their energy costs.

"Trucking businesses will face higher costs from 1 July 2012 when their suppliers put up their prices to respond to the carbon price. The Government plans to impose the carbon price on the fuel used by trucking businesses from 1 July 2014, although the ATA will continue arguing against it," Mr St Clair said.

"Trucking operators will need to pass their increased costs on to their customers, but their ability to pass on their costs will be limited by their existing contract arrangements and lack of market power. Many trucking businesses are locked into long term contracts. Small trucking businesses often feel forced to accept the rates they are offered, even if the terms are unfavourable.

"As a result, these businesses could end up bearing an unfair carbon price burden.

"As well as providing advice on energy efficiency, industry associations need to be able to provide their members with advice on how to improve their business practices to cope with the carbon price. This could include guidance on best practice contracts, adjusting fuel levies and the law relating to carbon price claims."

The ATA submission recommends the program should also cover energy efficiency standards and audit tools for accreditation programs run by industry associations.

"Many energy saving measures will only deliver consistent, long-term results if businesses adopt them systematically," Mr St Clair said.

"The ATA's experience with its TruckSafe program (www.trucksafe.com.au) shows the best way to ensure that businesses maintain these systems is through independently audited accreditation programs.

"Under these programs, businesses put systems in place in accordance with the program's standards. They are then audited regularly to make sure those systems do not fall into disuse because of changing staff or priorities."

The ATA submission is available at www.truck.net.au/public/advocacy/submissions

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National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry