

MEDIA RELEASE



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MORE FUNDING FOR TRUCK REST AREAS

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) has welcomed the Government's budget announcement that it will spend an extra **\$140 million on truck rest areas and other productivity measures** over the seven years from 2012-13 to 2018-19.

The Chairman of ATA, David Simon, said the announcement would help reduce the shortfall in the number of truck rest areas on the road system.

"The fatigue laws require truck drivers to take regular breaks, but there simply aren't enough rest areas. The Government has built or upgraded more than 70 rest areas under its existing funding program, which expires in June, but there is still a long way to go," Mr Simon said.

"The program will also fund **productivity measures like bridge upgrades** to enable us to use vehicles like B-doubles and B-triples on more routes. These trucks carry more freight than conventional semitrailers, so you can do the same job with fewer trucks, leading to safer, more productive and more environmentally friendly outcomes.

"I'm up at Parliament House this evening, and I have already congratulated and thanked Minister Albanese for this outstanding decision, which delivers on one of the ATA's long standing strategic priorities."

Mr Simon welcomed the Government's announcement that it will press on with its road program, despite cutting \$33.6 billion from the budget.

"The Government will offer an extra \$3.56 billion toward **duplicating the Pacific Highway** in NSW. It will **extend the Black Spot Program** for another five years, which will prevent thousands of accidents, and will **extend the Roads to Recovery program** for local councils as well.

"Every Australian will win from the Government's commitment to building better roads, because the benefits of lower transport costs and better safety percolate through the whole economy," he said.

Mr Simon warned that trucking businesses would continue to face tough times in 2012-13, with the Budget forecasting that household consumption and dwelling investment will remain subdued.

"Trucking businesses are under continued pressure from their customers to cut costs. In addition, many are facing deteriorating payment terms, with customers not paying their bills for 60 days or more," he said.

"The Government's decision to allow companies to **carry back up to \$1 million worth of losses** and get a refund of the tax they paid in earlier years will benefit incorporated trucking businesses facing temporary losses.

"But all trucking operators will be hit by the decision by transport ministers to **increase the fuel tax on the industry by 10.4 per cent, or 2.4 cents per litre**, and dramatically increase some registration charges. The budget papers show this decision will cost trucking operators an additional \$698 million over four years for the fuel tax increase alone.

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“Australia’s transport ministers will meet on Friday 18 May. At the meeting, they should reconsider or defer this tax increase given the budget forecasts and the tight or negative margins across the industry,” he said.

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