

MEDIA RELEASE



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A HUGE STEP FORWARD ON NATIONAL TRUCK LAWS

The national truck laws passed by the Queensland Parliament yesterday are a huge step toward improving safety and reducing red tape for the trucking industry, the Chairman of the Australian Trucking Association, David Simon, said today.

The laws passed this week will formally establish the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. Before the national laws come into full effect, the Queensland Parliament will need to pass a second, amending bill and the other states and territories in the national system will need to pass their own legislation.

Mr Simon said he had personally congratulated the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese.

"I met with Minister Albanese this week as part of our TruckWeek delegation program. I congratulated him for pushing, pushing and pushing the national law concept, despite the complex issues that needed to be resolved," he said.

"I would also like to congratulate the Queensland Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Scott Emerson, the other state and territory government transport ministers and officials, the federal infrastructure department and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator project office."

Mr Simon said the ATA had argued for national laws for twenty years, because the trucking industry was subject to a maze of inconsistent government regulation.

"I believe that having national laws and the national regulator will improve safety. Quite simply, operators and drivers are more likely to comply with fatigue and speed requirements that are consistent across state borders and clearly based on safety evidence," Mr Simon said.

"In addition, the national regulator will be able to deliver consistent enforcement across the country, and the ATA wants it to have a strong focus on educating the industry's customers about their safety obligations."

He said the national laws had the potential to benefit Australia and the trucking industry by more than \$12 billion.

"More than half the gains are expected to come from increasing the industry's productivity by enabling us to increase our use of trucks like B-doubles and B-triples," he said.

"These trucks can carry more than a conventional semitrailer, and are demonstrably safer as well. For example, B-doubles now carry 46 per cent of Australia's articulated freight but only account for 29 per cent of the accidents.

"The laws will also slash through the red tape faced by many trucking operators. Under the current laws in many states, operators have to carry every notice and permit relating to the routes they use in every single one of their trucks. In my company, that's a five kilogram bag of legal documents that has to be carried in every vehicle and constantly updated.

A safe, professional and viable trucking industry

“The national laws will slash this paperwork burden. Operators will only need to carry special permits that apply to a specific vehicle. Unless a special decision is made, they will not need to carry notices that apply to every truck that might want to use a route.”

Mr Simon said the ATA still had serious concerns about the chain of responsibility provisions in the laws.

“The chain of responsibility provisions need to be rethought so they are tougher but fairer, but the ATA and other industry bodies have secured an agreement that they will be reviewed as part of the regulator’s forward work program,” he said.

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About the ATA: The Australian Trucking Association (www.truck.net.au) is the peak body that represents the trucking industry. Its members include state and sector trucking associations, major logistics companies and operators and suppliers with leading expertise in truck technology.