

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **NATIONAL HEAVY VEHICLE REGULATOR MUST FIX PERMIT DELAYS**

Australia's transport ministers should review the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's budget and direct it to fix its problems with issuing road access permits, the Chief Executive of the Australian Trucking Association, Stuart St Clair, said today.

The NHVR started its full operations on 10 February, but has struggled to issue permits to operators in a timely way.

"Trucking operators moving over size and over mass loads, like large pieces of mining equipment, have been particularly affected by the delays," Mr St Clair said.

"These businesses need a special permit to move each load. The permits need to be approved by the managers of all the roads they use. This could involve getting consent from several local councils and one or more state government road agencies.

"Part of the case for the NHVR was that it would centralise and streamline the process of getting these permits. The full launch of the NHVR was put off and put off because it said it wanted to make sure its systems were ready. But now, after all that, the NHVR is failing to meet the commercial deadlines faced by the industry.

"Operators submitted 2,050 permit applications to the NHVR in the period leading up to Tuesday 18 February. The NHVR only managed to issue 258 permits. We know that at least some of those permits were issued with the wrong details, leading to further delays.

"Some operators are facing costs of tens of thousands of dollars per day. Some are laying off staff. In the mining sector, some of the world's largest manufacturers of mining equipment are facing contract penalties because they haven't been able to get their specialised equipment to mine sites in time.

"Australia's transport ministers will hold a teleconference next Tuesday to approve the NHVR's budget. They need to ask the hard questions and tell the NHVR to focus on fixing these permit issues.

"The NHVR is asking ministers to approve a budget of \$147.5 million in 2014-15, which will be recovered from the trucking industry through application fees, fuel charges and registration charges.

"The NHVR budget includes millions of dollars of costs and projects that are just a distraction from its core task, such as developing policies about telematics and electronic work diaries.

"These are tasks that should be done by other organisations. The NHVR is a regulator, not a policy body. It needs to focus on doing its core functions right, such as issuing permits so Australia's heavy haulage operators can do their difficult, exacting and vital work," he said.

Mr St Clair said ATA member associations, including the Queensland Trucking Association, ATANSW, the Victorian Transport Association, the South Australian Road Transport Association, NatRoad and the Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters' Association were providing advice to their members about the permit delays and pressing the NHVR and state governments on their behalf.

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“The Queensland Government has already taken back responsibility for processing over size and over mass permits and special purpose permits from the NHVR until it gets its act together. The ATA’s member associations in NSW and Victoria – ATANSW and the Victorian Transport Association – have urged their state governments to follow Queensland’s lead.

“When the rules change, when there are problems like this, the best way to get the information and support you need is to be in an ATA member association,” Mr St Clair said.

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