

MEDIA RELEASE



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ATA WELCOMES NTC PLAN TO IMPROVE TRUCKING PRODUCTIVITY

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) has welcomed the National Transport Commission's (NTC) commitment to improving trucking productivity, as outlined in its new 2015-19 work program.

The work program lays out plans for reporting on systems, tools and decisions that increase productivity, developing options to increase load volumes permitted for higher productivity vehicles, and investigating improvements to the Performance Based Standards system.

ATA Chief Executive Officer Christopher Melham said the NTC's focus on productivity would help the trucking industry address the growing freight task in the safest, most efficient manner possible.

"The national freight task is expected to grow by 80 per cent between 2011 and 2031, with the trucking industry handling a large part of this extra freight," Mr Melham said.

"Last week's Australian Infrastructure Audit Report warned that governments must focus on policy reforms to improve higher productivity vehicle use and the performance of highway infrastructure. It's fantastic to see the NTC taking this advice seriously.

"However, NTC still needs to increase its focus on measures that will deliver productivity improvements in the short term. In particular, the ATA urges the NTC to develop projects to:

- **Increase the steer axle mass limit** to reflect the increased weight of the equipment required to be fitted to vehicles for safety and environmental purposes;
- Properly investigate and then **approve the use of ultrawide tyres** to save fuel and reduce growth in the industry's greenhouse gas emissions;
- **Support the recognition of third party heavy vehicle safety accreditation programs** that meet a national standard;
- **Reconsider the formula used to assess the maximum weight allowed on bridges.** The formula is outdated and is restricting the use of high productivity vehicles, since it grossly overestimates the infrastructure wear caused by modern heavy vehicles; and
- **Examine an increase in vehicle length**, particularly so the industry can handle the 45 foot containers that are now used in Europe and North America.

"We also urge the NTC to review and **develop national guidelines on local noise curfews** for the port, retail distribution and waste sectors.

"Very often, well-meaning proposals by governments and bodies such as the Productivity Commission to increase industry productivity and reduce urban congestion are stymied by government regulation that restricts industry's ability to do its work outside of peak periods.

"With these additional projects added to the approach outlined in the NTC work program, the transport sector would be well positioned to support Australia's growing freight transport needs."

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