

MEDIA RELEASE



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ROAD REFORM NEEDED TO IMPROVE TRUCK PRODUCTIVITY, PEAK BODY SAYS

The Government must implement road reforms to ensure the trucking industry is able to continue increasing its productivity, the CEO of the Australian Trucking Association, Christopher Melham, said today.

Mr Melham was releasing the ATA's submission to the Government's Competition Policy Review.

"Between 1971 and 2007, trucking industry productivity increased six-fold due to the uptake of high productivity vehicles like B-doubles. But the industry's productivity has plateaued due to government regulation and policy decisions," Mr Melham said.

"With the national freight task set to grow by 80 per cent between 2011 and 2031, governments must take action on policy reforms to enable the industry to improve its productivity, including by using longer, safer trucks on appropriate routes."

The ATA submission recommends implementing road planning and funding reforms to optimise road infrastructure funding efficiency.

"The industry needs the right roads at the right price, with the right level of access," Mr Melham said.

"We want to know that funding for road infrastructure provides value for money, with better processes to assess how effectively it is spent. This would include improving governance arrangements for public infrastructure projects, project benchmarking, and additional cost benefit analysis.

"Our submission also urges the Government to examine road supply and management services provided by road agencies, with an eye to improving transparency and productivity in this area."

The submission also calls for competitive neutrality between government and industry trucking accreditation schemes.

"The competition review states that government businesses should not hold a competitive advantage purely because of their ownership. The Government should reflect this with fair and comparable treatment of industry accreditation schemes owned by industry (such as TruckSafe) and government (such as NHVAS)," Mr Melham said.

Mr Melham said developing fair and effective heavy vehicle charges were an essential foundation for reform.

"The trucking industry pays for its use of the roads through fuel tax and registration charges. However, issues with the charging system mean that truck and bus operators will be overcharged by \$117 million in 2015-16," he said.

"The NTC has already put forward options to solve this problem, which should be implemented as soon as possible. Government should also hold back proposed direct road user charges until it has proven that the system is revenue neutral, will improve road investment decision making, and does not burden the heavy vehicle industry."

A safe, professional and viable trucking industry

The submission is available at <http://www.truck.net.au/advocacy/submissions/competition-policy-review-submission>.

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