

MEDIA RELEASE



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03 February 2016

UNSNARLING THE RED TAPE FROM WHITE BUMPERS

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) has today welcomed the Australian Government's decision to remove the requirement for semitrailer rear bumpers to be painted white – a change that is predicted to save operators \$12.4 million over the next decade.

The move was announced today by the Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government, Paul Fletcher, and was originally proposed by the ATA.

ATA Chief Executive Christopher Melham said the amendment unsnarled an unnecessary tangle of red tape for operators and trucking suppliers alike, without affecting heavy vehicle safety.

“Until now, it has been a legal requirement under the Australian Design Rules for a semitrailer rear bumper to be painted white,” Mr Melham said.

“This was intended to improve visibility for other road users, but worked better in theory than in practice – the bumper makes little difference during daylight hours, and the semitrailer's rear marker plates provide much greater visibility benefits at night time and in low-light situations.

“The rule was inconsistent in that it only applied to semitrailers – other types of heavy vehicle were exempt from the requirement.

“In addition, the ATA was regularly hearing reports that operators had been issued with defect notices because the paint on their rear bumper had been scratched or otherwise obscured. This had nothing to do with the vehicle's safety – you certainly wouldn't expect to be fined if you scratched the paint on your car.

“I applaud the common sense approach that Minister Fletcher has taken to removing this nuisance red tape from the industry and trailer manufacturers. Once it flows through to the in-service regulations, it will help trucking operators focus on transporting goods safely, not worrying about the paint on their bumper,” Mr Melham said.

The change builds on the Australian Government's 2014 decision to remove the requirement for interstate registered B-doubles to be fitted with spray suppression equipment, which saved the industry about \$8.3 million per year.

The change will come into force for new trailers once the Vehicles Standard (Australian Design Rule 42/04 – General Safety Requirements) 2005 – Amendment 6 is registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

The National, Western Australian and Northern Territory heavy vehicle regulators will need to consider issuing exemptions against their vehicle standards regulations for the change to come into force for trailers in service.

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