

MEDIA RELEASE



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TRUCKING INDUSTRY CALLS FOR LICENCING AND TRAINING REVIEW

The Australian Trucking Association has called for a review of truck driver licence training and assessment in its evidence at today's Aspects of Road Safety in Australia Senate inquiry.

ATA National Manager Government Relations and Policy, Bill McKinley, said there needed to be a commitment to consistent licencing outcomes in the trucking industry.

"At the moment, the quality of training and assessment is highly variable. There are many excellent trainers, but others train to a price or guarantee how long the course will take, regardless of how competent you are at the end of it," Mr McKinley said.

"Operators are particularly concerned about the variable quality of training in chain of responsibility, load restraint, fatigue management and work health and safety.

"What we need for heavy vehicle driver licencing is a common set of standards that the states or the NHVR apply. The standards need to be imposed by a body that is responsive to feedback.

"At the same time, at the regulation of providers side, we need a common national system where registered training organisations deliver the training packages they're supposed to deliver.

"[In our view], the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development and the Minister for Education and Training should convene a joint review with the states of the training, assessment and licencing arrangements for truck drivers generally. This review should explore including these arrangements within the scope of the Heavy Vehicle National Law for the states that are part of that system."

The ATA also recommended reviewing the provisions that allow overseas licence holders to drive in Australia.

"The rules should firstly require overseas licence holders to obtain an Australian licence within a year, even if they are only in Australia temporarily. At present, every state except the NT allows temporary visitors to drive on their overseas licence indefinitely. This could be for years," Mr McKinley said.

"Secondly, there should also be consistent provisions about what happens when an overseas licence holder fails a driving test.

"In three states at the moment, it's possible for an overseas licence holder to apply for an Australian drivers licence, go to the driving test, fail, and then keep driving on their overseas licence, even though they just demonstrated conclusively that they are not competent to drive in Australia.

"Finally, overseas licence holders who do not hold an Australian heavy vehicle licence should be banned from driving heavy vehicles for any commercial or occupational purpose. An overseas licence holder should be able to drive a motorhome around Australia, but driving a heavy vehicle for commercial purposes should not be allowed."

The ATA provided the committee with a detailed review of the states' arrangements for managing overseas drivers licence holders, which is available at:
<http://www.truck.net.au/advocacy/submissions/driving-overseas-drivers-licence-comparative-review>.

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