

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## ATA SLAMS EPIC TAX OFFICE CONSULTATION FAIL

The Australian Trucking Association can today reveal the epic size of the tax office's failure to consult about its decision to slash employee truck driver travel expenses.

During the 2017-18 income year, the tax office will allow employee truck drivers to claim just **\$55.30** per day in travel expenses (excluding accommodation) without detailed receipts. In 2016-17, the amount allowed was **\$97.40**. In the same determination, the tax office increased the reasonable food and drink allowance for comparable employees in other industries from **\$106.90 per day** to **\$109.35 per day**.

ATA Chair Geoff Crouch said that a check of ATA member associations showed that none had received the consultation paper that the tax office says it issued on 30 September 2016.

"Even the tax office has now admitted that it did not receive a single response from trucking industry associations in response to the paper," Mr Crouch said.

"The lack of responses should have been a red flag for the tax office that something had gone wrong with its consultation process.

"One of their highly paid staff, who all receive travel allowance without needing to lodge receipts, should have picked up the phone, sent a follow up email or called a meeting. But nobody bothered.

"By sifting through the tax office website, the ATA has now located the tax office's copy of the consultation paper that we didn't receive.

"The paper does not provide any evidence to support the decision to slash the reasonable amount for truck driver claims. There are no statistics, case studies or references to relevant court or AAT cases.

"There are just vague assertions and a question, completely unsupported by evidence, about whether the truck driver rate should be set as a percentage of what is called the 'other country centre rate.'

"If the ATA had been asked, and we weren't, we would have said the percentage should be 100 per cent.

"The tax office should reverse its determination, rewrite its consultation paper to include actual facts and consult again," he said.

Mr Crouch said the ATA was particularly disappointed in this epic consultation fail because the tax office's work with industry was generally of a very high quality.

"The ATA has long been a member of the tax office Fuel Schemes Stakeholder Group. Its consultation with industry through this group has been exemplary, and as a result we have got some great results for trucking operators," he said.

[Read the tax office consultation paper that they buried on their website](#)

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