

**Submission to:** Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency

**Title:** Skilled Occupation List for 2014

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## 1. Introduction

An efficient road transport industry is vital to the continued growth of the Australian economy. A skilled and competent workforce, able to meet the demands of the growing freight task, in a safe, sustainable manner is needed.

The Consolidated Skilled Occupation List (CSOL) identifies occupations where recruitment of skilled migrants can meet the medium and long term skill needs of the Australian economy that cannot be met through employer and state-sponsored migration programs, or by efforts aimed at employing, training, skilling and up-skilling Australians.

Currently, heavy vehicle drivers are not listed on the Skilled Occupation List (SOL), as the profession does not appear on the CSOL. In order for the predicted national freight task to be met, it is vital that this be redressed.

The heavy vehicle industry supports a wide variety of businesses and activities. While demand for freight services continues to grow and is set to double by 2030 and triple by 2050, the heavy vehicle industry is under pressure from severe driver shortages and a negative image problem. This makes attracting young workers, female workers and other kinds of potential Australian workers generally more difficult.

The industry has recognised that significant action is needed in order to keep Australia moving, since current recruitment policies are not meeting the driver shortage. Some estimates have indicated that the rate of recruitment will need to increase by 150 per cent in order to support the increased demand for road freight services and a simultaneous loss of retiring drivers.<sup>1</sup>

At the ATA's annual event, Trucking Australia 2013, one of the most popular sessions held was on the issue of attracting more workers to the industry.

Given the constraints that operators have in sourcing and keeping heavy vehicle drivers in their businesses, it is crucial that the AWPA and the government seriously consider changing the CSOL to include heavy vehicle drivers in order for temporary, competent foreign drivers to supplement the Australian workforce. Current policies, while going some way to address skill shortages, will not meet the predicted freight demand over the long or medium term.

In order to further persuade the AWPA to review its recommendations on the inclusion of heavy vehicle drivers in the CSOL the Australian Trucking Association (ATA) provides examples of the importance of the industry to Australia's productivity and GDP, illustrating what the industry is doing domestically to train its existing workforce and other initiatives that attempt to meet the skill shortages.

## 2. Australian Trucking Association

The ATA is the peak body that represents the trucking industry. Its members include state and sector-based trucking associations, some of the nation's largest transport companies, and businesses with leading expertise in truck technology.

## 3. Recommendation

***Heavy vehicle drivers (ANZSCO 733111) should be included on the Consolidated Skilled Occupation List, in order for overseas drivers to apply for 457 visas and for the heavy vehicle industry to meet the growing freight task.***

## 4. Growing demand for drivers

*The heavy vehicle industry is a significant contributor to national and state economies.*

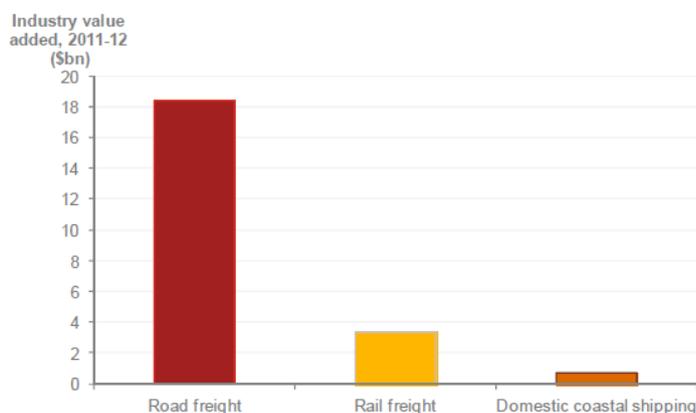
The freight industry generates direct, as well as flow on, activity through its contribution to the activity of a diverse range of industries and supply chains.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Transport Victoria, 2010, *A workforce strategy for road freight drivers*, page 4

Direct value generated by specialised road transport businesses added more than \$18 billion to the Australian economy in FY2012 or 1.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This is similar to major industries such as electricity (1.4 per cent contribution to GDP), coal mining (1.7 per cent) and agriculture (1.9 per cent) and several orders of magnitude greater than other modes of freight transport. The gross value added by the road freight industry is almost six times that of the gross value added by the rail freight industry and more than 19 times that of the coastal shipping industry.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 6: Direct economic contribution by freight mode (FY2012)**



Source: IBISWorld (2012a), IBISWorld (2012b) and IBISWorld (2012c)

Source: Page 12 - A future strategy for road supply and charging in Australia, PricewaterhouseCoopers 2013

Road freight will continue to play a crucial role in Australia’s GDP and needs specific action in order for the freight task to be met. However, there are strains on the industry that limit the attraction and retention of Australian workers.

## 5. Medium to long term supply pressures

The heavy vehicle industry has been suffering from a limited availability of workers for many years and the problems mentioned below are well known within industry.

### 5.1. Worker Shortages

Competition from other industries, specifically construction and mining, puts extreme pressure on the recruitment of heavy vehicle drivers. This competition is also not predicted to cease, leading to a situation of long term shortages Australia-wide. Consultation of industry members conducted by the ATA has highlighted shortages in the following locations:

NSW: Albury, Corowa, Wagga Wagga, Leeton, Griffith, Dubbo, Orange, Goulburn, Parkes, Forbes, Grenfell, the Riverina, West Wyalong, Temora, Junee, Cootamundra, Hunter Valley and Tumut.

NT: Darwin.

VIC: Wodonga, Wangaratta, Shepparton and Cobram.

QLD: Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bowen basin to Miles/Chinchilla/Roma, and Gladstone region.

WA: Derby, Port Hedland, Newman, Esperance, Karratha, Broome and Perth.

If these shortages are not addressed in the short term, there will be greater demand for drivers in the long term in these regions experiencing economic growth.

<sup>2</sup> Page 12 - A future strategy for road supply and charging in Australia, PricewaterhouseCoopers 2013  
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One explanation for the lack of available drivers is that the wages offered by competing industries are far higher than what a heavy vehicle driver is generally paid. Mining, specifically in Western Australia and Queensland, offers wages substantially above that which a hire and reward truck driver can earn.

The industry cannot apply for Regional Migration Agreements, which cover most of Australia apart from urbanised cities. This is because heavy vehicle drivers are not eligible for 457 visas.

The industry is also pursuing Labour Agreements (LA) with the Immigration Department. LA's are very demanding for the employer and have strict eligibility conditions that will restrict the success of the program overall. Specifically for the heavy vehicle industry, there is a limit to the type of vehicles that temporary migrants can drive, as Australia has some of the largest truck combinations in the world. The administrative side of completing a LA is intensive and this could prove prohibitive to operators in terms of cost. The LA agreement with industry also has some restrictive guidelines such as operators having to inform third parties of the operators desire to bring in skilled labour.

The benefit for industry, apart from having an employee, is that the migrant employee is tied to the industry for a limited period of time under the labour agreement, meaning they cannot change industry. The government has now allowed the Department to grant LAs autonomously; previously LAs had to be approved by the minister. This simplification of the approval process will increase the attractiveness of LAs to the industry.

There has also been popular discussion of self-driving trucks in the future, however, this is not expected to be suitable for lightly populated areas with unsealed road environments or the vast majority of Australia's sealed rural one and two lane roads. The take up of this as yet unavailable technology would take considerable time to become established even if there was an industry appetite for it, considering that the average age of a prime mover is 13 years and that their corresponding trailers are even older<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, this is not the solution today to meet our driver shortage issues.

## 5.2. An ageing workforce

Many heavy vehicle drivers are approaching retirement age, with new employees required to fill the vacancies created by the retiring drivers. The average age of a truck driver is 43; this is higher than the national average for other industries, 39.<sup>4</sup> The higher average age means that working conditions should be adapted for older workers and future projections of the proportion of older workers in the industry supports this move. The forecasting below shows that nearly half the current workforce will be over 65 by 2026. There is likely to be a high level of retirement due to natural attrition post-2016.

**Table 2 – Potential share of existing truck drivers leaving due to retirement**

*Source: Based on ABS (2007a)*

2006			2016		2026	
Age Group	Proportion	Number	Age Group	Proportion	Age Group	Proportion
15 – 24	4%	1,360	25 – 34		40 – 44	
25 – 29	7%	2,184	35 – 39		45 – 49	
30 – 34	11%	3,203	40 – 44		50 – 54	52%
35 – 39	14%	4,224	45 – 49	81%	55 – 59	
40 – 44	16%	4,850	50 – 54		60 – 64	
45 – 49	15%	4,627	55 – 59		65 – 69	
50 – 54	13%	3,923	60 – 64		70 – 74	
55 – 59	11%	3,228	65 – 69		75 – 79	48%
60 – 64	6%	1,933	70 – 74	19%	80 – 84	
65+	2%	741	75+		85+	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30,273</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Department of Transport Victoria, 2010, A workforce strategy for road freight drivers: background paper, page 16

While the workforce still has a high percentage of older employees, their expertise and wealth of experience should be used to industry's advantage. Allowing these employees to mentor new workers and become managers would be a sensible way to use these skills.

<sup>3</sup> Truck Industry Council

<sup>4</sup> J. Birdseye News and Media, 'women, an underutilised resource in the transport industry'. 09 September 2011. Isuzu Trucks.

Many of these workers do not have formal education qualifications, however, the knowledge they possess more than meets the competency of many qualifications. Recognising professional experience with a formal certificate of achievement and skill attainment would serve to validate these skills appropriately.

Adapting industry operations to suit the demands of an ageing workforce needs to be considered. It has been recommended there be a reduction of manual handling of freight by older workers, along with increased medical support, such as use of occupational therapists. In order to ensure that older drivers maintain their safety there will also be a need to expand medical testing and support services. Additional education about lifestyle choices and health issues should also be promoted.<sup>5</sup>

### 5.3. Lack of women workers and indigenous Australians

Attracting many capable workers to the industry is important and increasing the diversity of the workforce will help the industry meet demand for labour. However, the industry has generally struggled to attract women and Aboriginal Australians to participate in the heavy vehicle industry.

An AWPFA paper released last year<sup>6</sup> stated that “outcomes for Indigenous Australians improve dramatically with education. With increasing education, the employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is relatively small.” The literacy requirements to become and remain a truck driver are demanding. Safe driving, vehicle compliance and the correct use of equipment is a fundamental principle that cannot be changed to increase workforce participation. All Australians should be provided with the opportunities to contribute to the industry and these should be facilitated through increased education and support from industry.

Some states and territories are providing ongoing initiatives to support their indigenous populations. The Northern Territory has a portfolio of projects including assisting industry to increase its Indigenous employment capacity and traineeships.<sup>7</sup>

Not-for-profit organisations are also focusing efforts to increase Indigenous workforce participation. Nhari Inc, is an Aboriginal not-for-profit organisation dedicated to closing the gap in the health and well-being of Indigenous Australians. The Mummeri Mobo (Alive tomorrow) program is aimed at closing the gap in pre-licensing and licensing support for Indigenous people, who often due to their remote circumstances are a disadvantaged demographic in Australia. They have identified a number of issues including a significant gap in the provision of pre-licensing programs for Indigenous youth in remote regions and the disadvantages experienced by many people from license issues when they apply for jobs in the transport industry.

The program aims to improve Indigenous road safety and awareness, and licensing. Programs like Mummeri Mobo should be supported by the government and given adequate funding to achieve their goals.

It further makes sense for women to play a larger role in the trucking industry and not just to meet quotas. Economically, women have proven to be an asset as they are considered by many operators to treat machinery more cautiously and are less likely to behave recklessly, thereby saving companies in the area of costly maintenance and repairs.

Research has also found that “If Australia could close the gap between male and female employment rates it would boost gross domestic product by eleven percent.”<sup>8</sup> However, the industry is very male dominated and a perception of a ‘boys’ club’ culture may be off-putting to women.

The lifestyle that is inherent with heavy vehicle driving may be at odds with some women’s ambitions to socialise and have a family. Until the lack of adequate female-friendly amenities, flexible work hours and personal safety issues involved with driving trucks are addressed, many women will not believe trucking is an attractive profession where they can achieve long-term aspirations.

It should be noted that manufacturers are making efforts to design their trucks to be more suitable for women. The physical demands for heavy vehicle drivers have reduced over time, as forklift trucks and other loading equipment have reduced the need for physical strain.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Transport Victoria, 2010, *A workforce strategy for road freight drivers*, page 17

<sup>6</sup> Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency: Future focus: Australia’s skills and workforce development needs , 2012,

<sup>7</sup> The Northern Territory Government - Department of Business ‘*Gearing Up the Workforce 2012-2015*’

<sup>8</sup> R.Zivkusic-Aftasi, It’s A Woman’s World, Supply Chain Review, August 2012. Page 28 - 31

Trucks have now been manufactured to be both suitable for men and women; Volvo has publicised that their trucks can suit both ‘tall men and short women.’

*“A few years ago it was pointed out that the manual gearboxes were difficult to handle for shorter people; they had difficulty reaching the gear lever from the high seat. So we immediately changed that. Our task is to create trucks that are as comfortable and functional as possible for the specific tasks for which they will be used. The driver should benefit, irrespective of whether it is a woman or a man behind the wheel.”<sup>9</sup>*

The industry suffers from the media-sponsored image that there are no female truck drivers. However, the ATA membership has some remarkable women who drive some of the largest heavy vehicle combinations in Australia. Promoting these women would be a good step in supporting the role of women in the industry. Encouraging women drivers to speak to high school students about what it’s like to drive a truck would help to attract more young women to the role. “Students need to be better targeted so they’re informed about each industry before choosing a career.”<sup>10</sup>

Women should be encouraged to become truck drivers but creating and enforcing quotas would not result in the best outcome for industry. There should be equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome; competency and safety have to be paramount.

Women already play a large role in policy direction in the ATA Council and its Committees. Each year, women of distinction are competitively nominated and rewarded with the ‘National Trucking Industry Woman of the Year’ award at the ATA’s annual event. Women in this industry also support each other through associations such as Transport Women Australia, and through individual state associations. This support and recognition in the industry is vital in widely promoting the role of women in transport, and there needs to be a continued drive to make sure that women are recognised for the valuable asset to the industry they are.

#### **5.4. Young people don’t want to be truck drivers**

Many young people are struggling to find employment and the heavy vehicle industry is a viable career for this demographic. However, attracting young people to the industry is an issue exacerbated by an ageing workforce, licensing arrangements and a lifestyle that does not suit the aspirations of many young people.

While the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency emphasises that there has to be increased tertiary education uptake, the increased pressure on under 25s to advance beyond high school is having the effect of undervaluing those who undertake vocational education and those who do not attend university. It means the pool of labour that would previously have been eligible to work in the heavy vehicle industry is being shrunk, yet the ambitions of this generation do not typically include being a truck driver.

The transport logistic industry skills council (TLISC) have stated that ‘better marketing to young people at school about the opportunities available is essential. This includes supporting those who work in the carer space, providing tours of facilities, work experience, structured work placements and job readiness transition. Promotion of success stories and case studies that showcase workers also form part of this strategy.’<sup>11</sup>

#### **5.5. Tarnished image**

The industry has a negative image which is continually perpetuated by generalisations in the media. For example, the National Portrait Gallery’s Face to Face television advertisement, accessible at <http://www.starnow.com.au/markbearcampbellbulluss/video/116469/>, depicts a stereotypical truck driver in a stained blue singlet coming face to face with an actress. Although the ad is undeniably witty, it also perpetuates a one-dimensional view of the industry. Today, a truck driver is likely to work in a high visibility uniform in a sophisticated truck cab.

<sup>9</sup> M.Vassiliadis, *Attracting Women to the driving profession – solution to the approaching driver shortage?*. Corporate news, Volvo Group Global, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2010

<sup>10</sup> R.Zivkusic-Aftasi, *It’s A Woman’s World*, Supply Chain Review, August 2012. Page 28 - 31

<sup>11</sup> Page 6 TLISC Environmental Scan 2013

Challenging and changing the negative images portrayed by the media about the heavy vehicle industry is important in order to attract new entrants to the industry. For example, the majority of industry operates safely and professionally. However, most national news stories report on heavy vehicle accidents, speeding or bad driving. It should be noted that the cause of a multi-vehicle accident is statistically more likely to be a third party.

Technology also plays a much larger role in the industry than it did twenty years ago, and the interactive nature of the modern industry ought to be attractive to younger workers, who are more in touch with emerging technology than older generations. Operators are now being expected to embrace technology for compliance reasons. This means having drivers being competent to work alongside sophisticated in vehicle telematics. Non-traditional skills training and upward mentoring is required for this.

The ATA holds an event called TruckWeek biennially, which promotes the professionalism of the industry and its contribution to the community. The next TruckWeek is in 2014. The ATA encourages operators to hold BBQs and other public events, and reward good drivers with certificates of recognition. Participating so visibly in the community improves the image of the industry and secures the importance of trucking in regions.

## 5.6. Restrictive regulations

The current licensing regulations prohibit young people from obtaining a truck license due to mandatory waiting periods on driver licensing progression.

License category	Current eligibility criteria
Heavy Rigid (HR)	Car license held for 2 years
Heavy Combination (HC)	Held HR license for 12 months
Multi-Combination (MC)	Held HC license for 12 months*

*\* To obtain an MC licence, the applicant must also complete an approved course*

The current graduated licensing system disregards any competency training that a driver undertakes. This contributes to delaying competent drivers and means that there is a shortage of good drivers, especially HC and MC operators. Limiting the natural progression of young drivers in certain license categories restricts the attractiveness of becoming a heavy vehicle driver.

Heavy vehicle drivers are likely to be at least 20 years old before they can drive heavy combinations. This is frustrating for those who would like to work in road transport, and potential workers are more likely to change to a profession that offers faster job progression and earlier access.

Maintaining road safety is the number one priority of any licensing system. However, under the present system limited training is mandated in the current waiting periods. There is a strong argument for competency-based training to be encouraged to make sure that safe driving is taught to potential drivers. The ATA has previously promoted a system in which drivers can advance quickly through the graduated licensing system if they also undertook advanced competency training and assessment, and later demonstrated a history of safe driving on the job in the relevant heavy vehicle class.

Progression to higher levels of heavy vehicle licensing is also constrained because of a shortage of heavy vehicle driving instructors.<sup>12</sup> This is a two-fold problem with TLISC finding that the market is demanding the movement of larger goods in a single trip, which has implications for licensing requirements<sup>13</sup>.

In the longer term, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is set to examine the graduated competency-based licensing system and we hope that this will be implemented, given the demand for competency based training. However, such action is some years away.

<sup>12</sup> Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council, Environmental scan logistics management, road transport and warehousing supplement, 2010, page 2

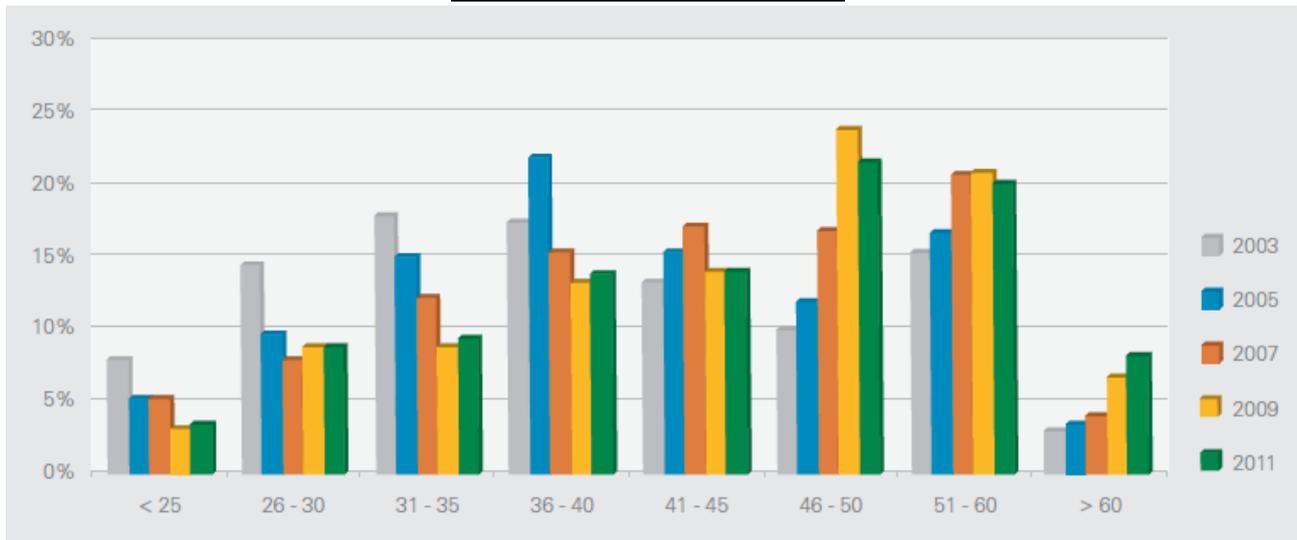
<sup>13</sup> Page 6 TLISC Environmental Scan 2013

### 5.7. Insurance for young drivers

Insurance premiums for young people are high; this is a significant barrier to operators wanting to hire young workers. Young people, especially males, are considered more likely to be involved in road incidents than older drivers, in general.

However, the evidence runs contrary to this view when examining young truck drivers' incidence rates. National Transport Insurance (NTI) has found there is 'no evidence of drivers under the age of 25 years increasing their involvement in major truck crashes.' They also strongly believe that the lowering of the involvement of under 25's in accidents is due to improved management and the monitoring of apprentices.<sup>14</sup>

**Accident Rate by Age of Driver**



Source: page 23 2013 Major Investigation Report NTI

High insurance premiums and other high costs limit the amount of in-cab training young drivers are able to afford and undertake. There may be greater opportunities for interactive simulated training, but it is unclear whether operators would pay for training when no freight is moved.

Drivers who undergo advanced competency based training should be rewarded for their efforts with reduced insurance premiums, as is custom with advanced competency training in light vehicles when a driver obtains a driver's license.

### 5.8. High responsibility

The industry is subject to increasing compliance regulation. Chain of responsibility and fatigue management affects all areas of the trucking business, meaning from the manager down to the driver, there are huge compliance requirements on every operation they carry out. Improving the safety and accountability of the industry is important. However, the gradual increase in regulatory paperwork and compliance processes is likely to put potential workers off, and it also burdens current workers with extra paperwork.

Additionally, there is an increasingly higher demand for literacy skills to perform satisfactorily in the industry. The work diary which each driver must correctly fill in to comply with legal working and rest hour rules, has been rated 4 out of 5 in terms of the English language skills required to complete it.

### 5.9. Health problems

The sedentary lifestyle of a truck driver can contribute to health problems. Facilities provided at truck stops or on the road are limited and often unhealthy. This increases the long-term risk of serious health issues like heart disease and diabetes. The prevalence of sleep apnoea in the industry is of huge concern for fatigue management and the ongoing health and well-being of drivers.

<sup>14</sup> National Transport Insurance, Major Accident Investigation Report, 2011, page 21

Sleep apnoea and other sleep disorders are being addressed in the industry with many managers encouraging their workers to be tested. However, waiting periods for testing can be long and workers could be prevented by road agencies or employers from working until the test results are available.

Drivers typically undertake limited exercise and long working hours can reduce their motivation to undertake physical exertion. Education programs about the importance of a good diet and healthy living in the heavy vehicle workforce should be promoted by industry and government.

### **5.10. Family life work balance**

Working as a truck driver is a very diverse lifestyle; it could involve long haul, short haul, overnight or early morning work. This disruptive lifestyle is not attractive to many people and does not generally match the aspirations of younger, urban people.

Apart from long periods away from home, both rest area and truck stop amenities in most places are not up to a suitable standard. The poor standard affects the overall working conditions that truck drivers have to deal with. Improving rest areas and change over bays where workers can swap trailers must be an objective of government when upgrading roads, as this would not only increase the use of the amenities but better support fatigue management throughout the industry.

Improving the flexibility of work hours needs to happen if there is to be a greater diversity in the workforce. Short shift driving would target over 35's, those with families and women in the industry. While this is one of the clearest ways to attract and retain workers, operators are resistant to an idea that will increase costs just to suit some of the workforce. The 'just in time' response to demand for freight movements also means that these kind of options cannot always be practical.

### **5.11. Occupational injuries**

Industry has strived to improve its safety record, compliance and competency to increase the professionalism of the industry. Better maintained vehicle equipment along with smarter in-vehicle technology has made safety compliance, and especially fatigue, easier to monitor. However, some dangerous practices still continue, such as not wearing a seatbelt and inappropriate use of loading equipment.

Promoting appropriate guidelines to make sure all drivers are aware of how to use equipment safely is supported by the ATA.

### **5.12. Limited training opportunities**

Training and education have not been historically provided to many in the industry, as the larger part of industry is made up of smaller enterprises are unable to provide or pay for additional training. Additionally, the industry does not have an accredited apprenticeship scheme. The lack of an established training scheme makes choosing a 'profession' in the industry uncertain.

Larger operators can provide mentoring, compliance guidance and training. However, there is a view that if training is given drivers will leave the heavy vehicle industry for a higher paying position with the resources sector, limiting the willingness of operators to provide additional training.

Establishing a national apprenticeship scheme and encouraging colleges to provide relevant courses would secure younger workers into the trade. Improved education on compliance issues in the future is vital to industry understanding its responsibilities as well as having a workforce that can care and act on legislative matters.

Schneider National, in the US, has a very successful training program, where it offers continual training and promotes a program that offers drivers opportunities to diversify into the mode of freight movement they want e.g. regional, tanker etc.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> D.Whistler 'Schneider offers \$6,000 tuition reimbursement to attract drivers' Fleet Owner ,25<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Established registered training organisations (RTOs) offer comprehensive competency-based training, new regulations were implemented earlier this year in NSW. This has changed the onus from NSW Roads and Maritime services (RMS) to monitor the output of the RTO, to the RTO to make sure they are meeting the competency guidelines. The outcome of this change in regulation has meant that drivers are not getting adequate training and RTOs that do not provide proper training simply disappear if they are investigated.

This issue is compounded by the fact there is a shortage of trainers in RTOs at the moment.

Up-skilling in regional and remote areas is a challenge for some companies due to a lack of access to suitable trainers and assessment resources<sup>16</sup>.

## 6. Current policies to address shortages don't go far enough

### 6.1. Australian Trucking Association

At Trucking Australia 2013, the ATA's annual event, a list of aspirational goals for the ATA and its member associations was created. It specifies that the ATA would work with its member associations to address:

#### Industry Training & Qualifications

- Identify industry cadetships, traineeships, work placement programs, and in doing so map existing skill development programs across all States of Australia.
- Provide useful course and career information to school leavers and school career counsellors.
- Represent industry at development seminars for career counsellors.
- Promote the skilling and career path opportunities of the trucking industry to schools, their students and families.

#### Strengthening & Promoting Industry

- Market professional opportunities in the industry, and the talented and successful people involved.
- Identify industry opportunities to raise career awareness amongst population cohorts traditionally under-represented in road transport, and to lower any non-regulatory barriers to entry.
- Work with government and relevant government agencies to ensure drivers are identified as "skilled employees".
- Work with government to expand truck stop availability and improve their personal amenities and other facilities.

#### Barriers to Entering the Industry

- Build on previous work to influence driver licensing regulations so that a person may drive a heavy and/or multiple combination vehicle once able to demonstrate relevant competence.

### 6.2. The Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council (TLISC)

TLISC has been very active in improving the talent of the workforce and helping to solve labour shortage problems. TLISC also offers training packages in transport.

TLISC recommends several ways to boost productivity, including regulatory reform, innovation, infrastructure investment and effective workforce development and skills strategies.

The ATA Skills and Workforce Committee has been involved with providing information to TLISC about issues in the industry.

TLISC uses a range of contemporary skills and workforce development practices included those facilitated through the National Workforce Development Fund (NWFDF) brokered by the industry skills council.

*National Workforce Development Fund*

This is a five year, \$700m fund created by the Australian Government that seeks to support workforce training and development in areas of present and future need. TLISC is the NWDF broker in the industry delivering \$10.4 million to 1,667 workers and trainers in 92 enterprises in 2012.

Transport managers and truck drivers are on the priority occupation list. The support TLISC provides to the industry is in developing a tailored training program that suits the needs of either the enterprise or the individual, identifying appropriate Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and assisting in the application process.

*WELL Program*

The WELL program is focused on improving the communication, writing, reading and numeral skills for existing workers, particularly remote and regional workers.

**6.3. State based programs****Queensland**

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has shown commitment to workforce development in industry by agreeing to fund and host a small team called TLI Connect. The newly formed Transport and Logistics Workforce Advisory Committee (TLWAC) will inform and lead the initiatives this team will support.

Attracting Youth to industry - This year the GenR8 youth engagement project saw 62 students from 5 schools graduate with a Certificate II in Logistics. More than 50% of these students have now gained employment outcomes in industry. This program continues to grow and will roll out in North Queensland and South West Queensland in 2014.

The TLI Connect team are currently undertaking one-on-one interviews with each TLWAC member to identify the current priority issues for industry and to determine the areas of focus. To date a couple of recurring themes are a) the overall skills shortage - we need to attract people into industry and b) the ageing workforce.

**Victoria*****VicRoads Heavy Vehicle Licensing Access Project (HVLAP)***

This program is an accelerated licence graduation for a heavy combination vehicle driver. Some of the parameters for gaining a HC licence using the HVLAP method, will include supervised and non-supervised hours of driving, which will then allow the applicant to be assessed for a HC licence. Essentially, there is the opportunity to obtain a HC licence in 3 to 4 months with plenty of driving exposure, as opposed to 12 months or longer now where there may be little or no driving exposure.

This program is still in the establishment phase.

While the above industry and TLISC actions support driver up-skilling, medium and long-term driver shortages will remain and require more concerted action to enhance the driver fleet to meet the freight task.

## 7. Conclusion

The ATA has provided conclusive evidence that there are barriers to attracting more and new workers to the industry and the industry is working on improving this situation. However, having heavy vehicle drivers included on the CSOL list will help supplement the national workforce temporarily and make sure industry can meet the growing freight task at the lowest cost possible.

### **Recommendation**

Heavy vehicle drivers (ANZSCO 733111) should be included on the Consolidated Skilled Occupation List, in order for overseas drivers to apply for 457 visas and for the heavy vehicle industry to meet the growing freight task.