

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## TRUCKING INDUSTRY WELCOMES COALITION STAND ON FUEL TAX LAWS

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) has congratulated the Coalition on its announcement that it will take action in Parliament to deliver more truck rest areas and to stop automatic increases in the fuel tax paid by trucking operators.

The Chairman of the ATA, Trevor Martyn, said the Coalition was taking an important stand for the men and women who drive Australia's trucks.

"Every truck driver knows we need more truck rest areas, because fatigue is a major cause of truck accidents. The new fatigue laws in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia will only be effective if truck drivers have more places to stop safely and rest," Mr Martyn said.

"A recent independent audit found there isn't a single major highway in Australia that meets the national rest area guidelines. The Coalition is proposing to move amendments to the Government's heavy vehicle charges legislation to link future increases in the fuel tax on trucking operators – the road user charge – to the construction of 500 extra rest areas on the AusLink National Network over ten years.

"Five hundred extra rest areas would make an enormous difference to road safety. In addition, it would profoundly improve the working conditions of every truck driver on the road," he said.

Mr Martyn said the Coalition's amendments would also prevent the road user charge from increasing automatically every year.

"The Coalition's amendments would deliver an open and transparent system for increasing the road user charge in the future. The industry would get access to all of the information used to calculate the charge, and we would have a chance to be heard," he said.

Mr Martyn congratulated Warren Truss on his approach to the amendments.

"It would have been very easy, but short-sighted, for the Coalition to have simply opposed the Government's legislation. Warren Truss has inspired his colleagues to propose amendments that will deliver real results for the industry," he said.

The Coalition amendments would alter the *Road Charges Legislation Repeal and Amendment Bill 2008*, and are largely based on model amendments prepared by the ATA. The Coalition amendments would also prevent the Government from increasing the road user charge unless the states and territories achieve substantial harmonisation of their transport regulations, including their heavy vehicle fatigue laws.

Mr Martyn urged the Coalition to reconsider this part of their amendments.

"The trucking industry needs uniform fatigue laws, but they cannot be delivered by amending this Bill. Instead, we believe the Australian Parliament needs to pass comprehensive laws to establish a national heavy vehicle regulator and national fatigue laws. The national laws would need to be flexible enough to reflect the different operating conditions in different parts of the country," he said.

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*National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry*