

MEDIA RELEASE

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COAG DECISION ON NATIONAL TRUCK LAWS

The Australian Trucking Association has welcomed COAG's decision to establish a single national heavy vehicle regulator, which is to be fully operational by 2013.

"The ATA has lobbied for twenty years to secure consistent national laws that will boost the industry's productivity and safety," the Chairman of the ATA, Trevor Martyn, said.

"The trucking industry delivers three quarters of Australia's domestic freight, but the heavy vehicle laws change whenever you cross a state border.

"The previous attempts to standardise these laws have not been successful. The most recent approach – the development of model laws for the states and territories to copy – has led to as many differences as similarities in some of the laws," he said.

Mr Martyn said the ATA would work closely with governments to make sure the national laws improve the industry's safety as well as its efficiency.

"The development of national laws has the potential to lead to important safety advances, which could include:

- a better understanding of the rules by trucking operators, leading to greater compliance and more efficient national operations;
- more targeted enforcement, with seamless Chain of Responsibility laws across state borders so companies and the industry's customers are held responsible for systemic safety problems;
- consistent fatigue management rules;
- increased access to the road system for modern safer vehicle configurations;
- an increase in the adoption of leading edge safety aids; and
- measures to encourage companies to join audited accreditation schemes like the ATA's TruckSafe program. Independent statistics show that companies in TruckSafe and other accreditation schemes are twice as safe as non-accredited companies.

"Governments will now need to consult closely with the industry, to make sure compliant operators, drivers and clients can move forward without losing existing productivity, access arrangements or other benefits.

"The new laws must not be a lowest common denominator and must provide benefits for intrastate operators and the local operations of national companies, as well as companies who operate across state borders.

"They must also provide a pathway forward to resolve road access issues, which are preventing the industry from using safer and more efficient vehicle combinations," Mr Martyn said.

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National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry