

MEDIA RELEASE



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FAST DECISION NEEDED ON NATIONAL TRUCK REGULATOR

The trucking industry has called on the Prime Minister, premiers and chief ministers to make a fast decision about the host state for the proposed national heavy vehicle regulator.

Australia's transport ministers met today to consider the plan, but agreed to refer the decision about the regulator's host state to COAG. New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland all expressed an interest.

The Chairman of the Australian Trucking Association, Trevor Martyn, said the trucking industry was not interested in the legal details of how the regulator was established or where its head office was located.

"What we care about is the outcome: safer roads for the community and greater productivity for our customers, including Australia's exporters," Mr Martyn said.

"The Federal Infrastructure Minister, Anthony Albanese, has shown determination and vision in pushing the concept of the national heavy vehicle regulator and regulations.

"Now COAG needs to show the same level of vision, and make a fast decision about the regulator's host state, so we can improve the industry's safety and efficiency further.

"We have made dramatic safety gains over the last twenty years, but there is always more to be done.

"With a national regulator in place, there could be seamless chain of responsibility rules across Australia to boost safety. Under these rules, company managers and directors in one state could be held to account if their actions, inactions or demands led to unsafe practices on the road in another.

"We also need to see the national regulator supporting the increased use of longer, safer trucks like super B-doubles and B-triples. These combinations can haul more freight, so increasing their use would reduce the growth in the number of trucks and the risk of accidents.

"In addition, these new vehicles have the latest safety features, and their drivers are licensed to a higher standard than semi-trailer drivers," he said.

Mr Martyn said the national trucking regulator and regulations would need to recognise that most trucking companies operate within state borders rather than interstate.

"There's a perception that the whole trucking industry will benefit enormously from eliminating cross-border differences in the trucking regulations. This is true for interstate operators, but not for companies that work locally or on regional runs," Mr Martyn said.

"These firms will only benefit from national regulations if they are easier to understand, easier to comply with, and ideally provide productivity enhancements compared to the present ones.

"In short, the new regulations will have to deliver better outcomes for the whole trucking industry and safety, with a no disadvantage test so no trucking operator is adversely affected.

“The new regulations will also need to include scope for local, regional and state-based variations that will improve productivity, including provisions so local operators and associations can have input into those variations. Ideally, like circumstances should lead to like outcomes across the states and territories participating in the national system.

“There must also be arrangements in place to ensure that Australia’s road agencies and police forces enforce the national regulations as intended,” he said.

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