

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## IMPROVING TRUCK SAFETY

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) Chief Executive, Stuart St Clair, used his address at the National Press Club today to call on all levels of government and the industry to work together to improve safety on the road.

"The safety of the industry has already improved dramatically. In 1988, there were 260 fatal crashes involving articulated trucks and 320 deaths. In 2008, there were 130 fatal crashes and 150 deaths," Mr St Clair said.

"It's a remarkable improvement considering the growing number of kilometres travelled by the industry. But the ATA believes we will only see further falls if governments, the industry and our customers take up the safe systems approach to road safety.

"To put this approach in place, governments and the industry need to focus on safer roads, safer trucks, safer drivers, and most importantly, safer companies."

Mr St Clair said recent investment in roads by the Australian Government will help push down accident rates, but warned that the state governments are often paving over or closing existing truck rest areas as they plan and build new roads.

"Our drivers need rest areas where they can take a break," Mr St Clair said.

"To get the best safety value, the Australian Government should require the states to design their Nation Building road projects to include truck rest areas from the start."

Safer trucks will also have a dramatic effect on the safety on Australia's roads, according to Mr St Clair.

"The industry's trucks will continue to become safer as new technologies arrive and are adopted throughout the fleet," he said.

"However, the best way that governments can improve the safety of trucks is to allow us to use longer and safer combinations like B-triples on some routes."

Improvements in heavy vehicle licence training would also see improvements in road safety.

"The establishment of national heavy vehicle laws is a chance for governments to put a modern licensing system in place," Mr St Clair said.

"Through our Driver Licensing Working Group, the ATA is putting together a detailed plan for consideration by governments. Under our plan, drivers would have the option of undertaking a certificate-level driving course to give them a nationally-recognised vocational qualification.

"Drivers who completed one of these certificates would be able to move through the graduated licensing system more quickly, because of their demonstrated competence and safety."

But Mr St Clair also called on trucking companies and their customers to do their part.

"There is a big difference today between the companies that adopt best safety practice and the rest of the industry," Mr St Clair said.

***National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry***

"Australia's best and safest trucking companies, like Linfox, make safety the central focus of everything they do.

"They train and monitor their drivers, they invest in the safest vehicles, they have policies to make sure their drivers are healthy and fit to drive and they make sure their drivers are scheduled correctly and legally.

"But you don't have to be a big company to put measures like these in place.

"Companies who join ATA's TruckSafe program have to meet strict safety standards, and are audited regularly," Mr St Clair said.

"Independent statistics show that companies in the TruckSafe program are about twice as safe as non-accredited companies.

"It is these companies that will drive down the truck accident rate in the future, along with building safer roads, allowing safer trucks, and training safer drivers."

**A copy of Mr St Clair's speech is available for download on the ATA website at [www.atatruck.net.au](http://www.atatruck.net.au).**

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