



MEDIA RELEASE

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VTA urges government-backed rail qualification to be extended to road transport

The Victorian Transport Association has lauded [a new qualification for Victorian high school students](#) to prepare them for a career in the rail industry as a model that should be extended to the road transport sector to help address its chronic shortage of skilled drivers.

The Australian-first qualification announced by Victorian Ports & Freight Minister Melissa Horne is designed to encourage Year 9 and 10 students to consider joining the rail industry after completing their studies, with a part-time course offered over two years counting towards a VCE qualification.

According to a 2019 Australian Industry Skills Transport and Logistics Skills Forecast, over 80 per cent of employers reported experiencing a skills shortage in the previous twelve months.

VTA CEO Peter Anderson said the road transport sector needs the same kind of support afforded to the rail industry to capture the interest of future workers at a young age.

“The biggest issue facing the road transport industry is the lack of young people entering the sector and this is a problem that will blow up considering the average age of a truck driver in Victoria is 57 and starting to contemplate retirement.

“We are working closely with the Victorian Government to change our outdated heavy vehicle licensing model so that young people can receive professional training and instruction and start a career as a professional driver straight out of high school.

“However, capturing the interest and imagination of young people aged 15 and over would really help to motivate them towards a career in road transport, which is where a transport qualification that would count towards a student’s VCE qualification would really help,”

The VTA’s [Driver Delivery](#) program is providing specialist heavy vehicle driver training as part of the Victorian Government’s \$4 million program to train 400 new drivers, which Peter Anderson says is a good start towards addressing driver shortages in the sector.

“Capturing the interest of young people early, and assuring them that a career in transport is well-paid, respected and valued by society as part of a structured course at high school, could be a game-changer and help the industry to recruit and retain new drivers,” he said.

“We will continue to work closely with the Victorian Government and other stakeholders on creative ways to attract young people to a career as a professional transport worker.”

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