



victoriantransportassociation_{inc.}

Victorian Transport Association

**Submission to Senate Standing Committee on
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee
Inquiry**

Inquiry into Aspects of Road Safety in Australia.

Executive Summary:

Road safety in Australia is a key responsibility of not just Government but by all road users. We are fortunate in Australia to be proud of our general attitude and improvement in results of road safety initiatives that have been undertaken by a variety of entities that have lead the way in ensuring that we continue to reduce the statistics of road death and road trauma caused by road accidents.

Australia is fortunate to have a series of instrumentalities and entities that focus on road safety and the reduction of road trauma. There are continuing studies, reports and research that define specific areas of concern and produce forecasts and recommendations that have significant impact.

It is not just the initiatives of government such as seat belt legislation or Australian Design Rules review that have led to significant reduction in road trauma but the ability of commerce and the community to adopt the changes that are demanded and to ensure that the environment upon which the use of roads continues to improve.

Work undertaken by instruments such as the National Transport Commission, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal have shown what effective government means to road use improvements.

Application of legislative changes and Orders bring about shifts in society values and actions that bring the desired results of improved driver outcomes.

The heavy vehicle industry is faced with a multitude of opportunities to improve its road trauma statistics as the most regulated user of Australian roads. Vehicle operational standards, driver accountability, commercial parameters and a unified approach to national law have all been improvements. We need to do more.

The NTC need to focus on laws that are easy to apply and understand, the NHVR needs to have national jurisdiction from a federal perspective while the RSRT is instrumental in improving the processes within the heavy vehicle industry that fall outside the ability of the operator to control and therefore create additional safety issues.

This submission to the Senate Standing Committee by the Victorian Transport Association confirms the recommendations and actions of many of the solutions that are currently in place. The VTA has also provided specific view points and recommendations that we trust will assist the Committee in continuing its work and driving improvements in the use of all roads within Australia.

The Victorian Transport Association and its members thank the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry.

Peter Anderson

Chief Executive Officer

Victorian Transport Association

ASPECTS OF ROAD TRANSPORT IN AUSTRALIA

Background:

Formed in 1902, and still recognised as Australia's leading multimodal prime contractor and employer organisation in transport and logistics, the Victorian Transport Association (VTA) works with all levels of government, the unions and the industry on a broad spectrum of issues.

The VTA represents the transport industry through a variety of means, including:

- VicRoads Advisory Board
- Victorian Freight & Logistics Council
- Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council
- Australian Road Transport Industrial Organisation
- Transport Industry Safety Group
- Transport Industry Council
- Truck Operations Committee
- National Transport Commission – Industry Advisory Group
- National Heavy Vehicle Regulator – Industry Operations Group

The VTA also supports the national agenda in collaboration with organisations such as the, Australian Road Transport Industrial Organisation, the Australasian Railway Association, the Australian Logistics Council, Roads Australia, Australian Trucking Association and the Transport Workers Union. The VTA regularly collaborates with statutory authorities such as Victoria Police, WorkSafe Victoria and VicRoads, to develop strategies aimed at addressing many of the underlying causes associated with road safety.

In conjunction with the Transport Industry Safety Group, the VTA has published safety-related guidelines and materials specifically focussed on the transport industry. Publications produced by the Transport Industry Safety Group can be found at <http://www.vta.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=1077> The VTA supports and has contributed to the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal.

This submission will draw upon the combined experiences of members associated with the transport industry over an extensive period of time, both at an operational level, as well at management levels. Therefore, the perspective presented within this submission is that of a transport operator.

ASPECTS OF ROAD TRANSPORT IN AUSTRALIA

a) The Social and Economic Cost of Road-Related Injury and Death

Heavy vehicles and buses represent around 3% of registered vehicles and 8% of vehicle kilometres travelled. However, they are involved in 18% of total road deaths and around 3% of total injuries. This disproportionate representation doesn't reflect greater culpability but the fact that greater mass means incidents involving heavy vehicles tend to have greater impacts.ⁱ

An individual is up to three times more likely to die in a crash where a heavy vehicle is involved.ⁱⁱ Australia's major heavy vehicle insurer, National Transport Insurance (NTI), conducts biennial analyses of heavy truck crash causation. In its 2013 analysis of 2011 data, NTI found that for their insured vehicles that were involved in multi-vehicle fatal crashes, the third party driver was at fault every time. In a similar analysis of 2009 NTI data, the third party was found to be at fault 82 per cent of the time.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development estimates the economic cost of road crashes at around \$27 billion per year.^{iv} The human cost (HC) in terms of grief, loss and trauma is incalculable. A recent report by the National Transport Commission (NTC) summarised the safety and economic impact of heavy vehicle related incidents as follows:

Each year, heavy vehicles in Australia are involved in around 200 crashes resulting in fatalities, 1500 crashes resulting in hospitalisation, 11,000 crashes resulting in less serious injuries, and 32,000 crashes causing property damage. These events result in death, extensive medical costs, property damage (including to the road, road infrastructure and to vehicles), environmental contamination, and lost productivity (for the affected operator and other individuals) as a result of road blockages and lost time due to injuries, property damage and other factors.^v

The evidence clearly suggests that industry commitment, policy interventions, shifts in social attitudes and behaviours, and vehicle and infrastructure design improvements can radically reduce road trauma.^{vi} Positively the reduction in deaths is a welcome trend.

Deaths from crashes involving a heavy vehicle decreased 33.5 per cent from 281 to 187 between 2004 and 2013 (a trend reduction of 3.2 per cent per year).

However, the down side is that despite death rates reducing the increases in high threat to life, admissions are increasing. Greater advancements in medical intervention mean that persons who would have previously died as a result of the injuries sustained are surviving however, the quality of life is sometimes severely compromised and the ongoing costs not only in dollars but emotionally and the ripple effect through the families and loved ones of these survivors is again incalculable.

Hospital admissions and high-threat-to-life cases from traffic crashes involving a heavy truck increased between 2002 and 2009.^{12vii}

Based on current analysis conducted by the VTA under the auspices of the Transport Industry Safety Group (TISG) it is estimated that approximately 100 heavy vehicle accidents are occurring on Victoria's roads each month and of this the party at fault in 54% of these incidents was determined as the driver of the heavy vehicle. This includes the incidents in which the accident was recorded as a single vehicle incident.

The VTA are extremely interested in these results and how the attitudes of not only the heavy vehicle driver but also the driver of the light vehicle influence the outcomes.

Many of the incidents recorded are a result of failure to merge correctly be it either the truck not seeing the light vehicle or light vehicles racing up the inside of a heavy vehicle whilst it is attempting to merge.

Another key area is the high rate of rear end incidents involving heavy vehicles both when the heavy vehicle is at fault or not again two key points have been identified, drivers inattention or road users not appreciating the road space required for a heavy vehicle to stop and thus invading the gap to further their own progress.

- i. ¹ Data published by National Transport Insurance (NTI) indicates that for multi vehicle fatal incidents in 2011 in every case the driver of the lighter vehicle or the third party was at fault. NTI, 2013 Major Accident Investigation Report, 2013, p.6
- ii. ¹ New South Wales Auditor General, Improving road safety – heavy vehicles, May 2009, p.14
- iii. ¹ NTI, Major Accident Reports (2013, 2011). Available at: <http://www.nti.com.au/supporting/accident-research.php>.
- iv. ¹ Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Impact of Road Trauma and Measures to Improve Outcomes, December 2014
- v. ¹ National Transport Commission, Heavy Vehicle Roadworthiness Program: Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement, January 2015, p. 52
- vi. ¹ Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Impact of Road Trauma and Measures to Improve Outcomes, December 2014
- vii. ¹ Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Impact of Road Trauma and Measures to Improve Outcomes, December 2014

ASPECTS OF ROAD TRANSPORT IN AUSTRALIA

b) The Importance of Design Standards on Imported Vehicles, as Australian Vehicle Manufacturing Winds Down

Agreeing with the ATA, the VTA sights that there is no evidence to support that heavy vehicle manufacturing is in decline, locally produced vehicles are well represented and accepted in the major fleets. The largest heavy vehicle fleet operator in Australia, The TOLL Group, have indicated through their own analysis of procurement that locally manufactured vehicles now make up 50.4% in dollars spend and 35% in quantity from 2009 – 2014.

Whilst the demand for imported product is still high, Australia imports ~85% of its heavy vehicles the shift in procurement particularly those vehicles being purchased for high productivity vehicle applications are moving towards locally produced vehicles, sighting the appropriateness of design for the Australian conditions.

If Australia is to truly adopt a global standard for design it needs to review the current design rules particularly those that are at loggerheads with design rules in the EU and USA, however this must be done in a way in which safety of all road users is not compromised. An example of such are the discrepancies in vehicle width. In Australia vehicles must remain below 2.5m, whereas the current design specification for the EU and USA is 2.55m and 2.591m respectively, by Australia holding steady at 2.5m elements of the vehicle affected by width could be compromised, items that could in effect raise the safety levels of the vehicles, such as cameras, or entry/exit access/grab rails and steps. Also limiting such things as axle and tyre combinations and even items in future designs such as exhaust collector boxes and outlets.

The VTA, through its association with the ATA agrees with the ATA's 2014 Review of Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989 Options Discussion Paper, in recommending the government retain the existing ADR system for heavy vehicles. But should strengthen the risk based approach as in MVSA1989 and retain the single regulatory facilitator to preserve current standards, but also encourage broader acceptance international standards and remain open to appropriate vehicle standards wherever they appear in the world.

The VTA believes that there should be stringent rules and standards to those vehicles individuals and/or larger entities choose to import be it either "grey imports" or direct imports (vehicles that are not available through traditional OEM's). The standards for this type of imported vehicle should neither deter or encourage the method however there should be no greater incentive through concessions to import a vehicle than the standards applied to the traditional importer OEM or a local manufacturer, and in doing so will ensure the truck sales industry is adversely compromised by "cheap" one off imports and the general public can have a level of comfort that these imported vehicles are as safe as the traditional OEM imports and locally manufactured vehicles.

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c) The Impact of New Technologies and Advancements in Understanding of Vehicle Design and Road Safety

Fatigue Management

Fatigue Management needs to be focussed on ensuring the individual is properly rested. This is in contrast to properly managing his/her fatigue. Fatigue is the lag indicator. The laws and principles that govern fatigue should focus on ensuring the driver of a heavy vehicle is properly rested. In doing so has every opportunity to obtain rest in an environment that promotes healthy sleep patterns and allows for restorative rest/sleep.

Rest areas for heavy vehicle drivers are in the main under resourced, they are inappropriate and in many cases drivers of heavy vehicles are finding themselves in conflict for the space with other travellers, such as campers and caravans. The facilities are just not there and this leaves drivers with little choice in most cases than to continue driving until they can find a space somewhere further on the journey and therefore pushing the boundaries of personal capabilities.

This does nothing for improving the quality of rest for these drivers of heavy vehicles, so we have a double edged sword where we have drivers who are regulated by law to take rest at a predetermined time/location and then due to overcrowding or in appropriate rest areas or worse still the issue of conflict with other road users/general public are forced to either break the law by exceeding hours of work in a period or park in an inappropriate position and risk both themselves and other road users by being in the “wrong place”.

Electronic Work Diaries

The VTA questions why the roll out of electronic work diaries continues to be debated and stalled by the authorities. Electronic work diaries will reduce the administrative burden on operators and provide to agencies and law enforcement an accurate depiction of what that truck and driver have done in the past. There needs to be a level of maturity entered into this debate, the focus on the minor infringements say 5 minutes over time need to cease, the focus should be on how the current laws around work and rest need to focus on providing the driver with adequate and qualitative rest periods, that promote fatigue management and not what looks good on paper.

Electronic work diaries will always have their detractors and naysayers however the current system of paper and drivers recording information at ad-nauseam clearly miss the intended point. What industry needs and what the general public should demand is that operators can meet the needs of their drivers and of their customers in unison. An individual drivers needs should be no greater than the other and communities need to be assured that drivers operating heavy vehicles are doing so both within the confines of the laws and not impeding on the individuals abilities to function.

Intelligent Access Program

The VTA supports the view of its affiliates at the TCA and ARRB that we must see intelligent road systems, be it road based or transport based, be fully explored. The benefits of IAP on HML vehicles in states other than Victoria are paying dividends, Transport operators have the capacity to further increase productivity of their assets and in many cases such as the Toowoomba to Port of Brisbane route, seen reductions in overall truck trips, relieving congestion, and reducing the safety risk by having less overall truck movements on that route to meet the freight task.

The VTA encourages government to mandate the installation of IAP on all Heavy Vehicles operating under HML or PBS and in doing so allow road managers and operators to share information that will ultimately allow for greater efficiencies on the road network. It has been demonstrated that the use of IAP to not only monitor behaviours and ensure vehicles stay on route but also more importantly demonstrate to road managers that with proper consultation and consideration structures can be accessed at higher mass albeit with special conditions that allow for industry to achieve higher levels of safety, productivity and efficiency.

The VTA encourages government to look at how information is both stored and dispersed, it is the VTA's opinion that the information collected should stay with the operator and only breaches of the conditions to access be sent to the agencies and in doing so allows operators the comfort of still being responsible for the activities of their fleets.

Collision Avoidance Technology

The VTA supports the introduction of mandatory left-side sensors and left-side cameras on heavy vehicles by 2025. This type of 'collision avoidance' technology will enable heavy vehicle drivers to take action in the event that an object/vehicle/person is detected on the blind-spot of a vehicle.

On-board vehicle-to-vehicle technology (V2V) and infrastructure-to-vehicle (I2V) (cooperative intelligent transport systems (C-ITS)) assist in reducing certain types of vehicle collisions, however there is still the need to ensure that driver behaviours are not overlooked.

Technological advancements to assist drivers detect and avoid collisions will not replace good driver behaviour and awareness. Victorian heavy vehicle licence requirements require drivers to know and understand their 'crash avoidance space' and establish behaviours to 'protect their crash avoidance space'. Ongoing driver education for the transport industry is vital to ensure safe driver behaviours and improved driver skill levels are fostered in order to achieve long term benefits for the industry.

Electronic Stability Control

The VTA recommends all trailers be fitted (or retro-fitted) with Electronic Stability Control (ESC) by 2025.

Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries quotes – *“Accident data shows that Electronic Stability Control (ESC) can significantly reduce the likelihood of being involved in loss-of-control crashes.*

The ESC system uses sensors in the vehicle to compare differences between the vehicles' actual course and the driver's steering wheel input. If the on-board computer senses that loss of control is imminent, the

system automatically reduces engine power, and may apply braking to individual wheels to assist the driver to bring the car back to its intended course.

The ESC software is programmed after exhaustive tests in a variety of driving conditions. While many systems can be switched off, it is recommended that the driver leaves the system on as emergency situations can occur at any time – often without warning.

On 22 June 2009, the Australian Government announced the introduction of an Australian Design Rule, based on Global Technical Regulation No.8, for the mandatory fitting of ESC to passenger cars and SUVs from November 2011 (for new models) and November 2013 (for all vehicles).

The FCAI supports the ADR, as it delivers nationally consistent regulations for ESC that are harmonised with international regulations.”

Similar standards for heavy vehicles would assist to reduce the number of roll-overs caused by vehicle loss of control, particularly on tankers, livestock carriers and vehicles with a high centre of gravity, where load-shift plays a significant factor.

All heavy vehicle trailing equipment should be fitted with ESC by 2025.

Anti-Lock Braking

The VTA supports the Australian Government’s decision to mandate Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) for all new model trucks from 01 July 2014 and for all new trucks from 01 January 2015. Design rules require prime movers capable of pulling B-double trailers to be fitted with ABS. This requirement should be mandatory for all new prime movers by 2025.

The VTA supports the mandatory fitment/installation of Lane sensing technology to all new heavy vehicles immediately and would advocate strongly to see the retrofitting of technologies to all heavy vehicles by 2025.

Although mindful of technology becoming the defacto for driver awareness, and drivers becoming over reliant on technology, lane sensing equipment will assist drivers in becoming more aware of the risks within their immediate vicinity. Longer vehicles particularly benefit from such technology because of the blind spots inherent on heavy vehicles. As already stated in previous statements the increases in side collisions with other vehicles indicate that drivers cannot always see a light vehicle approaching on the left hand side of the vehicle, and more importantly when a light vehicle elects to sit in the “blind spot” of the heavy vehicle, in many cases unaware that he/she is no longer visible to the driver of the heavy vehicle.

Lane Departure Warning

Lane Departure Warning (LDW) also has the potential to reduce fatalities by 7% in Australia, and given the challenge of rural and remote roads may be a worthwhile technology to promote if infrastructure can be optimised for its use. – *Source: The Centre for Automotive Safety Research (CASR)*

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d) – The Different Considerations Affecting Road Safety in Urban, Regional and Rural Areas

Already covered in the rest areas, there is a difference in the considerations given for urban areas differing from the regional and rural areas.

However there is more to road safety than just rest areas, road treatments, and conditions play a major part in road safety especially in regional areas. Coupled with driver inattention and distraction the issues in regional areas are usually higher speed and higher consequence accidents, and in many cases single vehicle accidents. Roads with lower volumes generally translating to lower maintenance regimes, resulting in less appropriate road conditions and higher risk of incident. We also see higher levels of driver complacency on regional and rural roads with awareness levels lessening and speed perception rates decreasing.

Higher Speed Collisions

While serious accidents in metropolitan areas tend to be at low speeds, major accidents in rural areas tend to be at higher speeds. Higher speeds and heavy vehicles bring about an increase in road trauma per accident.

Driver inattention and distraction are two of the major issues. While driver education is the key, it is important that this responsibility is not just left to individual enforcement jurisdictions. The Sharing the Road campaign recently introduced by VicRoads is trying to address the issue of attitude by the road user towards other road users. A program that should be driven nationally.

It is through national standards, a consolidated driver awareness approach and the ability for drivers to build a perspective of awareness while using the roads that will drive down road accident trauma.

Radio Break-In Technology

In 2010, VicRoads successfully trialled Radio Break-In Technology targeting railway crossing fatalities. The trial was conducted in Yendon, Victoria. The technology (developed by NFA Innovations Pty Ltd) uses GPS transmitters fitted to trains which sends a signal to vehicles fitted with transponders alerting drivers of approaching trains.

The technology and the subsequent trial did not proceed further in Victoria, due mainly to its implementation not being supported by the Victorian union. In 2013 the Queensland State Government committed \$1M to test the same innovative technology in an effort to make Queensland rail crossings safer. The move was supported by the Rail, Tram & Bus Union in Queensland and has been satisfactorily trialled. The VTA would support the implementation of this type of technology in Victoria.

Bridge Height Detection

Bridge height detection warnings in inner Melbourne do not satisfactorily prevent bridge collisions. As previously noted, on-board vehicle-to-vehicle technology (V2V) and infrastructure-to-vehicle (I2V) (cooperative intelligent transport systems (C-ITS)) assist in reducing certain types of vehicle collisions. The VTA encourages and will support research and development into better bridge height detection warning systems, coupled with road user awareness campaigns aimed at educating and informing heavy vehicle operators about bridge height restrictions.

Vehicle Visibility

The VTA recommends mandatory retro-fitting of reflective tape on all prime movers and trailers to support ADR 74/00 requirements for Side Marker Lamps. The combination of side marker lights and reflective tape will substantially increase vehicle visibility at distance, and reduce the incidence of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from crashes involving heavy vehicles.

The combination of ADR 74/00 Side Marker Lamps, ADR 84/00 Front Underrun Impact Protection and Dynamic Side Impact Occupant Protection, PLUS mandatory reflective tape will significantly reduce the likelihood of collision as visibility will be improved, and reduce the need for potentially dangerous evasive action to be taken by drivers. Front Underrun Impact Protection on prime movers and Side Impact Occupant Protection on trailers reduces the severity of injuries sustained in the event of front/side impact.

The creation and application of an Australian design Rule for the mandatory fitting of reflective tape on all heavy vehicles exceeding a length of 5.4 metres should be considered and supported.

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e) Other Associated Matters

Bridge Assessment

The VTA support the Austroads Review of AS5100.7 Rating of Existing Bridges and the Bridge Assessment Group Guidelines.

The Austroads Review states:

There is significant pressure in Australia to improve freight productivity through the national reform agenda. A key component of the reform plan is to improve access to the road network for heavy vehicle operators. Assessment of bridge capacity is perceived to be critical to this aim. This project reviewed the current Australian Standard Bridge Design AS5100.7: Rating of existing bridges (2004) and the Bridge Assessment Group Guidelines for bridge load capacity assessment (1997) which are currently the principal documents for detailed bridge capacity assessment.

The current formula for evaluating bridge terminal life does not effectively extend the life of the structure, but redirects traffic away from the structure in order to extend the ongoing viability of the structure. Assessment of bridge terminal age refers to the formula to assess terminal age, not the potential for catastrophic failure. The current methods are regressive and restrict economic growth.

The VTA endorses the review of bridge capacity and the associated design rules.

Modal Shift

The Victorian Government's Mode Shift Incentive Scheme (MSIS) encourages industry to shift more containerised freight from road to rail. This four-year, \$20M investment in the MSIS will enable regional centres to shift freight more efficiently to our ports, reducing the amount of containerised and bulk freight being moved on our road system. Incentive schemes such MSIS must be encouraged into the future.

Intermodal terminals/hubs will play a major role in easing the burden on the ports and surrounding areas, facilitating the transfer of freight from one transport mode to another. If rail is to increase its role in the freight transport and distribution system, investment must be made to ensure appropriate infrastructure and facilities are in place.

Initiatives in Victoria (announced in the 2015 State Budget) will focus on developing three rail markets:

- Interstate, mainly inter-capital city freight, which operates over long distances on the ARTC standard gauge network
- Regional, mainly export trade from regional Victoria and southern NSW, which operates over shorter distances on the V/Line controlled broad gauge network
- Metropolitan, which is a prospective market for rail and is currently handled exclusively by trucks on the arterial road network

The VTA welcomes these initiatives, as the freight task is forecast to go by 80% between 2013 and 2020. Further consideration must be given to developing strategies for managing growth in the “last mile”. Infrastructure spending on inner city road networks must also be increased to alleviate congestion.

Greater emphasis must be placed on reducing long-distance road freight transfers between regional and interstate locations to Melbourne ports which will have a positive impact on the number of incidents involving heavy vehicles and passenger vehicles.

Subsidies that encourage the use of rail as an alternative to road transfers must continue to be funded by State and Federal governments.

Road Utilisation

The VTA encourages government to look at how it can use the available road space more effectively opening up access to high productivity freight vehicles that have proven to be cleaner and with improved safety standards and equipment.

Vehicles that demonstrate greater utilization and better fit with the current freight demands with increased standards of safety are clearly an improvement for all.

Providing a national mapping system that highlights and indicates the standard and capacity of vehicle able to use that road would ensure that all users would become aware and promote awareness.

Road Funding

Newer roads are safer roads. The challenges for road funding have been faced by successive governments for generations. We are now seeing the development of new funding regimes as the toll road and private road operator continue to provide massive investment. It is difficult for public funds to meet the demands of the road user.

The VTA encourages government to consider alternate models for funding road and infrastructure development including new and existing roads.

The VTA has been looking at alternate models and believes that a Roads Infrastructure Fund could be supported by a small proportion of the fuel excise being attributed to the Fund (4%) with allocation of the funds being based upon road usage and vehicles travelled.

This would see specific roads or areas becoming attractive as revenue streams for private investors looking to build new and improve existing roads while taking the larger cost burden away from government.

Driverless Vehicles

The VTA does not support the introduction of driverless vehicles on already congested roads. Although improved safety measures are inherent in design, they are inflexible and don't cater to community needs. Technology failures create major disturbances to traffic flow and pressure on existing infrastructure follows – without alternatives to resolve the congestion problem created.

Skilling the Driver

In 2013 VicRoads implemented major reforms to licence assessment standards for heavy vehicle licences. These reforms made mandatory the training and assessment of non-driving skills including load securing, cabin drill and vehicle inspections, as part of the licence process. Training and assessment of non-driving skills at the time of issuing a heavy vehicle licence does not go far enough to meeting the skill level development required for new entrants into the transport industry, nor for upgrades from overseas licences.

The VTA supports the ongoing up-skilling of drivers and associated workers within the transport industry through accredited and non-accredited programs. The lack of government training subsidies for the transport industry has had a severe impact on the industry's ability to cope with increased demand – not only for skilled drivers, but for non-driving roles too. Our members acknowledge the need for training, however income for businesses already running on narrow profit margins can ill afford diverting money away from every day running costs.

In 2013, the VTA developed a Driver Cadetship program aimed at 21-25 year olds entering the industry. The program aimed to take a cadet who had held their drivers licence for 3 years up to heavy rigid level, followed by training up to heavy combination level. Assessment for the heavy combination licence fell outside the timeframe of the program. The program was endorsed by three major transport insurers, willing to provide unrestricted insurance cover up to heavy rigid level, if their cadets were put through the VTA Driver Cadetship program. With this type of support, businesses were provided with much needed relief on their insurance premiums. The program received strong support from the industry, until changes to Government Training Funds were diverted to manufacturing and the light car industry.

In conjunction with a Graduated Licensing System, the VTA Driver Cadetship program would provide the industry with much needed fast-tracking of skilled, licenced drivers into the industry.

Through partnership with a Registered Training Organisation, in 2012 the VTA established the VTA Academy. The VTA Academy provides a range of accredited and non-accredited programs aimed at requirements within the transport industry. Accredited programs range from TLI31210 Certificate III in Driving Operations, TLI42010 Certificate IV in Logistics and TLI50410 Diploma in Logistics. Accredited training is also provided at unit of competency level – depending on workplace needs, with customised non-accredited options available to suit individual business needs.

The VTA would like restrictions removed that prevent transport industry personal from commencing or completing workforce-specific training in order to remain in the transport industry. The aging population within the industry effectively rules out anyone who may have completed a Certificate III level course (or equivalent) when they first left school. Without subsidised training, these individual are unable to retain their skills and knowledge at a satisfactory level.

The VTA Academy provides Government with an established, recognised medium through which quality training can be delivered for the transport industry, and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these possibilities further.

Conclusion:

The Victorian Transport Association wishes to thank the Senate Inquiry for the opportunity to comment on aspects of road safety in Australia and consents to the publication of this submission.

We welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee and provide additional detail on this submission.

Please direct any queries arising from this submission to:

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ⁱ Data published by National Transport Insurance (NTI) indicates that for multi vehicle fatal incidents in 2011 in every case the driver of the lighter vehicle or the third party was at fault. NTI, 2013 Major Accident Investigation Report, 2013, p.6

ⁱⁱ New South Wales Auditor General, Improving road safety – heavy vehicles, May 2009, p.14

ⁱⁱⁱ NTI, Major Accident Reports (2013, 2011). Available at: <http://www.nti.com.au/supporting/accident-research.php>.

^{iv} Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Impact of Road Trauma and Measures to Improve Outcomes, December 2014

^v National Transport Commission, Heavy Vehicle Roadworthiness Program: Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement, January 2015, p. 52

^{vi} Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Impact of Road Trauma and Measures to Improve Outcomes, December 2014

^{vii} Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Impact of Road Trauma and Measures to Improve Outcomes, December 2014