



MEDIA RELEASE

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Bureaucracy infringing transport reform

It was my privilege to represent the Victorian transport industry and the VTA at a recent Senate inquiry being chaired by Shadow Assistant Minister for Road Safety Glenn Sterle, that is considering the Importance of a Viable, Safe, Sustainable and Efficient Road Transport Industry.

The inquiry is tasked with a range of issues of relevance to our road network and the transport sector, in particular minimum standards of operation, training and career pathways, the social and economic impact of road-related trauma, and the impact of new technologies in freight distribution and vehicle design.

The importance of a reliable, sustainable and safe road transport network cannot be overstated in view of the constant scrutiny and regulation our industry is under. However, we are desperate for factors outside the realms of traditional bureaucracy to drive change and reform that will deliver fairness, improved safety and commercial sustainability.

We are looking for leadership and support to help unpack the inequities of the economic and operational environment that we face today. The structural system our industry has been historically locked into is broken and needs change. To achieve this, a forensic look at the aspects of our commercial and economic landscape is needed. We trust that the terms of reference of the inquiry is will achieve a pathway to these aims.

Our industry is completely bogged down with Administrators administering administration! This results in the bureaucracies that govern transport being in a never-ending cycle which delivers few tangible benefits and improvements for freight operators.

To illustrate this, I provided the example of the then National Road Transport Commission – now the NTC – which in 1996 delivered a report with recommendations for change to Heavy Vehicle Driver Licensing. Nothing changed.

In 2013 the COAG Transport Industry Council called for another report into heavy vehicle licensing. The final report and recommendations came five years later by Austroads and again, nothing changed. Austroads commissioned yet another licensing study last year with recommendations to be completed by November 2022. Even if this deadline is met, it will be a further 2-4 years before any changes are implemented.

The transport industry is the customer of these bureaucracies and has been calling for meaningful change to the Heavy Vehicle licencing system for 30 years – such inaction in the private sector would not be acceptable, just as it should not be amongst public servants. Perpetual inaction like this seems to underscore an apparent disconnect between the freight industry and the bureaucracies, despite our sustained efforts to be heard over many decades.

Appearing before the Inquiry was an opportunity to amplify these issues and concerns on the record, and articulate the tremendous value of our industry to our economy.



We generate more than \$75 billion in revenue annually and directly support a further \$750 billion in GDP through the supply chain, as well as directly or indirectly employing hundreds of thousands. We connect communities, facilitate the highest living standards in the world through supply chain continuity, and are leading the way in technical innovation.

But for all this we cannot get the recognition we deserve for the value we create and provide, and continue to suffer under a bureaucratic process that inhibits initiative, confidence and sustainability. The result of these roadblocks and red tape is sub-standard road access, training and less capacity to drive world's best practice.

The transport industry is ready to embrace and support the change required to sustain our future. We understand the expectations from the community to create greater harmony and environmental outcomes that will provide economic benefits for operators and better amenity in our cities and town. Where there is a will there is a way and the transport industry has demonstrated it has the collective will to welcome reforms to make us safer, more efficient, viable and sustainable. What we need now is for the bureaucracy to pave the way for overdue reform and change.

Peter Anderson

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