



MEDIA RELEASE

27 April 2023

VTA welcomes migration system review

Urges highly skilled designation for freight driver

The Victorian Transport Association has welcomed the Review of the Migration System [final report](#), released today by Minister for Home Affairs Clare O’Neil, which makes several recommendations to make Australia a destination for skilled labour, simplify visa rules and categories, and provide clearer pathways for permanent residency.

VTA CEO Peter Anderson reiterated the Association’s calls last October for freight drivers to be designated as highly skilled to fast-track their migration and address the chronic labour shortage the transport industry has experienced for years.

“Labour shortages in transport are well documented with the 2022 National Skills Commission [Skills Priority List](#), acknowledging “truck driver (general)” as one of 129 occupations that weren’t considered to be in shortage in 2021, but now is,” Anderson said.

“Our recovery from the pandemic has sharpened the focus on this shortage because as the economy has started to recover the lack of qualified drivers has become a factor in supply chain disruptions which has far-reaching impacts for businesses and consumers.”

A recent VTA State Conference survey confirmed the shortage of drivers is real with 90% of operators surveyed reporting driver shortages in their business, and a similar number saying they had recruited drivers over the past year.

“Training and licencing reform is one part of the solution to the labour crisis in transport, but our migration rules also have a part to play,” Anderson said.

“As the government considers its response to this sweeping review of our migration system, we reiterate our calls for freight drivers to be designated as highly skilled so that they be prioritised over other migration applicants and fast-tracked for entry. If the government is going to scrap the skilled occupation list, which we have long advocated for drivers to be included on, it must give the new Jobs and Skills Australia body the capacity to recognise freight drivers as being highly skilled.”

Anderson said the review was timely because Australia faces stiff competition for skilled labour from countries facing similar shortages.

“Unless the government acts, Australia will continue to lose potential migrants to countries like Canada, the United States and the UK for drivers, and if we gave the occupation a higher priority and recognised it as the profession it is, it would certainly help to ease supply chain pressures in the economy,” he said.

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