

AUSTRALIAN LONG DISTANCE OWNER & DRIVERS ASSOCIATION INC

Registration No A0043469G



NATIONAL HEAD OFFICE

PRESIDENT: Bunny Brown Mobile:
VICE PRESIDENT: Peter Curruther: Mobile:
QLD VICE PRESIDENT: Peter Schuback Mobile:
PUBLIC OFFICER: Ted Stevens
TOWNSVILLE Freight Operations & Safety Advisers
Graham Cottor:
Collin Glindemann:

Submission Safe Rates

Introduction

ALDODA is an industry organisation dedicated to improving the safety and financial wellbeing of operators in the road transport industry. Very much a hands on organisation and instrumental in bringing together in NSW the RTA, Workcover and transport operators to gain a better appreciation of each sectors role in this critically important industry. This initiative needs to be extended to all states and territories.

ALDODA members feel that this Safe Rate legislation will only add to the ever increasing amount of compliance we are subjected to already. Fair Work legislation should address the issue of employees wages and the fact that owner drivers are being underpaid comes back to their lack of basic business training and poor investment advice from lenders and others parties with their own vested interests.

It is ALDODA's opinion that we need to work with the law makers to protect this critically industry for all of our futures. When you have a critically important sector of the Australian economy slowly dying, everyone in this country should be very concerned. The average age of drivers is 56years and rising and there are no mechanisms in place to encourage young people into the industry.

The other serious problem is the industry as well as everyone else's perception of the industry, the road transport operators are seen as and treated like second class citizens. The perception is that the transport industry is responsible for the prices of everything going up and we kill hundreds of innocent people. Why would you want to pay an industry sector like this when your perception and even our own of ourselves is so low.

As an industry the road transport industry needs to start feeling good about ourselves, we need to be saying to governments departments and the general public that we are worthwhile and as an industry we deserved to treated better and be remunerated properly. We need to be treated with the respect of having decent rest areas so that drivers can park up and rest properly. We need to be treated with respect by the general public on the roads, especially in built up areas.

Without doing the research we suggest that the transport industry is the most legislated and regulated industry in this country. This is not bad provided it is enforced consistently across the country and the Chain of Responsibility is extended to cover government's role in this industry.

Our organisation sees this submission as a platform to raise some very critical industry issues as well as put forward suggestions in relation to the purpose of the Road Safety Remuneration Bill in addressing safe rates for employee drivers and owner drivers.

In order to do this, our organisation feels it is important that legislators take a good long look at this critically important industry through the eyes of the average road transport operator. The following in an outside looking in approach to seeing our industry from our prospective. By this we mean that we will look at the stakeholders in our businesses and their perception of our businesses through their eyes.

From this approach we will then endeavour to point out what should be done to make this critically important road transport industry safer, viable and sustainable for the benefit of road transport stakeholders and Australia as a Nation.

Stakeholders in the Road Transport Industry

Road Transport Defined

For the purpose of this submission ALDODA would define road transport as the movement of good over a distance of more than 500km on a daily basis. Australia is a very big country and the distances covered in a single transport movement would well on excess of 1,000km in any one event.

Stakeholders

Like any industry the transport industry has individuals and groups of individuals including government who have a very real interest in the transport operation is being conducted efficiently on a day to day basis.

When you step outside our transport operations and look at our operations through the eyes of the stakeholders in our business you can see what the stakeholder's expectations are and manage your business accordingly. This outside in approach determines how well your business is being managed

When you use this same outside looking methodology in looking at the road transport industry through the eyes of the stakeholders you can gain a clearer view and understanding of where we are and where we need to be as an industry.

Please be aware that we have not had the time or the resources to provide detailed research and views of stakeholders are ADLDODA's perceptions standing in the shoes of the different stakeholder groups.

General Public

Road Users, Consumers of goods transported by road transport

***Current Perception** – Heavy vehicles kill innocent people. Heavy vehicles are a nuisance on the road.*

Road transport is the main reason for consumer items being so expensive.

***Preferred Perception** – Heavy vehicle operators are very safety conscious and a very responsible road user who need to be treated with respect and consideration on the roads by the general motoring public because of the size of the vehicles.*

Road transport is critical to our everyday lives and cost involved in having these daily essentials is fair when you consider the distances and what is involved.

***What Needs to be Done** – Tell the general public the real statistics such as 82% of fatal accident involving heavy vehicles are caused by the other driver.*

Make it mandatory that you have to spend one hour as a passenger in a heavy vehicle on the road before you can get your car drivers licence.

The general public needs to be made aware what percentage of the costs of the average household consumable is made up by freight. For example the percentage freight in the cost of a 5kg bag of potatoes is less than 1%.

Consumers need to be made aware of what is involved in having the truck on the road in order to get the consumers goods from point A to point B.

Government

Federal and State Governments

Transport Regulators, Police, OH&S Regulators, Fair Pay Regulators, ATO

Current Perception – *Government at all levels are perceived to be about enforcement being about revenue raising and not about trying to make this industry safer or more viable and sustainable.*

More often than not these regulators see smaller operators as blatant law breakers and for this reason focus their attention on the owner operator rather than the bigger multinational operations. ALDODA has provided authorities with documentary evidence from driver to support this assertion.

Preferred Perception – *Working with the road transport industry to make the industry safer, more efficient and viable for all operators especially the small to medium size operations.*

All operators big and small should be treated the same with no assuming that because the truck has a particular name on the side it has all of the boxes ticked.

What Needs to be Done – *Consistency is probably the most critically important outcome that needs to be achieved right across all the regulators. Consistency in interpretation of the legislation and consistency in the enforcement of this legislation and it has to be enforced on all operators including the multinational and those with political influence.*

There needs to be a scale of seriousness for the offence for example having an Oversize sign made out of the wrong material is not a safety issue and warrants a warning not a fine. A serious safety issue such as a vehicle without any breaking warrants a very hefty fine. ALDODA members would not be opposed to significantly increasing the monetary penalty for serious safety breaches provided there is consistency in the enforcement and less focus on monetary penalties for non safety breaches.

ALDODA has been working to bring the RTA, Workcover and transport operators together on a semi social level by having all parties gather informally at weighbridges in NSW. This has resulted in a better understanding all round of each other's requirements and has gone a long way to breaking down very big barriers. This initiative needs to be followed in all states.

Workplace Health & safety in Queensland is working with the road transport in developing a culture of government and industry working together to make this industry safer and more efficient. This initiative needs to be followed in all states.

Consumers of Road Transport Services

Retail Sector, Manufacturing Sector, Construction Sector, Mining Sector, Rural Sector, Governments State & Federal, Individuals

Current Perception – Each of these industry sectors would have a different perception of the road transport industry. Unfortunately all sectors have little regard for the regulatory requirement operators have to follow to get their freight from point A to point B.

This is evident by the way operators are made to wait hours to be loaded and unloaded which impacts on the BFM requirement.

Basis toilet facilities are not available in lots of instances.

The fact that some of these bigger industry sectors players hold payment for road transport operators payments for 90 and 120 days is evidence of how they treat this industry.

Preferred Perception – All industry sectors clearly understand their responsibilities under the COR requirements.

Road transport operators should be seen as critical players in how well their industry sector performs and should they should be treated with respect. Respect in ensuring adequate toilet facilities are available and payments are made in a timely manner as a basic minimum.

What Needs to be Done – Like the general public, these sectors need to be made aware of how important this road transport industry is to their viability and long term future.

Safe rates for some industry sectors maybe the answer for those sectors that perceive this road transport industry as being at the bottom of the food chain.

Investigate the possibility of setting up an ombudsmen system for operators to have some form of recourse when dealing with some of these sectors.

Suppliers to Road Transport Services

Retail Sector including fuel, tyres and other industry suppliers such as vehicle repairs etc.

Current Perception – Perception with the majority of suppliers to the road transport industry is that this industry is very much a high risk sector for not being paid for goods and services. This perception results in operators having to run their business on a cash basis on the supply side while acting as a banker on the other.

Preferred Perception – The transport is a viable industry sector and is entitled to the same commercial arrangements in relation to credit as other industry sectors.

What Needs to be Done – *The road transport industry needs to be fairly remunerated for the critically important role they play in the Australian economy. This applies right across the road transport industry and not just for drivers and owner operators. The majority of small to medium size road transport operate on unacceptable business margins.*

The road transport industry needs to perceive itself as being worthwhile and demand to be paid properly and expect a return on their investments the same as every other business sector. Without the road transport industry there would be no business transacted in this country and this needs to be recognised by government, industry and the general public.

Employees of the Transport Sector

Drivers and administrative staff

Current Perception – *Very much unappreciated by the general public and other industry sectors, more often the wiping boys/girls for the freight that didn't arrive for one reason or another.*

In the case of drivers, treated as second class citizens when it comes to loading and unloading. In most instances poorly paid as a result of the owner not being paid correctly for the service being provided.

Preferred Perception – *Individuals employed in the road transport industry need to feel proud to part they play in this critically important industry sector. They need to be treated with respect and be remunerated accordingly.*

What Needs to be Done –

Employees of the transport industry need to be the catalyst for changing their perception of the industry which then needs to flow through to the general public and all other stakeholders in the road transport industry.

We are proud to be part of this critically important industry sector and we deserve to be treated and rewarded better for the important role we play.

Summary

As can be seen from this submission, the problems in the road transport industry go much further than the Safe Rates for drivers and owner operators.

ALDODA sees the road transport industry as critically important to the long term future of the Australian economy. Government and the road transport industry generally need to make a very genuine effort to ensure not only the safety, but the continued future viability of this industry.

Enforcement must be consistent Australia wide and be applied to all operators big and small.

The general public need to appreciate and respect the critical role the road transport industry play in their everyday lives. They also need to appreciate the physical and safety aspects of driving a heavy vehicle.

Learner drivers need to spend a minimum of one hour in a heavy vehicle in order to obtain their driver licence.

There needs to be a plan to make the industry attractive to younger people to lower the average driver's age from 56 years of age.

All road transport operators should be paid at a rate that enables them to receive a fair return on their investments.

A process needs to be in place to ensure new operators in the road transport industry have a sound understanding of the business aspect of their operation. Like the Gold Card in the building sector, you have to have completed a business module before the card is issued. It might be that lenders require evidence that the operator has a sound day to day business understanding such as providing evidence of a Certificate IV in Business before loans are approved.

Bring regulators and road transport operators together for informal gatherings so as to break down barriers which currently exist. Workplace Health & Safety work with the road transport industry to help make the industry safer from a day to day operational point of view.

Implement an ombudsmen system for the road transport industry so that the road transport industry has some means of recourse to address issues that arise especially with bigger operators both in the road transport industry as well other sectors such as retailers etc.

All operators in the road transport industry, big and small, have to be treated equally.

Think about it
How did it get here?
By Road Transport
THINK ABOUT IT!!!!