

-----Original Message-----

From: Mick Rohloff

Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2020 2:04 PM

To: RRAT, Committee (SEN)

Subject: Inquiry into the importance of a viable, safe, sustainable and efficient road transport industry

To the Senators.

I have been a truck driver for a little over 20 years. I'm writing to express my experience in the transport industry. As I'm not great with putting pen to paper here goes.

In my time I have covered somewhere in the vicinity of 2 to 3 million kilometres. I've driven vehicles up to B Doubles in size carting timber, board, paper, logs, tallow, canola oil, aggregate and general freight which I'm currently involved.

I've met a lot of good people along the way and have many peers in the industry. A lot of things I've learned are from these people. And a lot is as I have gone along.

I take a lot of pride in what I do and have mostly enjoyed my time in the industry. I left for a short time in 2008 over dissatisfaction of new regulations coming into effect. Then realised that I'm better off back behind the wheel.

So I come to some of the things that I'm not happy about in present times.

First and foremost is the logbook. The actual filling in of each page and keeping time has nothing to do with fatigue. A lot of my peers have the same idea, and as mentioned in many other submissions, about the logbook. Because you can be driving for a number of hours at any time of day and feel tired but your logbook has still got time in it. The other scenario is that you've had a good run but because you've completed your 12 hours in 24 you have to pull up and waste time before continuing. Often somewhere where there no facilities or shade to rest etc. Fatigue is such a personal thing and should be treated as such. It's my belief a driver should be able to keep a record of work time to be more productive with out being penalised for it. Some sort of system that details accurately what work has been done and pay can be fair. Also in working out what tasks are required or can be achieved moving forward.

Second is the amount of drivers being killed in the industry. I've seen the words "unfortunate incidents" used. But to be honest it's a disgrace the amount of accidents happening. If this happened in say the timber industry it would be shut down. Why is it not a priority to address this issue?

Thirdly as mentioned in more detail in other submissions is the chain of responsibility (COR). Typically you'll be handed a bunch of paperwork. In it is your manifest and details of the load con notes and the like. Then there's a trip plan or a driver fatigue management plan. Which is a responsibility of the logistics people. It shows routes and other helpful information about rest areas and the like. It's helpful but again someone else has designed a form to manage your fatigue. Then there's the questionnaire that in most cases you're coached on the correct answers so you can tick tick tick and then you fill in your details and sign. And that's where the chain is broken. All the responsibility comes back on the drivers. Drivers should not have to deal with all the paperwork that has crept in over time.

Fourth point is about parking bays and facilities. While they are improving and getting better there's still not a lot of options especially when you have to use all your hours to get the job done quite often there's no facilities where you have to pull up for a major break.

As for rates I'm not really aware of this area as a driver.

Having safe equipment should be priority number one. A driver should do a pre start check to check things off that are easy to see and check. Not do a full maintenance report which really should be done by a workshop. I see a lot of vehicles on the road which look to be or are defective and only get fixed come inspection time.

The wages as a drivers seem to be stagnant with little increases as time goes on. The overnight allowance has

been cut so that a driver has to go back to keeping receipts to claim back expenses. Overnight allowance should be paid in full every pay. There is not penalty rates for someone on a km rate.

I talk with peers about the way things are and some say it will never change it all comes back on the drivers. Fundamentally the job hasn't changed as drivers will do whatever it takes to get the job done. All the paperwork in the world just keeps on building up to make things harder.

One other thing before I pull the brakes on with this communication is that there should be some form of formal training for the transport industry. As in a traineeship or a probationary period that is supervised and fostered support from senior drivers and management. Would go a long way to improving the industry. The cost of obtaining a licence should be on the industry/ company not the individual. The bums on seats mentality has to go. Along with the pressures put on a green driver to perform.

Thanks for my the opportunity to voice my opinions and I'd be, with notice, available to answer any questions in a senate hearing in future.

Regards Michael Rohloff
Sent from my iPad