

**Questions on notice: TWU response**

1. Accuracy of the 2017 'Major Accident Investigation Report' (p.9)

This Question on Notice arose from Senator Abetz. The Senator cast doubt over the accuracy of the Union's submission to this Inquiry by citing a figure regarding trucks not being at fault for 93% of fatal crashes.

The Union has been pointing out for many years that such figures are inaccurate and wildly misrepresentative. Below are some of the reasons why.

To begin with, for a range of reasons, there are long-standing, significant issues regarding investigations dealing with road deaths involving trucks and the accuracy of their findings. Truck crashes are not properly classed as workplace incidents and therefore investigations do not take into account the pressures on the truck driver that otherwise may have enabled them to take different actions, regardless of which vehicle was at fault for the incident. The Union has been calling for these crashes to be investigated as workplace incidents for more than two decades and until this is the case we will not get a clear indication of what the drivers' final response could have been but for pressures, and the causation that exists at the top of the supply chain.

Further, the cause of truck crashes are complex and multifaceted, often related to pressures emanating from the top of the supply chain (which are not investigated or reported). In fact even NatRoad conceded as part of this Inquiry that 'the main focus of truck crash investigations and data collection has been on the immediate cause... This is a flawed approach because truck crashes can be an outcome of multiple, interacting factors within the broader transport and supply chain system.'

In addition, we make some observations about serious limitations of the 2017 'Major Accident Investigation Report' itself:

- The report was produced by the National Truck Accident Research Centre (NTARC), an independent research facility that we understand was established by National Transport Insurance (NTI). NTI is an insurance company and the leading commercial vehicle and equipment insurer in Australia.
- The report only details research undertaken into major truck crash incidents in Australia where NTI was the insurance underwriter.
- The report only examines truck accidents in the 'hire & reward' sector with a vehicle payload that exceeds five tonnes.
- The report only examines truck crashes where the quantum of loss exceeds \$50,000.

Finally, and importantly, the NSW Centre for Road Safety has released a set of figures that contradict NTI's findings. The Centre found that heavy trucks were the key vehicle in 38% of fatal crashes and 60% of serious injury crashes. The Executive Director of the Centre has noted that, in contrast to NTI, their data is based on police reported and investigated crashes and that in NSW alone there were 1,008 casualty crashes (as opposed to the 606 crashes reported to NTI).

2. Origin of the 28% figure (p.9)

Answers to questions on notice by the Transport Workers Union of Australia. Asked at a public hearing in Sydney on 12 July 2018; received 15 August 2018.

This Question on Notice arose from Senator Abetz. The Senator inferred that a figure referred to in the TWU submission was either not relevant or accurate.

The 28% figure that was referred to in the TWU submission concerning a reduction in the number of truck crashes was from page 86 of the Federal Government commissioned PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2016) 'Review of the Road Safety Remuneration System Final Report' January 2016.