

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in response to your paper on fatigue reform. I haven't read the paper, because it is too long, but I don't need to read it to present changes that I believe would benefit the industry and subsequently, the nation.

The suggestions in this paper are not mine alone, but also are echoed by many other drivers who you won't hear from. On that point, in the future, a lot more should be done to hear from "the quiet Australians". If you really want to understand our industry, you need to hear from the industry as broadly as possible, not just the few who don't feel overwhelmed by a 50+ page document. Maybe before you start seeking consultation from the industry in the future, you could consult the industry on the best way to consult the industry.

On matters of fatigue, the first suggestion I make is that you repeal the law that allows two 24hr periods to run at the same time. There are an increasing number of cases reaching the media of late that experienced drivers have been caught out by this unnecessary law. They were not fatigued, but still were in breach of this particular law. I myself, have found it frustrating to comply with this law, as it has forced me to rest during the day, and then allowed me to drive later in to the night, instead of doing more of the driving during the day time as is best for me to manage my fatigue.

Secondly, all drivers should be allowed to use their truck for personal use up 100km/day without it affecting their mandatory breaks in any way. The time can be recorded in the comments section of the work diary if needed, but must not be counted as work time. Being stuck in one place (eg. a roadhouse) while waiting to load or unload any longer than what's needed to get a good sleep is not good for driver's physical and mental health. I know when I get held over for a day or more that I take the opportunity to get out of the roadhouse and enjoy some leisure activities or see some friends. Under the current law, I can't take the truck to do any of that if I'm on a mandatory break. I can't imagine that you would appreciate being stuck in your workplace for 24 hours without being allowed to leave, and you aren't alone on that. That is what we are forced to do unless we organise and pay for public transport which is often too expensive or too inconvenient, if available at all. There is no law to say that we can't drive a car for as long as we want on our mandatory breaks, but who has a car they can use in every town they visit? So, we should be able to use our trucks, in this case, as if it were a car.

Thirdly, the paper work diaries should count time like EWDs do. For example, if I rest for 15mins at any stage throughout the day, it should be counted as 15mins. Currently, it isn't. In some cases, our 15min break can be reduced to only count for 1min. Let me explain....if I start my day at 7am and drive to 1031am to have a break, I am required by law to state that I worked until 1045am because of the rounding rules. So, when I have had a 15min break at 1046am, I have to wait another 14mins to be compliant with the law. If I stop for 15mins four times a day, I can lose nearly an hour of work time because of this law. Less work time, means more time away from my family, which means less quality of life, which also impedes sound physical and mental health. There isn't enough rest areas and facilities in the right areas for us to make sure we pull up at exactly 1030am. The law would be more than adequate in stating that, for example a 14min break will not be counted, and a 29min break can only be counted as 15mins. But a 15min break at any time should be counted as such. Any further prescriptions are other the top, and a complete hindrance to the industry.

We are currently facing a huge driver shortage which is worsening, because of drivers retiring aren't being replaced by new drivers. Also, drivers are exiting the industry because they are finding it too hard to comply with the existing laws, which don't empower individual drivers to manage their own fatigue. The laws we have put everyone into the same mould, which is totally

unreasonable to assume that everyone could fit into them.

The current laws have also impacted on freight efficiency and that will have further and wider impacts if the laws continue as they are. Do you want to be paying more for your goods and those goods taking longer to turn up? An efficient law will keep the price of the goods you purchase down, because everything somewhere along the line comes via road transport.

I make one final suggestion; that all the ideas that you have received from the industry should be compiled and sort feedback from as many people in the industry as possible. This could look like putting ideas in list form and asking people to vote for or against that particular idea. Again, this will only work if it is put simply and easily enough to access for the average transport industry employee. I, among others, would be happy to offer suggestions on how this could work.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my submission, and I look forward to hearing from you,

Nick Twidale