

~~Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.~~

HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (2.34 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes and I nominate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2015.

Tabled paper: Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes.

I am pleased to introduce the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2015 to the Queensland Parliament. This bill amends the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 which provides for the consistent regulation of heavy vehicle operations across most of Australia and establishes the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to administer the national law. Queensland is the host jurisdiction for the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act and, as such, the Queensland Parliament must first pass amendments to the legislation before they can be applied by the other participating jurisdictions.

The Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 established a single, national system for the regulation of heavy vehicles and is the cornerstone of the Council of Australian Government's national heavy vehicle reform agenda. The Heavy Vehicle National Law commenced on 10 February 2014 and was developed to ensure that the heavy vehicle industry can operate across state borders without the impediment of conflicting regulatory requirements. The national law regulates the operation of heavy vehicles, including the mass and dimensions of heavy vehicles, vehicle safety standards, the work and rest hours of heavy vehicle drivers and other measures to manage fatigue, heavy vehicle accreditation, speed compliance and the use of intelligent transport systems. It also includes chain of responsibility offences, enforcement powers and administrative provisions.

The Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2015 before the House today makes amendments that will provide for the implementation of further national reforms for the heavy vehicle industry by facilitating the introduction of electronic work diaries and providing greater consistency of penalties under the national law. Electronic work diaries provide an alternative method to the written work diary for fatigue regulated heavy vehicle drivers to record their work and rest hours. Although electronic work diaries are already referred to in the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012, no electronic work diaries are currently approved under the legislation. The proposed amendments were developed following an extensive pilot project and will pave the way for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to begin approving electronic work diaries for use by drivers as an alternative to the traditional paper based work diary. One of the common complaints from drivers about the written work diary is how onerous it is to complete and how easy it is to make minor errors when recording and calculating their work and rest times. Electronic work diaries will automatically record and calculate work and rest periods for drivers. The system can even alert a driver when a mandatory rest period is approaching and needs to be taken. Electronic work diaries are expected to transform compliance and enforcement practices, enabling operators to better manage driver fatigue, while regulators and enforcement agencies will have access to a driver's work and rest records remotely through wireless technology. Making it easier for drivers to know when to take a break is not just good for the individual drivers or the industry, it is good for all Queenslanders who use our roads. As we know, fatigue is one of the leading causes of accidents on our roads, so making sure tired drivers have a break will ultimately create a safer environment for everyone.

One of the more difficult issues to be harmonised under the Heavy Vehicle National Law has been the setting of penalties for offences. The National Transport Commission has undertaken a review of the penalties contained in the Heavy Vehicle National Law and developed a national penalties framework. The national penalties framework establishes the underpinning principles for setting the appropriate penalty level for offences, taking into account comparable state and territory penalties and identified anomalies with the current penalty levels for some offences. The bill includes a number of amendments to existing penalties to address the identified inconsistencies. The bill also makes a number of minor and technical amendments identified by the Heavy Vehicle National Law maintenance process managed by the National Transport Commission. These amendments aim to

correct minor errors, improve administration, streamline regulatory processes and reduce red tape for the heavy vehicle industry. The bill was developed by the National Transport Commission in consultation with all state and territory transport authorities, police agencies and peak industry associations and was endorsed by the Transport and Infrastructure Council Ministers in November 2014. This bill represents the strong progress that continues to be made towards the harmonisation of heavy vehicle legislation across Australia and the reduction of red tape for the heavy vehicle industry. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JA TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade) (2.38 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.