



STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS COMMITTEE

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Mr BJ Mellish MP

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PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO THE HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL 2025

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 8 October 2025

Cairns

WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2025

The committee met at 4.23 pm.

CHAIR: Good afternoon. I declare open this public hearing for the inquiry into the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025. I am Jim McDonald, the member for Lockyer and chair of the committee. With me here today are: Mr Terry James, the member for Mulgrave; Mr David Kempton, the member for Cook; Mr Shane King, the member for Kurwongbah; Mr Bart Mellish, the member for Aspley; and Mr James Martin, the member for Stretton, who is substituting for Ms Jonty Bush, the member for Cooper.

The purpose of today's hearing is to assist the committee with its examination of the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025. This hearing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Only the committee and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. I also remind members of the public that they may be excluded from the hearing at the discretion of the committee.

These proceedings are being recorded by parliamentary reporters. Media may be present and are subject to the committee's media rules and the chair's direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. Please turn your mobile phones off or to silent mode.

BRAY, Mr Dale, Director, Brays Transport

GOSTELOW, Ms Debbie, Owner, Gostelow's Cattle & Freight Transport

MOHAMMED, Mr Abby, Owner, Cairns Heavy Haulage

CHAIR: Good afternoon. Thank you for being here today. I would like to offer you the opportunity to make a brief opening statement, after which the committee will have questions for you. Could you introduce yourselves, tell us a bit about why you are here and then make your opening statement?

Mr Bray: I am the director of Brays Transport. Currently we operate 40 trucks, mainly local to North Queensland. We do interstate as well but, generally, most of our work is in the northern areas. Basically, looking through the amendment bill, there are some key points that I think are good in moving forward. There are some that I think could have a lot more explanatory discussion about how it is going to affect our business. Some of those are around introducing safety management systems. I do not know if everyone here operates under some of these systems currently. It does say that they will revoke those systems into a new system, so how is that going to affect us and what cost will that have on our business to go through and entertain new systems?

The next one that I have a little doubt around is the ability of NHVR officers to determine if a driver is unfit to drive. This is a pretty grey area. I have a large staff of about 120 employees over various parts of the business. That part there is probably the hardest part for other people to determine—how they are going to enforce 'fit for duty'. Currently, as the rules stand today, it is put back on a driver to say that they are fit for duty and legally we cannot force them to work if they are unfit. Moving forward, where does that leave us with this? You can look at a person and you might say that they look tired but they may be fine. How do they judge that? How is that determined? They talk about how they go on to fining either the operator or the driver if you are not conforming to their rules.

Some of the other stuff that I saw in there was talking about increasing fines. It is probably the biggest fined industry in Australia for people not meeting obligations. It is pretty heavy. It is pretty heavy-handed tactics with how that is actually used. That is probably about all I have to add. We all have our issues with the NHVR system. Where it is not the same between the states is probably the biggest concern that people have today.

I think there are other things that could have been streamlined under this system to make it better for everyone else, based on the end user. A lot of that stuff does come back to permitting different types of vehicles. In New South Wales, the state will be gazetted for that use of a PBS vehicle whereas in Queensland we have to go through the rigmarole of having permits in place for every route. There are a lot of things in there that I think could have been probably addressed in this matter. I think I have said enough. I will leave the rest to you.

CHAIR: Thanks, Dale. Debbie, would you like to make a brief opening statement? Then we will have some questions for you.

Ms Gostelow: We have a couple of trucks. We used to have four. We have had good drivers leave the industry. We have predominantly cattle and freight through primary industries. We mainly freight cattle across Cape York and the gulf. We do northern Queensland mainly and also lately into the territory, chasing better roads. We are owner-drivers, so son and father at the moment. I go with Ken quite often.

I am not an expert in NHVR and HVNL, but it has been a learning curve. It is very difficult for us in these areas up here in our region because of the road networks. There are places we go where we would do 600 kilometres in 12 to 14 hours, and that is sometimes unloaded. That is just getting there. We are doing 30 clicks along the road, and then we get back down and we hit a bitumen road and NHVR is sitting there wondering why we have a full load of cattle on and we cannot get to market. If that happens, in that scenario we have to stop and let them stand seven hours, after travelling 12 to 14. We then have to just sit on the side of the road. We may be at Mount Carbine, an hour from Mareeba, but we have to stop because of those rules. It is much the same situation on the PDR out west. We believe there should be leniencies and allowances for travel on these roads unless they are brought up to some sort of reasonable standard, because 600 kilometres is not far. You can do that quite easily in eight to nine hours, fully loaded.

We also have other issues. You may leave at three o'clock one afternoon, travel for five hours, have a nine-hour break, and the next day you only have seven hours of work time left but you have to do that up to three o'clock. You still have a 24-hour clock. That means we could sit on the side of the road with those cattle for three hours in the middle of the day, waiting for our time to catch up to a 24-hour period. Then the driver drives into the night to catch his hours up. It does not make sense to us. You are sitting there in the middle of the day and you are not going to go to sleep because you just had nine hours the night before, but it does not reset a 24-hour logbook and it does not reset a seven-day logbook. It seems a ridiculous thing to us to have to sit and rest. All the people we talk to say the same thing. They sit and rest when their 24 hours is coming up. As soon as they hit their line, they have to drive like the clappers to get there.

There are other occasions where you just make it by the skin of your teeth to unload with cattle and you cannot make it home. For us, that is 10 minutes from the yards but we cannot go home. There are no toilets and no showers. There are no facilities but you cannot go home because you have reached your 12 hours. I do not know how many of you have been up the cape, but we do not have breakdown pads other than the likes of Lakeland. It has a shower and toilet and then you pretty much have nothing to Weipa. When travelling the coast down here there are a few, but if you head out west you have none. There are no toilets and no showers but you still have to stop. Unless the facilities are provided, there should be some sort of leniency to get to hygiene stops. It is much the same rules for the breakdown pads. There are no facilities at breakdown pads most of the time in the north.

I also have very big concerns about somebody perceiving someone to be tired. My husband is 65. He does not bother shaving and he is often hairy. Is someone going to pull him up—because it has happened—and say, 'You look like you should have a couple of hours off'? If this comes in, does that mean he can be told to sit on the side of the road after he has had seven or nine hours sleep? Whose perception is it? Is it ours? It also says part the way through that the driver must know he is safe to drive. Who is right? Is it the driver or the officer on the side of the road who does not know the driver?

We are concerned that we are getting pushed very quickly towards electronic diaries. In our industry, we have a lot of older drivers who are very experienced and safe and who know cattle. They are often cattlemen. They are not real good on technology or spelling et cetera and they are being fined for silly mistakes and we do not think that is fair. These are people who have never had accidents. They are good, upstanding drivers, but because it is difficult to understand they cannot continue with the job.

CHAIR: Thank you. You started your address by saying you do not know much about it but you are learning. I think you have learned very well. Thank you for articulating that for us. Abby, I invite you to make a statement and then the committee will have some questions.

Mr Mohammed: I own Cairns Heavy Haulage. I have had it for 18 years. I have got myself and one other driver and I have three trucks. We do heavy haulage in Cairns and Queensland. We sometimes go interstate but it is mainly around here. I have five main clients I look after. It is a big business.

One issue is the roads. There is one section of the road west of Chillagoe where it took me 2½ hours to do 23 kilometres. The roads are just dirt roads. I will not go to Weipa. People ask me to go to Weipa, but there is no way in hell. My new trailers cost me \$750,000 for these low loaders that transport the machinery. To run them up there on the cape and on the dirt roads, it just does not pay. You can crawl along.

As Debbie said, there are the logbooks. What can you do? You fill them out and you can only do so many kilometres. We only do 12 hours in 24 hours. We are only daylight to dark. We cannot travel into the dark.

I run under permit. Everywhere I go, I run under permit. It covers me on the highway here. We went on the Palmerston the other day. We have permits to travel everywhere. They are doing roadworks up there. I busted four rims and tyres and that was \$5,000 just for four rims and tyres. That is all because they did not have it wide enough. My permits state that the roads should be wide enough. They were not and it comes out of my pocket. It costs me a lot of money to do permits and to do things by the book. There are a lot of dodgy people around who are not putting permits in and they are getting away with it, yet I do the right thing and people say, 'You're too expensive.' NHVR sometimes try their best, but they just turn a blind eye to them. What can you do?

This last one I got today was from Ergon Energy. I shift a lot of cane harvesters in this district, and they have now said that for my overheight permits I have to pay someone every month to go and measure a powerline so I can get a permit. Ergon has just come back to me today and said that. It used to be a blanket cover before. I put in what roads I travel on, and now Ergon have come to me and said that I have to pay someone to measure every single powerline in that district and then they will assess it and give me a permit every month. Then every month someone has to go and recheck every powerline. That only just happened today.

Mr MARTIN: That is interesting. Is that a new rule?

Mr Mohammed: It has only just come out today. They just laid it on me. We went in for permits and I was told that we cannot do the permits; they will not let us. I have been shifting cane harvesters forever. All my normal permits state that I can travel up to 5.4 metres high, but now I have to go to Brisbane and do a course so I can be deemed that I can measure powerlines, even though I know what powerlines—

Mr KING: And they do not change, apart from sag in the heat in the hot months and that sort of thing, which is minimal.

Mr Mohammed: That is right. I know my district where I move, the Mulgrave district. This is how stupid it is. I have to name every single road I travel on to get an Ergon Energy overheight permit.

Mr KING: Chair, that is important. We need to note that. That is wrong.

Mr Mohammed: This is wrong. I have been doing it for that long. I know the harvesters. I shift them. There are two powerlines in this whole district where I have to move across on the other side of the road to get under the height, and that is it. My driver knows the same thing.

Mr KING: Is there anywhere where you have to get them to lift the line?

Mr Mohammed: No.

Mr KING: So you have never had that problem?

Mr Mohammed: No, only when I have had to move things from the airport to the Navy base. I had to pay Ergon to come and lift four powerlines. Do you know how much they charged me to move four powerlines?

Mr KING: I have a fair idea, but how much?

Mr Mohammed: It was \$7,700 to move me from the airport to the Navy base, straight down Sheridan Street.

CHAIR: What was the height of those? Were they particularly high?

Mr Mohammed: They are 5.6 metres high and all they did was lift four powerlines out of the whole lot and then the rest of the time they drove along and said, 'Go on this side of the road,' or 'Come over this side of the road and you'll miss them all.' That was just to go from the airport to the Navy base—\$7,700. It also cost me \$5,000 to have the police travel with me. That is nearly \$12,000 straight up with police and Ergon before I made any money, and then I had to pay two pilot cars and we shifted in the dark.

CHAIR: Debbie and Dale, have you thought of anything else while Abby has been talking?

Mr Bray: He has touched on a few subjects and we could talk about some of these for hours. I think the biggest thing with these amendment bills is that I feel they do not streamline the industry enough, especially with what you are getting at. It is the same thing. We talk about an Ergon permit. In this day and age, with the technology we have, that should be a given. Ergon should take responsibility for their powerlines. They are supposed to be a set height.

Getting back to these access permits, that should be a gazette notice so it conforms on major routes in districts. The other thing I have noticed is that if I go to get a permit for a day to shift something that is high or whatever, it may take three weeks to actually get that ticked off. The biggest delay you have is the time it takes for you to apply to NHVR. It will go through the process.

It is the same if I want to go for a mass concession to go under HML. I will pay my \$90 and do my permit, which takes me literally three minutes, but it will take them 30 days to come back to you to say yes or no. This is the sort of thing that industry is feeling is hurting us. If we go to do a job, we want to do it tomorrow, within reason. They are some of the things that need to be addressed. There are other things in the bill about removing stickers for accredited operators. That is fine. NHVR have this information on their computer. When they pull you up, it is related to your registration. There are good things that have streamlined it, but there are a lot of subjects that have been touched on that are an issue that do need addressing.

Mr MELLISH: My question might relate to something you are involved with; I am not sure of your particular clients. In terms of the Mossman mill closure and the extra haulages needed from Mossman to Gordonvale, is that going to be a bit of a regulatory headache in terms of getting the approvals, the road conditions and things like that? It might be something that Dale is involved in.

Mr Bray: We currently do that nightmare. There are a few things. Obviously, we have traffic management plans. It is all well and good to go through that and tick all the boxes. With any processes moving forward with bigger, heavier vehicles on that road, there is a bit of a debate about where we are allowed to go with that. I had my reservations and there are other people with different reservations. There are safety concerns with that current road infrastructure, especially with the roadworks. There are other issues surrounding that. It is probably a completely different discussion around that and what we can do to move forward.

If the current proposal happens, the number of trucks per day would be reduced. Currently we have over 80-odd truck movements. There are a lot of reservations on how it could be done differently because, obviously, they are travelling all through Cairns. If you start putting that into 160 to 170 truck movements in either direction in Cairns a day, it is pretty full-on. If anything ever happens, my name is mud; 'You caused this,' or 'You did that.' Obviously, we deal with this every day, predominantly because we are travelling through the Captain Cook Highway, then through the Cairns city or back through the bypass.

Mr MELLISH: So there are still ongoing discussions?

Mr Bray: Nothing is set in stone on what combination. I do not think there has actually been an approved vehicle. The biggest problem was that the miller was running away on their own little tangent and basically getting trailers built for what they thought. These people are not doing the run. Essentially, I did not contribute to any of the manufacturing or design work—what they should be using. That was my concern. We had an incident there on Friday. The same thing went through my head: if they think they are going to run back to a full-length B-double on that road, they are dreaming. It is this sort of stuff. At the end of the day, there is a duty of care. Again, this amendment bill does touch on what some of these companies expect operators to do and where that leaves us, because they will push it straight back onto the contractor.

Mr KEMPTON: If Abby drives down the road with a harvester on and has to do a measurement and you are 10 miles behind him, you have to get the same permit and do the same measurement?

Mr Bray: Correct.

Mr KEMPTON: That is crazy.

Mr Bray: That is what we talk about. I was talking to Abby about this prior to this hearing. He was telling me about this new rule. Ergon have an app where you can look up every powerline they have—what voltage it is, whatever it is. If they can go through that homework, why do they not have every height? It is already on street view. We are farmers as well. I give Ergon a lot of money every year for power, and I feel you never get bang for buck from them. You always seem to be giving it to them. We are talking 130 grand a month in peak irrigation. That is the sort of thing we are talking about. I think some of these other people—Ergon, TMR—need to do their part and stop putting everything back onto everyone else. That is the way I see a lot of this stuff going on.

Mr KEMPTON: The second part of my question is: your driver can be compliant within the terms of his logbook and his diary but still can be found not to be fit to drive on someone's observation?

Mr Bray: Correct.

Mr KEMPTON: So it is not about it being out of time; it is just on someone's observation?

Mr Bray: It is both.

Mr KEMPTON: Debbie, given the configuration of the trailers that you are utilising—you have breakdown pads, obviously, because there are areas where you cannot run B-doubles—

Ms Gostelow: Road trains.

Mr KEMPTON: Sorry, that is right—road trains—so you have to leave the trailer, take the cattle and come back. When you add to that the time that your drivers cannot drive, you have a real animal welfare issue, especially in this part of the world, haven't you?

Ms Gostelow: We have big dramas. Our boys went out yesterday and they had to run trailers all the way to Almaden to do 18 decks today out of Bellevue, down south. They did three hours just across to Ootann, which is 90 kays, then when they come back they will have to break down and drive back in—all on our hours, doing a one-day job. When we come from the cape, we are not allowed to do six decks, three trailers, for a start. We used to be able to; they used to do it all the time. If we were able to do, say, five, we have to leave one at Lakeland, drive down 2½ hours, unload, drive back 2½ hours, pick them up and drive back down another 2½ hours. It will take us two days.

Mr KEMPTON: That is putting extra pressure on your drivers?

Ms Gostelow: Plus the cattle. For us, it is the cattle that we worry a lot about because the road surface itself, for the BDR and the PDR in particular, like you were saying, is ridiculous. They are 30-kilometre-per-hour jobs and these cattle are standing there that long. It is not their fault. The people who live up there should be able to—like we were saying, TMR have to step up and streamline things. We tried to get a B-double permit to Julatten a couple of years ago, with QTA helping us, and we went round and round in circles. In the end, they sent a very short thing and we said, 'Why is it that 98 cane trucks can drive past? They are one metre shorter than us with our bull bars'—we usually have long-nosed Kenworths—and they said, 'It's a historical permit; therefore, they're allowed.' They would not give us a right of reply so that meant those cattle had to be picked up. We had to have a third truck pick those cattle up, take them back to Mount Molloy, off-load there, go back out, pick those cattle up, come back in, hook up and go to Townsville. So they just stand again. There is never any common sense to this stuff, based on their lack of infrastructure—not ours.

CHAIR: I understand.

Mr Mohammed: I will not travel up the coast road. I cannot. Because of the roadworks and all that, it is just too dangerous for what I do with heavy haulage. Even when they had the cyclone I had to get a special permit just to do the roadworks, but now I will not travel there. If I need to go to Mossman, I have permits to go up to Palmerston, across the top and down the Rex Range. I am the only one who has the heavy haulage, up to 30 metres long, to go down there with my weights to carry machinery up there. The amount of hoops that I have to jump through! It takes me seven hours to go all the way up to Mossman, and then people are like, 'Why are you so expensive? Why can't you just go straight up the coast here?' I say, 'I can't go up there. My route states where I have to travel. I run under permit everywhere.' Like you said, I can do it, but I had to go through that much drama to get permits to travel those roads. It takes 28 days to get a permit and then they just can reject it straightaway, so what do you do? How do you get the machine in and out of Mossman or up there? Work has to be done.

Mr KING: Debbie, we would appreciate your feedback on someone being able to judge someone as being fatigued because they have picked up that they have not had a shave or whatever.

Mr KEMPTON: You look a bit tired!

Mr KING: I have been tired for about the last five years! Do the vehicles have in-vehicle fatigue monitoring?

Ms Gostelow: No, we do not.

Mr KING: My latest car keeps annoying me, putting up a coffee cup on the dashboard. I am fine; I am trying to tell it I am all right. Would something like that—I think it goes on eye blinks and so on.

Ms Gostelow: I think Stocktrans tried that at one stage and it failed miserably. It just continuously malfunctioned.

Mr KING: It was just an idea. I thought that might bolster your case: 'I've had nine hours sleep. This thing says I'm not tired. Go away, pal.'

Ms Gostelow: Our argument is: when you get pulled up by them, they hang their hat on that book—to five minutes. If you accidentally go over 15 minutes, you will get a massive fine. If that book is telling so much truth, when we say we have nine hours sleep why isn't that enough? Why are they not believing their own book? If we pull up, even if we make an equation error and add the wrong 15 minutes up and add a worked 12 hours and 15 or 30 minutes, we get a fine. That could be just an equation problem for some blokes, but they do not believe their own book for our fatigue management.

Mr KING: I would have to look up *Hansard* from one of the last hearings we had. You were talking about the 10 minutes back to your place. They said that part of this was to ease that, to bring common sense back into it. I seem to recall that conversation; it may bring you some hope in respect of that sort of thing. As for when you have to leave cattle on the side of the road, obviously we will be writing about that. The other thing: you go across into the Territory, where the Heavy Vehicle National Law does not apply.

Ms Gostelow: We thought we were really smart this year. We got jobs to the Territory, took off over there and went into the Territory. Luckily we were working for Newcastle Waters, who are quite well known and know all the ins and outs of taking cattle from over here. They said, 'Hang on, guys. Sit down. Give us your books. Let's have a look at what you've done. You just lost an hour.' They do not care if you are going that way, but when you are coming this way they are all sitting at the border, waiting for you.

Mr KING: That is not on. I thought there was inequality because the Northern Territory—

Ms Gostelow: It is so frustrating.

Mr KING:—does not follow the Heavy Vehicle National Law. In Western Australia, you are trucking through there under different—

Ms Gostelow: We have talked to David. We have lived in the cape all our life. This is the first year that we have gone into the Territory and we are making decisions based around: 'Can we keep flogging our gear up the cape or do we follow these roads and these sets of industry support?' At the moment there is none.

Mr KING: This law keeps evolving. In a previous iteration of this committee I remember that the HVNL changed because you could not get something registered in the NT and then bring it over here. They changed that to say, 'If an engineer certified it there, we have to accept it here.' There was a particular member of the committee who was quite happy with that. This does evolve, so your input is really valued.

Mr JAMES: Debbie, you spoke before about older drivers. In any industry it is hard to get staff these days. If older drivers had electronic logbooks, along with the introduction of AI, for example, that is coming, would that satisfy—where they just talk and this thing comes up, rather than having to fill out logbooks?

Ms Gostelow: Perhaps. The fear factor firstly needs to be overcome because these guys are—I am the same. We took on a private guy's electronic program when we first started to help us understand, but I could not get Ken to understand how to even open it, let alone put it in. Perhaps a speech way of doing things could work, so long as mistakes—that is the terrifying part. Any mistake you make on these work diaries they hammer you for, and it costs you big dollars and big demerit points. That would be my fear. I know what Ken is like. He would be sitting there going, 'Hang on, wait a minute. It was 15 minutes. I pulled up at 8.15.' How do we alleviate the risk?

Mr JAMES: It is just like talking to your car: you just say, 'Cancel. Start again.'

Ms Gostelow: I haven't got a car I can talk to!

Mr JAMES: Abby, \$7,700 from the airport to the Navy base?

Mr Mohammed: Yes.

Mr JAMES: Can you extrapolate on that, please? What is the cost?

Mr Mohammed: I had to get a price from Ergon to give to Dawsons. It was for Dawsons to build diesel tanks for the Navy base. Dawsons asked me to get a price off Ergon because it was so high, height-wise. I had to get permits for that. Even though I had my normal permits, NHVR permits were \$1,600. Then I had to get Ergon permits. They were another \$300 or \$400. Then they slapped me with—to bring a crew out to drive with me—\$7,700. I had to pay up-front before I had even done the job.

Mr JAMES: Bureaucracy gone mad, do you reckon?

Mr Mohammed: How do they justify it? The cost for the police was \$5,000. I have taken stuff to the Daintree Ferry. I brought it out of Dawsons there to the Daintree Ferry. I had two police cars take me up, and they charged me five grand just to take me from Buchans Point to Craigie up there at Port Douglas. All they had to do was take me through there and it was five grand—\$2½ thousand per cop car. How do you justify it?

Mr KEMPTON: In terms of our northern economy, my observation is that if you three pulled out there is no-one waiting there to jump in and fill the gap. You are conducting essential transport services with this massive impost sitting on top of you. Would that be a fair comment?

Ms Gostelow: Well, look at Hawkins.

Mr KEMPTON: Yes, Hawkins have gone.

Ms Gostelow: I have told you about Hawkins. They have pulled out of the cape. Now there is this big void of freight that is not going to get to Weipa this year. Everybody is complaining already. Hawkins used to do the Bamaga run. Now the people along there, Bramwell Station in particular, are sending someone once a week over to Weipa with a truck to pick up their goods.

Mr KEMPTON: You have pulled out, and if you stop going to Mossman there is no-one there ready jump in there, is there?

Mr Bray: No, there is not. A lot of that relates back to exactly what you are saying: our infrastructure is not up to standard. We talk about the Palmerston Highway. That is the major freight route in our area. You cannot get a high mass limit for that road. If you put in for a permit, it is a great reply you get back. They talk about how the infrastructure standard is not good enough. Well, the problem is that this is a major road in our area. The Kuranda range is basically just a goat track now. We actually used to bring molasses trucks down there to the mill. We have stopped doing that because of the roadworks and the nightmare. All of those trucks have to go the Palmerston. Obviously, we cannot run under HML on the Palmerston. They will have some excuse that the trucks might be too slow going up the grades. Meanwhile, there is a sign there that says 'Trucks must use low gear'. It is hierarchy making some of these calls.

I think a lot of our issues in the north are around our infrastructure. If we can ease that burden on a lot of the companies around here—because this affects everybody; it is not just me. It is every transport company that comes to the north. We bring down probably about 200,000 tonne a year of product out of the Tablelands down the Palmerston. That is just in that area. Currently there is about 200,000 tonne of cane coming up the Captain Cook Highway through Cairns. The road infrastructure network in our region—and then you talk about the cape. We cart timber out of up in there and it is a goat track. I will not go to Weipa because every time you come home you end up with a bill. The road is just horrific.

When we are forced to make changes—they are talking about going to a new safe operating procedure or whatever they have come up with—where is their stuff behind that? I do not know if you guys are accredited, but a lot of the accreditation we spend money for we get audited on. We have to go through all this process. Where does that leave us now to change it to another system? It ends up just being a lot of paperwork that I feel never really achieves anything. There is a lot of discussion around people having maintenance management systems with the NHVR rules. Normally it is the operators that should not have it have it. Abby talks about how people are doing it without the correct permits and that people are breaking the law every day. We agree that they can come and get out the big stick and chase us with their rules, but the problem is that a lot of this stuff is forced onto people who cannot essentially afford it. We do not need another cost when it is that high already.

CHAIR: Thank you, Dale, Debbie and Abby. Thank you for appearing before us today and sharing your unique perspective from North Queensland, with your experience. It has certainly been very valuable so thank you very much for that.

That concludes our hearing here today. Thank you for participating. I hope you enjoy the balance of your day. Thank you to our Hansard reporter and our secretariat staff for their assistance. A transcript of today's hearing will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare this public hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 5.04 pm.