




Speech by  
**Bill Byrne**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2012

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## **HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW BILL**

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (11.35 am): I would like to voice my support for the Heavy Vehicle National Law Bill 2012 currently under consideration. The following matters, among others, are incorporated into the heavy vehicle national law: heavy vehicle registration, heavy vehicle registration regulations, Australian Vehicle Standards Rules regulations, heavy vehicle registration charges, mass and loading regulations, oversize and overmass vehicles regulations, restricted access vehicles regulations, higher mass limits regulations, heavy vehicle driver fatigue and heavy vehicle speeding compliance acts. I understand a separate body of work is being undertaken on the potential for incorporating heavy vehicle licensing at a later stage.

As members would be aware, this bill arises from the Council of Australian Government decision in 2009 to move to a nationally consistent regulatory environment. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is one component of a broader suite of transport regulatory changes, including a national rail safety regulator and consistent maritime safety laws. Over a number of years, as more and more companies have expanded operations nationwide, it has become increasingly clear that separate state based regulatory frameworks were imposing unnecessary costs on businesses. It is understandably difficult to keep track of the various regulatory requirements of different jurisdictions. It is clearly preferable that a single unified body regulate the trucking industry. I am glad that all Australian jurisdictions have been able to cooperate through the COAG process to deliver this micro-economic reform.

Elections have come and gone over a period since the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator was first proposed in 2009 and government has changed hands in New South Wales, Victoria and, of course, here in Queensland. That this reform has continued over successive governments is a testament to its clear and undeniable benefits. As we have already heard, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is estimated to save the national economy some \$12 billion over the next 20 years.

COAG has received some negative press of late, amidst concerns that it is becoming fractured, disjointed and incapable of progressing reforms. The Premier has done much to foster this perception with his combative approach to recent COAG meetings. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator proves that COAG is still an important driver of micro-economic reform if jurisdictions are able to put aside politics and act in the national interest.

Queensland will host the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and therefore is the first to consider the national model law. Our state was chosen to host the regulator for a number of reasons, but one overriding factor must be Queensland's sterling record for heavy vehicle regulation. We have been at the forefront of modernising regulations in the trucking industry and have improved the safety framework. As such, this bill only makes relatively minor changes to existing Queensland regulatory requirements.

I recognise the previous Labor government for securing the right to host a regulator. I would particularly like to thank successive transport ministers, Rachel Nolan and Annastacia Palaszczuk, for their work on this reform and I would also like to thank the current minister, Scott Emerson, for finishing this work after legislation lapsed when the parliament was prorogued earlier this year. I also acknowledge the federal transport minister, Anthony Albanese, for his role in stewarding this reform over the past three years.

Finally, I thank the staff of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the National Road Transport Commission and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator project office for their work on this reform. This has been a detailed reform process and it has been made possible only by the hard work of Queensland public servants. In particular, I acknowledge the detailed consultation that has been conducted as part of the reform. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has the support of both industry groups and unions. This is due in no small part to the exhaustive consultation process. This bill is proof positive that diligent consultation can foster consensus for important reforms. I commend the bill to the House.