




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

**TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION (HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (11.55 am): I rise in support of the Transport and Other Legislation (Heavy Vehicle National Law) Amendment Bill 2013. This bill is one of the last necessary steps in what has been a complex and significant legislative reform process for the heavy vehicle industry. Queensland has played a key role in the national heavy vehicle reform process, both as the host jurisdiction for the national law and in providing the location for the head office of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. Queensland was appointed as the host jurisdiction because of its positive working relationship with industry and its strong support for previous national heavy vehicle model legislation. As host jurisdiction, Queensland has facilitated the passage of the two heavy vehicle national law bills through this House and now this bill, which contains essential consequential amendments and transitional provisions to facilitate the introduction of the national law in Queensland. The development of these bills required the active involvement of the heavy vehicle industry and transport authorities around Australia. The passage of the national legislation is, indeed, a milestone and an outstanding example of cooperation across all sectors of the heavy vehicle industry.

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator commenced operations in January this year, providing initial services managing the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme and the performance based standards scheme. The regulator will become fully operational once the national law has been adopted in other states and territories and will transform into a one-stop shop for the heavy vehicle industry.

The bill currently before the House is technical in nature, making consequential amendments to existing Queensland legislation and setting out transitional provisions to ensure a smooth changeover to the national law. It is the final necessary step to make this reform work in practice for Queensland. Most importantly, the bill gives certainty to industry, generating efficiencies in their business operations. It does this by ensuring that all matters involving heavy vehicle operations covered by the national law are not duplicated or overlapping with Queensland laws. This will avoid confusion and inconsistency for industry. Any legislative reform that cuts out duplication across the different tiers of government is well worth while and I am delighted to support this bill as it is a pragmatic step in the right direction. As the great Winston Churchill once stated, if you have 10,000 regulations you destroy all respect for the law.

The transitional provisions in this bill also provide certainty for industry by allowing a regulation to set out in more detail the types of permits, accreditations and other documents that will automatically transition to the national law. As the minister said in his explanatory speech, the adoption of a seamless national law will allow Queensland businesses to benefit from productivity improvements. The ability to operate across state borders without the unnecessary burden of dealing with a range of regulators and regulatory interpretations across jurisdictions is just one such benefit.

It is important that the move to develop nationally consistent laws for heavy vehicles does not disadvantage local operators or fail to take into account local transport conditions. For many years, Queensland has worked closely with the heavy vehicle transport industry to find practical solutions to difficult operational issues. As a result, a number of local productivity initiatives were implemented to suit Queensland-specific conditions.

The national law will see the preservation of existing local productivity initiatives, including for primary producers. Over time the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator will move to consolidate and apply productivity initiatives more broadly across all jurisdictions. The resulting application of processes and initiatives on a national basis rather than the current state-by-state situation will yield efficiency gains and a reduction in the cost of regulation. Reducing red tape and improving regulatory efficiency are both core tenets of this Newman government.

With regard to primary producer specific initiatives, a simplified application process for fatigue management accreditation and heavy vehicle access permits, based on the application of consistent criteria from a single government body, will apply. This will allow a primary producer with a property straddling two local authorities to apply to a single body and receive a single determination, which will be a welcome change to the current situation. A more streamlined and flexible approach to fatigue management will allow primary producers and operators to more appropriately schedule livestock transport over long distances without compromising safety or endangering animal welfare.

Initiatives such as the Grain Harvest Management Scheme recognise the uncertainties that exist in the transport of bulk commodities. Accurate load calculations are made difficult because of varying moisture contents and densities. Participants in the Grain Harvest Management Scheme are provided with a certain amount of flexibility above normal mass limits to relieve this uncertainty.

Through the use of agreed administrative processes and compliance activities, industry and the Department of Transport and Main Roads can ensure an efficient grain harvest as well as protection of road infrastructure. These arrangements will continue under the regulator. A further example is allowing access for innovative multicomination vehicles on designated roads in Queensland. These high productivity combinations are safer than comparable sized road trains and provide greater efficiency as fewer trips are required to complete the same freight task.

The new heavy vehicle national law together with the supporting amendments in this bill will provide national benefits at a local level. This government is streamlining regulation, reducing red tape and improving safety and efficiency for the heavy vehicle industry—an industry so integral to the economy of a decentralised state like Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.