




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (12.45 pm): I rise to speak to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2018. Most of the changes in this bill are to conform with the HVNL. I would like to make some points about the bill insofar as it affects the rural areas that I represent. We acknowledge the benefit of having uniformity across states, which is what the bill tries to address, but it is very important to recognise when we touch on these matters that there are differences in the industry in different areas.

As an example, I had a call recently from someone who operates out of the territory—he does a lot of livestock haulage—who said that with droughted livestock the fatigue management laws can be very onerous. The conditions are very different. A lot of other factors come into play when you are dealing with fatigue and you have droughted livestock on the back. If it takes another hour or two or you get held up somewhere, there should be some capacity in those laws to manage issues like that. There are a lot of smaller owner-operators in those areas who are doing a lot of compliance work that seems to continually grow. I know there is an attempt here to reduce that. They are getting whacked with fines. It highlights the need to look at things differently in different areas.

I note that the committee recommended that the bill be passed. I think there were six points that were taken through from the original agreement when this process started. There were six key objectives from when this regulatory reform first came about. Not everything has been satisfied, but there is hope that these things in the fullness of time would be addressed. We have taken a lot of notice of the NRTA's submission. It does a good job of representing a lot of drivers in our areas. They held heavily on those six recommendations in the RIS relating to uniform laws; regulatory burdens not increasing; minimising legal administrative costs; productivity and effectiveness; efficient production of sustainable freight in heavy operations; and a framework which allows for regular review. That is a brief summary of those points. I think that is a good starting basis for everyone to move forward on.

It is important to note with anything going forward in the transport industry that it is not all apples. I recall a comment made to me recently about Bradley Hawkins, who is a terrific operator up there in the gulf. Bradley has built a big business up, but a comment was made that if Bradley was not doing the job up there then freight would not be delivered, because he does it for a price. He works the trucks himself and he works that hard that it would be different to expect anyone else to go up there and do the same job at the same rate which means businesses would not be able to operate for any higher cost-structure.

These things are very sensitive. They highly impact on areas of my electorate because they are very remote, distances are longer for drivers and there are not as many stopping points for trucks when drivers need to pull over for fatigue management. I also make mention of the fact that the Winton Roadhouse has reduced their hours and the McKinlay Roadhouse has now shut down. As towns are dying out in these western areas, there are fewer and fewer options for these truck drivers to pull over, get a meal, have a drink and rest. A lot of that gets forgotten when these rules are made, particularly rules on fatigue management, so there has to be latitude in there.

I think the laws can be very unforgiving. They are probably good and needed in some of the high-traffic coastal areas, but it is different out in those places. I make the point again, particularly in the context of the current drought, that drivers are taking long loads and they have animals under stress that need to get somewhere fast, so they cannot be getting \$3,000 or \$4,000 fines on fatigue management when, all things being considered, that is completely unreasonable. Moving forward, we accept that these changes are needed and are probably sensible, but these things need to be taken into consideration.