



Speech By
Hon. Brent Mickelberg
MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL



Hon. BA MICKELBERG (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (5.43 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise today to speak again on the Heavy Vehicle National Law Amendment Bill 2025. The bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 26 August this year and referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee for detailed consideration.

The bill will reduce red tape—a key aim of the Crisafulli government—and amends the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012, which provides a single national law for the consistent regulation of heavy vehicle operations across participating jurisdictions. The bill is an outcome of the Heavy Vehicle National Law Review that adopted a risk-based, outcomes focused regulatory approach to improve road safety, boost productivity and innovation, and simplify the law and its administration.

Truckies provide a critical service across Queensland and driving a heavy vehicle is already a difficult enough task without the need for onerous administration and unnecessary red tape. I am sure truckies, and their employers will welcome a simpler system that boosts productivity and innovation without compromising safety. They will welcome these changes as they have helped craft them, with the committee receiving 11 submissions to its inquiry on the bill, including from industry associations, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and the Local Government Association of Queensland. Overall, submissions were positive, endorsing the bill and its reforms.

Public hearings were held in Brisbane on 1 October and in Cairns on 8 October. In Brisbane, the committee heard from representatives of the Australian Trucking Association, AgForce, the Australasian College of Road Safety and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. In Cairns, representatives from Cairns Heavy Haulage, Brays Transport and Gostelow's Cattle and Freight Transport shared their perspectives. I thank all of the individuals and organisations who made submissions and assisted the committee by providing their valuable feedback and insights to help craft this bill.

Their contributions were carefully considered by the committee. The committee tabled its report on 17 October, making just one recommendation—that the bill be passed. I would like to acknowledge the work of the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee in conducting its inquiry into the bill. Thank you in particular to the chair of the committee, the member for Lockyer, and the other committee members for their prompt and detailed examination of the bill and their report.

Mr McDonald: Thanks, Minister.

Mr MICKELBERG: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. As noted in the committee report, 'without trucks, Australia stops'. I fully agree. This bill strengthens the operational efficiency of the heavy vehicle sector and delivers tangible benefits to Queenslanders. The bill modernises the regulatory framework for heavy vehicles, aiming to improve safety, streamline compliance, reduce red tape and ensure responsiveness to industry and community needs.

Key reforms in the bill include a new duty to be fit to drive, changes to penalties, accreditation requirements and codes of practice. The new duty to be fit to drive combines the existing requirement not to drive while impaired by fatigue with a broader requirement to be fit to drive. This new combined duty will be expanded to apply to drivers of all heavy vehicles over 4.5 tonnes regulated under the Heavy Vehicle National Law. To clarify, work and rest limits and fatigue management record keeping requirements will still only apply to drivers of heavy vehicles over 12 tonnes, and do not impact drivers of lighter vehicles. This duty aligns with the workplace health and safety requirements, placing responsibility on drivers to manage their own health and fitness, and empowering them to stop driving if unfit. Drivers pressured to drive while unfit can report concerns to the regulator's heavy vehicle confidential reporting hotline.

Recognising that many operators and drivers will need support in understanding their obligations, the regulator is preparing extensive guidance and education materials. I commend their efforts and note the allocation of additional resources to meet industry demands.

The bill also revises penalties—some increasing, others decreasing—based on a thorough review, to ensure proportionality and maintain deterrence. These changes were broadly supported and will be monitored to address any unintended impacts. An enhanced accreditation framework now requires operators seeking accreditation to implement a safety management system. This is voluntary and scalable, ensuring that businesses of all sizes can adopt a safety plan suited to their operations.

Concerns about fatigue management education and training were raised, and the regulator continues to provide and update resources to support heavy vehicle drivers. The revised code of practice framework simplifies the process and shifts responsibility for development and approval of codes of practice to the regulator, who must consult with the industry and allow public input for at least 42 days before finalising any code.

The bill represents many years of consultation, agreement and hard work from the National Transport Commission, the regulator, transport and police agencies, and industry stakeholders. While some have expressed concern over the time taken and the scope of the reforms, this legislation marks a significant step forward under the Crisafulli government. Importantly, reform efforts will continue. The National Transport Commission, the regulator and participating jurisdictions remain committed to ongoing improvement. Industry participants have played an invaluable role in the heavy vehicle reform process and will continue to remain vital in shaping future regulations.

In summing up, I want to thank my department for their role in delivering this legislation. As Queensland is the host jurisdiction for the Heavy Vehicle National Law, the bill must first pass here before it can be adopted elsewhere. The bill is also a testament to the collaboration of many agencies, including the National Transport Commission, the regulator, state transport agencies, police and industry bodies and other participants. Into the future, heavy vehicles will be able to operate within a modern regulatory framework with less red tape and safer roads for all, and that is a great outcome. Consistent with the committee's single recommendation, I support the bill and commend it to the House.