

## Question on Notice

No. 151

Asked on 22 March 2007

MRS PRATT asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS) -

### QUESTION:

With reference to the new laws for heavy transport, taking into consideration soil types etc, distance from towns and facilities and the vast distances to be travelled—

- (1) How many wet weather lay-bys suitable for heavy transport have been planned to assist drivers to comply with the new laws?
- (2) How many toilet facilities etc have been planned?
- (3) Where are these to be located?
- (4) Does Government expect local shires to build these facilities?
- (5) Will there be a phase in period until this infrastructure is in place?
- (6) How many truck drivers have been fined for incorrect spelling of a town's name in their log book as was recently alleged?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Nanango for the question.

Last year's Road Safety Summit highlighted the need for the Queensland Government to strengthen legislation to better address the responsibilities of heavy vehicle drivers. This government is serious about reducing the road toll and protecting people on our roads. That is why the government is proposing that drivers who exceed their regulated driving hours will lose demerit points and be subject to tougher fines than existing penalties.

The following are examples of why legislation to deter heavy vehicle drivers from driving tired is necessary:

- On 19 December 2005 on the Bruce Highway, a heavy vehicle driver died and a light vehicle driver received multiple fractures when the heavy vehicle veered across the double white centre lines into the southbound lane and collided with the light vehicle.
- On 26 February 2005 on the Bunya Highway at Dalby, a heavy vehicle passenger died and the driver was seriously injured when the vehicle left the road and collided with a tree.
- On 13 April 2003, again on the Bruce Highway, a heavy vehicle driver died when the B Double left a straight section of road and overturned down an embankment.
- On 18 April 2002 on the Leichhardt Highway, a heavy vehicle driver died after the B Double left a straight section of road, struck a tree and caught fire.
- And on 7 December 2000, north of Mackay, a Harker's heavy vehicle driver fell asleep at the wheel, hit a stationary vehicle and killed two doctors.

These proposed new fatigue regulations will be supported by a range of existing heavy vehicle rest area facilities at over 170 locations (published in the Guide to Queensland Roads). Rest areas complement the numerous commercial truck stops and service centres located around the state.

The Safer Roads Sooner program will make a substantial contribution to improving rest stops, and will complement the introduction of the new fatigue regulations.

Already under this program, a heavy vehicle rest area project has been approved on the Leichhardt Highway between Goondiwindi and Westwood. An additional four have been short listed for consideration this year – two on the Cunningham Highway, one on the Leichhardt Highway and another on the Moonie Highway.

In addition to the Safer Roads Sooner Program, Main Roads' State-wide planning process has allocated \$11.8m for fatigue counter-measures in years 3, 4 and 5 of the new Roads Implementation Program. This will include consideration of additional heavy vehicle rest areas.

Further work is being done, with the National Transport Commission conducting an audit of heavy vehicle rest area facilities on the following sections of the Auslink network:

- Brisbane to Cairns
- Goondiwindi to Toowoomba
- Stanthorpe to Ipswich
- Gold Coast to Brisbane.

The audit is to be completed by mid 2007.

Main Roads will also carry out its own investigation of the remaining strategic freight network, to guide future investment in heavy vehicles rest areas.

In addition to major facilities, guidelines have now been developed for the establishment of "informal truck stopping places". These are safe pull-off areas for heavy vehicles identified by blue reflectors on guide posts. The initiative has been trialled in Warwick district where 68 sites are now established. Main Roads will be working with industry to inform them of the new practice.

After further consultation on the guidelines, it is proposed to roll out this initiative across the State. These areas will supplement the existing rest areas and assist with the delivery of an integrated approach to fatigue management involving both regulation and infrastructure provision.

The government doesn't expect local shires to provide heavy vehicle rest facilities, as the focus of the new legislation will be to manage fatigue on the strategic long haul freight routes. These routes largely encompass the federally-funded AusLink network and a number of other major state-controlled roads.

There will be no phase-in period for the legislation to allow for the construction of additional rest facilities. As I've already outlined, there are currently over 170 heavy vehicle rest area facilities spread across the state and work is progressing with the provision of additional facilities.

Queensland Transport is not aware of any infringement notices that have been issued for incorrect spelling. There are offences under sections 48 and 64 of the regulation that relate to record keeping and falsifying or providing misleading information. If anyone issued an infringement notice under these sections believes they have been unfairly treated, they should seek a review of the issuing of the notice so that all circumstances surrounding the issue can be considered.

It is important to remember that none of the requirements relating to regulated driving/work/rest hours are being changed in this regulation. None of the requirements relating to logbooks and local area records are being changed. These requirements exist under the current legislation to ensure that drivers get adequate rest and do not pose a threat to their own safety, the safety of other road users and, to a lesser extent, the safety of property. All that is being changed is the penalty system applying to these requirements.