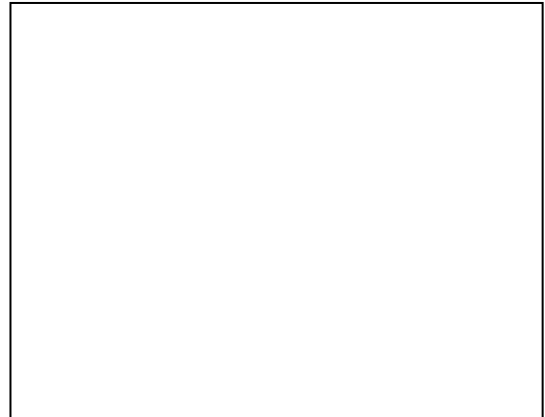




**INCORPORATED (9896349)**



I have been a long haul semi-trailer driver for nearly four decades. I am currently recovering from a serious workplace accident and that gives me time to research and study road transport law. I would like to offer the following observations for your appraisal.

I believe that any long haul driver would be able to present a strong case to their GP for stress leave due to the extended harassment they have suffered day and night for the last 3 years and a stressed driver is a dangerous driver, a driver that is more susceptible to road rage and a driver who is more likely to suffer from depression. Do the authorities think that what they are doing could in fact lead to thousands of drivers being on Workers Compensation? If they truly believe this action is warranted why do they not set up out the front of Transport yards and DCs and bring those in the COR in for a strategic examination? Why don't they start by checking if in fact the driver is being paid correctly, check if the company is monitoring it's obligations under The Fatigue Regulations 2008 act and checking work diary pages to monitor that their drivers are managing their fatigue. Why is it always the driver who is targeted ? Who makes the decision to target drivers and not others in the chain?

Truck drivers are by and large good people who do a dangerous, exhausting job day in and day out with little fuss or fanfare and their reward is to be harassed and hounded by Authorities while the media film and paint war stories about rogue 'truckies' they highlight the couple of bad eggs they see at the site of an operation and say nothing of the 10's of thousands who work with little fuss each night keeping Australia ticking over so that we can wake up each day and have our cereal and toast and milk and all the comforts we now take for granted. There have been the usual calls for trucks to be taken of the road, but you may want to be careful what you wish for, because it just may come true. To the media this is just another story and yes the facts are by and large relevant, BUT, you are attacking my workmates, you are conducting a character assassination on every driver in the long distance transport industry by not also highlighting why these rogue drivers and companies are allowed to flourish.

1. Pay rates for long-haul drivers have increased by only 50% in the last 20 years compared to an inflation spike of 150% This has been the predominant reason why drivers with years of valuable experience have left the industry in their droves since the new draconian fatigue laws were introduced in 2008. The net outcome of that initiative was to increase driver

working hours and not have any increase in pay rates and that's because 90% of long haul drivers are paid by the kilometre and nothing else. So the extra hours are unpaid hours.

2. In order to address the shortfall in driver numbers Australia's transport associations have lobbied governments to relax the stringent driver licensing laws making it easier for poorly skilled light truck licensed drivers to qualify for a Multi Combination licence allowing them to drive multi-trailer combinations up to 68 tonnes without any experience or training in the wide variety of tasks required of today's drivers. Noticed how the instances of sub-standard driving practices are increasing year by year? My fellow 'old school' drivers are disheartened by the tragic decline in the quality of new entrants to the driver ranks and the lack of training and guidance that is offered to them by transport employers.
3. The Fatigue management regulations introduced in 2008 INCREASED driver hours and ushered in a new era in over-zealous enforcement of these totally unworkable laws. You may have noticed that drivers have been pilloried in the press over these laws but when it comes to the transport companies and their customers the silence has been deafening. How anyone ie: transport associations, authorities and government can say laws allowing for a 90 hour work week in this day and age are good for anyone beggars belief
4. Stress, fatigue and depression are all factors that are having the detrimental impact on today's long haul driver they are MORE likely to suffer episodes of road rage, tailgating and generally be more likely to have brain snaps. The woeful state of road infrastructure isn't his fault but the heavy congestion on a sub-standard network makes him the target of the general publics frustration. They see him as an impediment to them or as a rogue but the reality is he is the meat in the sandwich who is trying to do a difficult, thankless job whilst all the while being attacked from all sides, ridden by the boss, the customer ,the police, transport authorities and the motorist next to or behind or in front of him. Any wonder they are so stressed and depressed and the sad thing is most of them don't even realise it.
5. So the moral of this submission is it's of no use killing the 'messenger' (the driver) because the industry is already churning out his sub-standard replacement as we speak and when that supply line dries up they are already lobbying the Federal government hard to bring in unskilled, under qualified migrants to meet the shortfall. Yes they will do anything to attract drivers except of course fixing the real problem in the industry and that is Safe Pay rates.

Yours Sincerely Brian Turpie

National President Long-Haul Drivers Association