

**The Hon Anthony Albanese MP**

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Minister for Regional Development and Local Government
Leader of the House

Reference: 01055-2013

06 MAY 2013

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr ~~Murphy~~

Thank you for your letter dated 14 March 2013 about a petition drawing attention to the risks faced by professional truck drivers and requesting additional payments to drivers under the industry award.

The specific proposal by the petitioners to increase award payments for truck drivers concerns the portfolio responsibilities of the Hon Bill Shorten MP, Minister for Workplace Relations. Last year the Government established the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal, which is empowered to set appropriate pay and conditions for truck drivers. The Tribunal's determinations will help to reduce the economic incentives for drivers to chase unrealistic deadlines and engage in unsafe driving practices.

Additionally, the Australian Government is committed to reducing road trauma. In cooperation with the states and territories, the Government has established the National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020, which sets out a comprehensive, evidence-based program to reduce deaths and serious injuries by at least 30 per cent over the current decade.

The national strategy encompasses a wide range of agreed actions to improve the overall safety of the road transport system, with several initiatives directly addressing the safety of the trucking sector. These include: improved braking requirements for heavy vehicles and trailers; safer management of restricted-access heavy vehicle operations; a review of driver licensing arrangements; a trial of electronic work diaries for heavy vehicle drivers; and measures to increase the prosecution of heavy vehicle speeding offences.

In last year's budget the Government also announced a \$150 million extension to its Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program through to 2019. This program is dedicated to improving heavy vehicle safety by providing funding for new and upgraded rest areas, parking and decoupling bays, other road enhancement projects and technology trials.

Finally, this government has invested \$19 billion since 08-09 to March 2013 in road infrastructure to improve the safety and efficiency of our road transport system.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

ANTHONY ALBANESE