



**The Parliament of the  
Commonwealth of Australia**

**House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on  
Communications, Transport  
and the Arts**

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## **Media Release**

### **Public hearings**

## **Alive and Alert!**

### **Managing fatigue in transport inquiry**

The important issue of fatigue will be under scrutiny when the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts holds the first public hearing in its inquiry into managing fatigue in transport in Adelaide on Monday 26 July 1999.

Mr Paul Neville MP, Chair of the committee, said:

Fatigue has emerged as the enemy of safety in all four modes of transport—air, sea, road and rail. The hours that people work, and the way they are worked, are important subsets of this problem.

Although we hear about the consequences of fatigue related accidents in the transport industry, there are positive ways for dealing with fatigue.

The indications are that some companies and employees are 'waking up' to fatigue and giving it the attention it deserves.

Fatigue is a seminal issue in the field of workplace safety and efficiency

Anecdotal evidence tends to suggest that in road transport for example, tired drivers use more fuel and drive erratically. Well rested drivers use less fuel and pay more attention to driving. Fatigue management is a win win situation for employers, employees and the community.

Witnesses appearing before the committee in Adelaide reflect the variety of initiatives being developed to combat fatigue.

The Adelaide Centre for Sleep Research will address the committee on its work with industry, particularly in developing a fatigue modelling software package to be used in organising shifts and rosters. They have identified the correlation between fatigue and alcohol impairment, and will provide data showing that staying awake for 17 hours can lead to impairment equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.05 per cent.

Representatives from the rail industry will give evidence about their initiatives in addressing the problem of fatigue.

The committee will be talking with Professor Laurence Hartley about an interesting approach to managing fatigue in road transport that has been implemented in Western Australia.

Representatives from Fremantle Pilots are expected to outline how fatigue impacts on marine pilots and what can be done to address the problem in this important aspect of maritime operations.

I wish to make it perfectly clear that the committee does not prejudge the issues, nor is there any element of a 'witch hunt' in this inquiry. Committee members want to recognise and discuss the positive initiatives being developed and implemented in the transport industry. We also want to identify any shortfalls and recommend to the government how any gaps might be plugged.

Ultimately, the whole community is responsible for fatigue. A major shift in attitude, similar to that which now exists with speed and drink driving, is needed to successfully combat this problem. We are currently examining a diverse range of submissions and are looking forward to receiving evidence from representative groups of transport industry players.

**The public hearings will be held at:**

**Hotel Adelaide International,**

**62 Brougham Place,**

**North Adelaide**

**26 July 1999**

**From 1115 to 1700 hours**

The committee extends an invitation to all interested members of the public and organisations to come to the public hearing.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are listed below. The public hearing program is attached.

**Terms of Reference**

In relation to managing fatigue in transport, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts is to inquire into, and report on, the following.

- Causes of, and contributing factors to, fatigue.
- Consequences of fatigue in air, sea, road and rail transport.
- Initiatives in transport addressing the causes and effects of fatigue.
- Ways of achieving greater responsibility by individuals, companies, and governments to reduce the problems related to fatigue in transport.

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For further information

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**Background** Adam Cunningham, inquiry secretary 02 6277 4597

**Web site** <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta/index.htm>