



**The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia**

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

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Media Release

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Public hearings

Sydney

Tired and dangerous

Managing fatigue in transport inquiry

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts will continue its important inquiry into managing fatigue in transport in **Sydney on Thursday 7 October 1999**.

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

'The committee's inquiry into fatigue in transport continues to generate a great deal of national and international interest. The committee has gathered a large amount of evidence through an intensive round of public hearings and the receipt of over 100 submissions.

The evidence has raised some serious concerns and questions that urgently need to be answered. The consequences of a fatigue related maritime accident in Sydney Harbour or an air accident over the metropolitan area would be catastrophic in human, environmental and economic terms. A fatigued driver is a fatal accident waiting to happen.

Air safety and fatigue issues will be examined with the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers Association, the Regional Airlines Association of Australia and QANTAS as witnesses. The members are particularly concerned about safety and fatigue in aircraft maintenance operations. I am surprised to learn that the duty hours of cabin crew and maintenance staff are not regulated to the extent of pilots who have strict duty time limitations.

The Maritime Union of Australia and the Public Transport Union will give evidence on fatigue and how it continues to adversely affect workers despite the initiatives that have been introduced. The union movement is playing a very constructive role in efforts to manage workplace fatigue and works closely with government and business to find appropriate solutions.

The committee also will be taking evidence from BHP and FreightCorp. Each of these organisations has recognised fatigue as a serious issue and are developing strategies to better manage fatigue in their operations. We are interested in testing the effectiveness of these initiatives to see if certain aspects can be applied broadly to the transport industry.'

Further, **Mr Neville said**

'The building blocks are in place. Australia is one of the world leaders in the fight against fatigue. We need to capitalise on our expertise and experience in order to manage fatigue effectively.

It is clear that there are no simple solutions to this complex issue. A crucial point is that fatigue is more than just lack of sleep or long work hours. Many factors need to be considered such as quality of rest and which hours in a 24 hour cycle are worked. The period between midnight and 6am is appropriately called the 'graveyard shift'. It is well documented that this is a prime time for fatigue related accidents. To effectively and comprehensively fight fatigue will take the combined efforts of government, business, the community and individuals.

This issue effects us all. The committee wants to bring together as many viewpoints as possible in order to identify any shortfalls and recommend to parliament how any gaps might be plugged.'

The public hearing will be held at:

Waratah and Poinsettia Room

Gazebo Hotel

2 Elizabeth Bay Road

Elizabeth Bay

From 0830 to 1700 hours

The terms of reference for the inquiry are listed below.

All members of the public are welcome as observers to the public hearing.

The public hearing program is attached. Background information is available on request.

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.

For further information

Media comment	Paul Neville MP, committee chair	07 4152 0744 02 6277 4940
Background	Adam Cunningham, inquiry secretary	02 6277 4597 on the day 0413 021 420
Web site	http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta/index.htm	