

November 1999



**The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia**

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

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Mr Paul Neville MP

Deputy Chair

Mr Steve Gibbons MP

Members

Mr Gary Hardgrave MP

Mr Colin Hollis MP

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Mr Peter Lindsay MP

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Mr Frank Mossfield AM MP

Mr John Murphy MP

Mr Stuart St Clair MP

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Media Release

Public hearings

Canberra

**Fatigued or not fatigued:
the difference between life and
death**

Managing fatigue in transport inquiry

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts is holding two days of public hearings on its critical inquiry into managing fatigue in transport in **Canberra on Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 November 1999.**

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

'Deaths and injury are inevitable if effective measures are not taken to reduce the levels of fatigue amongst Australia's transport workers.

The general community must be made more aware of the dangers of fatigue. The approaching Christmas holiday season only heightens the need for public awareness.

Truckies, train drivers, pilots, transport unions and related companies have inundated the committee with submissions. The overwhelming interest shown on this issue speaks for itself.

Fatigue related fatalities and injuries continue to occur in the transport industry. This highlights that the issue of fatigue must be given priority and be effectively tackled.

It is alarming is that almost two thirds of long distance drivers recently surveyed by the Transport Workers Union admitted they had been in serious accidents or near misses resulting from fatigue.

We are passengers of, and are sharing our roads with pressured transport workers exposed to excessive hours, who are at risk of falling asleep at the wheel. In extreme conditions fatigue can be fatal. Sleep experts believe that 17 hours of sustained wakefulness is equivalent to a blood alcohol reading of 0.05 per cent and 24 hours of 0.10 per cent'.

Further, **Mr Neville said**

'We have an impressive array of representatives from peak transport related associations and government bodies appearing at the public hearings. These include the Department of Defence, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, the Department of Transport and Regional Services, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Australian Trucking Association.

Of particular interest to the committee in this final round of hearings is the issue of fatigue in the aviation industry ranging from pilots and cabin crew, to air traffic controllers and maintenance engineers.

The committee is also eager to hear about what the Department of Defence have to say in relation to fatigue amongst the Australian military. Defence is one of the largest logistically based operations in the country involving land, sea and air forces.

Action must be taken to prevent fatigue related fatalities in sea, air, road and rail transport. Fatigue is a serious issue that affects all Australians, not just transport workers. The whole community is responsible for managing fatigue in transport and the general workplace.

The committee will continue its endeavour to develop practical recommendations on managing fatigue in transport—creating safer means of travel.'

The public hearings will be held at:

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Parliament House

Canberra

Monday 8 November from 0845 to 1545 hours

Tuesday 9 November from 0845 to 1445 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.

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	