

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2014-2015

Outcome 2 - Workplace Relations & Economic Strategy

Department of Employment Question No. EM0794_15

Senator McKenzie provided in writing.

Question

Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal

In relation to the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal and the underpinning legislation:

- a. Can any international data or research be provided in relation to links between road safety and remuneration?
- b. What are the primary causes of road accidents involving heavy vehicles in Australia?
- c. In relation to heavy vehicle deaths and accidents, what is the main cause of accidents?

Answer

- a. The Regulation Impact Statement prepared for the previous government in 2011 noted "...data at this point in time is limited and being definitive around the causal link between rates and safety is difficult". The Department is not aware of any international data or research in support of wage setting improving safety amongst heavy vehicle operators.
- b. Where infrastructure (such as roads and truck quality) and the weather are favourable, accidents are less likely than when they are unfavourable. The interaction of infrastructure, technical issues (truck quality and so on), other road hazards such as other drivers and the weather, with a range of human factors, is an important predictor of whether or not an accident will occur.

According to the National Truck Accident Research Centre's Major Accident Investigation Report 2013 (p.9), the proportion of accidents in Australia primarily caused by fatigue has more than halved, from 26 per cent in 2003 to 11.9 per cent in 2011.

- c. Recent data suggests that truck drivers are not responsible for the majority of multi-vehicle fatal accidents.
Multi-vehicle incidents account for 45.5 per cent of the heavy vehicle fatalities on public roads. Between 2005 and 2012, six per cent of fatalities on public roads were the fault of the heavy vehicle (see Safe Work Australia (2014), Work Related Fatalities Involving Trucks, Australia, 2003 to 2012, May 2014, p.23,24).

According to the same Safe Work Australia report, the data on almost half (49 per cent) of the heavy vehicle deaths on public roads showed either insufficient information or no particular reason for the crash.