

# Joint media release



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## **TRUCKING OPERATORS: DO NOT DESPATCH TRUCKS UNTIL YOU KNOW THEY CAN GET THROUGH**

Trucking companies should not despatch trucks to south east Queensland or northern New South Wales unless they have scoped the route and know their trucks can get through safely, six of Australia's trucking industry bodies warned today.

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA), Queensland Trucking Association, NatRoad, ATA NSW, the Victorian Transport Association (VTA) and the Australian Livestock Transporters' Association (ALTA) joined forces to issue the warning.

The Chairman of the ATA, David Simon, said there was no point despatching a truck from the south only to have the truck and driver stuck on the road waiting for the floods to abate.

"Trucking companies need to check with the NSW RTA and Queensland Transport about the current list of road closures before their trucks leave the depot, and not hope their driver can park the truck up and wait somewhere until the roads reopen," Mr Simon said.

"There are already 30 to 40 trucks stranded at the top of the Toowoomba range with nowhere to go. The local trucking industry has rallied to organise sandwiches, tea and coffee and the local hotel is providing showers. Queensland Transport inspectors have also delivered lamingtons and cold milk, which have gone down a treat."

The Chief Executive Officer of the QTA, Peter Garske, said the roads in south east Queensland needed to be kept clear for emergency services, road repairs and evacuations.

"Large numbers of roads in south east Queensland are now closed, and the roads that are open should only be used if the need is critical. We don't need any more trucks and drivers stranded and potentially needing help when there are so many people in Queensland and New South Wales in desperate and tragic circumstances."

The Manager of ATA NSW, Jill Lewis, said the industry's customers would need to be patient with any delays.

"Under the chain of responsibility laws, it is unlawful for customers to demand that trucking companies and drivers meet unsafe delivery schedules. Safety is paramount. The floods are devastating enough without adding the danger of road accidents in as well," she said.

The Chief Executive Officer of NatRoad, Bernie Belacic said help was available for owner drivers and small trucking operators who cannot earn an income because of the floods.

“The Australian Government had introduced a special Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy, which is \$469.70 per fortnight for a single person. Affected operators should apply to Centrelink on 180 22 66,” Mr Belacic said.

“Trucking companies affected by the floods should also talk to their bank or financier about whether they can put special arrangements in place for their loan repayments. Australia’s trucking industry associations will be pressing the banks to be generous to trucking operators who cannot meet their loan repayments for a short time because of this unfolding tragedy,” he said.

The Deputy Chief Executive of the VTA, Neil Chambers, said the VTA had issued an urgent alert to its members about how to find information about the road closures so they can plan ahead.

The Chief Executive of ALTA, Philip Halton, said livestock transporters were focused on helping their local communities move stock to higher ground.

“Now is not the time for non-essential transport operations to be on the roads. This is a crisis,” Mr Halton said.

**For detailed road closure information, access the NSW RTA website on <http://livetraffic.rta.nsw.gov.au/> and the Queensland Transport website on <http://highload.131940.qld.gov.au/>.**

**Media contacts:**

Australian Trucking Association	David Simon	0418 443 333
Queensland Trucking Association	Peter Garske	0418 724 981
ATA NSW	Jill Lewis	0417 201 466
NatRoad	Bernie Belacic	0417 688 462
Victorian Transport Association	Neil Chambers	0423 027 222
ALTA	Philip Halton	0439 495 693