

MEDIA RELEASE



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ATA TO TAKE STRONG STANCE ON OPERATOR VIABILITY IN 2011

The Australian Trucking Association will need to take a strong stance on improving the viability of trucking businesses in 2011, ATA Chairman David Simon told the organisation's annual general meeting today.

The ATA is the peak body that represents the trucking industry. Its members include state and sector trucking associations, the Transport Workers' Union and some of Australia's major logistics companies.

Mr Simon said the industry had created a real viability issue for itself: freight rates are at the same level in real terms as in the 1980s, despite the industry's increasing costs.

"The immediate issue is charges, and particularly registration charges on B-double lead trailers. The NTC has done its calculations and come up with its answer. The answer is wrong but that's what regulators are implementing. We have to fight harder on that," Mr Simon said.

"Today's meeting also discussed how operators are having trouble recovering their higher costs from customers because of the tough conditions faced by industry. Operators in this position have access to special cost models through their ATA member association. These cost models will help them justify the increases necessary."

Mr Simon said the ATA would work to secure national heavy vehicle laws that meet the industry's objectives, including national chain of responsibility laws and arrangements to meet the special requirements of Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

"We have the opportunity to get the national laws we have been demanding for 20 years, but it's not done and dusted. At some levels of the regulatory authorities there is a reluctance to agree to national laws, and we have to push for the right outcome."

Mr Simon said the ATA needed to increase the industry's knowledge of the importance of fitness for duty, including the impact of sleep disorders.

"There are a significant number of people affected by sleep disorders. In my own company, I have seven or eight drivers receiving treatment for sleep disorders who are much better for it," he said.

Mr Simon said the ATA's achievements for its members and the industry in 2010 included:

- the ATA's input into the draft National Road Safety Strategy, with its emphasis on building safe systems rather than blaming drivers for every accident;
- the inclusion of high productivity vehicles in the draft National Land Freight Strategy;
- important changes to the new requirements for Maritime Security Identity Cards;
- the ATA's strenuous lobbying on road charges;
- a start to work on two new Technical Advisory Procedures, one on side and rear underrun protection and the other on electronic braking; and
- the award of the 2010 Transport and Logistics Industry Excellence in Community Service Award to the ATA's safety, careers and industry exhibition, the Road Ahead.

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National Voice of the Australian Trucking Industry