

The Coalition's Response to Australian Trucking Association

2025 Federal Election Questionnaire

Boosting truck safety

The Coalition is dedicated to driving and delivering change on our roads. Public funding should be invested to achieve the best outcomes for community safety and the efficient movement of people and freight.

After a decade between January 2010 and June 2020 where annual fatalities declined from 1,502 down to 1,090, Australia's road toll has risen significantly. In 2024, Australia experienced its deadliest year on the roads since 2012.

The Albanese Government has failed to provide the leadership required to address this growing challenge.

A Dutton Coalition Government will provide \$6 million over three years to expand the scope of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) to oversee a national pilot to investigate road crashes. This will be done on a no-fault basis to learn and understand the causes behind road crashes to enable the development and implementation of mitigation strategies.

The former Coalition Government was committed to establishing a National Data Sharing Agreement with the states and territories to establish consistent metrics and reporting for road safety data.

This data should be required to be made available at a national level to inform policy and investment decisions supporting road safety across all levels of government. We remain committed to this principle.

Therefore, an elected Coalition Government will require states and territories to report road safety data and AusRAP road safety ratings and will work with jurisdictions to improve transparency around that data to help inform road safety investment decisions.

A Coalition Government will establish a \$600 million Ag and Mining Roads program to support our mining, resources and farming sectors by investing in infrastructure to upgrade agricultural and mining roads critical to getting product to domestic and export markets.

The Coalition will consult with rural trucking, farming and mining industry representatives to identify priority road and highway upgrades for funding under this program. Truck rest stops would be eligible to be considered under this program.

Reducing the trucking industry's emissions

Australia's transport sector contributes around 21 per cent of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions in 2023, the third largest emitting sector. Transport is a hard to abate sector given the age of life of transport assets (16.3 years for heavy rigid trucks, in 2024) and the early stage of research and development of alternative low emissions fuel sources suitable for transport over long distances.

The Coalition supports a technology neutral approach to reducing transport sector emissions. Battery electric, hydrogen, low carbon liquid 'drop-in' fuels all present opportunities to reduce emissions, as well potentially as technologies yet to be developed.

The Coalition will work with the road transport industry in a constructive way to support practical industry-led initiatives to reduce emissions. We will not impose arbitrary or politically motivated deadlines or targets on the sector.

The Coalition would, in its first year, bring representatives of the heavy vehicle industries, including the bus and truck sectors, together for a forum with state and territory transport ministers via the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting, to discuss practical measures to assist the industry.

Building our workforce

The Coalition will re-energise the economy and deliver a strong and future-ready workforce. A Dutton Coalition Government will:

- Build a new national network of Australian Technical Colleges, offering new pathways for students to fast track them to high-skilled and well-paying jobs in fields like housing and civil construction, defence, nuclear energy and the care economy.
- Return the number of apprentices and trainees across the country to 400,000.
- Support small and medium businesses, including builders and tradies, with \$12,000 in wage support to help with the costs of putting on and training a new apprentice or trainee.
- Deliver a new Key Apprenticeship Program that will support eligible apprentices with between \$5,000 and \$10,000 on top of their wages, over the life of their apprenticeship, helping them with the costs of purchasing their tools and the cost of living.
- Deliver a new Skills in Schools Strategy to get more kids into trades and boost falling school graduation numbers.
- Support a sustainable skilled migration program in Australia and review the Skilled Occupation List.

Hiring an apprentice or trainee is an investment, but many businesses, especially small and medium businesses struggle with the upfront costs of wages and training. We will help offset these costs, giving businesses the confidence to take on apprentices.

Unlike Labor, we strongly believe that employers are key to the strength of apprenticeships in Australia. Without businesses and builders willing to employ and train apprentices, the apprenticeship system is diminished.

Our Apprentice and Trainee Wage Support will allow around 40,000 new apprentices and trainees each year to take up training in critical skills and occupations like carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, electricians, aged care and disability support workers, chefs, sheet metal workers and welders.

The Coalition will place particular emphasis on housing and construction trades through this incentive and will ensure all construction and housing trades are eligible through an updated Australian Apprenticeship Priority List.

Building better roads – and paying for them fairly

The Albanese Labor Government has cancelled, cut and delayed more than \$30 billion worth of infrastructure projects since 2022. The result of these cuts and delays is the cost of delivering existing projects has increased, and worthy projects which have not been funded will have to wait longer.

The Coalition has committed to deliver more than \$17 billion worth of infrastructure projects during this campaign. This includes a commitment to establish a new \$600 million Ag & Mining Roads program to help transport agricultural produce and resources to markets.

The Coalition will also restore the 80:20 funding policy for nationally significant regional road projects, which will result in more highways and freight routes being funded in our regions.

New Coalition commitments include:

- \$840 million to build the Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass commencing with the Truro bypass on the Sturt Highway and fixing the Swanport Bridge.
- \$80 million to complete the duplication of the Bass Highway between Launceston and Deloraine, Tasmania.
- \$200 million to duplicate the Stuart Highway between Katherine and Noonamah, Northern Territory.

The Coalition will always commit more to upgrading the nations freight networks supporting our primary and resources industries than the Labor Party.