



30 September 2009

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local Government
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

HEAVY VEHICLE SAFETY AND PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) supports the Heavy Vehicle Safety & Productivity Program (HVSP), and appreciates the opportunity to have input into the funding decisions under the program. The first round of funding addressed a number of issues raised in the ATA round one submission, and effectively utilised state finances to aid funding capacity.

The funding priorities put forward in the ATA round one submission remain relevant. They are:

- Heavy vehicle rest areas on key interstate routes, including both the provision of additional rest areas and capacity enhancements to existing facilities
- Road infrastructure capacity upgrades to allow greater access for high productivity vehicles
- Heavy vehicle decoupling bays in and around urban and regional centres.

REST AREAS

Rest areas are a vital part of the road infrastructure, ensuring drivers can adequately comply with fatigue legislation and safely transport goods around Australia. There are minimum provisions that need to be provided with rest areas, such as shade and facilities. Heavy vehicle rest areas need to be dedicated for that purpose. The importance of having strategic locations for driver changeover and combination coupling and decoupling, that is separate to the rest areas, cannot be overlooked.

While significant gains have been made in round one of HVSP that targeted some of the most in need areas, there are still a number of under facilitated rest areas that provide critical links along major freight corridors. Accordingly, the ATA puts forward the following priorities:

NEW SOUTH WALES

- Upgrade of Gillenbah rest area, at the intersection of the Newell and Sturt highways.
- In proximity of the intersection of M7 and M4 freeways in Sydney – seek construction of major rest area, including adequate capacity for changeovers and decoupling.
- M5 freeway approaching Botany ports precinct in Sydney – seek construction of major rest area, including adequate capacity for changeovers and decoupling.
- Construction of rest area on the Pacific Highway south (heading southbound) of Grafton.
- Construction of a rest area on the Princes Highway between Kiama and Eden.
- Capacity upgrades to the existing rest area infrastructure on the Gwydir Highway between Grafton and Moree.
- Construction of major rest areas northbound and southbound on the F3 in proximity to the Hawkesbury area in Sydney.

Minter Ellison Building, 25 National Circuit, Forrest ACT 2603

P 02 6253 6900 F 02 6253 6999 E ata@atatruck.net.au W www.atatruck.net.au ACN 055 583 714 ABN 25 055 583 714

VICTORIA

- Facilities upgrade to the rest area 2 km west of Yarrawonga on the Murray Valley highway (including toilets, sealing, and improvement to the ingress and egress.)
- Capacity upgrades to the existing rest area infrastructure on the Hume Highway between Wodonga and Melbourne to address overcrowding at existing facilities.
- Construction of a rest area and changeover pad on the Western Highway between Nhill and the South Australian border.

QUEENSLAND

- Construction of major rest areas on the Gateway Motorway north (heading northbound) and south (heading southbound) of the Brisbane airport.
- Capacity upgrades to the existing rest area infrastructure on the Bruce Highway, specifically expansion at Waverly Creek and Gin Gin.
- After round one of HVSPF funding, there is a remaining need for rest area construction on the Barkly highway, at Johnston Ck (Camooweal).
- Further construction of new rest areas on the Flinders highway including Charters Towers (Pentland) and Hughenden (Richmond). Also Julia Creek (Cloncurry).
- Upgrade and expansion of rest area on the Gore highway, west of Millmerran.
- Expansion and dedication of rest area at Warrego, on Helidon Westbound
- Detailed feasibility studies have been put forward in the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads submission.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- Capacity upgrades to the existing rest area infrastructure on the Barrier Highway between Oodla Wirra in South Australia and the New South Wales border.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

- Construction of a rest area on the Barkly Highway in proximity to Barry Caves.
- Construction of a rest area on the Barkly Highway in proximity to Frewina in the Northern Territory.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The ATA supports the funding allocation received by the rest area priorities raised in the round one submission.

Future areas of focus should include:

- Construction of rest areas on the Albany highway between Perth and Albany.
- Improved provision of rest areas in south east of the state.
- Facility upgrades (including toilets) at rest areas on the North West Coastal highway heading towards Port Headland.

ROAD ACCESS AND CAPACITY ENHANCEMENTS

A major constraint on productivity and industry efficiency is the uncooperative attitude of state and local governments. The unnecessary protectionist behaviour towards some road infrastructure and higher productivity vehicles leaves freight to be carried by a greater number of vehicles, to the detriment of road infrastructure.

The expansion of the B-triples on the inter-capital routes in southern and eastern Australia is critical to achieving safety and productivity to accommodate the growing freight task. B-triples are a safer combination of vehicle, that are a more fuel efficient and road friendly way to transport the freight task. Increasing their use will reduce the number of vehicles on the road, promoting safer, quieter roads, and a more efficient industry that benefits the consumer and the economy.

At a broad level, the ATA believes the focus of infrastructure upgrades should be directed toward expansion of the network:

- Moving to general access, for 27 tonne quad-axle groups in semi trailers and B-doubles.
- To provide an intercapital link for modular B-triples, with the following priorities:
 - Melbourne to Wodonga via Hume Highway (immediately, as there are no substantial infrastructure constraints);
 - Melbourne to Adelaide via the Great Western and Dukes highways;
 - Melbourne to Brisbane via the Newell Highway;
 - Melbourne to Sydney via the Hume Highway, including the Barton and Federal Highway links to Canberra; and
 - Sydney to Adelaide via the Sturt and Hume highways;
 - Filling in the missing links on the existing network, particularly the connection from Adelaide to Broken Hill.
- To provide access for modular AB-triples and BAB-quads in regional and rural Australia beyond the currently gazetted road train areas.

The potential safety and productivity benefits embodied in modular high productivity vehicles are significant and worth pursuing. By optimising operational performance and efficiently carrying the freight task, heavy vehicle exposure on national highways will be minimised.

HEAVY VEHICLE DECOUPLING BAYS

The provision of heavy vehicle decoupling bays is essential for the safe and productive utilisation of restricted access combinations, including B-doubles, B-triples, AB-triples and BAB-quads.

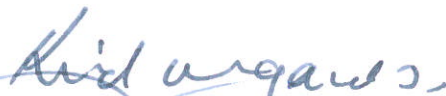
While the majority of the large hire and reward companies will operate high productivity vehicles from depot to depot (if provided with that opportunity), decoupling bays provide an additional capacity for the industry more broadly to utilise these vehicles.

Specific funding priorities for decoupling bays need to be assessed in light of road capacity upgrades and to keep pace with network expansion for these vehicles.

At a very broad level, the ATA submits that priority funding for decoupling bays should be given to those locations where network access starts/ends, including on the fringes of major freight generating urban and regional centres within the gazetted areas.

The ATA commends the work of the HVSP to date, and eagerly anticipates the efficient allocation of funding that will see further improvements in the safety and productivity in the heavy vehicle industry. This submission was developed in cooperation with members, and takes into account state needs with a national view. I look forward to future work with you and your department in this area.

Yours sincerely



Stuart St Clair
Chief Executive