

Second Reading

The Hon. TONY KELLY (Minister for Lands) [8.15 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This bill will align New South Wales's heavy vehicle legislation with parallel legislative drafting in other jurisdictions, and will reduce the risk of New South Wales potentially facing a comparative financial disadvantage.

The Act currently requires a Cabinet decision and legislative amendment each time a national decision is implemented or new, more productive heavy vehicles are introduced.

Placing the descriptions of heavy vehicles and the annually adjusted charges in the Regulation will improve the agility of New South Wales in responding to rapid technological and intergovernmental change.

The bill will also facilitate the timely introduction of newer, safer and more productive heavy vehicle configurations, providing New South Wales the opportunity to better address significant challenges including climate change, safety, efficiency and congestion.

The amendments in the bill will ensure that New South Wales continues to fulfil our commitment to national consistency in administering heavy vehicle registration charges.

This bill is a result of extensive consultation by the National Transport Commission between all States, Territories and relevant industry groups.

In addition, the New South Wales Government has undertaken extensive consultation with the road transport sector in New South Wales.

New South Wales must fund improvements in road infrastructure to support the valuable contribution of the heavy road freight and passenger transport industries to the people of New South Wales.

The National Transport Commission Heavy Vehicle Charges Determinations aim to ensure that expenditure on road maintenance and improvement is proportionate to their use by heavy vehicles.

This bill acknowledges that the current rate of innovative technological change means more productive heavy vehicle combinations must be recognised by the Determinations at regular intervals. It is sensible that New South Wales is able to respond swiftly to these changes.

The bill facilitates transparency in the charging regime by strengthening the prohibition on any regulatory amendment attempted without reference to an Australian Transport Council Inter-governmental agreement.

The bill also brings forward part of planned consolidation of road transport Acts into a single act, which was scheduled to be undertaken late in 2010.

Consistent with the Better Regulation Principles, the consolidation will simplify application and interpretation of road transport law for legal practitioners, administrators and all users of New South Wales's roads.

The New South Wales Government is determined to ensure that the national reform program causes minimal disruption to freight operators at a time when the global financial crisis means many are already doing it tough.

Following consultation with the road transport sector in New South Wales, the Government agreed to defer the introduction of the reforms for six months until 1 January 2010.

I would like the House to know that industry is supportive of this bill.

Jim Savage, President of the Livestock and Bulk Carriers Association, which has members in all States, has advised me that the industry fully supports the principle of paying its way for road use and that these increases are part of that formula. He also said that his Association greatly appreciated this Government's decision earlier this year to defer these increases to 1 January 2010 in recognition of the impacts of the global economic crisis and the impact increases would have on regional Australia at that time.

As he said, no-one likes increases in costs but if we are to have better roads, then the trucking industry is prepared to pay its fair share to get them.

The measures within this bill enhance the ability of New South Wales to give practical effect to ongoing national reform commitments.

Stakeholders who operate nationally will benefit from the amendments as they will be able to more readily interpret

their rights and responsibilities.

The proposed changes will also facilitate the introduction of newer, safer and more productive heavy vehicle configurations, providing New South Wales the opportunity to better address significant challenges including climate change, safety, efficiency and congestion.

I commend the bill to the House.