



Supplementary Submission to the Joint Standing Committee  
on Road Safety, NSW Parliament

Inquiry into reducing trauma on local roads in NSW

21 September 2020

## INTRODUCTION

1. The National Road Transport Association (NatRoad) is pleased to provide a response to the two questions taken on notice during the course of providing evidence on 14 August 2020 to the NSW Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety (StaySafe) relating to its inquiry into road trauma in NSW.

## HEAVY VEHICLE COMBINATIONS

2. The first question taken on notice is posed at page 19 of the uncorrected transcript. It follows on from an exchange about heavy vehicle length and heavy vehicle combinations. It is as follows:

*Obviously the truck would be two or three metres longer if the trailer went on a bonneted truck as opposed to a cabover. I am just wondering if there are any safety implications from that? A lot of people who use trucks around harvest time, for example, the truck may only come out for a few months of the year around harvest time, they might not have a lot of choice in terms of the combinations that they can use to stay under overall length, but that is probably a very specific issue to agriculture in regional New South Wales.*

3. There have been no formal studies of which NatRoad is aware that show that trucks in combinations that are over dimension (inclusive of length) are involved in a greater or lesser number of on road incidents. There is also a lack of any Australian research data about the safety outcomes of combinations where there is a bonneted prime mover compared with a cab-over prime mover. There is some data to show that vehicles in the Performance-Based Standards (PBS) Scheme<sup>1</sup> where vehicles/combinations are not required to comply with the usual dimension requirements<sup>2</sup> are safer and more productive than other vehicles. The National Transport Commission found that the use of PBS-approved vehicles was associated with:
  - an average productivity gain of 24.8 per cent; and
  - 46 per cent fewer major crashes, compared to the rates for conventional vehicles.<sup>3</sup>

## WOMEN IN THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

4. The second question appears at page 22 of the transcript as follows:

*Just thinking about female drivers—even male drivers, really—if you do have these facilities on the side of the road, what sort of safety measures could be put in place, particularly if there were more female truck drivers?*

5. NatRoad encourages women to take up a career in the freight industry. A greater number of women in the industry would mean that NatRoad's issue about more frequent and better rest areas that we emphasised in the written submission to this inquiry were underlined. There should be better lighting, better facilities and increased frequency of rest areas, particularly along rural roads, so that the safety of women drivers is protected and the amenity for all drivers increased.
6. The issue of rest areas is very important as a means to reduce road incidents. This important topic is integral to proper fatigue management being undertaken and would have been open to quantification (rest areas across the State and what distance from the prior rest area they occur and how and when their construction is integrated with infrastructure spending) and linked to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/performance-based-standards>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nhvr.gov.au/files/201707-0577-common-heavy-freight-vehicles-combinations.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See the NTC Issues Paper *Vehicle Standards and Safety* (July 2019) at p 24

[https://www.ntc.gov.au/sites/default/files/assets/files/Vehicle\\_standards\\_and\\_safety\\_issues\\_paper.pdf](https://www.ntc.gov.au/sites/default/files/assets/files/Vehicle_standards_and_safety_issues_paper.pdf)

research in this area, particularly the important US study that shows that more frequently placed rest areas has a major, positive impact on fatigue-related accidents. <sup>4</sup>

## CONCLUSION

7. NatRoad thanks the StaySafe Committee for the opportunity to expand on the initial written submission and to provide these answers on notice.

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<sup>4</sup> Bunn, Slavova and Rock *Association between commercial vehicle driver at-fault crashes involving sleepiness/fatigue and proximity to rest areas and truck stops* (2019)  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0001457517304189>