

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

INQUIRY INTO HEAVY VEHICLE SAFETY

At Dubbo on Monday 24 May 2010

The Committee met at 8.50 a.m.

PRESENT

Mr G. Corrigan (Chair)

Legislative Council

The Hon. R. L. Brown
The Hon R. H. Colless
The Hon. I. W. West

Legislative Assembly

Ms D. E. Fardell
Mr D. R. Harris
Ms N. Hay
Mr D. W. Maguire
Mr G. Souris

RODERICK MICHAEL HANNIFEY, heavy vehicle operator, 3 Windsor Parade, Dubbo, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: This public hearing is being held to review the operation and effectiveness of current safety measures in reducing heavy vehicle road toll in New South Wales. Today's hearing follows a full day's hearing held in Sydney last Monday. The Committee will consolidate information already gathered from representatives, industry bodies and government agencies with responsibilities in the area of heavy vehicle safety. The evidence from Mr Hannifey will provide a further opportunity to obtain information from a heavy vehicle operator with extensive experience, who has suggestions for improving the safety of heavy vehicles on the roads of New South Wales.

Mr Hannifey, thank you for appearing before the Committee today. I draw your attention to the fact that your evidence is given under parliamentary privilege and you are protected from any legal or administrative action that might otherwise result in relation to the information you provide. I should also point out that any deliberate misleading of the Committee may constitute a contempt of Parliament and an offence under the Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901. Your submission has been received and authorised for publication as part of the evidence of this Committee. Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr HANNIFEY: Certainly. Thank you for the opportunity. I have been involved in interstate trucks now for about 17 years, and I deal with a lot of truck drivers who are very frustrated and cynical and believe that what they wish to put forward is very hard to understand, particularly in written format. A lot of our drivers do not have qualifications—some of them left early—and whilst they are very good truck drivers they are not very good communicators or very good writers. For me to explain something to you simply about logbooks, which they might sit down and try and write 5,000 words about, will still not convey to you our problems.

I have ended up sort of being involved in a whole range of different things, particularly because of my passion with road safety. I know that is something that most drivers do not, I suppose, physically focus on but it is very relevant to them. If we do not travel safely on the road we do not get home safely to our families and that is something that we spend far too much time away from. Whilst I would love to have seen far more drivers and people contribute to this, I do understand their frustration and I hope that I can convey to you that that is part of the problem. They try and do the right thing, they often do not believe they will be heard, and it is hard for them to explain some of the intricacies of the life we lead on the road.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: In your submission you talked about the need for adequate rest facilities, clean showers and toilets. Would you please give the Committee your views on how you think the rest stop availability and the provision of adequate showers and toilets in New South Wales compares with the other States through which you travel?

Mr HANNIFEY: Certainly. Most of my work is in Victoria, New South Wales and a little bit into Queensland. If you come out of Melbourne on the Hume Highway the facilities in Victoria are absolutely exceptional with one proviso. Their areas are large, they have very good toilets and they have seating, but the one thing they do not provide for is shade, and their design often has cars parking at the rear of the area and trucks at the front, which means we are closer to the road. A lot of them are what we call herringbone parking, which is sausage sizzle, side by side. You cannot provide shade and you cannot provide separation. If any of you travel on the Hume Highway coming out of Melbourne during the daytime you will often find the trucks all parked around the perimeter. They are trying to get away from that bloke with a fridge van or that bloke with a stock crate, or every 15 minutes someone pulling up beside you, dropping the maxi-brakes, slamming the door and you are trying to have six or eight hours sleep. With the exception of the design, which can be overcome most of the time because of the fact that they are large, they are excellent.

When you travel into New South Wales some of the sites we have are virtually a piece of dirt and, occasionally, a rubbish bin. We have had some improvements on what they are, and if you are aware of the blue reflector markings that we have had a trial on in New South Wales—the Newell Highway initially—that is very good. Because a bloke that knows the road, and he travels that road every night, he knows that around the next corner there is a bit of dirt that he can park on. But if you are travelling along and you do not know the road very well or you're tired—and this is exactly where these blue reflectors came from—you are travelling along tired and you are thinking: Jeez, where can I stop? Where can I stop? One improvement we have is the signs that have the next three rest areas, but that is only just being rolled out and there is still far too big a gap. But if you

are travelling along tired by the time you think: Oh I could have stopped there, it is too late. You cannot back up. You cannot do a U-turn. Then you are actually more tired because you are thinking: Yes, I am tired. I need somewhere. Oh, jeez, I could have stopped there.

It is like a complaint I put in about driver revivers. They put the sign up to say it is open and you think you will pull up and have a coffee, and then you turn up and they are not there. You have sort of geared yourself into: I am going to stop. I am going to have a break. I am going to fire up. Then you get there and there is no driver reviver, or some of them have even refused truck drivers coffee at those sites. When they get there they think: Jeez, there is no-one there. Now I have got to drive on. Where do I go now? So the New South Wales facilities are lacking.

Queensland is a bigger state and it has road trains a lot more, and that is not taken into account. We have a progression towards B-doubles in this State—although there are some issues there that I would love to raise later on—but we have not considered for the last 10 years the needs of truck drivers. I did approach one gentleman from the Roads and Traffic Authority [RTA] at one stage and I said, "Jeez, there are no toilets." He said to me, "Oh don't you blokes all carry porta potties in your trucks?" That is what the gentleman from the RTA said! There are no toilets. There are not sufficient facilities. Even now where these upgrades are being done—a perfect example, north of Dubbo is a parking bay at Mogriguy Creek.

There was nothing wrong with that parking bay; it was a reasonable size, had a set of tables and chairs and had some shade. They have just gone and closed it for three weeks without any notification at the prior place that that is closed. They have spent a fair amount of money in resurfacing it, and that is really pretty, but if they had spent that money building a new facility across the road we would have had more sites whereas at the moment where they shut them down we have less. And until we have sufficient, blokes will get to the point where they are driving tired because there is nowhere for them to stop.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Which route do you normally take going from Victoria to Queensland? Do you come up the inland—

Mr HANNIFEY: My boss requires that I travel through Wagga. It is simply a service arrangement, that we have got better access to servicing on the Wagga Road. Most of our freight is direct to Melbourne, occasionally we go to Shepparton—that is once in a blue moon—so we choose the Wagga Road.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Would you be able to suggest to the Committee where you think facilities would be best placed on that inland route?

Mr HANNIFEY: The immediate and first concern—if you travel up the Hume Highway, there are a lot of trucks and there are a lot of facilities. If you are aware of the Bells Road intersection, which is where you turn off just north of Albury, the Government has spent a lot of money doing that intersection up. In doing that they closed—where the Hume Highway used to finish at Wodonga we used to have a parking bay either side and then you used to turn off in High Street and go through, both of those parking facilities were lost with the extension of the Albury bypass.

At the end of that, at Bells Road, there was an intersection where there were two dirt bays that we used—that is four sites now missing. Then there was another site just prior to that—that is five. All five of those sites have disappeared and not one of those sites has been replaced. When you turn off the Hume Highway, with all that traffic, and you turn on to the Olympic way there is, with the exception of one that took me five years of whingeing, ringing up and sooking about, not one sign of a truck parking bay between the Hume Highway and Wagga Wagga. The only one there now is one called the Henty Man parking bay, and previously the RTA used to go out and put a tractor through it and ramp up the side of it so we could not get into it. There is not one bay in those 115 kilometres roughly.

I can tell you that I have turned off the Hume with all the trucks and all the traffic and have been in the middle of the night, at one o'clock or two o'clock in the morning, travelling to Wagga and I have been bloody tired. There are some bits of dirt and there are a couple of sites where you can pull up and park in the town on the side of the road at Culcairn and at Henty and others, but you are parking that far-off the fog line, that far away from all the traffic, and you are in front of people, in front of their houses in some of those sites. So that is the first place immediately. I have been asking, writing, ringing and complaining about that for five years.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: And north of Wagga?

Mr HANNIFEY: Once you go through there, look there are a couple of sites again. There is one that has just been done up north of Barmedman, there are a couple of little truck stops. There is an unofficial site at Temora where we park but that is in front of a business. There are only a couple once you get to that end. There are some that are not signed. Again, if you are a driver that knows the road and you can rely on the signs, that is fine, but even the documentation that is put out by the Government is not accurate as to the size of sites. I am sure you are all aware that the Australian Road Research Board [ARRB] did an audit of all the highway rest areas in Australia and part of that was they were going to look at a number of specific sites.

I put my hand up and I said, "Can I come with you to these sites?" because, to be fair, someone who looks at a piece of dirt and there is no-one in there and they say, "Well, this is big enough", but I turn up in a B-double and there is a caravan parked right in the middle and a bloke parked at the end, then I cannot get the shade because I am there at eight o'clock in the morning and the shade is on the other side of the road and I have to have a break, or there are no toilets, or I want to have a meal and a shower, then when they look at that site through their eyes, "Okay, it is big enough. Why can't you park here?" When I turn up there and there are already three B-doubles there and I am buggered and there is no toilet, well then it is not big enough and it is not suitable. I said, "Can I accompany you to these sites to put in my comments?" They said, "No, you can't do that. Under occupational health and safety, you cannot be there", and I was not allowed to do that at all.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Just following on from that, what difference is there between the major highways? You were talking about the Olympic Way coming up north from Wagga Wagga?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: From there when you leave the Hume Highway until you get onto the Newell Highway, that is a major truck route, is that correct?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes. It is the alternative route. You have two; either through Shepparton or through Wagga Wagga.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: So a lot of heavy vehicles would use that road?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes, very much so.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: So there would be as much justification for making sure that those facilities are provided on that road as there would be on some of the major highways?

Mr HANNIFEY: Absolutely. That is a major route, it is not the Hume Highway, and the Hume carries more traffic but the Pacific Highway is a major route and there are simply not enough facilities there. I did an audit trip on the Pacific Highway prior to it being opened to B-doubles and north of Grafton there was virtually nowhere and every second driver I talk to now that runs the Pacific Highway will tell you that if you do not get into a parking bay by 10 o'clock at night you have Buckley's chance of finding somewhere to park and go to bed.

So the issue is still there and it is valid on every major road. Obviously the lesser the traffic the lesser the need, but the distance is still very important to us. You can drive along and you can see a parking bay and you can think, "I'm feeling good, I will go on because I feel okay". But if the next parking bay is 100 kilometres away—and I will give you a perfect example of where that applies in a minute—and you get tired 15 minutes down the road, what do you do then? We do need the facilities, we do need the signs and we do need to be aware of the vehicles using that road. On the Newell Highway there are road trains in a certain section allowed on that, yet we are going to bigger vehicles, and some of the parking bays are virtually the size of a truck.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: How many other major heavy vehicle routes are you aware of that are not listed as highways per se?

Mr HANNIFEY: That depends on freight routes. You have, of course, a lot of work going to the mines. If you run out of Mackay to Peak Downs, that is a major freight route and they have their own problems with 10-metre wide loads and Eatons Range Road, which is simply not big enough for the traffic. Out there now there is now a road train break-up site, which is meant to be for road trains but you find blokes pulling up there

going to bed because it is a point of finish or start, "Yes, I can hook up and then go to bed". But the site does not have shade; it probably does not have the facilities. I have not been to that one since it has been opened.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: But in New South Wales there would be a number of other routes not listed as highways?

Mr HANNIFEY: Absolutely.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Do you think there is a need to have some sort of classification of heavy vehicle routes or something like that?

Mr HANNIFEY: Again, you look at the stock people. A lot of them cart off farms and they are still truck drivers. They still need facilities and they still need places to rest. Stock may not be a very relevant sector on a major highway at times but they need access to a feedlot, a farm or an area. And the same applies to all the grain cartage. You have blokes, 50 or 100 drivers with tippers, going to all different farms in an area, to congregate that into a grain silo. If that is an area where there is a lot of truck use, then it requires those facilities. Sometimes a piece of dirt can be enough, but it depends on the volume of traffic and the distance between those facilities. If you do not know they are there, technically they do not exist, because you drive along and you think, "I could have stopped there." That is no good to you.

That is where the blue reflectors came from—as an interim to mark those bits of dirt. I understand that if someone said today, "We are building a new rest area today"; it is two years away. You have to do your environmental study; you have to do your residential stuff and have to do your ecological stuff. They have to buy the land, they have to build it and they have to design it, so it is two years away. We can put blue reflector bays up tomorrow, with six blue reflectors and sign a piece of dirt, so that a bloke who is tired has somewhere to stop. At the moment we do not have enough facilities for that at all.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Mr Hannifey, you mentioned that you did an audit?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Can you explain to the Committee a little bit more about that? Did you do that of your own initiative?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes, it was. Again, as a truck driver, I have a lot of blokes say to me, "We need to fix this" or "We need to do that" or "We need to do something else". They are very frustrated that they cannot get that through. When I got involved I was initially running from Dubbo to Newcastle every night. That is the Golden Highway now, and I started ringing road authorities. I rang the Singleton shire and I said, "There is this really bad bump. Would you fix it" and he said, "Yes." He got his backside kicked about three weeks after that because it ended up being a very expensive job, which they had not anticipated.

Then I rang the Merriwa Shire Council and I said, "There's this bump. Will you fix that?" and they said, "Jeez, we don't got very many truck drivers ring up." I said, "If I set up a trip where I can get each of those shire engineers in the truck, would they all attend", and they said, "Yes". So I set up a trip of a daytime. Each of those six shire engineers travelled in the truck and I gave them all a list of things that I wanted fixed. Two years after that event all of those things were done, but it is very hard to do; you have to coordinate it, the truck still has to earn money for the employer. I had to arrange all that with them and there were a couple of major jobs that I had nothing to do with—they were million-dollar jobs that would have been done because of my involvement or otherwise.

It is simply getting to those people. When I did that, I was doing one of those trips a year, and one of them included that section up on the Pacific Highway, but to do it once a year, I cannot build the momentum. It is really good to talk to you people today but in 12 months you may have moved on and they put new people in and then you go back and say, "I complained about this 12 months ago" and someone says, "I don't know anything about that, mate. It's got nothing to do with me. Don't want to know. You are a truck driver. I don't care." It is so frustrating.

When I did at trip on the Pacific Highway, I wrote a list of every site that was available. I sent that list to the RTA. I offered for them to do a trip in the truck and to coordinate that. I then said, "Here is my issue in

this section of road and here is this tiny bit of dirt, which is no good to us." I just simply could not get anyone to do it. I have offered that opportunity a number of times since.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: When you did the audit, did you record that somewhere?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: So there is a document to support that?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Do you use equipment like a GPS to identify the site?

Mr HANNIFEY: When I first did that, GPS was only just coming in. The truck that I drove up until last week was the first truck anywhere in the world that had the capacity to record the impact of the road into the truck. Now generally the trucking industry is blamed for damaging our roads. If the road is as smooth as this table, we just travel along the road and we do not do any damage to it. If the road has a failure in it, we hit that impact. It impacts into the truck and increases wear and tear and possible mechanical failure—and some of those impacts are bloody savage—and then it impacts into me as the driver and then it impacts back into the road.

It is that impact back into the road that does the damage. We should not be blamed nor charged for that because the road should be built up to a standard and not down to a cost. When we then travel along the road, we hit these bumps; they throw you all about in the truck and they increase my fatigue. They mean that on some roads I will actually travel with my steer right-hand wheel over the centre line. Now, on a road which is narrow—and the Olympic Way is a reasonable example—it does not very often have a good shoulder nor a bitumen shoulder off the fog line, and if I have to travel within that much gap in a 64-tonne B-double, you are forever going like that; you are trying to stay on the road. But if I move over a metre, then I have a metre more bitumen to play with; I do not have to be so focused and critical.

Obviously if there is traffic coming the other way you move over, but it makes it easier on me if I move over. I do not then put all that wear into the edge of the road. You only have to look at roads that are narrow. You will see the left-hand lane moves like that because the shoulder is not compacted to the same value as the road surface. But if you have a wide bitumen shoulder, then I have a lot more room. If the car coming towards me drifts over the line, I can move to the shoulder, but if you go through the middle of the Pilliga scrub, which is part of the Newell Highway, and a car comes towards you, I have not got that much bitumen to play with.

Beyond that, a lot of the places have a 45-degree taper. Now, if I swerved to miss a roo, that truck is arse over head. That puts far more pressure and far more fatigue on us. When I do these audits, I make a list. The truck had GPS capability. We could actually record how bad the bumps were. I have approached every road authority in Australia and said I would love some support to get this out there because I believe I can save the government money.

The moment I find a bump I ring the RTA. A perfect example—those of you that know the Moree area, there is a parking bay up there called the Kiga Bore parking bay. One of the audits I did I had an RTA gentleman in the truck, and at that time there was just a loop of dirt and there was one tree there. I said to this bloke, "We will go up here and there will be a truck under that tree." We got there and there was. He said, "You set that up. You rang a mate and got him to park under the tree." I said, "No. This is the only tree within 200 kilometres. You never go past it without someone being under it." That parking bay has been expanded but at the five-kilometres mark down from that there was a savage dip in the road. When I hit that bump it was enough to fling me like that up against the seatbelt and it was pulling the UHF mike out. I went and took photos of it, and I can produce those photos. It does not look very bad but in the truck that was coming up as a 2G impact.

Now on our steer axle we are allowed six tonne—that is three tonnes per tyre. That impact is putting six tonne per tyre impact, and those tyres are not rated for that. That bump impacts into the truck and creates mechanical failure. Because the truck bounces, it then affects the next bit of road as the truck bounces down the road. Now if we can put a layer of asphalt over that it takes the bump away—one less hazard—it then will last for 10 years. But if that bump is left there for two years—within a month of me complaining about it the first time there was a great big set of black skid marks off to the side of the road where someone has hit this bump,

whether they have banged their head, whether they have heard something snap on the truck, I do not know, but there is a great big set of skid marks off the road. That increases our costs, but we could fix that with a layer that will last for 10 years. If it is left as a bump, it will create hazards and more wear. Yet to get that bump fixed that took me six months, and the two prior to that took me two years. That was ringing, that was e-mailing, that was requesting, that was begging. Yet, unless I get people in the truck—in the car there is no problem at all—it is just getting that information to people to get those things done. I believe we can save the Government an absolute fortune in road maintenance if we can utilise that facility in that truck.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: Could that audit be done by a Roads and Traffic Authority person in a car or is the key point the truck?

Mr HANNIFEY: It is the truck. It is the weight of the truck. A car is designed to run generally at its weight with four passengers. So the car weighs two tonne and you put four people in it so there is another 400 kilos. A truck runs empty—my truck tares 30 tonne when it is empty, when it is fully loaded it is 64.5 tonne. Therefore it has got to cope with being at 30 or at 64. Now no mechanical suspension can do both perfectly, everything is a compromise. But if you are in a car, and most people will say—I had Garry Liddle, the chief executive officer of VicRoads, in the truck and we come out of Melbourne and there is this really bad bump and he said: "Jeez, I have been over that in a car and it's not a problem." Now it took me eight months to get him in that truck; two weeks after he hit that bump that bump was fixed. Yet prior to that is was, "It is not a problem for us therefore it does not count."

They do have four-wheel drives that travel up the highway that have the lasers on the front. They look at rutting, which is where you get the ruts in the road, but they do not look at those things. They look across the lane not along the lane. Even then, in a four-wheel-drive that might weigh three tonne you can pick up some of the things. I rang the RTA recently and complained about something—they do now have some video footage, which they film as they travel along. There is this bump just north of Barmedman I have been asking for someone to fix for five years, and every time I rang the RTA they said, "We can't find that bump." I said, "Jeez, I can't miss the bloody thing. It is always there." He said, "Look, I have got the video footage going on. Oh, I can see a bit of a bump. Yeah, that is probably the one." But that video footage says there is a bump; it does not tell you how bad that impact is and it does not then correlate to the impact into the truck, and no-one yet seems to have realised that if that is there it will only damage the truck and the road but if it was removed the road costs would be lessened as well.

Mr GEORGE SOURIS: We cannot really imagine that we are going to have a fully loaded truck with Roads and Traffic Authority officials doing what you have just said?

Mr HANNIFEY: No, but the capability on this truck now records it. At the moment, because it was the first truck in the world it was all done manually. So where I know the bumps are I was recording and that data has been captured virtually from Brisbane to Melbourne, to Rockhampton and to a number of other places, and we have all that data available. The new system when it comes up will be on line and the truck will be recording all the time. When it finds a bump above a set parameter it will backtrack, save that information, send that automatically by GPS to the people who have designed the system, which we then hope to sell to the authorities because there is \$15,000 worth of gear on the truck that I haven't paid for in trying to set this up, and this gentleman has spent a lot of money on it. That information will be available to road authorities. We believe if they pay for that, and we do those small repairs faster that we will make the roads a safer place.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Can you tell us a little bit more about that system? Where is that system installed in the truck?

Mr HANNIFEY: You are all aware now of most trucks running on air suspensions. You are aware of road-friendly suspensions and all the gear that went behind that. Again the industry was promised that if we went to road-friendly suspension we would be given higher weights because that road-friendly suspension technically does less damage to the road. Now I am a truck driver; I am not an engineer. There is quite a technical argument as to whether road-friendly suspensions are as road friendly as they are made out to be, and if you ever watch a truck travelling down a road and you watch one of axles and the axle is going like that, you will find the shock absorbers are worn. If the shock absorbers are worn then the air suspension is not doing its job and it is probably more hazardous.

With airbag suspension you have got an airbag each side on each axle. The truck I drive has onboard scales. So you put a load onto that air, the air compresses, you read the difference in that and that will give you

the weight of the load. Behind that again on this truck is another computer system that reads that as we travel along. It was designed initially to prove our road-friendly compliance; the law I believe says that you must check shock absorbers every 100,000 kilometres. On a B-double there are 18 shock absorbers, which are roughly that big. You have got to pull them off the truck to test them. That is the only way you could test a shock absorber previously. If you imagine virtually a whole day off the road to pull all them off, check them and find they are okay and then put them back on again is rather ludicrous.

These people decided that they could come up with a system where if they had a set piece of two-inch pipe as they ran over that pipe they could confirm that the shock absorber worked because they know what the parameters are for that suspension. When they did that they thought: That is okay. Jeez, if we can do that deliberately to confirm that, maybe as we travel along the road we can feel these bumps and we can record them. That is where it came from. So it is airbag suspension, which most trucks have. It is onboard scales on top of that, which more and more are having now, to get their mass and their compliance and it is required, well looking at being complied, required under internal operating procedure [IAP], and then there is another program behind that again, which records the data and records the impact. It is then turned into a program that shows the impact as a graph and it also GPS locates it.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: You mentioned the big dip that you hit put 2Gs on the truck?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Did it calculate that or is there an accelerometer in the truck?

Mr HANNIFEY: Currently the truck records vertical impacts—that is where the 2G force comes from. The next system when it goes on line will have both vertical and horizontal and an accelerometer in it—some of the systems that AARB use I believe have that now. I have been trying to get Main Roads to bring their system into the truck, which is portable, and compare it to ours. But it is a working truck and there are just not enough hours in the day to get everything co-ordinated, and I am still trying to set that up.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: It has got a tachometer and it records speed at the same time—

Mr HANNIFEY: The system records the speed and the weight. I do not know if on the graph for the road impact it actually shows those. On the graph it shows the GPS location but also each of those trips comes up with every point that I record as a map and then it also records speed and weight on that map. Then you go to each individual recording and then it comes down to the graph format. I do not think the speed is shown on the graph.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Because your forward speed would affect the vertical acceleration?

Mr HANNIFEY: Certainly would, yes.

Mrs DAWN FARDELL: Have many Roads and Traffic Authority officials actually ridden in your truck? I know Brendan Nelson and others have? Have the Roads and Traffic Authority had any involvement in travelling down the highway in your truck?

Mr HANNIFEY: Five or 10 tens ago when I started, as I was saying, I was doing one trip a year that had RTA people in the truck. I have had VicRoads and Main Roads people in the truck over that time. I have also had people from the National Transport Commission [NTC] in the truck. They are our national regulator and, I suppose, the biggest problem I have is that years ago when the NTC were looking at these new fatigue regs I had a meeting in Wagga with two of the commissioners and one of their people and we set the trip up. At that time my employer—not this gentleman here—a very large multinational company with three month's notice could not supply a truck on the day. I honestly believe that had I had those people in the truck at that time I would have convinced them that our seven-hour break should be allowed to be split, and I could have shown them why, and I could have detailed it to them. Because they then all had to get in a car and drive home and I could not get them in the truck I missed that opportunity.

To me, having people in the truck is the most important part of what I do, but it is hard at times to coordinate it, schedule it and get people to come along. Each person who gets in the truck fills out a form—what are their thoughts, have they been in the truck, do they have any suggestions? I had Barry O'Farrell in the truck recently and he said everyone should spend time in a truck. He has made a commitment that should they get into

government, that they will have people in the truck. Brendan Nelson got out and said that everyone should spend time in the truck to learn about these things. If we could get those people in the truck more, then that information can be given to yourselves and others so that we get a fair hearing, we get better roads and we get better road safety for all road users.

But it is hard to get them in and it is hard to coordinate it when it is a working truck. Part of my problem is if I have a really flash looking truck that runs up and down the highway just recording things, then I do not drag the truck drivers along with me and I want to be one of them to say, "I am doing my part. It is up to you and you and you to do the right thing on the road; to ring up and report an incident on the road; to ring up and report a bad section." I still now, within a week, could tell you that I spoke to two people and said, "You know that you can ring 131700, 24 hours of the day, seven days a week to report that bump. They said, "Jeez, I didn't know that." Getting that information out is very hard.

Mrs DAWN FARDELL: The Roads and Traffic Authority has recently identified rest areas on some of the major highways in New South Wales. Have you or your employer had any input into that?

Mr HANNIFEY: Again, I try very hard.

Mrs DAWN FARDELL: Were you asked to have any input?

Mr HANNIFEY: No. I have got to do it all on my own. I have got to chase everybody. To give you a perfect example, on the Pacific Highway there is a rest area at Taree called the Four Mile rest area. I was travelling on the Pacific Highway at the time. All the drivers were saying, "It is another weigh station", it is this or it is that. It took me probably six to eight phone calls to find the person responsible for that site. I then said, "Will you send me the plans for that site?" There was a long gap on the phone, and he said, "What for?" I said, "Well, I am a truck driver and I want to see what you are going to design it for." He said, "I suppose."

I got the plans and it was herringbone; it was side-by-side. I said, "Mate, it's no good." He said, "Why not?" So we went through all of that. Off the top of my head I can detail a dozen of these conversations where I have got on to a bloke, after the event sometimes unfortunately. They build a rest area and I say, "Why did you do it like this?" They say, "Because I was told to." I say, "But that is no good" and it is too late. I got the design changed for Four Mile and I have had drivers say to me that it is the best rest area on the Pacific Highway.

There is one at Bookham on the Hume Highway. Again, they were doing major roadworks where the road was being widened. I rang the RTA and I said, "Mate, you have just built a new rest area at Bookham". He said, "Yes, fantastic, isn't it?" I said, "Well, no. Can you sleep in your bed on a 45-degree angle?" The bloke said, "Don't be a smart Alec" and I said, "I'm not. Our beds run across the truck. You've built it on a 45-degree angle. Can you sleep in your bed like that? I bloody well can't. He said, "Oh, I'll get back to you". To his credit, six months later he rang back and he said, "Yeah, you're right. We stuffed that up." I said, "Good. How do we fix it?" He said, "We can't fix it. It'll cost twice as much to fix as it did to build." I said, "Well, you've just spent \$1 million and you may as well have not spent it at all."

It is so hard. If they build a rest area, you come along and you go to your design engineer and you say, "Right. I want a rest area built there. I want it designed now, I want it fixed and I want it done next week." The bloke sits there, he draws this, then he goes away and he does his job to the best of his ability. It goes down the track and then I find out when it is being built later on that they have done it wrong. I have heard blokes say, "Jeez, I could have done what you wanted for the same or less cost and given you what you need." But I have to get to every district, to every State, to every designer, to every RTA engineer, to every bloke, to get them to understand that. It is so hard.

The National Transport Commission, when they put out the national guidelines for rest areas, had a document put out. The RTA, I think it was six years, did not contribute to that document, so the document sat in a drawer. When it was finally approved, they came up with the national guidelines that show herringbone parking side-by-side. I spent hours upon hours on the phone getting the RTA and the Northern Territory to agree with me that herringbone was not the only design, that we needed parallel to get shade and separation and that went to the document, but the only detailed drawing is that herringbone. Now that is our national document and I have had people say, "But I have looked at the national document and that is what you wanted" and I have said, "No, it isn't."

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Can you explain to us with regard to the design of those truck stops, et cetera, if you had the opportunity to review the plans other than using your own initiative as you have done, and if there were an opportunity for industry to review those plans, how and who would be the peak body or the spokesperson for the industry to ensure that you get best practice in the design of future truck stops?

Mr HANNIFEY: I understand. There are two things on that. There is a lady by the name of Helen Benham who works for the RTA in Albury. She has moved up from what she was doing. She did a survey on the Hume Highway and I think her results were that 75 per cent of drivers wanted herringbone parking. I said, "Okay, now you have done a survey on the Hume Highway. Most of the drivers who run the Hume Highway run from either Sydney to Melbourne—10 hours driving. They get out of the truck, they go into a room, they go home, they do whatever they like or they do changeovers. They run from Sydney to Tarcutta, the other driver comes from Melbourne to Tarcutta and they either change trucks or they change trailers and they go home. They do not need eight hours sleep on the side of the road."

Now with me, let us say I have come from central Queensland—and this has happened to me—I have come down and I have to go to some place such as a parking bay called Ironside parking bay, south of Albury and I have to have a seven-hour break in that parking bay. I was out of hours; I had used my 12 hours driving up and I had to have a break. That has about five bays side-by-side. I pulled into that parking bay. I might have got to sleep after an hour and then every 15 minutes a truck pulled up beside me, it dropped the maxi brakes, slammed the door, went to the toilet, had a 15-minute break and roared off into the night. In the seven hours that I was there—and I could not leave—I probably got two hours sleep. At the end of that time my logbook says I am right to go but I am still buggered and two hours down the road I was; I was tired and I had to pull up again.

If we design the parking bays to suit the blokes who only run backwards and forwards, a bloke like me who does long distance work and does not have a set schedule, a set run or a set time cannot find somewhere decent to sleep. If we set it up to suit me, they are also accommodated. If we had a facility where I could get that design—and going back to the RTA, there was a gentleman there who stuck with me for 10 years and he was told to leave me alone, to stay away from me, not to help with blue reflectors, but he said the design I wanted could be done at the same or a lesser cost.

The other big thing is: there are three groups of people who use rest areas. There are truckies, there are car drivers and there are caravaners. Caravaners all leave Melbourne as soon as the weather turns cold and it has started now. They go off and they cannot afford to stay in a park or in a motel so they stay in the truck bays. When they do that, we cannot get into them. When you go to Queensland and Northern Territory, it is a similar problem. When they do that, we come along thinking, "Yep, I'm going to go to bed here, and there are three caravans in there and you cannot even get in the bloody place" so where do we go then?

If the bays are designed so that we have a car bay here and a truck bay there—and the cost of a rest area is approximately \$1 million; they tell me the biggest cost is the acceleration and deceleration lanes because they have to be built to road standards. So you have 500 metres deceleration and 500 metres acceleration, so that is one kilometre of road and \$1 million for a start. If only trucks use that bay and then you build one for cars, you double that up for nothing. So you design the bays so that the cars can use the front and the trucks use the back. I say to you that in the time I have been on the road I could count on this hand the number of cars I have seen in a car rest area at night.

They go into those sites during the day. They have toilets, they have tables and chairs, they have lovely shade and most of those sites are designed to keep us out; they have "no truck" signs. Then you go up the road and we get a piece of dirt if we are lucky, with a rubbish bin and nothing. We should all be able to use those sites. If you travel up the road where do all those car drivers go at night? They come to the truck bay because they feel safer. They do not want to be in a little dark area in the middle of nowhere on their own in the middle of the night.

Occasionally you will see a car pulled up in the middle of nowhere on the side of a road because the bloke has fallen asleep and cannot go any further, but people who go along at night generally pull into a truck bay because they feel safer with us and the caravaners like it. If we had a facility that was designed properly for all users, we minimise all the extraneous cost and we minimise doing the same thing three times for three different groups and then the truckies who use the bays at night most, get the facilities and the car drivers who use it most in the day get it as well. I believe up until now we have not looked at that and they have not done it properly.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Are there any examples of best practice in Australia that you have seen of truck bay-car park-caravan design?

Mr HANNIFEY: The one that comes immediately to mind is at Miramvale in Queensland. Again, they asked for submissions to that and I put in a submission and the Queensland Government actually quoted me in the report when it was first opened up. What it was, it was a commercial facility—it is a service station—just south of the town. They have gone and bought all the land beside it, put in a big truck parking bay, shade and everything. Yes, there were some complaints that the caravaners took it over, but it was big enough for that facility. Another thing that has not been targeted yet—Wagga is a perfect example—the Caltex out at Gumly Gumly. In Wagga, you have got virtually the town of Wagga here and you have got the Sydney road and the Caltex, which is the only 24-hour servo in Wagga.

There is nothing on the Narrandera Road or the other road. There is a big wide shoulder opposite the Caltex. Now I rang the RTA and I complained that the potholes in that shoulder were that deep and it meant that when I came along I virtually had to stop on the road, on the highway, and then idle off and bang through the bumps until I could park and get the trailer off the road. They said, "Oh, but if we fix those bumps we're going to have to go and put a truck bay in front of every fish and chip shop in Wagga." I said, "No, you're not." They said, "Why doesn't the Caltex buy all the land beside it?" I said, "They're a franchisee. They go and buy the land, they develop it, Caltex walks in tomorrow and says, 'We're taking this over now. We will give you two bucks for that \$50,000 you have just spent on that land.'" They are not going to do that. They are not going to spend that money.

At the last Australian Trucking Association [ATA] convention I had a meeting with BP. There was the Queensland Rest Area Advisory Panel, which I sat in on a meeting, and I said to BP, "The new BP at Gundagai, large concrete area, not a tree in sight. If you go in there because you want to have a shower and a meal and make that part of your break and go to bed, you can sit there on the concrete and just bake all day—it is fantastic." They said, "Yeah, but we don't have the money. If we go to a site and we want to put in all these trees and make all these facilities for drivers BP won't give us the money; they will go and spend it somewhere else where we can get a better return." So even there if we had those sites, which have already the acceleration-deceleration lanes, they already have the toilets, they already have the food, sometimes they have the space, if we could build rest areas onto those sites, as provided by the road authorities, the road authorities do not have to provide acceleration-deceleration lanes, they do not have to provide toilets.

You know, there is a parking bay on the Hume Highway at the Muldoons. At one stage the RTA threatened to close that parking bay because the cost of maintenance of the toilets was too high. They were not just going to shut the toilets, they were going to shut the whole parking bay. There was such uproar from the industry, "Bugger off, there is nowhere else to stop now." Look, vandalism is a problem. There is a new parking bay at Euroa, which I complained and complained about to VicRoads for years, and again there was a site we used to use and this bloke said, "The bloke that owns the house is sick to death of you blokes shitting in his front lawn." I said, "Well where else do we go to the toilet?" He said, "Oh, you should have gone before." You know, pretty easy to say, pretty hard to do. They built a new bay and I went in one night and some kids had been in there and they had shoved the steel bar that operates it down in the toilet and they had shitted all over the floor. We get blamed for that because it is a truck bay. To be fair, you are not going to do that in your own toilet.

We are all different I am afraid. Humans are all different, and there are always some truck drivers that I would rather not see driving trucks, but we get the blame for a lot of stuff and yet it is our facilities and they are simply not there. We do not have enough, they are not well designed, and if we had the chance to contribute to that—again I spent an hour the other day with a lady from the RTA and she said, "Why are you doing this? Why isn't ATA or NatRoad or the NSW TWU doing it?" I said, "They're not truck drivers. They don't live on the road. They don't live in the parking bays. They don't have to find a meal. They don't have to go to bed. They don't have to fill in a logbook. They are there for the big picture stuff. They are there for national outcomes. They are there for access to pollies. They are not truck drivers and they do not live on the road and until they do they can't represent me at that level for those facilities that we need."

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Are you aware of the \$35 million proposal to build a 250-bay truck centre at Tarcutta?

Mr HANNIFEY: The facility that is there, I am not aware of an improvement to that.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: A development application has been lodged.

Mr HANNIFEY: Oh, right. No, I am not aware of that. I know that when initially—look, Tarcutta, we asked for 20 years for a changeover facility at Tarcutta. Drivers were killed at Tarcutta because they were doing changeovers on the side of the road and then driving across the road and getting hit and getting run over and that facility was not there. That facility has been built but the access to it for a B-double is bloody abysmal. It is all on a slope, which means sooner or later—please, I hope this never happens—someone is going to pull up in a truck and it is going to run away and run over somebody. It is all on a slope. It is harder to sleep and the access to the highway is designed for someone in a car. To get a B-double in and out of there on a slope, on an incline—at least you are in a 50-kilometre zone thank Christ—but a truck driver did not design it.

When that was being done, the Sturt Highway is south of Tarcutta and the RTA wanted a facility at the intersection, and they tried to get BP and Shell and everyone to do it. We said, "No, we don't want it there. We want it in Tarcutta because that is the centre point." Then there was a lot of toing and froing and eventually we received that site at Tarcutta. Nhill is another one. I am sure all of you know that the trucks that run to Adelaide do a lot of changeovers at Nhill. It has taken 20 years, and that is being constructed as we speak. I do not know whether those local people have had a hand in how to design that. It is out of my scope really and I can't sort of say, "Hey, I want to be involved in that when I never go there."

CHAIR: The Committee is going to Tarcutta tonight. What should we be looking at in that area tonight?

Mr HANNIFEY: Okay, this is the Hume Highway. At the moment you come into Tarcutta, coming north you come through the Mobil and there is a little roadhouse there that was one of our sites. Opposite that there are approximately 10 or 12 bays—I haven't counted them—where a lot of changeovers were done. That was all we had previously. North and south of Tarcutta you will see parking bays on the side of the road that blokes still now do changeovers in. Once you go past that parking bay on the southbound side there is an exit to the left and there is a large concrete area in there. To get into there in a B-double is not too bad but to get out you are on a slight slope. The room for a B-double means you have got to go right over against this gutter, and right over against that gutter to get out, and you will see where people have already driven over gutters. When you look at the site there is no provision for shade, so no-one uses it of a day time—they all go somewhere else—whereas if it was designed properly with shade around it and separation maybe it would have been able to be utilised in the daytime as well. It is the same as the car bays. At the moment, you know, you are only getting 12 hours use out of them and we have got nowhere to go. If they were designed for 24-hour use for both there would be better utilisation. My understanding is that the new alignment will go behind that parking bay is that correct?

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: That is right.

Mr HANNIFEY: And we will still have access to that bay from the new road alignment. Hopefully that will be better than what it is now. Maybe when they designed it they looked at the future, but it took 20 years to get that facility and in that time people got killed and we shouldn't have had to wait that long.

CHAIR: I am interested in your comments in relation to trip plans. We heard evidence last week from professional drivers that trip plans served no great purpose. What is your view on that?

Mr HANNIFEY: They are exactly right. As a driver I make a plan. I know that, for instance, this afternoon, I imagine, I am going to Melbourne—I do not know that yet and that could well change. My biggest problem with the trip plan was the company I worked for had a book, which I had to fill out with my proposed trip and then I had to fill out what I did. Now what I did was exactly the same as what I put in my logbook. So that is duplication for a start. Then I go to a company and we do what is called a "subbie load"—I am doing it for another company who is doing it for another company. They want me to fill out another form, which has what I am going to do and what I did. I am now up to two proposed plans, one that I have to do for my company to comply, one that I have to do for them or they won't give me the load, and three actual plans of what I did for each of them plus my logbook. Now if you can tell me that writing the same information out five times on five different sets of documents, and on every one of those you have got to put the rego, where you left and when you last had your break, and all of these, where I am, and odometer readings, there is half an hour's writing before you even start the trip.

Then I have to write if I change that plan. So if I blow a tyre or I feel sick I have to write, "Well I changed this plan because I felt sick." I should not have to do that. That piece of paper does not make me safer.

It does not make me do something that I don't already do. Even then the facilities aren't there. You try and get a decent meal on the road now it is damn near impossible. Years ago you travelled up and down the highway and where did everybody go? If the trucks were pulled up that is where you went for a good feed. All those little places have gone. They can't compete with McDonald's and BP, so they are not there for us. Now, because of the fact that the trucks are far more fuel efficient and we have a card, so we can only fill at one site, I will not go to the BP and then drive round the corner and go to the Shell because the meal is better, because my logbook is going to be a problem for a start. How do you put in five minutes? Then I have lost 15 more minutes out of my driving hours and that is one of the biggest things with these changes.

In the past the logbook is built on 15-minute increments. I will be completely honest with you, if I left at 3.08 that went into my logbook at 3.15. I can only control the time I leave, not the time I arrive. At the worst in a day, I am not going to stop every 15 minutes so I can pick up seven minutes. In our logbook we are allowed to drive for five hours, have a half hour, drive five hours, have a half hour, so there are three stops. Let us say I do one because there is a good feed there or I want to go to the toilet, so there are four stops. If I pick up eight minutes on each of those four stops, technically I might exceed the number of hours I have driven in a day by half an hour—four times eights are 32.

The current rule means that if I leave at 3.14, I have to write in my logbook I left at three o'clock. I have given up a quarter of an hour of my driving time for that day in one movement. If that happens four more times, I have lost two hours out of my driving day. If I am looking to do a 10-hour trip and I lose that, and I blow a tyre or have to load, I cannot legally do that trip. That is where these electronic work diaries are going to watch me every minute, every second, every kilometre. I do not know of any driver who wants to work 18 hours a day, seven days a week, but I know a lot of drivers who want to be able to drive when they are fit and sleep when they are tired, and that is how most of them have done it for the last 30 years.

Now, with these new rules, it is harder to comply, it is easier to be punished and we are forcing people out of this industry who I would value with my life every night on the highway and then we replace them with people who do not have the training or do not have the knowledge and do not have that 30 years experience to come at me on the road and run me off and kill me, and that is a real concern.

CHAIR: I note your comments about private truck use. You suggest, I think from memory, being able to drive your prime mover 75 kilometres?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

CHAIR: What do you do now if you say you are in Brisbane?

Mr HANNIFEY: You break the law. There is a BP truck stop in Brisbane. I was there one day and I was speaking to a lady truck driver from Western Australia when this fellow who works at the service station came over. He said, "Look at the price of" whatever it was. He said, "At the Shell it is two bucks. Here it's three and in the restaurant it's four." He said, "They've just told us to put all the prices of the cigarettes up by 10 per cent" because they know that once you go to that site, you cannot go anywhere else and they are screwing us all, ripping us off and then you do not get any competition. Shell sold off all their roadhouses and that made it even harder. Even going to Melbourne they put an eight-hour limit on the site. So if you get there late on a Friday night and you cannot unload, where are you supposed to go? Put the truck on a skyhook.

When you go to those sites, they are not designed for us; there is not enough room. I have had to wait and sit at the bowser to get a park to go to the toilet at the BP at Cooper Street because there is just no room. What is happening now with those facilities being lost, is that if I am on a 24-hour break and I want to go to the doctor, the dentist or the candlestick maker, I have got a registered vehicle, I have a licence to drive that vehicle but as soon as I drive that vehicle out the gate—and there was a time a little while ago in Townsville where I think the roadhouse was three kilometres from the area where most of the trucks filled and the Main Roads coppers were sitting there, knocking the drivers off for not putting an entry in their logbook for driving three kilometres to get a meal.

The same applies in a seven-hour break. If I pull up at one site and I want to have a meal, and then I want to get out of there because I cannot physically get a park and I want to drive 10 minutes down the road where there is shade, or whatever the case may be, that is supposed to go in my logbook. That break is my seven-hour break. It just makes it harder and harder to comply and easier to be punished. I take my truck home. When my truck has no trailers on it—and again with the system I have in the truck I can prove that it does not

have a load on it. If I go to work, I have to empty the truck. I have all my bedding, I have my fridge, which is that big and that tall and weighs 100 kilos with all my food in it. I have all my bits and pieces such as my computer and camera; I do not want to leave that in the truck.

If I take the truck home, technically I have to write that in my logbook because they believe it is work, but it is not. It is the same as me driving the car to and from. I leave work generally on a Sunday and I do not get home until a Saturday. So I have to have a car sit there for six days a week for nothing and it is going to have a flat battery every second month and then I have to get there, take all the stuff out of the truck—and I am not going to put that down as work time anyway—and put it in the car. Then I have to take the car home and then I have to take the stuff out of the car, and then I have to do it all again the other way. Why cannot I drive that truck home bobtail if my employer allows me to? I do not have to take everything out; when I get there it has got everything in it I need, I just take what I need out, put it back, and I am away again. At the moment I am breaking the law to do that and I do not believe that is justifiable or fair.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: I was interested in the five recommendations that you have made. You talked about the requirement for two consecutive nights rest?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: You have a different view on that, is that right?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: You also talk about split rests, is that right?

Mr HANNIFEY: Yes.

Mr DARYL MAGUIRE: Which was your initial suggestion. Can you elaborate a little on that for us?

Mr HANNIFEY: I certainly can. Just recently National Transport Insurance has released its accident data. It is probably the biggest insurer in the road transport industry. The worst time for an accident is on Monday in the afternoon. Using myself as an example—and a lot of other drivers drive for six nights of the week—you have your one night at home, and anybody knows that if you work shift work, the intent is that it takes your body three days to acclimatise to a change of shift. Technically, you should not change shifts more than once a fortnight.

Our industry has run on working six nights, having a night at home and going to work on the Monday. Now a lot of drivers will tell you that Monday is the hardest day to go to work because you have suddenly had one night at home, but a lot of blokes will cope with that by having a nanny nap, if you wish, or an afternoon couple of hours. Now the problem with not being able to split your rest means that that punishes you later in the night; you still have to pull up and have another seven-hour break whether you want it or not and you can lose driving hours, depending on where that fits into your longer schedule.

The other thing is that with the consecutive nights, what they are now saying is that I must have two consecutive nights, so I am breaking shift. Straight after having two consecutive nights off, then I break shift again to be able to drive the next five nights. I believe that is creating a far bigger problem than it is solving. All the research into shift work verifies that. Their argument is that we cannot get decent rests. We used to have a six-hour break and it was extended to seven. The reason for that was that they said that you cannot get a six-hour sleep in a six-hour break. I said, "But how far do I have to go? The bunk is there. If I am tired I can get into the bunk and I can be asleep because that is where I live six nights a week."

The next extension to that is that technically under the law you are not allowed to spend seven nights in the truck; you must have a 24-hour break out of the truck. I will tell you that blokes who spend six nights in a truck are not going to get out on the seventh night, go in a motel, into an unfamiliar bed, unfamiliar surroundings, pay money to get a lousy night's sleep, to get back in the truck the next night. If you have a truck that is set up with good facilities, a good sleeper bunk—and there needs to be probably better legislation on what that entails—then you are going to get a good night's sleep. If I have to have those two nights, I believe it throws your body clock out and then you go back to work the next day and that is the hardest day to go to work. That is why after that one night there are more accidents.

The next thing is with split rests and Garry Liddle, the CEO of VicRoads was in the truck. I said, "Okay, Victoria will not allow us to split that seven-hour break at all." In New South Wales and Queensland we must prove that we had to do it. They are saying if you do not have seven, you can have six plus two. That can be because I was asleep, a stock crate pulled up beside me; that was no good, so I moved down the road and I will split that six plus two. But what happens if he turns up after three. Then I still have to have six plus three. With that seven-hour break, if you are going to Melbourne you get messed around; something goes wrong. And it does. You go to the customer and he is not ready or the order is not done; you get messed around. You come out of Melbourne and you do the right thing. You have a rest in the afternoon for three or four hours. You have had good sleep when you were tired, you have set yourself up; you have had it where there was shade. That is fine. That night I am still required to have another seven-hour continuous break.

Now if you are running Sydney to Melbourne, it is not so bad. If you are running Melbourne to Brisbane, it is a two-day trip and because our logbooks work on a rolling 24-hour period, if I put that break in the wrong place, then I run out of hours to get to Brisbane on the second day. I pull up at Toowoomba and I am out of hours because I have done the right thing, because when I was tired I went to bed. Garry Liddle's exact words to me were, "Oh, so the incentive is to drive when you are tired". That is where Safe-T-Cam has an impact. So many drivers will say to you, "I had to get through the camera". They will have an accident before they get there because if they do not get through the camera, they cannot then match where they want to be and do the right thing.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: Is Safe-T-Cam in other States or only in New South Wales?

Mr HANNIFEY: Only in New South Wales and South Australia. The New South Wales Government tried very, very hard to get the other States to take it on; they would not. My understanding is that there was a similar system used in America that had hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on it, which was eventually thrown out. Safe-T-cams as such on the Hume Highway—again, personal view—is nothing but a joke. Because the blokes get out there and, look, as I say, not all truck drivers are perfect. I have been passed by the same truck five times in one night, because they roar down the highway, they pull into a truck stop, they wait three, two, one and launch off down the road again, and they time it so that they don't breach the safe-T-cam times. But if I am running Brisbane-Melbourne—again, I went to a RTA meeting and Ann Williamson was there, one of those fatigue experts, and I said to her exactly that. On the Hume it is a joke but on the Newell if I go to bed when I am tired before I get into New South Wales, because you have a camera at Albury or at Shepparton and a camera at Goondiwindi, because that is more than 12 hours driving, I must show my 7-hour break within New South Wales.

Now if I go to bed when I am tired before I get to New South Wales and then I still have to have that continuous break when I am not tired, I am sitting there after three hours thinking to myself: Jeez, what am I going to do for the next four hours? I can walk around here, round and round the truck! Then that impacts on when I can get into Brisbane. So if you go to bed and do the right thing you get punished. If you get caught you get punished. Years ago logbooks were called lie books, lie sheets, whatever you like. The safe-T-cam has changed that but so has GPS tracking and all of those things—many of the fleets have that in their trucks now. My concern is if we go to these electronic diaries unless there is some provision for the fact that we need that little bit of flexibility. As I say, no driver I know wants to work 18-hours a day, 7-days a week, but we need the flexibility and the facilities to be able to drive when we are fit and sleep when we are tired, and we don't have either of those things now.

CHAIR: Thank you for your attendance at this public hearing this morning and for your evidence.

Mr HANNIFEY: The young lady said someone would ask me if I had anything else to table and I have this sheet here, which is just another conclusion. I just want to make sure that is there. There is an offer to any of you in there, and that is the aim of my truck—and I have got to get another one now—that I have people in the truck once a month. In part of this, and I certainly suggest it in my submission, I ask some of you spend time in trucks and get a chance to talk to drivers. There is an offer to any of you to come and do a trip in the truck to learn these things firsthand. I do believe that is so valuable that it just can't be understated.

(The witness withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 9.53 a.m.)