



# Every cross a roadside reminder

The issue of heavy vehicle safety was brought into the public eye yesterday, with 287 crosses lining the Peter Ross Edward Causeway. The crosses represent the number of heavy vehicle fatalities which occurred in Australia last year.



**Remembering those lost:** Transport Workers Union of Australia secretary Wayne Mader with stark reminders of truckies lost in road fatalities.

Picture: Ray Sizer

# Crosses to bear

CAMPAIGN LINKING DRIVER FATIGUE AND LOW PAY INVOKES ROAD TOLL

**By Chloe Warburton**

The number of people who died in heavy vehicle incidents on Australian roads last year was all too clear to motorists yesterday, with hundreds of white crosses lining the Peter Ross Edwards Causeway to raise public awareness.

The Transport Workers Union of Australia was using the 287 crosses to demonstrate its campaign for "safe rates" in a statewide road trip to indicate the plight of truck drivers

on national highways.

Former truck driver and union organiser for the north Daryl Coghill, who is originally from Numurkah, worked in the industry for 25 years before starting with the union nearly five years ago. He said truck drivers faced many dangers on the road.

"The main thing is fatigue, given the time frames — you're always put under pressure to be in a place at a certain time and then get back," Mr Coghill said.

"We were never given adequate time for breaks.

"Companies say they give good hours, but it's not the truth. It was always about getting there as quick as possible and the wages, conditions and maintenance side of things are always the first to go under pressure.

"It's not until you pull up at a set of lights and realise the brakes aren't working too well, or that there's a lot of rubber on the side of the road when there

shouldn't be, that you realise the truck really does need maintenance and the owner is putting it off.

"When you put a time limit of nine to 10 hours to get from Shepparton to Sydney, it doesn't leave a whole lot of time for anything but driving."

State secretary of the Transport Workers Union of Australia in Victoria and Tasmania Wayne Mader said one of the main issues in transport worker fatalities was the low rates of

pay that put them under pressure to achieve more in the shortest time possible.

"The TWU is involved in a national campaign about safe rates of pay for transport workers," he said.

"It's supported by government in accordance with an inquiry led by Professor Michael Quinlan which found that clear evidence exists that if a transport worker is low-paid, it leads to unsafe practice."



**Cause and effect:** TWU secretary Wayne Mader says there's a link between drivers' low pay and fatal truck accidents.

Pictures: Ray Sizer