



Time for governments to act on truck deaths

By **Campbell Walker**

WHITE crosses lined the Peel Bridge in Tamworth on Thursday, representing the 287 lives lost on the roads each year in truck crashes, while governments fail to act on transport safety recommendations.

The crosses are part of an ongoing campaign by the Transport Workers' Union which began in November last year, a year after the Wright-Quinlan inquiry found that current pay practices influence

truck-drivers to cut corners on safety.

Newcastle and northern NSW TWU secretary Mick Forbes told *The Leader* the recent spike in truck crashes causing deaths raised many issues the whole community should be aware of.

"Tamworth and its surrounding area relies on truck movements for its very existence, and road safety should concern not just local businesses, but the community as a whole," Mr Forbes said.

"All of the studies in this industry tell us that it is the economic pressure applied by clients that causes crashes."

The ATU want paid waiting time, a full cost recovery system for fluctuating fuel prices and even stronger chain-of-responsibility laws to be legislated as part of the Council of Australian Governments' decision to establish uniform transport laws.

"Truck drivers spend an average of 20 hours waiting to be loaded and unloaded,

which is all un-paid," Mr Forbes said.

"Owner-drivers are then pressured to make up for lost time, driving for longer hours than they should, driving overloaded, or even driving beyond the speed limits.

"The RTA has made some ground on chain-of-responsibility laws which shares part responsibility between the consignor, driver and transport company for pushing these drivers too hard, but it still needs to go further."



TRAGIC: NSW Transport Workers' Union northern NSW secretary Mick Forbes ponders crosses representing 287 lives lost on roads in the past year. 110210JA02