



Put the brakes on truckies' toll

TRUCK drivers want to turn around an increasing road death trend in heavy vehicle accidents.

More than 280 people died on the roads last year as a direct result of heavy vehicle accidents – a 24 per cent increase on the previous year.

The Transport Workers Union is working with governments at all levels in a bid to ensure minimum pay rates for truck drivers.

Transport Workers Union North Coast secretary Mick Forbes handed a report on safety and rates of pay in the transport industry to Port Macquarie MP Peter Besseling on Friday and asked it to be considered

as part of a Transport Workers Union national campaign.

“When the rest of the road toll is on the decline, the heavy vehicle road toll is on the increase,” Mr Forbes said.

He said drivers made more money the more kilometres they covered, while they were largely unpaid while they waited for their trucks to be unloaded.

About 500 heavy vehicle drivers, including owner operators, are believed to live in the Port Macquarie area.

Mr Forbes said minimum pay rates would take a lot of pressure off driv-

ers.

“These people have got to be paid right, so they can put food on the table, run their vehicle and do it safely,” he said.

Port Macquarie MP Peter Besseling said the heavy vehicle road safety issue was an important one, not only to the drivers but to all road users.

Transport Workers Union members will travel across the country in coming weeks to raise awareness for the importance of lasting change in the industry.

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□ **Safety campaign:** Transport Workers Union North Coast secretary Mick Forbes, union delegate Mike Walsh and Port Macquarie MP Peter Besseling discuss road safety.