



# Mayor becomes prime mover in truck campaign

Council shares concern for heavy vehicle statistics

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THE TRANSPORT Workers Union made a special stop in Lismore last week to hand a new road safety report directly to Mayor Jenny Dowell.

While road transport industry safety is a federal issue, Cr Dowell was keen to meet the TWU and add her support to its national campaign to reduce the 281 fatalities involving heavy vehicles last year, as detailed in the report.

"I'm here because many truck drivers live and work in our community and we all have to share the roads with heavy vehicles," she said.

"We need to know that all truck drivers on our roads are working under safe conditions.

"The thought of a family losing a dad or another family member due to workplace pressures hor-

rifies me."

The report highlights a worsening safety crisis **more news online at [northernstar.com.au](http://northernstar.com.au)** in the growing road transport industry detailing a 24 per cent increase in fatal crashes involving heavy rigid trucks, and a 6pc increase in articulated trucks.

TWU official Helen Bellette said the campaign aimed to localise and humanise the shocking statistics and that it was important that all politicians took up the case on behalf of their constituents.

"The TWU has been working for some time with governments at all levels in order to ensure there is a federal determination with minimum rates of pay for truck drivers," she said.

"With 281 people being killed in our industry

each year, it is important that drivers have full cost recovery, including pay for waiting times and fuel costs, so they are not forced into doing 'one more load' to make ends meet."

Campaign truck driver Frank Black said it was not uncommon in his workplace to wait, unpaid, for up to five hours to get unloaded.

"We then have to make up that time ourselves," he said explaining that company workers not driving trucks with company colours and logos often found themselves in that situation.

The campaign truck will continue across the country during the next few weeks stopping at major regional and metropolitan centres to raise awareness and support.



## We asked: Do truckies do it tough?



**'OLD GLEN' SHARP, of Goonellabah:** Definitely. They have to be away from their families for a long time and live like gypsies.



**PETE BRENTNALL, of Goonellabah:** The main issue with truck drivers is getting their trucks off the roads and replacing them with trains.



**CINDY FLICK, of Goonellabah:** Yes, I think they do have it tough. They have to travel really fast so there is a safety issue.



**BLAYNE ARNOLD, of Goonellabah:** Everybody has it tough. Some truck drivers probably have it tougher than most.



**FAY HANLON, of Goonellabah:** Some do because they are under a lot of pressure. But I don't have nice things to say about truck drivers.



ON BOARD: Lismore mayor Jenny Dowell meets with Brisbane truck driver Frank Black on his trip from Brisbane to Canberra to promote the Safe Rates Summit findings.  
Picture: JACKLYN WAGNER