



**TWU**  
Carrying Australia

# TRUCKIE HEALTH

FEBRUARY 2021

## STUDY REVEALS SHOCKING INSIGHT



We already know that trucking is a dangerous job. But a three-year study published yesterday by Monash University paints a horrific picture of just how bad things are. [Click here to watch the ABC 7:30 report.](#)

In the largest study in trucking ever, the physical and mental health problems truck drivers face are connected to the many pressures and stresses of the job, and directly linked to an increase in crashes and near misses. The whole community is impacted when driver health is not a priority.

It's time for the Federal Government to take your health seriously. That means having enough well-resourced rest stops that are hygienic and accessible for drivers. It means making wealthy clients at the top of the supply chain accountable for the pressures they force onto you as drivers. And it means making road transport safer.

**But we need every one of you to fight for each other.**



[Click here to take the pledge](#)  
to take action and  
improve conditions for  
everyone in trucking



Read more about the  
issues in the  
infographic below.

**TOGETHER, WE ARE STRONGER.**  
**JOIN NOW FOR A BETTER FUTURE.**

[www.twu.com.au/join](http://www.twu.com.au/join)

**TWU SA/NT** Ian Smith **P:** 08 8346 4177 **E:** [info@twusant.com.au](mailto:info@twusant.com.au) **W:** [www.twusant.com.au](http://www.twusant.com.au)

Authorised by Michael Kaine, National Secretary, Transport Workers' Union. Level 2, 388-390 Sussex Street, Sydney 2000 p (02) 8114 6500 e [twu@twu.com.au](mailto:twu@twu.com.au)



# DRIVING HEALTH STUDY

The first major survey of truck driver health, conducted by Monash University in partnership with TWU, Linfox and the Centre for WHS, reveals shocking problems in Australia's most common job for men. It points to a need for urgent reform to address and prevent physical and mental health issues among drivers.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

TRUCK DRIVERS

NATIONAL AVERAGE



54%

are obese compared to

32%

of the general population



30%

had three or more diagnosed medical conditions compared to

8%

of the general population



30%

were in fair to poor general health compared to

16%

of the general population



34%

had back problems compared to

17%

for Australian males

“ The biggest issue with drivers is just **food and the availability of fresh, good food on the road**. That's probably one of the biggest issues. But the thing is, what people tell us to eat, and what is available on the road, it's very hard to get... my work is all overnight so I sleep during the day and then eat during the night. So it's very, very hard. ”

## MENTAL HEALTH



50%

reported having some level of psychological distress



1 in 5  
1 in 9

under 35 reported severe psychological distress compared to

of the average population

“ Just last week, I had a driver say that he nearly pulled the wheel on the truck to head straight into a tree, because it was just crap; it was too overwhelming for him. **And he's breaking down crying on the phone.** ”

more over page...

## DANGEROUS WORKING CONDITIONS



**71%**

reported near misses on average once a week



**37%** *Only* **11%**

reported working more than 60 hours a week

worked less than 40 hours a week

“ If I miss a deadline my **management get rather upset with me**. They like to try and yell, rant and rave down the phone at me. ”

“ There are some cases of three or four-lane highways where there's **nowhere to pull over**. I can personally tell you I've been driving along there struggling to keep within my lane and then trying, and just struggling to stay awake and there's nowhere to pull over. ”

## RELATIONSHIP STRUGGLES



**SOCIAL ISOLATION**

Social isolation on the road and long working hours often led to relationship breakdowns with family.

“ Myself and my ex-wife separated... **because I was away so much**. So that's probably one time where I lost everything. ”

“ My son's been looking for my guidance and my love I suppose and it hasn't been there because **I've been too busy** driving trucks and, you know, fighting my own battles. ”

## BARRIERS TO HEALTH



Difficulties in eating healthily and exercising



Challenges of accessing professional help with unpredictable shifts



Sub-standard facilities on the road



Time pressures and long working hours



Financial Pressure

“ There's truck rest areas where there might be 10 and 15 trucks parked of a night time and there's **not one single toilet and nowhere to wash your hands**, nowhere to wash your face, nowhere to cook a meal, nowhere to sit in the shade, trucks are all out in the sun in a dustbowl. ”

“ 95% of drivers I talk to don't want to work more than 12 hours a day, **but the owners need more to pay the [truck] payments**... they've got to make that truck work 16 hours a day... six days a week... to make the payments because they work that cheap. ”

**TOGETHER, WE ARE STRONGER.  
JOIN NOW FOR A BETTER FUTURE.**

[www.twu.com.au/join](http://www.twu.com.au/join)

**TWU SA/NT** Ian Smith **P:** 08 8346 4177 **E:** [info@twusant.com.au](mailto:info@twusant.com.au) **W:** [www.twusant.com.au](http://www.twusant.com.au)

Authorised by Michael Kaine, National Secretary, Transport Workers' Union. Level 2, 388-390 Sussex Street, Sydney 2000 p (02) 8114 6500 e [twu@twu.com.au](mailto:twu@twu.com.au)

