

# Transport Workers' Union of Australia

## National Office

a. 388-390 Sussex St, Sydney NSW 2000  
t. 02 8114 6500

ABN 18 559 030 246



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

National Secretary  
**Michael Kaine**

4 February 2022

The Hon Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister & Chair of the National Cabinet

By email: [Scott.Morrison.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Scott.Morrison.MP@aph.gov.au)

Dear Prime Minister

The Transport Workers' Union represents thousands of truck drivers including owner drivers across the country. We write in response to national transport and logistics companies standing down drivers as a result of flooding in South and Western Australia disrupting supply chains. We call on the Federal Government to immediately provide financial support for drivers affected, and commit to longer term planning and upgrades to reduce disruptions in future.

As you would be aware, flooding in South Australia has washed out 300km of the Trans-Australian Railway, severing the 'umbilical cord' which carries consumer goods and supplies from eastern states into Western Australia. It's been reported the disruptions may continue for several weeks if not months. Equally, major freight routes have been significantly impacted between South Australia and the Northern Territory impacting jobs and emptying supermarkets of crucial supplies.

### Financial impact

The knock-on effect for local supply chains in Western Australia cannot be understated. Transport workers who rely on deliveries arriving by train have had their work dry up overnight. Workers have been stood down by their employers, with workers pressured to use up their paid leave or cash in leave in advance, or go without income. Subcontractors and casuals without these entitlements have been left with no financial support. For owner operators running on wafer thin margins, this could be enough to put them out of business.

Transport workers are some of the heroes of this pandemic. Many are being left in the lurch by a crisis not of their own making. Without immediate disaster support, the Federal Government risks throwing drivers into financial ruin – particularly owner drivers who have fixed costs like truck repayments.

While the TWU is in ongoing discussions with the WA Government about how it can best support the drivers affected, this is first and foremost a national crisis. Hundreds of workers and owner drivers across the country are already stood down and more will lose work over the coming weeks should the flooding continue impacting the revenue of transport and logistics companies.

NSW/QLD State Secretary  
**Richard Olsen**  
1800 729 909

Vic/Tas State Secretary  
**John Berger**  
1300 727 614

WA State Secretary  
**Tim Dawson**  
08 6313 3000

SA/NT State Secretary  
**Ian Smith**  
08 8346 4177

## National Office

a. 388-390 Sussex St, Sydney NSW 2000

t. 02 8114 6500

ABN 18 559 030 246



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

National Secretary  
**Michael Kaine**

## Longer term supply chain planning

These significant disruptions point to a broader national issue: the failure to adequately plan ahead to protect supply chains.

The Trans-Australian Railway is a national asset, and it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to ensure critical infrastructure is – to the extent possible – insulated from disruptions like natural disasters or external shocks. This rail line has been deteriorating with no interest in upgrades from the Federal Government despite its critical importance.

Transport workers are bearing the brunt of an absence of national leadership. Whether it's failing to safeguard critical industries like aviation and road transport against external shocks, refusing to listen to transport workers calling for a national approach to ensure supply chains remain safe and open - including free rapid antigen tests, or inaction to support workers and small businesses during this recent flooding event.

**Transport workers urgently need national support. We seek your immediate commitment as Prime Minister that:**

- **The Federal Government will introduce a wage scheme similar to JobKeeper or targeted disaster support that goes straight into the pockets of workers to help drivers ride out this crisis; and**
- **The Federal Government will, in consultation with workers, unions and industry, scope and implement longer term planning to protect essential supply chains from disruption and external shocks.**

Given the seriousness of this crisis, we request your urgent consideration and response. The TWU is available to meet with you to discuss these issues as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Nick McIntosh  
TWU Acting National Secretary

Tim Dawson  
TWU WA Branch Secretary

CC. The Hon Mark McGowan MP, Premier of Western Australia