



2 June 2022

Senator Glenn Sterle
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee Chair

Via Committee Secretariat: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Sterle –

As you are aware, the Transport Workers' Union of Australia (TWU), the Australian Road Transport Industrial Organisation (ARTIO) and the National Road Freighters Association (NRFA) represent thousands of workers and operators in Australia's road transport industry.

We write first to congratulate the incoming Albanese Government on its success at the recent Federal Election. We look forward to working constructively with you as a leading advocate for the transport sector in the Federal Government on improving the industry's sustainability into the future.

To that end, we write regarding the landmark *Without Trucks, Australia Stops* report; the important recommendations of which were largely ignored by the outgoing Morrison Government. The Inquiry you chaired fostered a renewed spirit of industry cooperation, in large part because of your genuine commitment to consultation and dedication to improving the lives of drivers and operators.

However, in the time since the Committee concluded its important work, the sustainability of the road transport industry has been crippled by the triple pressures of COVID-19, natural disasters and rising operating costs caused by astronomical fuel costs. Without a robust system in place capable of responding quickly to emerging threats to the industry— an independent body with the power to create universal, binding standards as recommended by the Committee – the economic and contracting pressures on drivers and operators have never been more severe.

As a consequence, potentially thousands of operators and owner drivers are staring down the barrel of insolvency. Further, the consequences of Federal inaction are deadly: since the Report was tabled, 140 people have been killed in truck-involved crashes – including 46 truck drivers.

Unless the incoming Albanese Government takes swift action to address the contracting pressures crushing road transport as laid out in black in white in the Senate report, we risk the potential collapse of Australia's national supply chains.

We write to urge the committee to reconvene its working group at the earliest possible opportunity to lead industry participation in establishing an independent body without delay, in addition to further action on all 10 recommendations.



We note that the 10th recommendation of the Report is for the Federal Government to convene a Transport Advisory Group consisting of workers, unions and transport industry representatives to serve as an advisory body for Ministers responsible for infrastructure and transport. Due to your remarkable efforts to unite all sections of the industry throughout the inquiry, you are best placed to convene this working group.

It is our hope the group would work constructively with the Federal Government on drafting a timetable to implement the Committee's important recommendations; all of which were supported by Labor Senators on the Committee.

The TWU, ARTIO and NRFA are prepared to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss these important matters. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Kaine".

Michael Kaine
TWU National Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Anderson".

Peter Anderson
ARTIO National Secretary

Rod Hannifey
NRFA President