

Transport Workers' Union of Australia

National Office

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t. 02 8114 6500

ABN 18 559 030 246



www.twu.com.au

National Secretary
Michael Kaine

2 June 2022

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
By email: Tony.Burke.MP@aph.gov.au

The Hon Catherine King MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
By email: Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au

cc: Chair Senator Glenn Sterle
Chair of the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
By email: Senator.Sterle@aph.gov.au

Dear Ministers,

As you know, the Transport Workers' Union represents thousands of workers in road transport and aviation across the country. On behalf of the men and women who keep Australia moving, we write to extend our sincerest congratulations on your recent Federal Election success and appointments to the National Cabinet in the Albanese Government.

We look forward to continuing to work constructively with you to improve the lives and conditions of transport workers, in particular by acting urgently on the government's commitment to establish an independent body in trucking as recommended by the Senate Select Committee chaired by Senator Glenn Sterle.

To that end, we write to express the haste with which a tribunal to set enforceable minimum standards for truck drivers and operators must be installed. Significant increases in fuel costs pose existential threats to transport businesses and owner drivers, many of whom operate on razor thin margins.

With no mechanism to back cost recovery from economic powers at the top of supply chains, rising operating costs are undermining the sustainability of the industry as a whole. The problem was exacerbated by the former Morrison Government's snap decision to remove the fuel tax credit previously available to truck drivers, meaning their current savings amount to just four cents per litre.

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For the workers who in recent years carried Australia through the pandemic, bushfires and floods, these changes are neither fair nor sustainable with operating costs likely to remain high for some time to come. This must be urgently addressed through the Senate-recommended regulation to ease contracting pressures and hold supply chains to account for cost recovery.

When rising operating costs increase the economic and contracting pressures on the industry, the results are deadly. It is well-documented that drivers are more likely to overload, speed, drive while fatigued and cut back on maintenance when operating costs smash their already thin profit margins. In 2022 alone, 83 people have been killed in truck-involved crashes – including 24 truck drivers.

These issues point to a broader need for industry reform to support the long-term sustainability of road transport, which was widely supported across the transport industry when successfully brought together by Senator Glenn Sterle and the Select Committee investigating safety in tucking. Central to improving the lives of transport workers is implementing in-full the 10 recommendations of the landmark *Without Trucks, Australia Stops* report.

Given the seriousness of this crisis, we hope to see the implementation of this report as a top priority under your joint portfolios, with Senator Glenn Sterle as industry expert and Committee Chair at the helm.

Congratulations once again. The TWU is available to meet at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

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

Michael Kaine
TWU National Secretary

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