

TOWARDS A NATIONAL OPERATING STANDARD FOR HEAVY VEHICLES MAKING ELECTRONIC COLLECTION OF INFORMATION COMPULSORY

Australia's Heavy Vehicle National Law should:

- encourage and embrace the use of technology for safety and access purposes; and
- ensure operators have suitable safety management systems in place and the capital necessary to ensure the safe operation of heavy vehicles.

The Australian Logistics Council (ALC) believes these goals can be enhanced through the incorporation of a national operating standard for heavy vehicle operators into the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL).

An important element of the standard would be a requirement for operators to collect and keep specified pieces of information using telemetric equipment and services compatible with standards and performance outcomes recognised through the National Telematics Framework.¹

ALC believes data is the 'new oil' for the freight transport industry. ALC has therefore traditionally supported any amendments to the HVNL that facilitate the use of data to discharge statutory obligations.

Historically, one of the perceived barriers to mandatory collection of data has been the cost of the equipment required. However, there is little doubt that it has become far more affordable since the HVNL was first drafted.

ALC members advise that for around \$2500 (for hardware) plus around \$30 a month service fee, a compliant unit can be obtained that provides:

- compliance with NHVAS mass, maintenance and fatigue modules;
- electronic work diaries and electronic fit for duty declarations;
- integration with on board weighing systems;
- electronic braking systems, transport/freight management systems, distraction monitoring services and cameras;

¹ A digital business platform consisting of infrastructure and rules that support an open marketplace of telematics and related intelligent technology providers. For further information see: <https://www.tca.gov.au/ntf/national-telematics-framework>.

- applications to calculate Fuel Tax credits, location and speed monitoring, trailer tracking and driver navigation services: and
- assistance in fuel management and the production of engine information

On this basis, it is no longer feasible to argue that compliance costs outweigh the benefits of mandatory recording of data, which include:

- allowing road owners to fully understand the volumes of heavy vehicle traffic on their network;
- having on hand speed and fatigue information for use as required;
- providing operators with data that can help them develop their business;
- giving road owners the best data to make decisions as to whether a particular vehicle should access a road; and
- providing data that can be used in a National Freight Data Hub, improving freight data collection, sharing and analysis practices to enable industry and government freight sector participants make better informed operational, planning and investment decisions.²

As the Productivity Commission found³:

Box 9.13 Heavy vehicle operators' use of telematics

The NTC made the following findings in regard to operators use of telematics and to track vehicles, monitor speed, and inform targeted driver training programs:

- Finding 12: a 2018 study conducted by Teletrac Navman reported that 89 per cent of respondents use telematics to monitor vehicle tracking, 67 per cent use telematics to monitor speed, 57 per cent to monitor distance travelled and 51 per cent to monitor driver hours.
- Finding 13: Many transport operators are increasingly adopting safety technologies and telematics to derive safety, productivity and commercial benefits. Safer operators are using telematics and safety technology in the following ways:
 - J.J. Richards and Sons use speed limiters on their entire heavy vehicle fleet, leading to shorter stopping distances and more time to identify and react to dangers ahead.

² See Transport and Infrastructure Council (2019) *National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy National Action Plan*: 22 - <https://www.freightaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-action-plan-august-2019.pdf>

³ Productivity Commission *National Transport Regulatory Reform Inquiry Report*: 283 - <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/transport/report/transport.pdf>

- Linfox has partnered with Telstra and MTData to implement an advanced telematics and management solution into its Australian truck fleet.
- Rod Pilon Transport driver, Rod Hannifey, drives a TRUCKRIGHT Industry Vehicle (TIV), which aims to improve awareness and road safety. The TIV has Teletrac Navman telematics installed to allow Rod to operate under IAP. ...
- Simon National Carriers has developed its own in-vehicle telematics solution to meet the needs of the business. The telematics system records location, speed and self-declared mass and integrates business work and rest time management with payroll and their own freight management systems.
- Toll Group are ... undergoing a \$1.5 billion equipment upgrade, which include introducing a new fleet with the latest safety equipment and telematics on board. The managing director of Toll Group has issued a direction that every new vehicle purchased must have telematics. ...
- Finding 14: stakeholders advised that chain of responsibility has positively influenced some operators to make the right choices and ensure they can demonstrate compliance. Some industry stakeholders provided anecdotal evidence that some operators will not use vehicles if telematics devices are not fully functioning because of chain of responsibility duties.
- Finding 15: used effectively, telematics can positively influence drivers' behaviours, attitudes and the safety culture of an organisation. Telematics data reports can highlight trends in unsafe behaviours such as speeding and harsh braking, which can then inform data-based and targeted driver training programs. (NTC 2018a, pp. 2–3)

Community confidence in the safe operation of heavy vehicles requires nothing less than a requirement for operators to collect and keep information collected electronically.

Conclusion

The creation of a National Operating Standard offers the opportunity to enhance the safety and productivity outcomes of heavy vehicle operators – key objectives of the HVNL.

The opportunity should be taken to make these amendments to the National Law and to make the legislation fit for the 2020s and beyond, in an environment where digital technologies and data will be an integral part of heavy vehicle operations.