

**Improving the Regulatory Framework for
Transport in Australia**

Transport and Logistics Productivity

Efficient freight transport is the lifeblood of modern commerce; every time a gain is made in transport productivity, consumers enjoy the benefits via lower costs on the shelves of retail outlets. But regulation plays a large part in how far transport and logistics productivity can be improved. It is a delicate balancing act between the needs of the industry and the need to protect community interests. New technologies, advances in measurement tools and changing community values all affect regulation.

Transport Regulations

Transport regulations are wide-ranging and differ in each state. Simply complying with all the different regulations imposes costs on business.

Areas of transport regulation include:

- General road rules;
- Restricted access vehicles (large truck) access routes;
- Truck mass and dimension limits;
- Fuel prices (state and federal tax components) and diesel rebates; (including strict environmental criteria)
- Security legislation for ports and airports;
- Security legislation regarding the transport of dangerous goods;
- Rail access regimes;
- Port charge regulation;
- Compliance and Enforcement (Chain of Responsibility) legislation;
- Airport curfews (especially in Adelaide and Sydney);
- Truck driving hours rules; and
- General business regulation, including GST and OHS requirements.

The Cost of Regulation

These laws are important and play a vital role in protecting the community, but there are ways that they can be made better for everyone.

In the past, when rules have been simplified, made nationally consistent or removed when no longer relevant, the whole community has benefitted through a lower transport cost component to the goods purchased every day.

Regulatory compliance costs everyone: transport companies, suppliers, outlets and consumers. So, it is important that the benefits and costs be constantly re-evaluated to allow for improvement.

Changes to Regulation

The National Transport Commission (NTC) is the body responsible for examining and proposing changes to transport regulation and promoting consistency on a national level. The NTC often seeks industry and public comment before making a change. Click [here](#) to visit the NTC website for more information.

The NTC's current and recent regulatory activities have included:

- Changes to Performance Based Standards to allow trucks access to roads based on their performance abilities, not simply mass and dimensions.
- Changes to Compliance and Enforcement legislation including Chain of Responsibility legislation to make a company legally responsible for a regulatory breach (such as over mass), not just the driver who carried it. The Chain of Responsibility approach has now been extended to model laws dealing with fatigue, the transportation of dangerous goods and heavy vehicle speeding.¹
- Regulatory changes to driving hours reduce the incidence of fatigue related crashes.
- Changes to National Rest Areas Guidelines to standardise and improve roadside rest area facilities for all road users.
- A move towards a single National Rail Safety Regulator to draw on a national pool of knowledge and resources and support the safe, efficient and sustainable growth of the railway industry.²
- A move towards a National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to streamline regulatory arrangements, reduce the compliance burden for business and reduce transport costs.³

¹ <http://ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?Areald=35&DocumentId=1419>

² <http://ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?documentid=1925>

³ <http://ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?Areald=34&DocumentId=1931>