

# ONLINE ARTICLE

<b>Title:</b>	"Hopes high for national transport reform today"
<b>Author:</b>	James Nason
<b>Date:</b>	Friday, 19 August 2011
<b>Publication:</b>	Beef Central
<b>Copyright:</b>	Beef Central Pty Ltd
<b>Address:</b>	< <a href="http://www.beefcentral.com/p/news/article/497">http://www.beefcentral.com/p/news/article/497</a> >
<b>Accessed:</b>	Wednesday, 13 June 2012



*A proposal to replace state-by-state variations in road laws with a single national set of laws will be voted on in Canberra today.*

A meeting of the nation's leaders in Canberra today has the potential to make life a lot easier and less expensive for the nation's livestock transporters.

On the agenda at today's Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting between Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the premiers and chief ministers of each state and territory is a proposal to introduce a single set of national road laws for heavy transport.

If supported, the move will replace the confusing and complicated array of heavy transport laws that exist between states with one uniform national road law.

It would also result in the creation of a single national regulator to administer heavy vehicle transport laws and road access issues Australia wide.

The Australian Livestock Transporters Association has been lobbying for national road transport reform for the past three years, and executive director Philip Halton says today's vote has "profound significance" for the entire transport sector.

"It will take a couple of years for its effect to evolve and fully touch all of our members on the road, but in Australia the law and the movement of vehicles will become seamless," Mr Halton said.

"You will genuinely be able to start from the beginning of your destination to the end of your destination and be doing the same thing all the way."

Eliminating discrepancies in allowable weights between states is one example of the practical improvements that new national regulations would bring.

In Queensland livestock vehicles are regulated according to a volume-based loading system, where operators are allowed to load to the point where animals are comfortable. A similar scheme is in place in Victoria and South Australia, however, these states also impose a limit on how heavy trucks can be when not loaded, in order to control the potential maximum weight of a vehicle.

In NSW livestock trucks are regulated in the same way as general cargo trucks, and are set a maximum weight limit. A truck loaded in compliance with Queensland laws, for example, may be breaking the law when it arrives in NSW, and again in Victoria or South Australia.

In an opinion piece in today's Australian, Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Anthony Albanese said it did not make sense that a cattle farmer transporting animals from Queensland to NSW must unload some cattle to meet the lower mass limits in NSW. These inefficiencies added about \$9 a head to freight costs, he said.

Mr Halton said a single national law would also improve the onerous diary obligations and multiple fee systems that currently exist, and would simplify and improve the management of fatigue laws.