

ONLINE ARTICLE

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The nation's leaders have agreed to overhaul anachronistic transport regulations in a move that will deliver a \$30 billion boost to the economy and establish a single trucking regulator.

COAG today signed an intergovernmental agreement in support of establishing single road, rail and maritime regulators. While Western Australia did not sign the agreement, Premier Colin Barnett has given in-principle support. Barnett will take the agreement back to his home state and present it to Cabinet before signing up.

The intergovernmental agreement gives the green-light to creating a single set of regulations for trucking and establishing the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator in Queensland to oversee the system. It is intended to be fully operational by January 1, 2013.

"The agreement means there will be one regulator for maritime, rail and heavy vehicles, cutting the number of transport regulators across Australia from 23 to three," Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Anthony Albanese says.

He says reforms will boost national income by up to \$30 billion over the next 20 years and reduce the administrative and compliance burden on the transport industry.

"It will see an end to 110 years of duplication and confusion caused by conflicting regulations and red tape that the nation's truck drivers have been forced to comply with in the course of their daily business," Albanese says.

"Heavy vehicle operators will no longer have nine separate regulatory regimes to deal with."

The rail regulator, which will be based in South Australia, will supersede the existing seven separate regulatory authorities. The agreement, struck amid concerns that some governments would attempt to water it down, will also end the seven state and territory maritime regulators

“The transport industry which has had to face different rules each time they cross a border knows this is a critical microeconomic reform,” Albanese says.

The Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association (ALRTA) says it is “delighted” with the outcomes of the COAG meeting.

ALRTA Executive Director Philip Halton says the group “lobbied intensively at the highest possible levels of government” in the lead-up to the meeting to get the agreement over the line.

Halton says the ALRTA is now focused on working closely with government to make sure the reforms deliver productivity, efficiency and safety gains for trucking operators.

There was concern among industry and government over the prospect of national regulations, with some sections of the bureaucracy attempting to stonewall the issue.

Albanese last week specifically named Victoria for stalling on maritime regulations, while NSW has fought to retain existing heavy vehicle compliance and enforcement provisions.

Western Australia previously stated it would retain its own fatigue management and productivity schemes.