

# ONLINE ARTICLE

<b>Title:</b>	"Campbell Newman joins in to slug truckers on rego"
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New Queensland Premier Campbell Newman's mantra of cutting cost of living expenses does not extend to trucking operators, with his government signing off on massive increases to heavy vehicle registration fees.

Transport and Main Roads Minister Scott Emerson has confirmed the government will join with other jurisdictions in increasing charges by more than 20 percent in some cases from July 1.

The trucking lobby has been pushing transport ministers to reconsider their March decision to increase heavy vehicle charges, but Emerson blames the state of Queensland's finances for the need to hit the hip pockets of truckers.

"The LNP government is committed to delivering its election commitments and improving the state's dire budget position," he says.

"As a result we can't afford to lower the charges at this time because of the \$85 billion of debt left by Labor. In the future there may be scope to review the way charges are calculated which will require close consultation with industry."

At its first Cabinet meeting last month, Newman's government agreed to a package to lower the cost of living for Queenslanders, which included freezing private vehicle registration fees for three years, freezing or lowering the electricity tariff and halving scheduled increases to public transport fares.

In a statement from the meeting, the government said its "focus was to act immediately to start addressing cost of living issues".

Queensland did not vote on heavy vehicle charges during the March meeting of the Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure (SCOTI) because it fell during the state election.

Queensland Trucking Association (QTA) CEO Peter Garske last month sent an issues paper to Emerson that highlighted the industry's concerns.

“The recent decision on charges is harsh, unsustainable and near impossible for small operators to pass on to customers in the current economic environment,” the paper stated.

Only the Northern Territory and Western Australia agreed to implement lower registration fees, with the Territory capping increases at 3.7 percent and delaying them until January 1, 2013.

New registration fees will coincide with an increase of 2.4 cents per litre to the fuel excise.

The Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association (ALRTA) last week accused governments of overcharging road train operators, claiming the new fees will strip more than \$10,000 more than what is needed from double road trains.