



Mr Howard Hobbs MP
Chair
Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

(by email: thlgc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Hobbs

Heavy Vehicle National Law Bill 2012

The Australian Livestock and Rural Transporters Association (ALRTA) is pleased to offer this brief submission upon the Heavy Vehicle National Law Bill 2012.

The ALRTA is an advocate for the establishment of an excellent, expert and appropriately-resourced national regulator for our industry. Working in partnership with industry, the community and all jurisdictions, such a regulator will make a strong contribution to improving efficiency, productivity and safety in the road transport sector.

The ALRTA has publicly supported the national decision to appoint Queensland as the 'home jurisdiction' for the National Law and as the host state for the national regulator itself. The regional diversity of Queensland, which is well reflected in the State Parliament, means that Queensland always takes a balanced and responsible view of the transport industry and is well suited to being the host of the National Law.

The ALRTA strongly desires to see the national regulator commence delivery of at least some initial nationwide services to industry from 1 January 2013 (even if this has to be achieved through administrative agreements with other jurisdictions). We would welcome your Committee highlighting this objective in your report to the Parliament.

To achieve this goal, it is important that the provisions of Chapter 12 of the present Bill should commence as soon as possible and certainly not later than October 2012.

The ALRTA therefore congratulates your Committee upon your decision to hold an expedited inquiry into the current Bill, and we are pleased to offer full support for the provisions of Chapter 12 of the Bill.

Your Committee will be aware that a second Bill is in preparation, which is intended to improve many of the operational provisions of the current Bill.

The ALRTA's strong preference is that, other than Chapter 12, the provisions of the current Bill should not commence prior to the Parliament's consideration of this second Bill. Here again, we would welcome your Committee highlighting this issue in your report to the Parliament.

The ALRTA is hopeful that this second Bill will be presented in a very timely manner, allowing for full Parliamentary consideration and the commencement of a consolidated Act by 1 January 2013.

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When this second Bill becomes publicly available, the ALRTA will be carefully scrutinising its provisions. The ALRTA will particularly examine the treatment of the 'Chain of Responsibility' and the provisions dealing with network-access decision-making.

The members of your Committee will recall that the first 'Chain of Responsibility' provisions in road transport law were developed in Queensland, under the Borbidge Government. The 'Chain of Responsibility' concept has been strongly supported by our members since that time, has been enacted in every State and Territory, and has become one of the most highly-valued elements of contemporary road transport law.

While being open to the possibility of making improvements, a fundamental concern for the ALRTA will be to ensure that the 'Chain of Responsibility' provisions remain strong and effective and are not reduced in their scope or reach, through the provisions of this second Bill.

On network-access decision-making, the ALRTA understands that the second Bill is likely to deliver some improvements that will improve the consistency of decision-making across the country and reduce the scope for highly subjective judgements. Any such improvements are to be welcomed, as this issue has vital significance to the productivity and efficiency benefits that will flow from the National Law. The ALRTA will be considering whether there may be a case for further amendments.

The ALRTA thanks your Committee for the opportunity to present these views and trusts this submission will assist your work. Any enquiries can be directed to Liz Schmidt on 07 4778 4488.

Yours sincerely

AUSTRALIAN LIVESTOCK AND RURAL TRANSPORTERS ASSOCIATION



Liz Schmidt
National Secretary
7 August 2012