

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORT, REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LEADER OF THE HOUSE

MINISTERS SIGN OFF ON A NEW BEGINNING FOR TRANSPORT

The nation's transport ministers have agreed to put in place a single national registration and licensing scheme for Australia's 375,000 heavy vehicles by 1 July 2009.

This outcome is good news for road safety because one in ten licence holders are truck drivers and this will ensure they all meet the same high qualification standards no matter where they live.

It's also good news for business because it means they can move their goods around the country without the red tape and cost of eight different registration systems.

This long overdue reform is about delivering on the Rudd Labor Government's commitment to modernising our century old federation and building a seamless national economy for the twenty-first century.

Meeting today in Melbourne, the ATC has given its in-principle support to *A New Beginning for Transport*, a national action plan for keeping people and freight moving.

As well as a national scheme for heavy vehicle registration and licensing, the action plan includes:

- A single national approach to maritime legislation covering commercial vessel survey, certification, crew competencies and some operational practices;
- A partnership with industry to attract, train and retain transport workers;
- Progressing work on the establishment of a national road safety advisory council; and
- A report to the November ATC meeting on progressing to a national system for driver license and registration for all vehicles.

During the meeting I indicated the Commonwealth's willingness to work with the states and territories to relieve urban congestion and improve public transport – building upon my announcement earlier this week that the Government will establish and resource a Major Cities Unit within my Department.

Ultimately the measures agreed to today are all about getting products onto supermarket shelves at the lowest cost, supporting the sustainable growth of our cities and giving working families better access to jobs, healthcare, schools and recreational activities.

It will also do more to prevent road deaths, help Australia meet its international climate change obligations, tackle the regulatory 'red tape' hindering national productivity and respond to emerging skill shortages.

A New Beginning for Transport is more than just a 'tune-up'. It's a blueprint for 'reconditioning' the engine room of economic growth – the nation's transport system.

Ministers will do further detailed work on the action plan before submitting it to COAG.

Contact: Jeff Singleton 0410 476 890
Friday, 2 May