

# Media Release

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## National focus welcome, but regulatory reform must consider road and rail

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) has welcomed the Productivity Commission inquiry on national transport regulatory reform's findings that greater consistency in national safety laws is needed.

ARA Chief Executive Officer Caroline Wilkie said recommendations to improve national consistency in the Rail Safety National Law and Heavy Vehicle National Law would help drive efficiency improvements in the transport sector.

"Recommendations to remove variation in national safety laws between jurisdictions is a welcome step and will support improved safety and productivity outcomes over time," Ms Wilkie said.

"The current state-based variations in the Rail Safety National Law mean operators face unjustifiably different compliance requirements on the issues of drug and alcohol management and fatigue management when crossing the border into Queensland or New South Wales and yet the risks being managed do not change.

"The Productivity Commission's recommendation for a nationally-consistent risk-based approach to fatigue management is good news for the rail industry, but support from the New South Wales and Queensland governments will be critical if we are to actually achieve change."

Ms Wilkie warned that any steps to improve transport regulation must take a mode neutral approach.

"While the ARA agrees with many of the Commission's recommendations, we are disappointed by the greater emphasis on road transport over other modes," she said.

"A truly efficient transport network must take a more equal approach so we can get the best out of every mode of transport."

The ARA also welcomed the recommendation that regulators should monitor and report on the compliance costs imposed on industry, commencing from 2021.

It is important to ensure that there is an ongoing effort to deliver cost-effective regulation and minimise the impact on industry, particularly when so many are facing a challenging period of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ARA looks forward to engaging with governments on the recommendations.

ENDS

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