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Joint Media Statement

The Government will establish a new national road safety system to tackle speed, fatigue and dangerous work practices in the trucking industry - to make Australia's roads safer for all drivers.

The new Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal will have the ability to set pay or pay-related conditions to ensure safe driving practices.

This will save lives by ensuring that truck drivers are paid reasonably for the work they do, getting rid of the economic incentive for drivers to take unacceptable risks on our roads.

Around 250 people are killed and more than 1,000 people suffer serious injuries on our roads each year in accidents involving trucks. Most of those deaths involve other vehicles in a collision with trucks.

Truck drivers should not have to speed, overload their trucks, drive excessive hours or cut back on vehicle maintenance just to make a decent living.

The Government will introduce legislation this week to establish a national Road Safety Remuneration System comprising a Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal and a separate education and compliance framework.

The Tribunal will begin work on 1 July, 2012 and will include members from Fair Work Australia along with independent work, health and safety experts.

Where the tribunal determines that a sector of the industry has poor safety outcomes as a result of low remuneration, the tribunal will be able to make a Road Safety Remuneration Order to improve the on-road safety outcomes for drivers operating in that sector.

The Government has been working on this legislation for some time – we released the *Safe Rates, Safe Roads* Directions Paper last year for public submissions and since the Safe Rates Advisory Group was established 12 months ago, industry has been consulted every step of the way.

Research by the National transport Commission shows low rates of pay can lead to and risky work practices by drivers to make ends meet.

These risky practices by drivers include speeding, long hours and using illicit substances.

The truck driving sector continues to have the highest incidence of fatal injuries compared to all other industries with 25 deaths per 100,000 workers in 2008-09 – 10 times the average for all industries.

In 2010, the total cost of heavy vehicle related accidents involving fatalities and serious injuries was \$2.7 billion.

The Road Safety Remuneration System would complement existing and new initiatives in the road transport industry such as the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

The Australian Government is committed to improving safety outcomes for truck drivers, while ensuring the long term viability of the road transport industry.

The nation's roads are shared by all Australians and it is in everyone's interests to ensure better safety on our roads.

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