



NATIONAL ROAD FREIGHTERS ASSOCIATION Inc

NRFA comments on Performance Based Standards (PBS)

Implementation

The concept of PBS is flawed in the extreme, and this is for the following reasons:

The implementation of such a scheme will advantage the multi-national carriers against smaller fleets and owner drivers, this is because:

Small operators will not be able to afford the cost of replacing existing equipment in the time frame that is required to compete with the big operators.

The uncertainty of the success of the application will deter any small operator from buying equipment and taking the gamble of getting an approval; all approvals will require equipment to be in place for assessment, a totally unsatisfactory expectation.

If and when the application is successful there is no guarantee that the different states or any of the states will approve their use, or grant the road access the PBS is promoted to give.

Once in the scheme there is no guarantee that the goal posts won't be shifted, this could be cause by;

The Public dissent about sharing the roads with larger vehicles combinations in a densely populated area.

Public and media pressure over PBS vehicles involved in accidents and a knee jerk reaction from Governments will see your investment made redundant.

The failure of road surfaces brought about by combinations that are not proven over long periods of use and with no long term trials could see the road asset falling apart, then there will be screams to get them off the road.

Cost verses productivity

For people without any business accruement in road transport to predict that there will be cost efficiencies to come out of the PBS are guessing at best, there is no way of telling the real cost until the runs are on the board.

It is my belief that the added bureaucratic regulations, charges, compliance and restricted access will in fact add to the cost of operating these combinations.

The high cost of equipment, increased fuel usage and driver training to gain safe experienced operators again will place any cost efficiencies in doubt.

Governments playing favourites

The real winners under PBS will be the multi-national carriers and large fleets with enough rolling stock to configure these combinations, this will allow them to reduce their investment in prime movers to gain greater utilization from less trucks and drivers, special permits will be granted to them under some 'operational agreement' that no-one else will be able to access, it's happened before, and will again.

The obvious advantage the PBS scam gives the 'big end of town' is too blatant to believe, small operators will place themselves in massive debt to keep up but will struggle to survive in a climate of never ending change, and most of it is being manufactured by the big boys with the help of Government, the small operator will always be coming from behind.

The days of innovation coming from the industry are over, the new era of bureaucratic interference is here to stay, we have a big job ahead of us and if ever there was a time when this industry needs to stand together to ward off these changes, it's now.

Until next time

Stay safe

Mick Pattel

