



## A view on the Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS)

By Mick Pattel

The concept of national regulation has a lot of merit, however we have seen the result of bureaucrats meddling in the affairs of road transport through the National Transport Commission (NTC) and we all know what a disaster that has been, my fear is that we will further erode our position in determining the future direction of the road transport industry by accepting another regulatory body that is bound to get it wrong and exclude the industry from any real consideration or consultation.

Industry driven reforms that address an ever changing transport landscape will always deliver the best outcomes, regulation forced on the industry with the inherent penalties and the big stick approach will always be met with resistance and contempt.

### **The Problems we face**

The States will influence the direction of regulation purely from the fact that they own and control the road network; the restrictions on cross border regulation will always take the lowest common denominator to accept variations in road capacity and quality, this will result in some of the individual state concessions being eroded, **i.e. Volumetric loading, multi-combination vehicles and a host of state specific concessions that will be watered down to a 'one size fits all' rule and as I said before we will be forced to accept the lowest common denominator as the national standard.**

We in this industry are hamstrung by the inability of states to agree on a national standard, and if you need to be reminded of the best example of this look at the



different railway line gauges between the States, and remember these rail networks are owned by the State Governments, what chance do we have of getting agreement from all the different State Governments to allow configurations that have been in use in some States for the past four decades.

The real solution here is to allow interstate travel based on the individual State regulations being applied as if that vehicle were in its home State, that is, no jurisdiction can over ride another States regulations and should embrace reciprocal rights to allow interstate freight transfers without impediment, it's really not that hard, the childish barter that is carried out by the different jurisdictions is the key reason the road transport industry is caught up in this debacle.

I have no doubt that if the proposed reforms to come out of this Regulatory Impact Statement go ahead the majority of road transport operators will lose considerable ground, this will be felt at a State level by those operators who never leave their own State, the National standard will still apply to them and we will see our concessions wiped out, it will set our industry back twenty years, and that isn't progress.

It's a safe bet that the fourth option in the discussion paper is already the planned model and the others are a put up to say that there are alternatives but blind Freddie can see through this lot.

## **National Registration**

This is an attempt by the Federal Government to take over an income stream controlled by the individual State Governments, it will also split the Stamp duty revenue, fees and charges and CTPI, the so called simplification of the system and the cost efficiencies will be lost, on top of that the money collected by the Federal Government will not necessarily find its way back to the States, where will the road funds come from then?

If there is to be a change in the application of Vehicle Registrations, I believe that all registration charges should be scrapped in favour of a road user fuel charge that would reflect a truer 'user pays' system, Example, if your vehicle s annual distance travelled is 100,000 klms you pay on the amount of fuel you use, if you are getting a higher utilization from your equipment say 300,000klms per year your contribution will be reflected in the extra fuel used, at the moment one group is subsidising the other because everyone pays the same annual fee for registration.



The implementation of this scheme would allow the Government to reduce the size of the administration in their transport departments and remove the red tape involved in vehicle compliance.

## **National Drivers Licences**

After reading the document on these reforms to our driver's licences it became clear that most of the changes will be about the introduction of a national data base to track drivers and it will be linked to the new electronic log books, this will be an invasion of your privacy and again used as a tool for enforcement, I believe we will need to resist any attempt to further erode our freedom and our rights.

There are many other issue I could raise here but I believe I have touched on the most important ones, as a result I will not support the proposals under the Regulatory Impact Statement for the reasons given above, you may not agree with me on this one but I encourage you to read as much information on these changes as you can to get an understanding of how they will impact upon you, and then make up your own mind.

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