



5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Ms Ashne Lamb  
Case Investigator  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK, VIC 3006

Dear Ms Lamb,

**Re: Court Reference COR 2016 001102**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Coroner Jamieson's recommendation in the Finding into the Death without Inquest of Constantinos Bekiaris.

The recommendation states:

"The Court does not appear to have received further correspondence from the Victorian Transport Association Inc. that would indicate further progress has been made in this area. In these circumstances, I repeat Coroner Spanos' recommendation in the Finding into the Death without Inquest of James Sawbridgeworth, and I recommend that the Victorian Transport Association Inc, and the Transport Industry Safety Group continue to investigate previously identified concerns about the lack of forward visibility in trucks and heavy vehicles, and what can be done to improve pedestrian safety."

This recommendation will be implemented.

As requested, the Victorian Transport Association Inc. (VTA), has continued to investigate the issues as outlined in Coroner Jamieson's recommendations. The following outlines the progress that has been made in the area since responding to Coroner Spanos' recommendation in the Finding into the Death without Inquest of James Sawbridgeworth and subsequent efforts to establish the implementation of the recommendations.

#### *Collision Avoidance Technology*

The VTA has directly consulted with leading heavy vehicle manufacturers and suppliers in relation to 'collision avoidance' technology. Although this technology is available and can be retrospectively fitted to a heavy vehicle, the costs and infrastructure to deliver this outcome are commercially prohibitive for a majority of heavy vehicle operators.

Although new heavy vehicles have far more safety features available as standard equipment each year, the Australian Design Regulations do not specify the fitting of forward collision technology to heavy vehicles as standard. Such equipment is deemed as optional fitment coming at additional



cost. The VTA also notes that one of the key issues that prevents operators from investing in newer/safer equipment is that there is no perceived direct economic benefit or incentives.

The VTA has the conviction that the Australian Design Regulations (ADRs) need to be amended in order that front warning sensors, left-side sensors and left-side sensors are installed at the point of manufacturer for all cab-over heavy vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) equal to and greater than 4.5 tonne. This position was also highlighted in the VTA submission to the *Senate Standing Committee on rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee Inquiry (March, 2016)*.

The VTA and the Transport Industry Safety Group (TISG) will continue to campaign for heavy vehicle amendments to the ADRs that deliver improvement to heavy vehicle safety standards.

#### *Driver Licencing and Training*

Technological advancements in object/vehicle/person detection will not replace competent driver behaviour and awareness.

The VTA has established a working party with VicRoads department of licencing, to review the heavy vehicle licencing requirements to improve driver skill levels and safer driving behaviours. This specific pedestrian safety issue is a key element being considered in the delivery of the program.

In 2017, the VTA in conjunction with a leading driver education provider, has already implemented and is trialling a comprehensive heavy vehicle 'Driver Delivery' program whereby 'Behind The Wheel' (BTW) experience is a key focus. Pedestrian safety and 'blind spot' awareness for drivers is integrated into the increased BTW program's training approach.

#### *Stakeholder Engagement*

The VTA is also working through the Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council (VRFAC) to develop a strategy to address this serious issue.

The VTA is supportive of the Travel Happy-Share the Road campaign and plans to further expand key messaging in relation to heavy vehicle blind spot awareness and to increase the likelihood of being seen by heavy vehicle drivers with VicRoads.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Anderson  
Chief Executive Officer