



# THE URGENT CASE FOR SAFE RATES



**TWU**  
Carrying Australia

*The Australian Labor Party has pledged to introduce an independent body to lift standards in road transport – Australia’s deadliest industry. This reform must be an urgent priority for the Federal Government as deadly pressures on transport operators and drivers are increasing through cost-cutting and the Amazon Effect.*

*Transport workers need your support. Read on to better understand the crisis in transport and what you can do to get this life-saving legislation off the ground.*

# TRANSPORT: AN INDUSTRY IN CRISIS

## AUSTRALIA'S DEADLIEST INDUSTRY

Trucking is the **deadliest industry in Australia**. In 2016, the former Coalition Government shut down the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal. Since then deadly pressures have increased exponentially.



**OVER 1000**

Truck crash deaths since the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal was abolished



**Over 250**

Of those deaths were truck drivers

A survey of 1,100 truck drivers working in freight, construction, and oil and gas revealed shocking pressures drivers face which force them to cut corners on safety and drive to exhaustion.



**42%**

of owner drivers **didn't raise safety concerns** out of fear they'd lose pay

“

When you report damage, unroadworthiness, weight issues or cleanliness...**you get pushed and bullied to drive anyway.**

”



**52%**

of drivers have experienced wage theft

## PRESSURE FROM THE TOP

- ▶ Wealthy clients at the top of the supply chain (including supermarkets, retailers and oil companies) squeeze transport contracts to make more profit.

When money is tight, transport operators and drivers

- ▶ are pressured to **cut corners on safety, delay maintenance** on trucks, and **drive faster for longer** to make ends meet.



**1 in 4**

pressured by employers to drive past legal hours and skip rest breaks



**1 in 5**

pressured to speed to meet deadlines



**1 in 5**

pressured to falsify logbooks

## THE AMAZON EFFECT



“ I could wake up tomorrow with an **email** saying that my agreement with Amazon Flex has been **terminated**

SEE ABC'S  
EXPOSÉ ON  
AMAZON FLEX



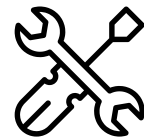
While companies at the top of the supply chain squeeze transport contracts, unregulated gig companies like Amazon **undercut traditional transport from the bottom.**

Amazon Flex pushes workers into precarious work with low rates of pay and no workplace rights or entitlements.

Coined by the TWU as **The Amazon Effect**, this undercutting forces traditional transport operators to attack strong workplace conditions and safety to keep costs low and remain competitive.

**41%**

**know a driver  
killed at work**



**55%**

of owner drivers have **delayed truck maintenance** because they couldn't afford it

**1 in 4**

**involved in a  
crash while  
working**

“ I've watched a truck **completely burn** in front of me with a **co-worker trapped inside.** Another close co-worker rolled his truck 2 years ago, seriously injuring himself.



# THE AMAZON EFFECT IN PRACTICE

In 2021, thousands of workers in major transport companies across Australia took action because of the encroaching Amazon Effect. Feeling the squeeze from undercutting, Australia's largest transport operators began attacking their own operations to keep costs low, **meaning workers were up against significant threats to their job security.**

Thousands of transport workers across the country were forced to take strike action to fight for their jobs.

## UNDERCUTTING

At many companies, labour hire workers were paid well below employees, even **as low as the Award** in some cases. Without commitments to same pay for the same job, employee drivers risked being undercut by cheaper labour hire.



Workers fought for same job same pay in their yards

## OUTSOURCING

Workers faced **significant job security threats**, with labour hire increasing in many of their yards around the country, and companies demanding "flexibility" to accelerate outsourcing.



Workers achieved caps on outsourcing.

## B RATES

Some companies were proposing to bring in an underclass of workers on far inferior pay and conditions. **This posed a significant safety risk and threatened the jobs of existing workers.**



Workers succeeded in getting B rates off the table.

# FEDEX PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE AMAZON-FLEX STYLE MODEL

FedEx workers are now under direct threat of becoming the first traditional transport company casualty of the Amazon effect. A new proposal by the company would bring in owner drivers on an **Amazon Flex-style model** that would unwind job security protections thousands of workers fought for last year.

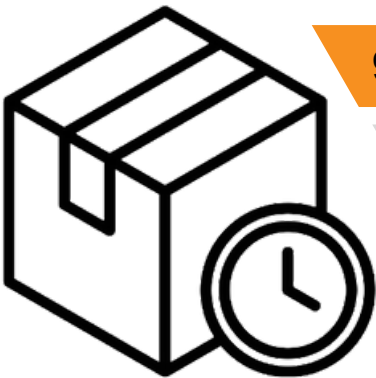


## OWNER DRIVER **PIECE RATES**

FedEx's plan would see an underclass of owner drivers brought in on low piece rates with no ability to negotiate. These workers would be stripped of rights like sick leave, superannuation and workers' compensation. Like at Amazon Flex, workers could be terminated if they failed to complete deliveries in unrealistic deadlines.

Lower-paid drivers under the new system would make up 25% of the owner drivers engaged by FedEx, with plans already in place to expand this to 50%.

## WHAT IT MEANS FOR **WORKERS**



**93 parcels** delivered per 10-hour shift

That's **1 every 6 minutes**

Drivers could be **sacked** for not delivering enough parcels

**THIS IS THE DEADLY  
AMAZON EFFECT IN  
PRACTICE**

- ▶ If FedEx goes ahead with this, other major transport companies will be forced to **slash pay and conditions** to stay competitive
- ▶ A fair system to **level the playing field** and protect good, secure jobs is now an urgent national priority

# SENATE INQUIRY INTO ROAD TRANSPORT

The Senate Inquiry into the road transport industry, chaired by Senator Glenn Sterle, conducted a two-year deep dive into the crisis in the industry, involving:

- 11** ▶ public hearings
- 128** ▶ submissions
- 150** ▶ witnesses, including
  - **37** truck drivers
  - **13** transport organisations



Noel Blue gave evidence to the Inquiry of his 29 year-career as an armoured driver, including colleagues held at gunpoint, shot at and killed.

## THE NEED FOR A STANDARD-SETTING BODY

Last year, the Inquiry made 10 recommendations, including urgent reform in trucking to protect workers, businesses and road users.

The Senate Select Committee called for a powerful standard-setting body that can:

- Set fair standards
- Hold clients to account to ensure fairer and safer contracts
- Ensure payments are made on time
- Protect the rights of all drivers (owner and employee)
- Ensure voices of all drivers are heard



**IT'S TIME  
TO ACT.**

# WHAT YOU CAN DO, NOW

Transport workers, their families and the public who share the roads need your support to ensure life-saving trucking reform is introduced as a priority by the Federal Government. Here's how you can help:

## 1 SUPPORT SENATE INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS AS A PRIORITY



These recommendations provide a blueprint to save trucking jobs, businesses and lives. First and foremost, there must be an independent body that can set standards and lift pay and conditions for all workers.

This must be accompanied by **improvements to vital rest areas, universal licensing and training, and proper investigation and reporting into truck crashes** in order to save lives. With FedEx already joining Amazon in the race to the bottom on wages and conditions, these reforms in transport are **incredibly urgent**.

## 2 SHARE YOUR PUBLIC SUPPORT

Truck drivers need to know that you support a safer, fairer road transport industry. You can do that by:

▶ **Using #SafeRates**  
Use the hashtag #SafeRates on social media to share your support

▶ **Sharing a photo**  
Download solidarity signs and other resources by scanning the QR code below

▶ **Posting a video**  
Road transport is an industry in crisis. Post a video to your social media channels in support of safe rates to save lives on our roads.



# SENATE INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS

After the extensive inquiry, the Select Senate Committee into Road Transport made 10 recommendations to create a fairer, safer and more sustainable road transport industry, including:

## ▶ A POWERFUL STANDARD-SETTING BODY

Transport needs a body that can:

- Set fair standards
- Hold clients to account to ensure fairer and safer contracts
- Ensure payments are made on time
- Protect the rights of all drivers (owner and employee)
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## ▶ IMPROVEMENTS TO REST AREAS

- Truck drivers need **adequate and safe places to rest**, both to comply with fatigue requirements, and to pull over for toilet breaks, checking loads, and making repairs
- Many drivers are already pressured to drive fatigued and skip rest breaks. Lack of proper infrastructure acts as a further disincentive to taking rest breaks - a huge safety risk

## ▶ UNIVERSAL LICENSING AND TRAINING

- There are currently **no national standards** for safety training for drivers
- In the past, lack of training has led to **deaths on our roads**, like the Cleanaway 2014 crash that killed four
- BlueCard must be expanded as a **universal and standardised system** as part of a holistic Safe Rates package

## ▶ PROPER INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING INTO TRUCK CRASHES

- **Many deaths on our roads** may be because of drivers being pressured to take stimulants to stay awake behind the wheel, skip rest breaks and drive fatigued, but without proper investigation the cause of some is never known
- Truck crashes must be classified as **workplace accidents**, and the ATSB must be empowered to conduct independent investigations
- These investigations must examine **the role of those at the top of the supply chain**



**IT'S TIME TO ACT.**





+61 2 8114 6500

[www.twu.com.au](http://www.twu.com.au)

[twu@twu.com.au](mailto:twu@twu.com.au)

Level 9,  
447 Kent Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Authorised by TWU National Secretary Michael Kaine