National Heavy Vehicle Driver Action Plan

The biggest issue facing the Australian Transport Supply Chain industries is the critical driver shortage. The International Road Transport Union (IRU) Global Truck Driver shortage report shows a deepening driver shortage with 28,000 unfilled positions in 2024 forecast to grow to 78,000 by 2029. Despite these shortages, the road freight task is projected to rise from 31% in 2026 to 41% by 2050. This has serious implications for the Australian economy, communities and broader.

The National Heavy Vehicle Driver Action Plan (the Plan) was developed in partnership with industry leaders, and its program of work validated by broader stakeholder consultation. It provides a shared commitment to address HV Driver shortages. The Plan aims to identify and build upon local initiatives achieving good outcomes, trial new approaches, and identify where advocacy is required to better support this integral sector of the Australian economy.

The Action Plan, and its program of work, are organised under four priority areas

1. Elevate perceptions of the profession

Build public awareness of HV driving as a highly skilled and rewarding career that is a legitimate alternative to university with equivalent earning potential. The program of work includes development of a national communication strategy to build broad community engagement and positively influence the public perceptions.

2. Improve the supply of HV Drivers

Builds upon priority area 1 and considers how to attract new entrants from labour pools that are underrepresented. The program of work explores how to maximise benefits from skilled migration; supporting employers with recruitment; and, developing high-quality resources to facilitate work readiness and transition programs.

3. Improve training/licensing pathways

Focuses on improving funding for and access to career and learning pathways for new and existing supply chain workers. It includes actions to improve the quality and consistency of training, assessment and licensing for HV Drivers; establishing a national HV Driver apprenticeship; and, building the capacity and capability of the driver training workforce.

4. Retain the Drivers we have

The first three priorities aim to improve attraction and development of the HV Driving workforce. However, HV Drivers often leave the industry due to a range of issues. Actions for this priority include improving the quality of facilities for HV Drivers; and developing resources to support Driver wellbeing, continuing professional development, career planning and satisfaction with employment.

Online Employer Information Hub

Industry Skills Australia will develop an Employer Information Hub that will serve as a 'one-stop-shop' for information on funding and incentives, skilled migration pathways, workforce development, careers and career and learning pathways.

Industry Skills Australia