

**NATROAD**

NATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Research Summary

# Road Freight and the Australian Public Report

February, 2022





## STUDY FINDS STRONG SUPPORT FOR ROAD FREIGHT INDUSTRY AND TRUCK DRIVERS

---

The road freight industry is the backbone of the Australian economy, keeping businesses moving and supplying ordinary people with the necessities of life.

To operate effectively and to adapt to new challenges, the sector needs the support of both government and the general public. A climate in which ordinary Australians understand the valuable role that road freight operators play is one in which the industry has the potential to successfully lobby for legislative change around the issues that affect it. For example, high levels of public support could help achieve more favourable operating conditions, such as a reduction in delivery curfews.

To formally gauge public sentiment towards the sector, NatRoad commissioned a study of more than 1,000 Australians across all states and territories. The findings were analysed and published in the 2022 StollzNow paper Road Freight & the Australian Public Report.

## Strong overall support

One of the clearest findings from the research was that support for the road freight industry was extremely high across the country. Some 91 per cent of survey respondents said they viewed the sector as personally important or very important. A total of 99 per cent said the sector was either important or very important to the Australian economy, while 98 per cent agreed it was an essential industry. \*

The results suggested that Australians actually tend to overestimate the financial contribution that the road freight and warehousing sector makes to the national economy. While Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate the industry is the eighth largest in terms of revenue generated in Australia, respondents on average ranked it in third place.

## Mixed results around environmental performance

When asked about the environmental impacts of the road freight sector, the results of the survey were more mixed. Respondents put road freight in last place when asked to rank a list of the most serious environment concerns, including pollution, climate change and food wastage. However, some 60 per cent of those surveyed disagreed with the statement that road freight is environmentally friendly.

With the industry currently examining lower-emission delivery solutions, a significant proportion of respondents reported they would be willing to accept a reduction in road freight service levels in exchange for more environmentally friendly delivery. Some 43 per cent of respondents were willing to wait longer for goods, 24 per cent would accept less variety and 24 per cent would pay more for goods if it meant deliveries were more sustainable.

## Support for change

The high levels of understanding of road freight's importance appeared to translate into support for more favourable operating conditions. Some 59 per cent of respondents were likely or very likely to support the removal of curfews for deliveries in affected areas if it improved the availability of goods. Just over half of those surveyed were initially aware that curfews of any kind affected road freight deliveries.

A significant proportion of people also said they would be more likely to vote for a state or federal member who supported the road freight industry. Some 37 per cent of respondents would likely change their vote, 60 per cent reported no change, and 3 per cent were less likely to support such a candidate.

## Respect for truck drivers

Another clear finding of the research was the generally high levels of respect the public held for truck drivers. Four of every ten respondents knew someone who drives a truck. Some 81 per cent of respondents agreed that truck drivers were considerate of other road users. A significant 92 per cent of respondents felt that truck awareness should be a part of driver education and licence training.

Attitudes towards the road freight industry	
99%	of respondents believed road freight was important to the economy
83%	believed road freight was efficient
60%	believed road freight was not environmentally friendly
43%	would accept a longer wait for goods if it made the sector more environmentally friendly
59%	per cent were likely to support changes to curfews that improved goods availability
37%	were more likely to support a state or federal member who supported the road freight industry. (Only 3% were less likely.)
40%	knew a truck driver
81%	saw truck drivers as considerate of other road users

Association of respondents with truck types
<b>LARGE TRUCKS</b>
Travel interstate
Have skilled drivers
Require a special licence
Are highly regulated
<b>MEDIUM TRUCKS</b>
Travel interstate
Important to daily life
Require special licence
Essential to daily life
<b>SMALL TRUCKS</b>
Important to daily life

*\* To increase clarity around the findings, responses of 'don't know' from respondents were not included in the results.*



### About NatRoad

With a proud history dating back to 1948, NatRoad operates to represent its members and as advocates for the \$96 billion road freight industry. With more than 45,000 trucking companies employing more than 140,000 people across the country, the road transport industry is one of Australia's biggest economic drivers.

NatRoad is a not-for-profit Association that is 100% funded via its membership fees and business partnerships. No funding is provided by government or unions. Our board is made up of individuals who run transport businesses and have members from owner-drivers to road freight and large fleet operators, representing all aspects of the industry.

### Contact NatRoad

Phone: 1800 272 144

Email [info@natroad.com.au](mailto:info@natroad.com.au)

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