



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Driving this Christmas – Don't be a Turkey!

On Saturday 14 December, Member for New England, Tony Windsor will team up with local trucking operator Jim Savage of Stockmaster for the National Drive for Safety, the annual event organized by the Australian Trucking Association and its member organizations. The Drive highlights the need for extra care on the roads over the Christmas period, when holiday drivers take to the roads and trucks need to keep working.

“Driver fatigue is an acknowledged killer on the roads, so always take the time to plan your holiday driving and include rest breaks, and avoid driving at times at which your reflexes are slow,” said Mr Windsor. “Professional truck drivers must take regular rest breaks even though they are used to driving huge distances every week of the year. Holiday drivers don't have this experience and need to be conservative in planning their holiday trips.”

Whilst the road transport freight task has increased more than 50% in the last decade and truck numbers have increased to service the growing freight task, truck related fatal crashes have remained stable for the last decade, and in fact have declined so far during 2002. According to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, there have been 177 deaths in truck related crashes this year compared to 196 in the same period to October 2001. Also their research reveals that in 62% of these crashes the other party is at fault.

“These statistics show how vital it is for truck drivers to focus on road safety whilst emphasizing the need for other road users to take more care when they encounter trucks,” said Mr Windsor. “Commonsense approaches include recognising that it takes a long time to pass a semi-trailer, B double or road train, that trucks need a lot of space to manoeuvre and brake, and that they have blind spots. If you can't see the truck driver in his mirrors then he can't see you.

“Also, in urban areas do not cut in front of heavy trucks at traffic lights or stop signs, and do not overtake turning trucks. At the least this can avoid a bent mudguard or scratched panels. At the most it could save a life,” he added.

“The National Drive for Safety is also an opportunity for me to understand a little more of the challenges, other than safety, which trucking businesses face every day of the year. I thank Stockmaster for their support by driving with me this year and wish all road users a Happy and Safe Christmas,” concluded Mr Windsor.

Interviews will be available at the Tamworth Truckies Memorial, New England Highway from 12.15pm – 12.30pm on Saturday 14 December 2002.

For further information contact Tony Windsor MP on Ph: 67613080 or Jim Savage on 6760 7388