

16 May 2022

**KAP candidate backs-in hands-on driver heavy vehicle training program**

KATTER'S Australian Party candidate for Herbert, Clynton Hawks, is demanding the major parties join him in supporting an initiative of the Queensland Trucking Association aimed at boosting the number of experienced truck drivers on the road, potentially bring down insurance costs for transport operators, and improve safety.

The QTA's Jobs Ready Program aims to assist employers to attract new entrants into a trucking career, but also to bridge the gap where the quality of training and lack of opportunity to gain experience as a heavy vehicle driver is a barrier to getting a job.

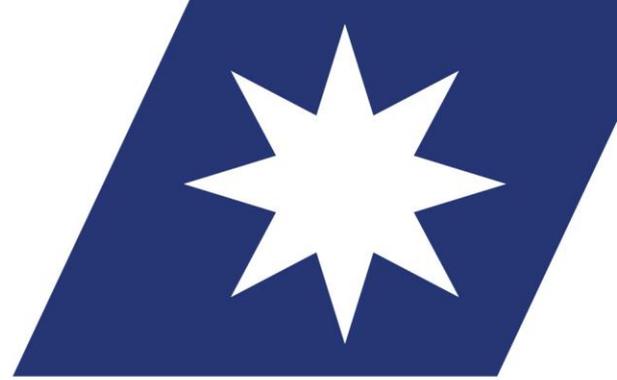
QTA is proposing a pilot funded by the next Australian Government estimated at \$1,500,000 to initially train 150 heavy vehicle drivers, with a forward plan to allocate an additional \$5 million to extend the training for 600 positions.

Mr Hawks said employers want job-ready candidates who view the industry as a career of choice, offering financially-stable employment with long term prospects, but were naturally wary of offering positions to drivers with little or no real experience.

"The problem many transport business operators face is finding experienced drivers. Some companies would rather let a vehicle sit idle than put someone a bit wet behind the ears in charge of heavy machinery which might cost upwards of half a million dollars.

"Newly qualified drivers lack knowledge of even the most fundamental heavy vehicle driving skills.

"License qualification only requires them to be able to drive forward. They come to get a job and they can't go backwards, they can't back a trailer, and they can't change gears. That's a problem because many transport companies still operate mainly manual fleets."



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**MEDIA RELEASE**

QTA's NQ Representative says the Jobs Ready Program is a good practical initiative from our Election Blueprint which will put people in jobs.

"People might have light rigid, medium rigid or even heavy rigid licenses, but they can't actually get a job because they don't have the experience they need.

"So, the Jobs Ready Program is taking a pool of those people, and putting them with businesses who will employ them. They will do six one-day courses covering a range of safety and skills development areas including fatigue management and load restraints.

"The drivers then do 160 hours of supervised time, running them through a two-up situation with an experienced trainer-driver."

The QTA says the average cost per driver trained would be about \$10,000, with the funding covering a wage subsidy, all project management, training, mentored driving hours program and onboarding.

Mr Hawks said insurers are very interested in the QTA initiative, as getting insurance at reasonable rates for inexperienced drivers was a barrier to employment and one of the factors keeping transport costs high in Australia.

Mr Hawks, himself a qualified heavy vehicle operator, said he'd been fortunate to have come from a family of transport operators.

"I learnt just about everything I know about driving a truck from my Dad.

"Not everyone has a Dad in the trucking business, so the Jobs Ready Program is the next best thing."

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**For media inquiries, please call 0429622882**