APPENDIX 3

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AMONGST 300 LONG DISTANCE TRUCK DRIVERS: RESULTS OF AN INTERVIEW-BASED SURVEY

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A core part of the Safety Inquiry into the Long Haul Trucking Inquiry was an assessment of the key issues and problems in the industry as identified by truck drivers themselves. To achieve this, 300 drivers working on the six major highways in New South Wales were approached for face-to-face interviews during May and June 2000. At the same time, the drivers completed a three-page questionnaire that required qualitative and quantitative answers. The data from these interviews were analysed and form the basis for this research report.

This Executive Summary begins by a brief description of the key findings. A more in-depth analysis of underlying pressures that determined hours of work, personal pressures, economic realities, and major difficulties experienced by truck drivers follows. Readers are encouraged to examine the detailed findings in the full report that follows. Specific areas of study have been separated into six separate sections: methodology, employment status and working conditions, occupational health and safety (OHS), economic and time pressures, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) assessment, and draft safe work plans.

Methodology (Section 1)

In all, 300 truck drivers working in the Australian state of New South Wales were interviewed on a face-to-face basis and completed a detailed questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. These truck drivers were interviewed at truck stops, parking bays and in freight-forwarding yards. At least two sites were selected on each of the six major highways in the state. The methodology adopted for the empirical study is detailed in Section 1 of this report.

Employment status and working conditions (Section 2)

Years in the industry
Most interviewed truck drivers had been employed in the industry in one capacity or another for at least 5 years; the majority for far longer. Owner/drivers and those employed in larger fleets had worked in the industry for marginally longer than had those in small fleets. This long-term commitment to a particular industry has important consequences on truck drivers’ OHS status. For example, seating design is very important as drivers may spend 40 years behind one truck steering wheel or another. Long term industry group occupancy is also an important consideration for those who wish to improve injury and ill-health preventive knowledge amongst the workforce.

Hours of work
All groups of truck drivers worked long hours. To some extent the cited hours of work may have been understated because of the legal limit of 72 hours a week; that is, many suspicious drivers may have reduced their stated hours to this legal limit. Nevertheless a significant proportion of the 300 drivers indicated that they worked 70-72 hours a week (15%), or 73 plus hours a week (40%). That is, a long working week was the norm for OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
the majority of drivers. However driving was not the only task that drivers performed. For a significant proportion of owner/drivers ‘time off’ only meant a different form of labour as truck maintenance was routinely completed during ‘rest’ hours.

“You spend the week behind the wheels, and the weekend under them (maintenance)” (209).

Extent of interstate work
Fully 50.7% of all truck drivers interviewed only drove interstate, and a further 31% drove both inter and intra state. A slightly greater proportion of owner/drivers drove interstate than did employee truck drivers. However, even those who only drove within the state were frequently away from home overnight on long distance trips. That is, the vast majority of interviewees drove significant distances every week.

Types of freight carried
Most truck drivers carried a wide range of goods. The only notable variation was that drivers employed by large fleets more commonly carried dangerous goods and fuel. The type of trucks driven also varied: those in large fleets (50.6%) more commonly drove B/doubles than did those in small fleets (22.1%) or owner/drivers (10.1%). Conversely, owner/drivers and those in small fleets more commonly drove rigid vehicles. Inevitably the size of the truck driven affected the weight of loads carried.

Employment status variations
Of the 300 truck drivers interviewed, 33% were owner/drivers, 34.7% were employed in small fleets, and 28.3% worked in large fleets. (The break point of 20 or fewer trucks was used to define a small fleet, based on the commonly used definition of a small business as one with 20 or fewer workers.) A further 0.3% had some ‘other’ employment status, for example one interviewed owner/driver had handed back his truck to the finance company the day before interview. Detailed analysis indicated that the truck driver workforce was segmented by employment status with very little movement between the owner/driver population and those who were employees. Close attention has to be paid to variations in injury and ill-health indices between employment status groups as there may be differential exposure to OHS risks.

Age distribution
The 300 interviewed truck drivers were concentrated in the 35 to 54 age range, with owner/drivers slightly older than those employed in small or large fleets. This slight age variation may be important in the distribution of long-latency injury and illness conditions, such as cumulative musculo-skeletal disorders. That is, those who had worked in the industry longer had inevitably been exposed to the hazards and risks for greater periods of time. Further, the ability to adapt to working conditions that disrupt circadian rhythms – such as driving in the night and attempting to sleep in the day - diminishes with age. This adaptation is likely to be more difficult for those over age 45. Notably, at least 40% of all drivers interviewed drove through the night. Further, the sub-group of interviewed drivers over age 55 was dominated by owner/drivers.
Membership of trade unions and other formal associations
Unexpectedly, nearly 34% of the 300 truck drivers interviewed belonged to a union. This proportion was increased amongst those employed in large fleets, and decreased amongst owner/drivers. Membership of unions is important for OHS information on prevention, and also in the distribution of up-to-date road transport rule changes (in addition to all the usual functions performed by these organisations).

Occupational health and safety (Section 3)

A range of questions was asked about aspects of OHS.

Work-related injuries and illnesses in past 12-month period
Around 25% of all drivers interviewed had had a work-related injury or illness in the previous 12-month period. The incidence and severity ratios appeared to be similar across employment status groups. However, there were variations between employment status groups in levels of treatment sought following an injury, and in amounts of time taken off work for recuperation. Those employed in large fleets tended to have their injuries medically treated more frequently than did other groups of drivers. In contrast, owner/drivers rarely sought treatment or took time off to recuperate – even with injuries that appeared to be quite serious. There are important consequences on OHS status if intervention is not commenced during the early stages of development of long-term conditions.

Chronic work-related injuries
Chronic injuries were cited at double the rate of acute ones, with a relatively high proportion citing one or more (51.3%). Around 30.7% of drivers had chronic back injuries, 21% indicated they had hearing loss, and 13.3% had some other chronic condition. There were some variations by employment status with owner/drivers citing more chronic back injuries, and employees in large fleets more frequently reporting hearing loss. Stress, fatigue and exhaustion from long hours of work were sometimes reported. Another stressor (in common with train drivers) which has a long-term impact is suicide attempts by car drivers:

'My eyes have been open twice as long as they should have for my age’ (160); and ‘10.10pm in country - a head-on with a car on wrong side of road. Fatal. Car a write-off. Police found a suicide note in his car. Affects me still. We don’t get counseling; just have to live with it’ (286).

Occupational violence
Violence in one form or another was a common experience for the truck drivers interviewed. This violence came predominantly from other road users, sometimes from other workers at freight-forwarding yards, and occasionally from customers. Across the total interviewed population of 300 truck drivers, 32.7% had been verbally abused in the immediately previous 12-month period and 21% experienced road violence, however threats (7.7%) and physical assaults (0.7%) were relatively rare. Thus we believe that lower level occupational violence in its various forms is a significant (but poorly
recognised) OHS problem for long distance truck drivers. While road violence experiences were usually minor, some had the potential to be fatal, as the following direct quotations from truck drivers indicate:

‘Car drivers giving you the finger or the thumb and you can read their lips as to what they are saying’ (214); and ‘had someone throw a cricket ball through the windscreen about 3 years ago. Deliberate – threw off a bridge; swerved and smashed the windscreen. The same bridge where the truck driver was killed from same thing long after. Called the ‘Mark Evans’ bridge now. I rang the police but they didn’t send anyone out. I know they didn’t send anyone out because I was listening on the scanner. Happens all the time – it’s a truck driver, so who cares?’ (86).

Illicit drug use
While no specific questions were asked about illicit drug use, 23 of the 300 interviewees volunteered statements about personal use in the past, or use by other drivers. Amphetamines were most commonly cited, with many drivers condoning their use if it reduced the risk of fatigue-related smash. For example:

‘I’ve taken drugs myself; just to keep going. I know I’d rather have a guy coming towards me who’s had lots of amphetamines and who is wide awake than one who is fatigued and falling asleep’ (213).

Truck crashes
There were two distinctly different types of truck crashes: (a) relatively minor incidents (for the trucks) involving cars at intersections or roundabouts, or at freight-forwarding yards; and (b) more major incidents in country areas involving animals on the road, other vehicles running ‘up-the-back’, and occasional fatigue-related runs off the road. These incidents often resulted in significant damage to vehicles and large claims on insurance policies.

‘Ran over a car in Sydney in afternoon at an intersection. As going round corner he came round the inside and I ran over him with back set of wheels. No injuries, nil truck damage. His left hand guard and bit of bonnet damaged but repairable’ (273); and ‘cow on road after dark and hit it; truck damaged and cow killed. $38,000 damage to truck and $12,000 loss of income. Six months ago, and insurance company from farmer flatly refuses to pay. We have now got to take them to court to recover losses and repair bills and they are dragging it out. Fifteen cows on the road at night!’ (61).

Workers’ compensation and insurance coverage
The majority of large fleet drivers (89.4%) and those working in small fleets (78.8%) had workers’ compensation insurance cover, but fewer owner/drivers (38.4%) were covered. However many owner/drivers had other forms of insurance in case of illness or injury associated with work. Even when workers’ compensation benefits were available,
drivers were sometimes reluctant to make claims, or enforce their rights to time-off for treatment.

‘I’m too scared to claim on my workers’ compensation as they’ll only put it up’
(51-owner/driver with a chronic back injury).

Organisations that could be contacted for information
No clear path to access authoritative sources of information could be identified. Few knew exactly who to approach for specific information on OHS, or even road transport rules. Many had little faith in government authorities after experiences where different individuals within an organisation such as the RTA had told them different things. Hence word of mouth or a friend were the most commonly trusted sources. Further, authorities with dual functions (such as information provision and enforcement of road rules) were often perceived to prioritise revenue raising over crash prevention. Ironically, the police - whose function is to protect drivers - are frequently seen as the enemy. Clearly a more direct, and informed, source of regulatory and OHS preventive information was needed.

‘They keep changing the rules all the time. Even the RTA don’t know. If you ask them a question, 99% of them wouldn’t have a clue’ (26); ‘get on the phone merry-go-round as no one gives you a direct answer’ (140); and ‘when I fractured finger, the union bloke was the only one I could get information from about income protection’ (272).

Economic and time pressures (Section 4)
All groups of truck drivers were under significant time pressures and completed extensive journeys through long hours of work. These pressures were fundamentally caused by the intense competition for freight contracts. Under-cutting was rife, and even some of the large companies were barely viable.

The competition for freight contracts is most intense between owner/drivers. However low freight rates are not the only financial stressors for owner/drivers. Rising costs for fuel, tyres and insurance are eating into their meagre profits. Further, because freight rates – and payments for freight carted – are in effect the wages of owner/drivers, delays in payment of invoices caused significant additional financial stress. Interviewed drivers often cited 60 to 90 day delays in payment of invoices, with drivers having limited ability to do anything at all to hurry payments up. It has been suggested that the only way minimum freight rates could be accepted as the norm across the industry was if all workers were united, refused to accept extremely low rates, and did not under-cut each other. However, desperate owner/drivers about to suffer significant financial losses found it extremely difficult to sustain such bans.

‘We’re at the bottom of the food chain’ (59); and ‘go home and stay home...the strong will go broke too- just take a bit longer than the rest of us’ (owner/driver from Newcastle, meeting at Dubbo on Sunday 7th May 2000).
Competition for jobs was also intense between many employee drivers. Many indicated that they felt powerless, which sometimes resulted in compromises to their OHS.

‘1.45pm, checking the load restraints in a yard and load binder snapped shut on my hand. Smashed my hand and for four days he kept me away from home. Hand was as big as a balloon when I finally got home after 4 days...I was given six weeks off work but the following Sunday (3 days later) was told ‘here’s another job to do and if you don’t do it, you haven’t got a job’ (213-small fleet employee).

That is, while the economic pressures were most intense for owner/drivers, employment conditions for all truck drivers appeared to be becoming more similar over time as competition for freight contracts intensified.

The General Health Questionnaire assessment (Section 5)

The General Health Question (GHQ) is an internationally recognised objective instrument that measures mental health status. The GHQ was included on the questionnaire because it has been argued that this is an accurate predictor of future physical health status. The results were unequivocal: nearly all drivers assessed had a GHQ score above the ‘normal’ range of 8.59. The overall mean was 10.3, and 15.7% had a rating within the ‘immediate serious threat’ range of 14 or above. Overall, owner/drivers (11.5) had scores above small fleet drivers (9.8) and those working in large fleets (10). Those working on the Hume highway were at greatest risk. A number of potential causes and contributing factors were assessed. It was found that financial stress was the independent variable driving the contributing factors of long working hours, more interstate driving, and (most important) more overnight driving (with consequential impacts on quality and quantity of sleep and time away from home).

Safe work plans (Section 6)

The final section of this report offers a potential remedy that may reduce the risks, limit the pressures that lead to rule-breaking, and enforce accountability throughout the ‘chain of responsibility’.

Conclusion

In order to improve OHS in this industry the overall organisation of work has to be examined. Regulatory attention is usually focused on individual truck driver behaviours such as speeding, log book rule breaches, excessive hours, and illicit stimulant use. In this research report it is argued that these are superficial consequences rather than underlying causes.

The working life of truck drivers requires:
- long driving and total working hours
- inappropriate waiting periods at many freight forwarding yards
- tight pick-up and delivery time schedules between centres in different states
The data clearly indicated that the safety of truck drivers is under threat
• 14.3% had had a truck smash in the past 12 months, with small fleet and owner/drivers experiencing a greater proportion
• 19.3% had had a truck smash in the previous 5-year period, with small fleet and owner/drivers experiencing a greater proportion
• 47% of all drivers cited some form of occupational violence in the past 12 months: 32.7% had been verbally abused, 21% experienced road rage, but only 7.7% had been threatened and 0.7% assaulted.
• other motorists who share the road with fatigued truck drivers are also at risk.

The data indicated that the health status of truck drivers is under significant threat:
• a quarter were injured in the past 12 months
• more than half reported a chronic injury
• levels of stress - as measured by the GHQ - were extremely high and posed a significant threat to their long-term physical and mental health status. Around 15.7% had GHQ scores at levels where urgent medical attention was required.

When the evidence of extensive hours of work, chronic injury, violence, and raised GHQ scores are considered together, a consistency in patterns emerges. All these, it is argued, are dependant variables; the inevitable consequences of deteriorating working conditions.

The causes of this poor OHS record lie at a deeper level. The working lives of all truck drivers were seen to be constantly deteriorating as competition for contracts intensified, freight rates decreased, and working hours lengthened. The different employment sub-groups experienced these pressures in different intensities. There were clear links between low freight rates, and low and nil payment by customers; these emerged as the leading underlying causes of deteriorating working conditions. Undercutting was almost inevitable as desperate owner/drivers and fleet operators shaved profit margins to non-viable levels. Those who control freight forwarding contracts fundamentally caused the survival behaviours adopted by drivers that breached regulations. Those ultimately responsible – at the peak of the chain of responsibility - appear to have little accountability for the inevitable consequences.

‘Some of the companies that force their drivers to load and unload and then drive again to get their freight to another state...They should be regulated so can’t force drivers to do those things’ (199).

Yet regulatory efforts continue to be primarily focused on the consequences and not the causes of truck driver behaviours. That is, authorities routinely ignore the chain of responsibility. In this report it has been argued that acute economic pressures are not only threatening the financial viability of both small and large operators, but are also compromising the safety and health of truck drivers as well as undermining legislative controls.
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OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
Section 1

METHODOLOGY

The overall aim of this research study component of the Safety Inquiry into the Long Haul Trucking Industry was to ensure that the views, experiences and perceptions of truck drivers themselves were included. That is, those who did the ‘hands-on’ work in the industry were to have a voice. While the protocol indicated that 250 drivers were to be interviewed, in the end 300 face-to-face interviews were conducted around New South Wales.

The research project commenced on Sunday 7 May 2000 and was concluded 15 weeks later. All the data collection and analysis was completed by a researcher who was seconded out of her normal job for the study.

Support for the research project was widespread and had minimal conditions imposed by employers, the union, and managers of sites where interviews were conducted.

Field research began at a meeting of owner/drivers on Sunday 7th May 2000 at Dubbo. At least thirty owner/drivers, a few TWU organisers, a representative of the RTA, and the researcher conducting this survey attended. Interviews were not conducted at this meeting, but valuable background information was gathered to aid in the design and focus of the research instrument/questionnaire. During the following week, the questionnaire was developed, field-tested, and refined. Immediately thereafter an intensive four-week period was spent gathering data from truck drivers on various highways and freight-forwarding company sites across the state. The final weeks of the research project were devoted to data analysis and writing this report.

1.1 Research design and sample selection

The research process was designed to ensure, as far as was possible, that the drivers interviewed were a representative sample of all long-distance truck drivers in New South Wales. The interviewed drivers therefore had to drive on a range of highways, in different types of trucks (B/double, semi, and rigid vehicles), carry a variety of goods (general goods, fuel, furniture etc), and include all employment situations. This objective to include all employment situations meant that relatively similar proportions of truck driver interviewees had to come from the three major groups: owner/drivers, and employee drivers in both small and large fleets.

Interviewees were selected from across the major highways in the state of New South Wales. An attempt was made to ensure that a larger proportion of the sample came from highways with more traffic; thus more interviews were conducted with drivers using the Hume highway than on the Great Western highway. Because a significant proportion of the drivers working in the Sydney area were involved with local deliveries rather than long distance transportation, very few interviews were conducted in the state capital. On each of the major New South Wales highways, interviews were conducted at a minimum
of two different towns, sites, or truckstops. Truck drivers were approached at freight-forwarding yards where approval had been gained for access, at truckstops when drivers were having meal and rest breaks, and at truck parking areas when drivers were seen moving around their vehicles; that is, they were clearly not asleep. All drivers approached for interview were told that participation was voluntary and anonymous. All freight-forwarding companies approached to allow their workers to be interviewed on site readily agreed, and nearly all were conducted during paid working time. Apart from one truckstop (at Sutton’s Forest) all managers of truckstops/fast food outlets approached agreed to allow interviews to be conducted inside their premises, usually in dining areas or in special driver rest rooms. (This was an important consideration given the unusually cold autumn/winter evenings in inland areas where many interviews took place.)

All interviews were conducted over the period of 12 May to 8 June 2000. A total of 300 drivers were interviewed; of these 299 were male. In spite of the fatigue levels of many drivers, 90.6% of those approached agreed to participate (31 of 331 refused). The distribution of interviewees broken down by highway and employment status is shown in Table 1. It is believed that the distribution of interviewees was representative of long haul traffic on the different highways.

### TABLE 1

**Distribution of interviews conducted with 300 drivers during long-haul transport Inquiry**

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<th>owner/drivers</th>
<th>small fleet employees</th>
<th>large fleet employees</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total no. interviewed</th>
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<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79 (26.3%)</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Newell</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59 (19.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51 (17%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42 (14%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturt</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29 (9.7%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Western &amp; Mitchell</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21 (7%)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Sydney</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19 (6.3%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total %</strong></td>
<td><strong>33%</strong></td>
<td><strong>34.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.3%</strong></td>
<td><strong>4%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total n =</strong></td>
<td><strong>99</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 The research instrument/questionnaire

The draft questionnaire was adapted from one used in a number of recent large-scale surveys conducted by the researcher, sometimes involving the head of the Inquiry. The adaptation of a previous questionnaire meant that responses to a number of key questions could also be compared with findings from workers in other industries, for example, injury patterns. An early draft of the questionnaire was trialed with three people with indepth knowledge of the industry. Then it was refined and pilot-tested amongst eight truck drivers (four owner/drivers and four employee drivers) and minor changes made.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected during the face to face interviews. Quantitative data allowed estimates to be made and incidence ratios calculated. While
many qualitative questions in the questionnaire were tightly focused, others were open-ended and allowed truck drivers to state a wide range of opinions on important contextual variables. The three-page questionnaire included questions on employment and working situations, injury and crash experiences, major risk factors in the industry, and also included the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). Use of the GHQ allowed comparisons to be made with workers in other countries. The full questionnaire appears in this report as Appendix 1.

1.3 Strengths and weaknesses of research design

The strength of the research design was that a wide range of drivers was accessed across the state. Further, reasonably similar proportions of owner/drivers, small fleet, and large fleet drivers were interviewed. Thus, arguably, the sample was as representative as was possible with a sample based on only 300 face-to-face interviews.

There are only two apparent weaknesses in the research design. First, up to seven of the drivers interviewed may not have been totally appropriate. Of these seven drivers, one was a farmer who drove his own truck and produce to a purchaser hundreds of kilometers away once a week; one was a van delivery driver who occasionally drove ‘one-off’ trips; three were in the armed services and had been assigned to long distance transportation; and two were interstate coach drivers (one had previously been a truck driver). Second, time limitations on interviews inevitably meant that some areas were studied and others not. At the commencement of the study there was significant debate over the merits of including the GHQ – the ‘opportunity cost’ of which was exclusion of questions on individual driver financial viability and profit. In the end it was decided that the validity of responses to the GHQ would be far higher than answers to financial viability questions; and so the GHQ was included and individual economic questions excluded.

1.4 Ethics committee requirements and ethical considerations

No names of individual drivers were recorded on the questionnaires, and the names of companies whose workers participated in the study were not recorded. Further, towns where interviews took place have not been cited as in some case this would have identified individual freight-forwarding companies. Thus no individual or company data or identifiers can be separated out. Only grouped data has been presented. As a result of this protocol, interviewed truck drivers felt free to clearly state their perceptions without fear of backlash from employers, principal contractors, freight-forwarders, or others associated with the industry. Such fears may, or may not, be well founded.

An outline of the research protocol, draft questionnaire, draft information sheet provided to all interviewees, and individual consent to participate form were submitted to the Independent Human Ethics Committee of the University of New South Wales (the latter two based on their standard protocol requirements). The Ethics Committee subsequently approved these for use, providing the usual confidentiality guidelines were followed. All interviewees were subsequently provided with the information sheet that included guidelines on how to obtain a copy of the Inquiry findings, where a formal submission to
the Inquiry could be lodged, and contact details if further information or complaints were to be made. While interviewees who participated in the study occasionally refused to sign the ‘Subject Consent Form’ required and approved by the Ethics Committee (because such a signature could identify an individual), signed and dated forms were retained for a minimum of one year. A copy of the Ethics Committee approved ‘Subject Information Statement’, and ‘Subject Consent Form’, appears in this report as Appendix 2.

1.5 Data analysis

During the subsequent analysis, the basic units for analysis were (a) employment status and (b) highway where each truck driver was driving on the day/night of interview. These categories were separated out, and variations in responses between the distinct types of driving situations identified.

The next section of this research report provides a profile of the working lives of the 300 truck drivers interviewed. This background data includes discussions on their employment status, types of vehicles driven, goods carried, extent of interstate and intra state driving, age profile, membership of trade unions and other organisations, and hours of work.
Section 2

BACKGROUND: EMPLOYMENT STATUS, VEHICLE TYPE, GOODS CARRIED, AGE, AND HOURS OF WORK OF 300 INTERVIEWED DRIVERS

This section of the research report provides an overview of demographic features of the working lives of the 300 interviewed drivers. Issues discussed include employment status (owner/drivers, large and small fleet drivers, and ‘other’ employment situations), the types of vehicles driven, range of goods carried, age distribution, membership of unions and other organisations, and hours of labour. Since 299 of the 300 drivers interviewed were male, a gender-based analysis was not appropriate.

Both quantitative and qualitative data have been included in discussions to enhance understanding of proportionate responses to questions and situational contexts. At the end of each sub-section a summation of key points is provided. These key points were highlighted in the Executive Summary that appears at the front of this research report. Quotations have been taken directly from the words of drivers as written on the questionnaires in order to aid understanding of contexts. These direct quotations appear with an anonymous individual identification number in brackets. Spelling has been corrected and punctuation marks inserted where this aids understanding, and only commonly understood abbreviations have been retained.

2.1 Employment status of 300 interviewed drivers

Each interviewee was asked ‘what is your employment status?’ The responses to this question determined which employment category each individual questionnaire was allocated to during all future analysis. Six possible response boxes were provided: ‘owner/driver’, ‘employee in small fleet (20 or fewer trucks)’, ‘employee in large fleet’, ‘casual’, ‘subcontractor’, and ‘other’. The rationale for making 20 trucks the dividing point between a small and large fleet driver was that a business with 20 or under employees is often used as a defining point for a small business. Subsequently these six response groups were collapsed to four: owner/driver, employee in small fleet, employee in large fleet, and ‘other’.

Two owner/drivers (31,161) had ticked both the ‘owner/driver’ and ‘casual’ boxes; after perusal of answers to other questions on their questionnaires both were allocated to the ‘owner/driver’ category. Others who were retained in the owner/driver category had ticked both ‘owner/driver’ and ‘other’ boxes and written: ‘small fleet’ (39); ‘part-owner’ (190); and ‘prime contractor’ (259). One owner/driver re-defined himself as: ‘driving to own’ his truck (61).

One small fleet driver ticked both ‘small fleet’ and ‘casual’ boxes but was allocated to the ‘small fleet’ category because he later indicated that he had worked for this company for 8 years (108). One small fleet employee added: ‘small fleet owner contracts to a large company’ (141). Another driver had ticked both small and large fleet boxes but in discussions indicated that she was a permanent employee in a small fleet but also drove casually for a large fleet; she was allocated to the ‘small fleet’ category because this was her major place of work (300).
One large fleet employee ticked both the ‘large fleet’ and ‘casual’ boxes, but was allocated to the ‘large fleet’ category for analysis because he had worked for this company for at least 12 months (17). Two ticked both ‘large fleet’ and ‘other’ boxes and wrote: ‘army’ (9); and ‘do work on the side in small fleet’ (205); both were allocated to the ‘large fleet’ category for analysis purposes.

The 12 ‘other’ employment status drivers included one who ticked both ‘owner/driver’ and ‘other’ boxes and wrote: ‘was owner/driver but handed my truck back yesterday’ (38). Another ticked the ‘casual’ box and wrote ‘7 day casual’ (69); as did two others (76,78). Eight ticked the ‘subcontractor’ box (112,150,163,186,210,212,218,231). Because there were only 12 drivers who had an ‘other’ employment status, interpretations of data patterns amongst this group must be treated with caution.

In sum, of the 300 interviewed drivers, 33% (n=99) were owners/drivers, 34.7% (n=104) were employed in small fleets with 20 or fewer trucks, 28.3% (n=85) worked in large fleets, and 0.3% (n=12) had some ‘other’ employment status. All data gathered during the interviews are analysed by separating truck drivers into these categories. Where appropriate or significant, additional analysis was conducted by separating responses by the highway on which they were driving on the day of interview.

2.2 Where the 300 interviewed truck drivers usually drive

Each interviewee was asked ‘where do you usually drive?’ There were four possible response boxes on the questionnaire: ‘interstate only’, ‘within the state only’, ‘inter and intra state’, and ‘other’. The distribution of responses is shown in the table below. However, since many owner/drivers and one large fleet driver ticked more than one box, these column and row totals exceed 100%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Owner/Drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>Small Fleet Drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>Large Fleet Drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>Other (n=12)</th>
<th>% Driving in Each Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interstate only</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within state</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter &amp; intra state</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Other’ places where owner/drivers worked included: ‘local’ (258,266). Similarly one small fleet truck driver worked in the ‘local’ (176) area. However no large fleet truck drivers made any ‘other’ comments. ‘Other’ places where other employment status drivers usually worked included: ‘all’ (150).

In sum, over 81% of the interviewed drivers drove interstate or both inter and intra state. Only 18.3% drove within the state; many of these worked on the Great Western or Mitchell highways – and some on the Hume highway (perhaps on shuttle systems). Only
five of the sample drove in local areas; most of these were interviewed in the Greater Sydney area. This pattern of responses indicates that the research design developed was appropriate to select a comparatively random selection of long-haul transport drivers.

2.3 Type of goods carried by 300 interviewed drivers

Each driver interviewed was asked ‘what do you usually carry?’ There were five possible response boxes: ‘general goods’, ‘dangerous goods/fuel’, ‘cattle’ (included other livestock), ‘frozen foods’, and ‘other’. Inevitably many drivers ticked more than one box, and as a result row and column totals exceed 100%.

### TABLE 3
Type of goods carried by 300 interviewed drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of 300 drivers carrying each type of load</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>general goods</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous goods/fuel</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cattle</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frozen foods</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owner/drivers made the following comments about goods they carried: ‘specialised freight - oversized goods’ (2); ‘produce e.g. stock feed’ (7); ‘produce into Sydney market’ (16); ‘computers’ (27); ‘bulk grain’ (32); ‘quarry material’ (48); ‘steel’ (52,89,224,293,297); ‘bulk’ (56,57,238,240); ‘fruit and veg.’ (59); ‘produce etc.’ (60,123,250); ‘vehicles’ (109); ‘carbon’ (151); ‘race cars’ (161); ‘grain, fertiliser’ (164,278); ‘produce, lettuce’ (166); ‘empty pesticide drums’ (170); ‘bulk powder’ (177,178); ‘soft drinks’ (192); ‘hay and chaff’ (194); ‘agricultural’ (208); ‘furniture’ (229); ‘fresh food’ (255); ‘gravel, dirt, sand’ (258); ‘grain’ (259); ‘hay and grain’ (285); and ‘steel, wood’ (294). One ticked the ‘cattle’ box and wrote ‘chickens’ (261).

Small fleet truck drivers made the following comments: ‘rock bond equipment’ (6); ‘cheese and butter’ (18); ‘plant’ (26); ‘furniture’ (65,153,225,230); ‘produce’ (84,135,148,156,165,276); ‘crushed cars and steel containers’ (87); ‘food’ (88); ‘air freight’ (98); ‘flour and sugar’ (102); ‘stock feed’ (124); ‘grain’ (125,275); ‘garden supplies’ (131); ‘vegetables and produce’ (133,135); ‘poles’ (142); ‘rice’ (174); ‘house products e.g. cladding’ (188); ‘soft drinks’ (193); ‘bulk goods e.g. coal or potatoes’ (195); ‘passengers’ (206 – as well as general goods); ‘flour and produce’ (207); ‘chiller’ (216); ‘cars’ (222); ‘machinery’ (228); ‘perishable goods’ (233); ‘milk’ (234); ‘bus’ (236); ‘produce and grain’ (237); ‘bulk’ (239,288); ‘latex’ (243); ‘cars and machinery’ (290); ‘steel’ (292); ‘coal’ (298); and ‘coal and grain’ (299). One crossed out the ‘cattle’ box and wrote ‘poultry’ (267).
Large fleet truck drivers made the following ‘other’ comments: ‘produce’ (8); ‘dry bulk’ (12,287); ‘food stuff’ (13); ‘timber’ (17); ‘oils’ (67,197); ‘cars’ (71,73,77,272); ‘cars and light commercials’ (75); ‘cars and trucks’ (83); ‘express parcels’ (86); ‘steel’ (90,113); ‘milk products’ (173); ‘express’ (182); ‘food’ (201); ‘produce’ (203,217,277); ‘coal’ (205); ‘groceries’ (221); ‘bus’ (235); ‘flour’ (241); ‘mail’ (274); and ‘dried food’ (289).

‘Other’ employment status drivers also carried ‘other’ goods including ‘cars’ (69,76,78); ‘all’ (150); and ‘produce’ (218).

Variations by highway: drivers on the Great Western/Mitchell, Newell and New England highways more commonly carried grain, fertiliser, hay and chaff. The carrying of cars/trucks/buses was, proportionately, more frequently mentioned by drivers interviewed on the Sturt highway.

In sum, there was a wide range of goods carried by all groups of drivers. The only marked variation by employment status was that large fleet drivers more commonly carried dangerous goods/fuel, and less commonly carried ‘general goods’. Those interviewed on inland highways tended to more commonly carry agricultural produce.

2.4 Types of trucks driven by 300 interviewed drivers

Each interviewee was asked ‘what type of truck do you usually drive?’ Possible response boxes on the questionnaire included: ‘rigid’, ‘semi’, ‘B/double’, and ‘other’. The distribution of responses is set out in the table below. Some drivers in all employment status groups ticked more than one box; perhaps because they changed vehicles according to the goods being carried and/or size of load. As a result of multiple responses, the total numbers add to greater than 100%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of all 300 drivers by type of truck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rigid</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semi</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/double</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owner/drivers made the following comments: ‘fridge’ (16); ‘quad dog’ (57); ‘road train’ (130,139,158,240); ‘tanker’ (151); ‘rigid with trailer’ (258); and ‘table top’ (266).

Small fleet truck drivers wrote the following comments: ‘road train’ (136,137,174,179,247,288); and ‘coach’ (206 – he also drove a rigid truck). One interviewee stated that he used to be a full-time driver, now drove a van locally, still held a truck licence and ‘does a bit’ (290).
Two *large fleet* truck drivers commented: ‘*road train*’ (182,281).

One ‘*other* employment status’ driver wrote: ‘*all*’ (150).

*Variations by highway:* only drivers on the Newell, Pacific, New England, Sturt, and Great Western/Mitchell stated that they drove road trains. While no drivers interviewed on the Hume highway or in the greater Sydney area indicated that they drove road trains, the researcher saw one on the Hume highway while interviewing late one night.

*In sum,* there was some variation in the types of vehicles used by the different employment status groups. Those in large fleets (50.6%) far more commonly drove larger B/doubles than did those in small fleets (22.1%) or owner/drivers (10.1%). Conversely, owner/drivers (70.7%) and those in small fleets (68.3%) more commonly drove semi’s than did drivers from large fleets (56.5%). Similarly owner/drivers (13.1%) and small fleet drivers (13.5%) more commonly drove rigid vehicles than did drivers from large fleets (3.5%). Hence it is important to remember in later discussions in sections 3 and 4 that some variations between groups may result from the different types of vehicles driven.

### 2.5 Years spent in industry by employment status

Each of the interviewees was asked how long they had worked in the transport industry. Possible response boxes on the questionnaire were: ‘< 1 year’, ‘1-2 years’, ‘2-3 years’, ‘3-5 years’, ‘5-10 years’, and ‘greater than 10 years’. The distribution of responses is shown in the table below, separated by employment status.

| TABLE 5: Years spent in industry by 300 interviewed drivers by employment status |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|
|                                | owner/drivers (n=99) | small fleet drivers (n=104) | large fleet drivers (n=85) | other (n=12) | % of 300 drivers in each bracket |
| <1 year                        | 1%               | 1.9%             | -               | -     | 1%              |
| 1-2 years                      | -                | -                | 1.2%            | 8.3%  | 0.7%            |
| 2-3 years                      | -                | 4.8%             | -               | -     | 1.7%            |
| 3-5 years                      | 5%               | 4.8%             | 2.3%            | 25%   | 5%              |
| 5-10 years                     | 10.1%            | 19.2%            | 7%              | 16.7% | 12.7%           |
| > 10 years                     | 80.8%            | 68.3%            | 89.4%           | 50%   | 77.7%           |
| no answer                      | 3%               | 1%               | -               | -     | 1.3%            |

The above table shows that the vast majority of drivers remained within the industry for more than ten years. Owner/drivers and those in large fleets had worked in the industry for marginally longer than had those in smaller fleets. This long-term commitment to a specific industry sector has important implications for OHS, for example, any long-latency injuries or illnesses are likely to have been caused solely from truck driving and related work. In the next table the average number of years spent as an owner/driver, and years as an employee driver, are displayed.
TABLE 6
Average length of time in industry as owner/driver and time as employee driver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>years as owner/driver</td>
<td>16.1 years</td>
<td>1.9 years</td>
<td>2.7 years</td>
<td>2.25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>years as employee driver</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>14.5 years</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The owner/drivers had spent most of their working lives in the industry, predominantly as owner/drivers. However many had spent a few years as an employee, presumably to save the deposit for their own vehicle.

The small fleet drivers were clearly career employee drivers. One driver answered this question with a dash for years as an owner/driver and for employee wrote: ‘all’ (55). He was coded as 11 years because he ticked the ‘more than 10 years’ industry box.

The large fleet drivers were also clearly career employee drivers. Very few had worked for extended periods of time as owner/drivers, and most had spent many years as employee drivers. Three drivers answered this question with a dash for owner/driver and for employee wrote: ‘100%’ (71); ‘all’ (73); and ‘all of it’ (204). All were coded as 11 years because the drivers ticked the ‘more than 10 years’ industry box. Another wrote ‘100%’ (149) in the ‘employee’ box and this was coded as 3 years because he indicated that he had been in the industry for 3-5 years.

Many of the ‘other’ drivers did not respond to this question, so the average years spent in the industry listed for them in the above table are of limited utility.

In sum, truck drivers are typically very long-term workers in the industry. However the workforce is segmented by employment status with only limited movement between owner/drivers and employee driver status. While most owner/drivers have spent a few years working as an employee driver (perhaps saving the deposit for their own truck), there is little movement away from owner/driving back to employee driver status. Conversely, both small and large fleet drivers were long-term employees who had spent very little time as owner/drivers in the industry.

2.6 Security of tenure

All employee interviewees were asked questions about the security of their employment. The response boxes on the questionnaire included: ‘permanent’, ‘casual’, ‘labour hire’, or ‘one-off trip’ categories. Five small fleet employees gave more than one answer e.g. they ticked both the ‘permanent’ and the ‘casual’ boxes; hence totals exceed 100%.

TABLE 7
Security of tenure for employee drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>% of 189 (104 + 85) drivers by security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>permanent</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>casual</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labour hire</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one-off trip</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table indicates that a far higher proportion of small fleet drivers were casual compared with those in large fleets. This increased use of casual drivers may indicate a softening-up of employment contracts in the smaller-scale end of the industry. The use of labour hire arrangements and one-off trip casuals was minimal.

Two small fleet employees ticked the ‘other’ box and then wrote comments: ‘permanent casual’ (63); and ‘permanent and get holidays, but don’t get sickies’ (84). One had been employed on a permanent/casual basis for 15 years (137), and another had been a casual for 5 years (165).

One large fleet truck driver who ticked the ‘other’ box commented: ‘relief driver’ (17). One ‘labour hire’ employee had been with the same large company for 10 years (282).

To further check the security of tenure, each employee interviewee was then asked ‘how long have you been with this company?’ The 93 small fleet drivers (out of 104) who replied to this question had been with their current employers for an average of 4.1 years. The 74 large fleet drivers (out of 85) who replied to this question had been with their current employers for an average of 6.6 years.

In sum, fully 88.9% of all fleet drivers were permanent. A greater proportion of large fleet drivers (95.3%) was permanent, compared with drivers in smaller fleets (83.6%). Further, small fleet drivers had a shorter tenure with their current employers than did those working for larger fleet owners (4.1 vs. 6.6 years). Casual drivers were also far more common in small fleets, as were ‘unusual’ employment contracts where standard benefits were restricted. For example, annual leave but not sick leave was allowed (see quote 84 above on this page).

2.7 The basis by which payment is calculated

As part of the larger set of questions about aspects of employment status, each interviewee was asked ‘how are you paid?’ Possible response boxes included: ‘award rate’, ‘by the km or trip’, ‘km/trip rate plus bonus’, and ‘varies by the job’. In the table below the responses have been separated by employment category. One owner/driver, 5 small fleet drivers, 10 working in large fleets, and 1 ‘other’ employment status driver ticked more than one box so totals in all columns and rows exceed 100%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of 300 drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>award rate</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the km or trip</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>km/trip rate plus bonus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>varies by job</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
Some owner/drivers ticked the ‘other’ box and wrote comments: ‘tonnage rate’ (7,61,296); ‘got my own clients and just charge them a rate’ (24); ‘subbie rate’ (29); ‘item or tonnage’ (31); ‘tonnage’ (89,208,245,256,293,297); ‘whatever we agree on’ (100); ‘paid for the work’ (104); ‘self-employed’ (105); ‘tonne plus km’ (115,116); ‘award contract rates’ (151); ‘by the tonne’ (158,163,164); ‘hourly hire’ (191); ‘got a produce store and carting my own stuff’ (194); and ‘set rates’ (254). One ticked the ‘varies by the job’ box and wrote ‘price per chicken’ (261-who carted chickens).

Some small fleet drivers ticked more than one box and wrote comments: [by km or trip] interstate; local work by the hour’ (87); ‘km rate interstate; hourly rate for country’ (88); [award rate] town [by the km or trip] longer’ (94); and ‘paid award plus loading/unloading plus km’ (246,288). Some ticked the ‘other’ box and commented: ‘cash in hand’ (108); ‘if sit at home all week, a retainer. Otherwise 20% of what truck earns’ (125); ‘weekly wage plus living away allowance’ (156); ‘20% of profits’ (167); ‘22% of the load’ (172); ‘% of what the truck earns’ (195); ‘commission’ (228); ‘by contract’ (233); ‘wages plus commission’ (290); ‘percentage’ (292); and ‘tonnage’ (299).

One ticked the ‘km/trip rate plus bonus’ box, crossed out ‘plus bonus’ and wrote in ‘with expenses’ (133,134); and another ticked the ‘km or trip’ box and wrote ‘plus allowances’ (157).

Large fleet drivers commented: ‘extra work has extra hours pay’ (14); ‘after 3 trips a week (Sydney/Melbourne), the 4th get a bonus’ (93); ‘plus extra for delivery/pick-ups’ (160); ‘plus loading time’ (168); ‘Melbourne on trip rate. Intra-state is hourly’ (197); ‘hourly’ (198); [by the km or trip] for long-distance’ (199); and [award rate] AWA’ (235). Of those who ticked the ‘other’ box, some wrote comments: ‘between award and trip money, but no km rate’ (68); ‘interstate by the km; intra-state by the hour’ (83); ‘EBA agreement (award plus)’ (90); and ‘EBA that is above award rate’ (221).

Three of the ‘other’ employment status drivers who ticked the ‘other’ box commented: ‘by tonne’ (38); ‘percentage of what truck earns’ (112); and ‘all’ (150). One ticked more than one box and added: ‘plus loading and unloading time’ (69).

In sum, overall 46% of all drivers interviewed were paid by the km/trip rate and 16.3% on the award rate. Drivers working in large fleets were more commonly paid by the km/trip rate (68.2%) or award rate (24.7%), compared with those working in small fleets (51% and 21.1% respectively). Small fleet drivers were sometimes paid on a partial piece rates basis (e.g. % of earnings); so in terms of payment mechanisms these drivers are mid-way between owner/drivers and large fleet wage systems. In contrast, owner/drivers are rarely paid by the km/trip rate (23.2%) or by the award rate (5%), and in fully 38.4% of their driving contracts the rates vary from job to job. (With the wisdom of hindsight, it may have been appropriate to have included assessment of the extent to which allowances formed part of wages packages or contributed to an incentive payment bonus for long-distance interstate trips.)

That is, in terms of payment methods, there may be a softening of the employment contracts of many small fleet employee drivers. Over time the basis by which small fleet
driver payments and entitlements are calculated are moving towards those enshrined in owner/driver contract conditions.

2.8 Owner/driver payment systems

Each owner/driver was asked three basic questions about consignment arrangements and the payment systems that they worked under.

(a) ‘How many consignors/freight forwarders do you get loads from?’ Of the 88 owner/drivers who provided a numeral in answer to this question, the average number of freight forwarders/agents was 9.2. Non-numerical responses included ‘heaps’ (2,3); ‘lots’ (39); ‘three plus farmers for stock’ (130); ‘none’ (138); ‘organise all myself’ (227); ‘loading agent’ (270); and ‘just carry our own freight from property’ (285).

(b) Owner/drivers were asked ‘If you only work for one consignor/freight forwarder, how long have you been with it?’ The 30 owner/drivers who used only one consignor/freight forwarder averaged 8.1 years with their sole agent. These owner/drivers were interviewed across all the major highways in New South Wales. That is, nearly one third of owner/drivers were solely reliant on one agent for at least 8 years.

(c) Owner/drivers were asked ‘How do they pay you?’ Possible response boxes on the questionnaire were: ‘on delivery’, ‘regular salary’, ‘on invoice’, ‘fortnight’, ‘monthly’, ‘different consignors pay differently’, and ‘other’. A number ticked more than one box so totals exceed 100%; one did not answer this question.

Owner/drivers were paid on delivery (1%), by regular salary (2%), on invoice (7.1%), fortnightly (19.2%), monthly (25.2%), different consignors paid differently (30.3%), and by some other means (22.2%).

Owner/drivers who ticked the ‘other’ box commented: ‘by consignment’ (19); ‘they hold the first five weeks money and then it’s a weekly check’ (20); ‘weekly’ (27,224,254); ‘60 days’ (31,47); ‘half didn’t pay’ (54); ‘up to 20 days late. We’re at the bottom of the food chain’ (59); ‘when he gets paid – and that could be 12 months’ (115); ‘pay self’ (194 - has produce store and carts for self); ‘usually very slowly, especially Victorian firms e.g. 90 days’ (232); ‘not paying their bills. We’ve got money outstanding for 12 months’ (240); ‘have to wait; sometimes 30 days’ (244); ‘cash’ (255); ‘most 90 days’ (258); and ‘3 weeks’ (297). Five ticked the ‘monthly’ box and wrote comments: ‘on return of paperwork’ (43,44); ‘but then they stretch it out to 30 days from end of month so it’s 60 days’ (100); ‘some people quicker and some slower’ (261); and ‘plus on manifest’ (296). Four who ticked the ‘different consignors pay differently’ box wrote: ‘some don’t pay, and 90 days is too long’ (264); ‘some don’t pay at all’ (265); ‘some are too slow. One was 9 months’ (271); and ‘some don’t pay you, and some you’ve got to chase’ (291).

In sum, payment of owner/drivers is erratic and many appear to be at the mercy of their major clients/freight forwarding agents. At least a quarter must wait a month and many far longer than that. The payment periods also vary considerably between the different consignors/freight forwarders that owner/drivers contract to. It is important to remember
that for owner/drivers, payment for freight services is their weekly pay check; thus delays in payment mean regular pay checks are not available for urgent and essential goods.

The data clearly indicate that timely payment for completed transportation of goods is an issue that needs urgent attention.

2.9 Bonus and penalty payment systems in use

Each interviewee was asked ‘do you get bonus payment if you deliver early, or penalties if late?’ Many did not answer this question (and laughed at the ‘bonus’ possibility). It was found that only 2.3% of the 300 drivers interviewed received bonus payments if they delivered early, although 7.3% had some form of penalties imposed if late.

Only one owner/driver (1%) received a bonus payment if he delivered early: ‘share of profits’ (191). However 15 owner/driver (15.1%) had been penalised when late: ‘you might get held over the night so you lose money’ (20); and ‘rarely’ (39).

Five (4.8%) of the small fleet truck drivers had been rewarded for early arrival at their destinations: ‘if you get in early he looks after you’ (85); ‘get a pat on the back’ (117); ‘25c a km’ (219); and ‘bonus if carry more than 7 cars’ (222). Coincidentally, 5 (4.8%) had been penalised when late: ‘[paid] express rate. If you’re late you lose $100’ (26); ‘the company enforce penalties on my boss if we run late’ (135); ‘with previous company; knocked off $100 an hour e.g. when an owner/driver’ (213); and ‘yes’ (276).

Only one large fleet truck driver (1.2%) received a bonus payment if early, and none were penalised if late.

No ‘other’ employment status drivers received bonuses if early with their deliveries, but two (16.7%) were penalised if late.

In sum, overall, the use of bonus payment and penalty systems appears to be relatively rare in the New South Wales long haul transport industry. Penalties appear to be most frequently imposed on owner/drivers who arrive late at their destinations, occasionally on small fleet drivers, but not on employees in large fleets.

2.10 Age distribution of 300 interviewed drivers

The age distribution of the 300 truck drivers was assessed. Minor differences in age group were identified between the different employment status groups.
### TABLE 9
**Age distribution of 300 interviewed drivers by employment status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of 300 drivers in each age bracket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or over</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the above table, most of the 300 interviewed drivers were aged between 25 and 54. Owner/drivers tended to be marginally older than were those working for large or small fleets. No variation in the age distribution by highway was apparent.

**In sum**, there were few drivers under age 25 or over 55. Owner/driver tended to be slightly older than were drivers working in small or large fleets. This slight age increase may be important in the distribution of long-latency injury and illness conditions. For example, as will be shown in section 3.2, owner/drivers interviewed cited an increased incidence of chronic back injury. This increase may follow (a) longer exposure times resulting in increased risks; and/or (b) some decades ago the design of truck seats was less well-developed and arguably drivers who have spent longer periods of time in such vehicles are more likely to cite a chronic back injury. Further, the ability to adapt to working conditions that disrupt circadian rhythms diminishes with age. Inversion of the circadian rhythm is likely to be particularly difficult for those over age 55 – an age group where there was a significantly greater proportion of owner/drivers.

#### 2.11 Membership of unions, employer, and other associations

It may be that membership of formal organisations affects the ability of truck drivers to negotiate over working conditions, pay, access up-to-date information about OHS and road transport rules, as well as levels of understanding of working conditions across the industry. Each interviewee was asked: ‘do you belong to a union, employer or other organisation?’ Possible response boxes were ‘no’, ‘yes union’, ‘yes employer association’, and ‘yes other organisation’. The distribution of responses is set out in the table below.
TABLE 10
Membership of union, employer, and other associations by 300 interviewed drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type of membership of 300 truckies</th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes union</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes employer assoc.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes other organisation</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One owner/drivers ticked the ‘yes employer association’ box and wrote: ‘long-distance road association’ (100). Six others ticked the ‘yes other organisation’ box and wrote: ‘Australian Road Train Association’ (130); ‘own company’ (139); ‘owner/driver association’ (140); ‘company’ (190); and ‘RTA’ (224,232).

Three small fleet truck drivers who ticked the ‘yes other organisation’ box commented: ‘company in employer association’ (4); ‘own company’ (147); and ‘team 200 scheme’ (179). Another ticked the ‘yes employer association’ box and wrote ‘bloke who owns the trucks’ (252).

Two large fleet truck drivers who ticked the ‘yes union’ box commented: ‘in progress’ (68-who had just applied to join); and ‘un-financial’ (235). Both were coded as union members.

No ‘other’ employment status drivers made any comments.

Variations by highway: no remarkable differences in levels of membership of unions or other organisations by the highway on which interviews took place were discernable.

In sum, overall, a higher than anticipated proportion of all groups belonged to a union (33.7%). It may be that the sampling method adopted was inadvertently skewed towards union members, for example, truck stops chosen as interview sites may have been disproportionately patronised by union members. As expected, truck drivers in large fleets more commonly belonged to a union than did owner/drivers or those in small fleets.

2.12 Hours worked per week

Hours worked per week are an important predictor of fatigue. Each interviewee was asked ‘how many hours a week do you usually drive/work (include driving and maintenance work)?’ Possible response boxes on the questionnaire were: ‘under 24’, ‘25-34’, ‘35-39’, ‘40’, ‘41-49’, ‘50-59’, ‘60-69’, ‘70-72’, and ‘73+'. It is important to note that 72 hours per week is an important legal limit on driving hours. Since questionnaires were anonymous, and the names of companies were never recorded, it was hoped that most drivers who exceeded 72 hours a week would be willing to honestly
record their working hours. The distribution of responses is set out in the table below, separated by employment status.

**TABLE 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours worked per week</th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% drivers by hours worked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 24</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-49</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73+</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owner/drivers commented: ‘couldn’t work it out’ (2); ‘could sit here for two days; can’t work it out’ (3); ‘don’t know. Never added it up’ (29); ‘except at present while my driver is off sick with bad back’ [usually works 25-34 hours week] (151); ‘you spend the week behind the wheels, and the weekend under them (maintenance)’ (209); and ‘otherwise farm work’ (269-who worked with trucks under 24 hours a week).

No small fleet or ‘other’ employment status drivers wrote any comments.

Large fleet truck drivers commented: ‘go to Perth each week as a ‘two-up’. Only drive for 40 [hours] but away for 80’ (67); ‘24 hours in truck asleep’ (72); and ‘hard to count up as we’re two-up. Do you count time in bunk or not?’ (119).

The only variation by highway in hours worked per week was that most Newell highway truck drivers (and many on the New England highway) ticked the ‘70-72’ or ‘73 plus’ hours per week boxes.

In sum, the most notable finding is that 40% of all drivers admit to working longer than the weekly limit (although both driving and maintenance hours were included). But, excessive hours were not worked equally by all employment types. Owner/drivers more frequently worked 73 or more hours per week (47.5%), followed by those in small fleets (43.3%), and ‘other’ employment status drivers (41.7%). Large fleet drivers who were direct employees were more likely to work within the 72-hour weekly limit, and less frequently worked excessive hours (27%). While a few owner/drivers worked part-time in combination with other work such as farming, most worked excessive hours when all maintenance and driving-related tasks were included. Thus employment arrangements appear to affect hours of work irrespective of legal requirements.
2.13 Hours worked per day

Each driver interviewed was then asked ‘how many hours a day do you usually work on average?’ Possible response boxes included: ‘under 6’, ‘6-8’, ‘9-10’, ‘11-12’, ‘more than 12’, and ‘varies everyday’. One owner/driver and one large fleet driver ticked more than one box, so totals in these columns and rows exceed 100%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% drivers by hours worked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 6</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 12</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>varies everyday</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no answer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One owner/driver commented: ‘on driving days [11-12]’ (194).

No small fleet or ‘other’ employment status truck drivers made any comments.

Large fleet truck drivers commented: ‘used to 12-hour day. We’ve done the fatigue management course so allows us to drive 14 hours a day’ (12); ‘14 the legal amount’ (13); ‘work one day and have one day off’ (28); and ‘12-16’ (77).

No obvious variations by highway were apparent.

In sum, the hours worked per day were relatively similar across all employment status groups. Owner/drivers more commonly worked more than 12 hours a day (48.5%), than did large fleet drivers (45.9%), those in small fleets (41.3%), or ‘other’ employment status drivers (41.7%). Small fleet drivers appeared to have a slightly greater variability in hours of driving per day than did the other groups of truck drivers. However it is important to note that the period of labour over each 24-hour period can vary markedly from one day to another. For example, a shift where loading – and waiting to be loaded – is combined with interstate driving is likely to be quite extensive. In contrast, a shift where long distance interstate driving only is performed may result in a comparatively short working day of 12 hours.

2.14 Time of the day when most frequently working

Each interviewee was asked: ‘what times of the day do you usually drive/work?’ Possible response boxes on the questionnaire included: ‘day time only’, ‘evenings’, ‘night time’, ‘always changing’, ‘Monday-Friday’, and ‘weekends’. Most interviewees ticked a number of boxes so all rows and columns in the following table exceed 100%.
Further, during interviews many drivers ticked the ‘daytime only’ box as well as the evening and night boxes; that is, many drivers read and interpreted this box as ‘day’ driving rather than ‘daytime only’.

**TABLE 13**

Time of the day when 300 interviewed truck drivers most frequently worked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of the day</th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daytime only</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night time</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always changing</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekends</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owner/drivers commented: ‘7-day weeks’ (5); ‘Tuesday to Saturday’ (16); ‘from Sunday night till Friday night’ (19); ‘when I’m loaded I go’ (24); ‘loading and unloading daytime. Drive at night’ (45); ‘when I can cheat the camera’ (59); ‘service truck’ (109); ‘legally only supposed to work 6 out of 7 days’ (126); ‘every Sunday’ (177); ‘Saturday’ (191); ‘casual [on] weekends’ (227); ‘6 days a week’ (251); ‘anytime’ (285); and ‘Sunday’ (297).

Small fleet truck drivers commented: ‘from Sunday night till Friday night’ (18); ‘a little bit [weekends]’ (87); ‘sometimes [weekends]’ (108,171,206,247); ‘everywhere. Day off can be anywhere’ (110); ‘Sunday to Thursday this week’ (117); ‘some Saturdays’ (125); ‘Sunday dinner to Friday’ (142); ‘but mostly Monday to Friday [ticked M-F as well as weekend boxes]’ (157); ‘half [weekend]’ (165); ‘some [weekends]’ (195,263); ‘Sunday out [driving]’ (219); ‘part [of weekends]’ (222); and ‘just Saturday’ (230).

Large fleet truck drivers commented: ‘coming up leave Adelaide at midday. Get here [Sydney] about 3am. Leave here late afternoon and get back to Adelaide 7am or 2pm depending on which load’ (8); ‘all over the place. Five trips a fortnight. Melbourne to Sydney and back’ (14); ‘a week of days. Then a week of nights’ (23); ‘any [shifts and times]’ (77); ‘day and night’ (107); ‘varies [weekend work]’ (152); ‘any time’ (160); ‘part [weekends]’ (181); ‘some’ (197); ‘some Saturdays’ (198); ‘odd day [on weekend]’ (205); and ‘sometimes [weekend work]’ (235).

‘Other’ employment status drivers commented: ‘prefer to drive at night as can see better’ (38); ‘all’ (150); and ‘some [weekends]’ (231).

Variations by highway: nearly all drivers interviewed on the Hume highway indicated that they drove at night, or that their work schedules were ‘always changing’. Those on the Newell highway tended to tick all time-of-day boxes, the ‘always changing’, and both Monday to Friday and weekend boxes (many may have been on the Brisbane to Melbourne run).
In sum, the pattern of working hours was similar across all employment status groups. Driving a truck is frequently a 7-day a week job for all employment status groups. Most drive in the evening and night, frequently loading/unloading in daylight. The majority work at least part of every weekend. Further, schedules are ‘always changing’ for nearly half of the 300 truck drivers interviewed. The only minor variation between employment status groups was that large fleet drivers less frequently drove in the daytime or on weekends than did owner/drivers or those employed in small fleets. Thus work scheduling arrangements, interstate driving, and tight delivery time-slots result in extensive working weeks for most truck drivers. It would appear that owner/drivers are those most affected, but their working conditions are, over time, increasingly becoming the norm for those employed in small fleets.

The discussion now turns to analysis of work-related injuries, experiences of occupational violence, road crash occurrences, coverage by workers’ compensation insurance if injured/ill from work, and exactly who truck drivers contacted for information when facts or data were needed.
Section 3

WORK-RELATED INJURY, WORKERS’ COMPENSATION COVERAGE, OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE, AND TRUCK CRASHES

This section of the research report summarises the responses of the 300 interviewed drivers to those questions related to OHS, road crashes and safety. The qualitative and quantitative data have been separated by question and sub-question asked on the questionnaire, and then broken down by employment status (owner/driver, small and large fleet drivers, and ‘other’ employment status). Any variations by the highway on which driver was working on the day of interview have been identified. Quotations have again been taken directly from the words of drivers as written on the questionnaires; all direct quotations are in italics and are followed by the interviewee number in brackets. Readers are encouraged to peruse these quotations in order to understand the contexts in which injuries, occupational violence incidents, and road crashes etc occur.

3.1 Work-related injury experiences in immediate past 12 months

On the questionnaire, all drivers were asked a series of questions about injuries experienced in the immediate past 12-month period. If the driver answered that s/he had been injured, information was requested on the type of injury, whether the injury was treated and if so by whom, and if the injury required time-off work. Descriptive data about the working situation, activity underway, and time of day/night when the injury occurred were requested (few answered these descriptive questions). The collated data are shown in the table below; following this a detailed breakdown by owner/driver, small fleet, large fleet, and highway variations is provided. A summation of the distribution of both recent work-related injuries and chronic conditions is provided under table 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>74.03%</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes injured</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usual little things</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total injured</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of drivers with any injuries</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owner/drivers

Only 6.1% of all owner/drivers answered ‘yes’ that they had had an injury, and some described the situation at the time of injury, including: ‘bung knee’ (170); ‘7am when unloading and tyre hit me on back of hand’ (226); ‘kidney problems - too many drugs’ (265); and ‘on roadside at night’ (295).
However 22.2% of owner/drivers had experienced injuries that were ‘the usual little things that don’t stop you working’. While these injuries were typically minor (e.g. cuts), many required medical attention (e.g. five stitches). Comments included: ‘took top off finger and still kept working’ (5); ‘five stitches in my finger because window winder on truck broke’ (20); ‘cut from washing truck’ (44); ‘back’ (56); ‘hernia op.’ (61); ‘stress.
On property that had a drugs raid and there wasn’t any drugs. Police never contacted me; stressed for months and months over it’ (105); ‘odd jammed finger when working on truck’ (123); ‘fell off a load of bricks and hurt my knee’ (126); ‘in workshop about 10am. Work being done on truck and fell down a pit’ (140); ‘around the yard’ (191); ‘straining a finger – got caught in a load’ (261); ‘dropped a spare tyre on my foot’ (291); ‘twisted my pelvis while in yard’ (296); and ‘catch a wog, but you’ve still got to keep working’ (297).

Only 27 owner/drivers provided information on the type of injury experienced. These included: cut (22.2%), burn (3.7%), back strain (14.8%), other strain (25.9% - e.g. ‘knees’ (105)), bruise (3.7%), fracture (7.4%), and ‘other’ (25.9%). The other categories included: ‘hernia’ (61); ‘stress’ (105); ‘couple of falls’ (140); ‘superficial wounds’ (191); ‘torn tendon off finger’ (226); ‘ill health’ (265); and ‘illness’ (297).

Owner/drivers were asked whether their injuries had been treated or not. Of the 30 who responded, the answers were: no (36.7%), yes by me/family/friend (23.3%), and yes doctor/nurse/hospital (40% - one of these crossed out doctor/nurse/hospital and wrote ‘chiropractor’ (126).

Owner/drivers were then asked whether this injury required time off work. Of the 19 drivers who responded, the answers were: no (36.8%), no but slowed me down (42.1%), and yes had time off (21.05%). The ‘no but slowed me down’ written comments included: ‘was supposed to, but I laughed at him – financial pressures’ (5); ‘restricted as to what you can do’ (20); and ‘been an asset as can’t sit in truck for more than 2 hours so have to have lots of breaks’ (105 – who has a knee strain problem). The average amount of time off work was 4 weeks; these absences followed surgery, a severe fall, health problems following excessive drug taking, and a complex leg/foot fracture after being hit by a car on the roadside. Those who had time off work included: ‘6 weeks off for operation. Supposed to be 3 months but could only afford 6 weeks – and couldn’t really afford that’ (61).

Small fleet truck drivers
Only 15.4% of all small fleet drivers answered ‘yes’ that they had had an injury, and some described the situation at the time of injury, including ‘fell off truck and pulled my arm during the day on local work. I was stepping off truck and slipped on fuel tank’ (87); ‘stepping from cabin - missed bottom step’ (98); ‘washing truck; day time’ (99); ‘coil of steel dropped on hand’ (103); ‘fractured ankle jumping out of truck in daytime’ (108); ‘heart failure; just comes on’ (134); ‘wrist’ (136); ‘sore back; fractured leg’ (155); ‘knee strain’ (172); ‘daytime/mid afternoon when climbing off cab and fell and twisted ankle’ (206); ‘1.45pm, checking the load restraints in a yard and load binder snapped shut on my hand. Smashed my hand and for four days he kept me away from home. Hand was as
big as a balloon when I finally got home after 4 days’ (213); ‘thumb last Friday about 4pm. Securing the load and the binder bar sprung back’ (214); ‘fell off a truck in morning while unloading’ (220); ‘I am in the city and a dog bit me at a yard when loading’ (228); ‘in morning when carrying a piano’ (246); and ‘I slipped, about lunchtime. I put shoulder out as I was using dogs and chains’ (280).

A further 10.6% of small fleet drivers had experienced injuries that were ‘the usual little things that don’t stop you working’. While these injuries were typically minor, many required medical attention but drivers did not receive seek or receive treatment e.g. fractured ribs (26). Comments included: ‘backs from the road conditions’ (6); ‘broke a couple of ribs the other day [while] changing a tyre’ (26); ‘bad back and sore neck, mainly when I’m driving. It’s there all the time’ (84); ‘usually in mornings; just twist your knees or twist your back’ (110); ‘midday; stepping down off tanker and tripped’ (114); ‘[stress from] government’ (148); ‘couple of colds’ (154); ‘when you’re loading’ (216); and ‘got a hook stuck in my arm while unloading at 8am’ (239).

Only 30 small fleet drivers provided information about the types of injury experienced in the past year. These injuries were described as: cut (10%), back strain (13.3%), other strain (23.3%), bruise (10%), fracture (23.3%), and other (20%). This ‘other’ category included: ‘neck ache’ (84); ‘A.C. joint separation’ (98); ‘heart failure’ (134); ‘government - stress’ (148); ‘cold’ (154); and ‘puncture wound’ (239).

Small fleet truck drivers were asked whether their injuries had been treated or not. Of the 25 who responded to this question, the answers were: no (8%), yes by me/family/friend (28%), and yes doctor/nurse/hospital (64%). The injuries treated by truck drivers themselves were often painful and disrupted their work – although most persevered with work. Those who treated themselves typically had strain and sprain injuries or cuts. Self-treatments included: ‘Bundaberg rum is a painkiller’ (6). One small fleet driver had crossed out the doctor/nurse/hospital treatment category and written ‘chiropractor’ (84).

Small fleet drivers were then asked whether this injury required time off work. Responses were received from 27 small fleet drivers including: no (18.5%), no but slowed me down (33.3%), and yes (48.1%). Typical injuries that did not require time off were: ‘bruise’ (174); ‘cut’ (216); and ‘puncture wound’ (239). Typical ‘no but slowed me down’ injuries included back injuries/pain (6,84), fractured ribs (26), strains (87, 280); and severe cold/flu (154). Those who took time off typically had fractures including: ‘fractured a bone in back of right hand and 2 cuts and fractured base in back of hand’ (103); a fractured wrist (136); ‘knee just went on me and couldn’t change gear’ (172); and ‘dog bit me on head’ (228). However some of those injured did not take the full time off work allocated – sometimes for personal reasons and other times because they were forced back: ‘WorkCover allow 3 months – returned after 3½ weeks. I felt I could do my job. A.C. joint is still torn off’ (98); ‘I was given six weeks off work but the following Sunday (3 days later) was told ‘here’s another job to do and if you don’t do it, you haven’t got a job’ (213); and ‘sick/off for two weeks and then light duties for six months’ (246). The average amount of time off was 4.9 weeks; most frequently following fractures.

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
Large fleet truck drivers

Only 15.3% of all large fleet drivers answered ‘yes’ that they had had an injury, and some described the situation at the time of injury, including ‘strained back lifting ramps (day time)’ (75); ‘eye plus back’ (77); ‘torn tendon in shoulder from unloading cattle; about 2 to 3pm’ (128); ‘torn neck muscle; driving and was hit by a rigid truck about 4am’ (129); ‘hernia’ (197); ‘carpal tunnel – repetitive driving and epicondylitis’ (198); ‘strain chest’ (202); ‘back injury (driving), night time’ (204); ‘passenger in a car going home’ (217); and ‘in afternoon loading empty pallets to return to warehouse and injured foot’ (221).

A further 12.9% of large fleet drivers had experienced injuries that were ‘the usual little things that don’t stop you working’. Many of these injuries were minor (e.g. colds) but some were quite serious. Comments included: ‘knees’ (10); ‘colds’ (53); ‘gash on head from the upright bar on the trailer smacking me on the head while unloading and reloading’ (86); ‘bent over and door had closed a bit and hit my head one morning; stitches in head’ (122); ‘twisted ankle 7.45am [when] unstrapping the load in a yard’ (199); ‘finger fractured. In the morning when loading truck the winch spar slipped out of the winch and got me finger’ (272); and ‘9.30pm and making coffee by the truck [sustained burn]’ (279).

Only 22 large fleet drivers provided information on the type of injury that they had experienced. The types of injury were: cut (9.1%), burn (9.1%), back strain (22.7%), other strain (36.4%), bruise (0%), fracture (4.5%), and other (18.2%). ‘Other’ injuries included: ‘[knee] cartilage worn out’ (10); ‘knee’ (70); ‘hernia’ (197); and ‘head injury’ (217).

Large fleet truck drivers were asked whether injuries had been treated or not. Of the 22 who responded, the answers were: no (4.5%), yes by me/family/friend (9.1%), and yes doctor/nurse/hospital (86.4%). Untreated injuries included a hernia (197). Typical injuries treated by a doctor/nurse/hospital were back injuries (73,75,77,204), a torn neck muscle (129); and ‘surgery on left hand (right-handed) [for carpal tunnel syndrome]’ (198); chest strain (202); head injury (217); foot injury (221); and ‘the next day when I got home saw doctor [for fractured finger]’ (272). One large fleet driver crossed out the doctor/nurse/hospital category and wrote: ‘first aid person at company where unloading’ (86).

Large fleet drivers were then asked whether this injury required time off work. Responses were received from 18 large fleet drivers including: no (5.5%), no but slowed me down (44.4%), and yes (50%). The ‘no but slowed me down’ comments included: ‘muscular’ (9), a back injury (73); ‘had a headache for a couple of days’ (86); a driver with torn neck muscles who had been treated by a doctor (129); a driver with a hernia who had not yet sought treatment because ‘don’t have time yet’ (197); and one with a twisted ankle (199). Those who responded yes to time off included: ‘operation’ (10); ‘recovery’ (107); one with a chest strain (202); back injury (204); head injury (217); ‘5 days plus on-going treatment such as physiotherapy’ (221); and a fracture (272).
average amount of time off was 2½ weeks, most frequently following surgery or a fracture.

‘Other’ employment status drivers
None of the truck drivers in this category cited any recent work-related injuries or illnesses.

Variations by highway
There were some variations in patterns of injury in the immediate past 12-month period by highway. These have been combined with the variations for chronic injury and detailed under section 3.3 and table 16.

In sum, overall, around 25% of all interviewed drivers had experienced a work-related injury or illness in the immediate past 12-month period. Large fleet drivers cited more injuries in the immediate past 12-month period than did small fleet and owner/drivers. However the qualitative data indicated that injury types and severity were similar across employment status groups. The incidence patterns were also relatively similar across employment status groups when ‘yes injured’ and ‘usual little things’ were combined. That is, owner/drivers had more ‘little things’ and the small and large fleet employee drivers checked the ‘yes injured’ box more frequently. One explanation for these minor variations in injury patterns is that normalisation of injury was more common amongst owner/drivers.

While injury incidence and severity was similar across employment status groups, there were differences in levels of treatment. Large fleet drivers sought treatment by a doctor/nurse/hospital more frequently than did small fleet drivers or owner/drivers. Similarly small and large fleet drivers more commonly declared that their injuries required time-off work while owner/drivers rarely took time off. One explanation for these differences is that financial pressures may have been more acute for owner/drivers (e.g. for truck re-payments), and hence they may have been more willing to self-treat injuries and continue working while injured than were those in more secure employment situations. (This hypothesis is supported by the pattern of chronic injuries discussed below.)

3.2 Chronic work-related injuries

It was of interest to identify whether patterns of chronic injury mirrored those of acute injury. Each interviewee was asked ‘do you have any chronic injuries that have built up slowly over time?’ Possible response boxes included ‘no’, ‘yes back injury’, ‘yes hearing loss’, and ‘yes other’.

Somewhat surprisingly, chronic injury incidence was found to be around double the level of acute injury or illness. The distribution of chronic injuries cited by drivers is set out in the table below, with written comments provided underneath. Many had more than one chronic problem.
TABLE 15
Chronic work-related injury experiences of 300 interviewed drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes back injury</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes hearing loss</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes other</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with any chronic injuries</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owner/drivers
Over half of the owner/drivers interviewed (55.5%) responded that they had a chronic injury. Of those who responded yes, many had more than one.

Many of the 35.3% that indicated they had a chronic back injury wrote comments, including: ‘back plays up all the time from being hurt at work’ (7); ‘hereditary as well as the job. Moving people’s furniture for about 6 years didn’t help’ (20); ‘fell off a truck’ (31); ‘in a head-on [crash] 10 years ago and smashed my spine’ (100); ‘lower disc is deteriorating and it’s from bouncing up and down on the seats’ (126); ‘started about 15 years ago’ (178); ‘no trouble with it for about 10 years’ (191); ‘sitting in trucks all the time; started about 10 years ago’ (226); ‘[started] about four years ago when working on a farm’ (227); ‘for years we never had forklifts and you had to load everything by hand’ (245); ‘after 3-4 years of driving due to bad seats, bad roads’ (264); ‘3 years ago from the job’ (265); ‘started when loading spuds when about 15’ (270); ‘started when shearing’ (271); ‘continual heavy lifting’ (285); ‘pain started about 13 years ago when doing maintenance on truck’ (293); ‘only lasts about 2 days, after lifting the side gates up on truck’ (294); ‘back’s buggered’ (295); and ‘pain started about 15 years ago’ (297).

Of the 16.2% of owner/drivers who indicated that they had some hearing loss, a number wrote descriptions of their problems and the causes: ‘we all have a hearing problem’ (2); ‘trouble hearing background noise. From working on dozers with no ear muffs’ (5); ‘loud motor in old truck (now obsolete) but still got hearing injury’ (105); ‘from earth moving machinery and tractors and hereditary’ (192); and ‘[started] about nine years ago’ (227).

A further 15.1% of owner/drivers indicated that they had some other chronic condition including: ‘diverticulitis’ (5); ‘eyes have failed a bit. I blame the night driving’ (32); ‘eyesight’ (34); ‘got crushed between a forklift and a truck at a mushroom farm. Face badly crushed; should have died but didn’t. They had to rebuild my face. August 1998’ (54); ‘stomach muscles have all gone. Put that down to bouncing around in the truck and that buggers up your stomach muscles’ (61); ‘knee injury’ (105); ‘most of us have got bad knees caused by jumping off the trailers when we were kids’ (126 - now aged 45-54); ‘bad hips’ (127); ‘sore knee. Fell off trailer about 8 years ago and knees buggered ever since’ (130); ‘eyesight’ (238); ‘stress’ (240); ‘bad ankle. Got pushed off the top of a load
of timber and fractured it about 10 years ago. Had badly bruised finger’ (256); ‘knees: jumping up and down off trucks’ (264); ‘shoulders buggered. These are on-going from driving a truck’ (295); and ‘shoulder pain in both – an on-going thing’ (296).

**Small fleet truck drivers**

Fully 48.1% of the small fleet drivers responded that they had one chronic injury or another. One did not answer this question.

Many of the 33.6% of the small fleet drivers who that indicated they had a chronic back injury sustained this through an earlier truck crash. Some wrote comments: ‘just from driving’ (1); ‘back injury from a roll-over, but doesn’t restrict me too much’ (22); ‘back injury the result of an accident in 1988’ (64); ‘back getting worse all the time’ (84); ‘related to crash’ (92); ‘had a rollover in 1978. I went out through the windscreen and landed on lower part of back, and niggles ever since’ (103); ‘1976 broke back in a truck accident and still troubles me’ (114); ‘gets a bit stiff if sitting too long. Just fatigue I think’ (117); ‘when I was about 20 years old it started. I was meat/beef carting’ (125); ‘2 discs removed from lower back 12½ years ago. Just went bang when I tried to stop a piano from hitting the ground’ (135); ‘started when I started driving trucks’ (136,155); ‘started just after I started driving trucks’ (137); ‘had a workers’ comp. claim on a back injury years ago. Stepped out of a truck and slipped into pothole in the dark. By the time finished driving [for the shift] passed out. Back in ’89; still plays up’ (141); ‘shoulders. An old stove fell off truck on me about 3 years ago and my back and shoulder aches every now and then since’ (172); ‘been there about 6 years’ (188); ‘3 years ago after rolled over. Hurts sometimes now’ (189); ‘started years ago from meat carting’ (193); ‘back injury through bike accident. But work isn’t helping it much with lifting things and moving boxes around on the back of the truck’ (206); ‘in 1985 I jumped out of a truck into a hole and jarred the back’ (207); ‘three years ago started’ (213); ‘10-12 years ago. One day my back was sore and went to doctor and took x-rays. The discs were stuffed up from pounding of truck’ (216); ‘after truck accident’ (247); ‘for years; since I was about 18’ (280); ‘15 years ago when loading a trailer and fell off it’ (286); ‘[started] about 8 years ago’ (288); and ‘pain just built up over the years’ (292).

Although 19.2% of the small fleet drivers indicated that they had some hearing loss, none wrote descriptions of this problem.

A further 9.6% of small fleet drivers indicated that they had some other chronic condition. A number wrote comments: ‘neck’ (1); ‘crook knees (sports related)’ (6); ‘shoulder, constant ache in the cold’ (88); ‘liver test scans on Wednesday; from chronic tiredness’ (102); ‘asthma’ (108); ‘shoulder pain and in rib cage’ (247); and ‘shoulder pain’ (288). Some had a number of chronic conditions: ‘neck’s buggered, back’s buggered, shoulder’s buggered. Doctors have been telling me for years to get out of the industry’ (26); ‘shoulder, elbow, hands, knees’ (99); and ‘knee and back problems, but I spent 12 years in the army’ (157).
Large fleet truck drivers

Fully 54.1% of the large fleet drivers responded that they had a chronic injury. Two did not answer this question.

A total of 23.5% of large fleet drivers interviewed indicated they had a chronic back injury. Some wrote comments including: 'broke my back about 15 years ago and that’s a re-occurring problem' (13); 'sore back from lifting' (23); 'started 8 or 9 years ago when fell off a truck' (83); 'back injury started when I first started driving; in the first 12 months and gone on from there. You learn after a while how to look after it' (93); 'started when a teenager; slows down work a bit’ (106); 'back a bit tender. Started about 10 or 15 years ago. All I did was bend down to get a saucepan out of a cupboard’ (120); 'back injury started about 7 years ago. I was on foot and squashed between truck and trailer. Didn’t end up in hospital except for check-up’ (182); 'started 20 years ago’ (196); 'prolapsed disc. In 1993 I was pushing an automatic tarp on a coal truck and when I reached out to push it and it was jammed. I hopped off and climbed in door and my disc went’ (205); 'got run over by a bus a few years ago when working as a mechanic and bus rolled off jack’ (235); and 'from old/earlier model trucks’ (273).

Some of the 29.4% of the large fleet drivers who indicated that they had some hearing loss wrote descriptions: 'just a little. Nothing the doctors are concerned about’ (8); 'ever since worked with earth moving machinery; more than trucks’ (12); 'little by little’ (71); 'started 6 to 8 years ago; just built up’ (180); and 'right ear’ (281).

A further 16.5% of the large fleet drivers indicated that they had some other chronic condition. Conditions described included: 'knee’ (10); 'stress’ (14); 'stomach hernia’ (53); 'heart, liver and kidneys’ (58); 'knees from jumping off the back of a truck’ (68); 'neck ache from poor truck seating (defective seat)’ (86); 'eyesight a bit’ (93); 'blood circulation problems’ (152); ‘eyes. My eyes have been open twice as long as they should have for my age’ (160); 'stress’ (173); 'carpal tunnel’ (198); ‘arthritis in shoulder caused through old practices’ (199); 'eyesight failing’ (203); and ‘arthritis from fractured bones’ (277).

‘Other’ employment status drivers interviewed

Only 3 (25%) of the 12 ‘other’ employment status drivers indicated that they had any chronic injuries, however one of these cited three different disabilities: ‘torn ligaments/disc in lower back; deaf in left ear through industrial deafness; [having] operation on right shoulder next week caused by lifting and abuse over the years’ (38). Another truck driver had a back injury (158), and another hearing loss from 'work-related but unrelated to driving’ (212).

Variations by highway

There were some variations by highway. These have been combined with the variations for injury in the past 12 months and detailed in section 3.3 immediately below.

In sum, the level of chronic injury amongst all groups of drivers is of grave concern. Overall, 55.5% of owner/drivers, 48.1% of small fleet and 54.1% of large fleet drivers cited a chronic injury. However, the types of chronic injury varied across the
employment sub-groups. **Chronic back injuries** were more common amongst owner/drivers (35.3%) and small fleet drivers (33.6%) than amongst large fleet drivers (23.5%). This may reflect improved access to mechanical loading/unloading equipment in larger operations that leads to a reduction in levels of back injuries amongst workers. Conversely, **chronic hearing loss** was more common for large fleet drivers (29.4%) than for small fleet (19.2%) and owner/drivers (16.2%). One possible explanation is that more large fleet drivers had been scientifically tested for hearing loss and so the condition had been recognised. Finally, seven of the 300 drivers interviewed commented on poor eyesight as a chronic injury; this has to be of concern to any road user.

This pattern of chronic injuries was compared with the age distribution discussed in section 2.10. It appears that because owner/drivers were older (table 9), had worked in the industry for longer periods of time (table 5), had driven older less well-designed trucks more (table 4), and worked longer hours (table 11), they had been exposed to hazards and risks more.

The distribution of chronic injury (table 15) was compared against the payment method (table 8) for each truck driver. Some of the interviewed drivers ticked more than one chronic injury box, and more than one payment level; and five did not indicate payment methods. Hence line and row totals do not always align with those in tables 8 and 15. The top line of table 16 should be compared against data in each of the employment status group lines beneath it.

**TABLE 16**

**Chronic work-related injuries of 300 interviewed drivers, compared against basis by which payments and wages were calculated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of all drivers paid this way (table 8)</th>
<th>award rate</th>
<th>km or trip</th>
<th>km/trip + bonus</th>
<th>varies by job</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of owner/driver with chronic injury</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of small fleet drivers with chronic injury</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of large fleet drivers with chronic injury</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of other employment status drivers with chronic injury</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in table 16 indicate that:
- owner/drivers with chronic injuries were disproportionately paid by ‘varies by job’ and ‘other’ methods
- drivers in small fleets who cited a chronic injury were usually paid on the basis of a km or trip rate
- drivers in large fleets who cited a chronic injury were usually paid on the basis of a km or trip rate or the award rate.
That is, the group with the highest incidence of chronic injury (owner/drivers) were also those with the most variable payment levels (see table 15).

However, the cause and effect relationship between chronic injury and methods of calculating payment is unclear. It may well be that payment methods contribute to injury, for example, it is possible to hypothesise that those with variable and irregular payments (such as owner/drivers) may accept jobs more likely to result in injury when they are broke. The extent of this cannot be estimated from the available data.

Variations in patterns of chronic injury by the highway on which each driver was working on the day of interview are shown in the following section.

### 3.3 Variations in patterns of injury by highway

In the following table all cited injuries have been included, that is, all injuries that required time-off work in the most recent 12 month period, those that just ‘slowed down’ drivers, as well as chronic injuries. In each box of the table, employment status is separated by highway. For example, in the top left hand box the first figure shown is the 28.6% of owner/drivers on the Hume highway who reported an injury in the most recent 12 month period (either requiring time-off work or which ‘slowed down’ the driver). The second line in this same box shows the 57.1% of owner/drivers on the Hume highway who cited a chronic injury. It is very important to note that the numbers interviewed in many boxes were low, so interpretations must be made with caution.

**TABLE 17**

**Variations by highway in patterns of recent injury, those that just ‘slowed down’ drivers, and chronic injuries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>highway</th>
<th>owner/drivers (total n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (total n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (total n=85)</th>
<th>other (total n=12)</th>
<th>% injured by employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>28.6% injured 57.1% chronic</td>
<td>21.7% injured 47.8% chronic</td>
<td>25% injured 65% chronic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.3% injured 56.9% chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newell</td>
<td>28.6% injured 35.7% chronic</td>
<td>33.3% injured 55.5% chronic</td>
<td>25% injured 56.2% chronic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.8% injured 50.8% chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>22.2% injured 66.7% chronic</td>
<td>30.4% injured 47.8% chronic</td>
<td>33.3% injured 66.7% chronic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24.5% injured 54.9% chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>18.7% injured 68.7% chronic</td>
<td>14.3% injured 42.8% chronic</td>
<td>16.7% injured 41.7% chronic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.7% injured 52.3% chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturt</td>
<td>20% injured - 20% chronic</td>
<td>40% injured - 33.3% chronic</td>
<td>33.3% injured 33.3% chronic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27.6% injured 20.7% chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Western &amp; Mitchell</td>
<td>14.3% injured 42.8% chronic</td>
<td>- 50% chronic - 40% chronic</td>
<td>- 40% chronic - 4.8% injured 42.8% chronic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Sydney</td>
<td>25% injured 75% chronic</td>
<td>50% injured 75% chronic</td>
<td>54.5% injured 72.7% chronic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47.4% injured 73.7% chronic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total % injured by employment status</strong></td>
<td>24.2% injured 55.5% chronic</td>
<td>26% injured 48.1% chronic</td>
<td>28.2% injured 54.1% chronic</td>
<td>- 25% chronic</td>
<td>25% injured 51.3% chronic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, the pattern that emerges from the above table is that:
• for recent acute injuries, large fleet (28.2%) and small fleet drivers (26%) report more acute injuries than do owner/drivers (24.2%);
• chronic injuries are reported at double the frequency of acute ones, a pattern that is clear across all employment status groups and on all highways (except the Sturt). Owner/drivers (55.5%) tend to have more chronic injuries than do large fleet drivers (54.1%) or those employed in small fleets (48.1%);
• there are only minor variations by highway. Drivers on the Newell, Sturt, Hume and Pacific highways cited acute injuries more frequently. There was a tendency for the interstate freight drivers on the Hume, Pacific, New England and Newell highways respectively to have more chronic injuries. However, as was shown in table 1 in section 1, interviewees were not equally distributed across all employment status groups on all highways. For example, of the 30 drivers interviewed on the Pacific highway, only 6 were employed in large fleets. Conversely, of the 25 drivers interviewed on the Sturt highway, 15 were employed in large fleets.
• Thus from the data available it appears that neither employment status nor specific highways were marked determinants of patterns of work-related injury amongst long-distance drivers.

3.4 Occupational violence experiences

Occupational violence is an OHS issue that is receiving increasing attention across the industrialised world. Evidence indicates that workers in jobs with extensive face-to-face contact with clients, where there is cash on hand, or where other people are insecure, threatened, or under significant stress (as through long hours of labour), are at higher risk of occupational violence. To ascertain the extent of occupational violence in the long haul trucking industry, each interviewee was asked ‘have you been verbally abused, threatened or assaulted at work in the last 12 months (since May 1, 1999)’. Possible response boxes included: ‘no’, ‘verbally abused’, ‘threatened’, ‘assaulted’, and ‘road rage’. Both the verbally abused and the road rage boxes elicited frequent responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbally abused</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>threatened</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assaulted</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road rage</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total number</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with violent experiences</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A total of 141 drivers provided written comments on 143 separate violent incidents.

**Owner/drivers**

Fully 54.5% of the owner/drivers indicated that they had had occupational violence experiences in the past 12 months. Owner/driver interviewees experienced verbal abuse (36.4%), had been threatened (10.1%), assaulted (1%), and subject to road rage (21.2%). There was significant overlap between the verbal abuse and road rage categories, and a few road rage victims had also been threatened.

Owner/drivers who had been verbally abused wrote a number of comments: ‘get it all the time from car drivers’ (29); ‘motorists’ (35); ‘always having abuse’ (43); ‘blamed for late delivery’ (47); ‘cars’ (51); ‘different loading people; forklift drivers’ (54); ‘freight owner’ (57); ‘by RTA. They don’t like bees’ (104 - driver who was carting bees); ‘from customers. Usually little customers who are struggling for survival and have to take it out on someone’ (192); ‘Department of Main Roads Inspector. Another time was a young female in a four-wheel drive in the city’ (232); ‘from cars in city. Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, old pensioners with caravans’ (240); ‘cars’ (254); ‘RTA officers’ (259); ‘specialised problem. Sometimes we’ll be going through towns and young women will abuse us for being cruel as we’ve got live chickens on board. (100% young women, never blokes)’ (261- driver who carries live chickens); ‘other cars and trucks, coppers, RTA and people you turn up late with freight’ (264); ‘coppers and RTA’ (265); ‘from car drivers in the city’ (294); and ‘motorists all over the place’ (295).

Some of the threatened owner/drivers made comments: ‘had a gun pulled on me a couple of months ago. They cut me off and when I abused them and told them what I thought of them, they pulled a gun on me at Bankstown’ (20); ‘forklift drivers are unbelievable’ (30); ‘car drivers and wherever you pick up and drop off loads. You are an animal, not a person, to a lot of people’ (31); ‘motorists’ (33,34); ‘by car drivers over silly little things’ (60); ‘got hit with a rock about a fortnight ago. Hit just above passenger window. Just kids throwing rocks as you go past’ (208); and ‘idiots who put up road blockades in the last couple of weeks. Carry on like idiots’ (224).

One assaulted owner/driver wrote: ‘they threw the first punch. Cars fill up the buffer zone which you leave to allow yourself to brake’ (61).

Owner/driver road rage recipients made the following comments: ‘car drivers cut you off; pull in front of you. They think just because you’re driving a truck they’ve got to get past you’ (19); ‘people in cars and trucks just get impatient’ (32); ‘lot of car drivers when taking off at lights or cutting around sharp corners on the inside. They don’t know the meaning of the warning signs on back of trailer “do not overtake turning vehicle” ’ (123); ‘car motorist’ (139); ‘idiots in a car that want to stop in front of you at red lights when you’re nearly stopped. Full-on donkeys’ (178); ‘lot of cars just don’t understand how long it takes for a truck to stop or how hard it is to see both sides of the vehicle’ (190); ‘car and truck drivers. Happens 3 or 4 times a day going through Sydney e.g. going round an intersection’ (226); ‘car drivers/cabbies – CBD Sydney’ (229); ‘car drivers, mainly in city’ (238); ‘car drivers in the city; more or less everywhere. They
think you are driving a box trailer’ (250); ‘always someone giving you the finger, usually a young woman in a car. Try and pass you on a roundabout and so on’ (251); ‘nearly all cars. Mostly in cities or towns’ (291); ‘a car tried to push me off the road by slamming his brakes on. If I hadn’t gone off the road I’d have taken the side out of his new Falcon. During the rain. Then he slammed on his brakes and I had to jump on my brakes, and I had 2 B/doubles up behind me. Then he took off waving his fingers up – freeways outside of Sydney’ (293); ‘car driver in the city gave me the finger – approx. a 19 year old girl’ (296); and ‘car and truck drivers; mainly in the cities. Usually heavy traffic conditions when everyone gets short-tempered’ (297).

There was significant overlap between the verbal abuse and road rage categories. The following comments were made by drivers who had either ticked both boxes on the questionnaire or ticked the ‘verbal abuse’ box when referring to a road rage incident: ‘car driver cut in front of me. Stopped and took off, pulled off-side, and did the same thing again’ (16); ‘general public in a car’ (27); ‘car motorists. Got shot at. The RTA was doing a bridge/weights test and had the road blocked off. A kid went through and started shooting at us – didn’t hit’ (100); ‘car drivers, usually in capital cities. Now and again from a farmer because we’re going on the limit and it’s upsetting their cows and up their tail’ (126); ‘car drivers as they go past you. Because of road conditions you slow down but they don’t want to’ (140); ‘car in the country. They threw an empty coke bottle at me as they passed and then pulled in front of me and slammed on their brakes. Scared the hell out of me as I thought it was another one of the suicides – there’s a lot of that happening now’ (158); ‘once or twice a week on road from car drivers, and when loading and unloading’ (244); and ‘car drivers in city in mornings at roundabouts’ (245).

Small fleet truck drivers
Nearly half (45.2%) of the small fleet drivers interviewed indicated that they had had occupational violence experiences in the past year. Interviewees experienced verbal abuse (35.6%), threats (6.7%), and road rage (19.2%), but none had been assaulted. Again there was a significant overlap between the verbal abuse and road rage recipients.

Many small fleet drivers who had been verbally abused wrote comments. These included: ‘they put their fingers up and toot their horns – car drivers’ (18); ‘car drivers’ (49,137); ‘from boss and occasionally from loading/unloading place’ (84); ‘it was a daily basis when I worked on tow trucks’ (94); ‘motorists in a car’ (101); ‘car motorists. When held up in one-lane situations, and overtake on double lines, and give you the finger and the horn’ (102); ‘if it happens, you don’t worry about it. Big enough to look after yourself” (110); ‘other car drivers every now and then’ (111); ‘RTA, police, boss’ (145); ‘RTA, police and boss and people we tow for’ (147 - carried frozen foods); ‘nothing to worry about. Car drivers are uneducated about trucks. They do silly things’ (154); ‘people in cars. Mainly when they cut me off or cut off on the inside’ (189); ‘by customers struggling to survive’ (193); ‘by client for being late. Mismanagement on management’s behalf’ (213); ‘by cranky forklift drivers’ (216); ‘mainly cars; usually in the country on expressways. Impatient people’ (233); ‘in depot of different company. He decided to have an argument’ (236); ‘cars and trucks in city/Sydney’ (239); ‘car drivers in the city’ (242); ‘car drivers impatient all over (country, local)” (253); ‘just normal
abuse out on the road by car drivers both on the highway and in city. A lot of it is impatience’ (280); ‘by customers if late’ (288); ‘car and truck drivers in country’ (298); and ‘mainly car drivers in Sydney’ (299).

Two of the small fleet drivers who had been threatened wrote comments: ‘boss. Threatened with dismissal for being late’ (98); and ‘work mate when I drove his truck’ (132).

No small fleet drivers had been assaulted.

Small fleet road rage recipients made the following comments: ‘from cars. Weekends are the worst. Mainly in the city’ (114); ‘inconsiderate car motorists pass you, pull in front of you, and then they hit the brakes in front of you. They probably don’t realise what heavy vehicles can do to a car if run over one’ (135); ‘car drivers where they cut you off. Usually in city - especially in Melbourne’ (141); ‘motorists, usually in city in 60km zones’ (183); ‘car drivers – city’ (184); ‘car drivers in the city. Usually cut you off and fork you (thumbs up)’ (211); ‘car drivers giving you the finger or the thumb and you can read their lips as to what they are saying’ (214); ‘car drivers and cabbies and bus drivers’ (230); ‘car drivers in the city at roundabouts’ (243); and ‘get idiots in cars. Never been assaulted but carry a pick handle in the front of truck’ (247).

Again there was a significant overlap between the verbal abuse and road rage recipients: ‘people where you load and unload and people in cars and idiots on the UHF at night making threats – complete idiots. Saying truck drivers are the lowest form of life in the world’ (26); ‘abused by boss. Car drivers threaten me at roundabouts and intersections’ (64); ‘car drivers just want to do everything they can to get in your way. Have not got the patience to wait 1 minute for you. That’s my biggest grievance with driving’ (88); ‘a range of people: forklift drivers/managers/general public/cops/RTA dogs’ (99); ‘car drivers. Normally 18 to 20 year old sheilas with P plates in little hatch backs. Shire blokes on the road abuse you too’ (124); ‘by clients and other motorists – normally cars’ (136); ‘customers abuse you if you are 10 minutes late. They haven’t got a clue what we go through e.g. half them haven’t driven in snow so you have to go 40km hour’ (179 - interviewed on Great Western Highway during snow); ‘cars in the city. Doesn’t happen as much in the bush, but [does] on highways. Just people wanting to get around you and then stepping on the brakes because they don’t like a truck in front of them’ (246); and ‘vehicles that speed up on overtaking lanes making it impossible’ (276).

Large fleet truck drivers
Of the large fleet drivers, 42.3% indicated that they had had occupational violence experiences in the past 12-months. Interviewees experienced verbal abuse (25.9%), had been threatened (5.9%), assaulted (1.2%), and were subject to road rage (21.2%). There was a significant overlap between the verbal abuse and road rage categories.

Large fleet drivers who had been verbally abused made a number of comments. These included: ‘employer’ (37); ‘from bosses’ (113); ‘get told in a certain way by bosses if you’re running late’ (128); ‘people I tow for and the boss’ (146 - carries general goods);
‘other road users and customers if late’ (175); ‘fellow truck driver at work yard’ (181); ‘women drivers. Just had a woman in a little car with a baby in the back who passed me on a double line – in a bloody hurry to go to [named fast-food outlet]. That’s where she turned off’ (187); ‘car drivers get the shits with you. They think they can pull up in front of you at lights’ (197); ‘other truck drivers on the radio. You just laugh at them. Probably full of drugs and don’t know what they are doing’ (272); ‘car drivers; maybe 50 times a day’ (274); and ‘verbally abused on the phone by the boss if you’re going to be late. Everything is time-slotted’ (289).

Three large fleet drivers who had been threatened made comments: ‘other car drivers’ (53); ‘I’m a union delegate. From management, mainly over day-to-day running and things they know they should do and it comes to an argument to get them done’ (198); and ‘my boss, because truck is not cost-effective. Threatened with the sack’ (204).

Only one large fleet driver had been assaulted: ‘NCO [non-commissioned officer]’ (9 - in armed services).

Road rage recipients working in large fleets made the following comments: ‘Sydney depot manager is a bushranger’ (14); ‘always get someone on the road who gives you the shits a bit. You’ve got to turn off to it’ (15); ‘car driver gestures. Couldn’t hear what he was saying’ (83); ‘cars – a really regular thing. They assume we can stop on a 10-cent piece. We might beep the horn as a warning sign and then they abuse us’ (119); ‘car e.g. overtaken dangerously on bend, speeded up and then abuse you. Speed limiters on us so can’t speed up’ (120); ‘cars have a go’ (121); ‘car drivers are the worst’ (122); ‘car drivers when they’re going to work or just knocked off work; everywhere’ (129); ‘car drivers. Usually anything that doesn’t go their way e.g. cutting in front of you’ (180); ‘car driver in city; gestures and horn blowing. There’s a few crazy people out there’ (221); ‘mainly car drivers in both city and country e.g. put the fingers up’ (241); and ‘car motorists everywhere’ (277).

For large fleet drivers there was less overlap between the verbal abuse and road rage categories than for the other employment status groups. Two written comments were: ‘the general tourist public. Car drivers in charge of caravans and out here at night and have no idea of driving on Hume highway. Always cop abuse; just everyday junk. Part of the job’ (13); and ‘verbal in city from car drivers. Road rage in country – car driver tried to run me off the road’ (196).

‘Other’ employment status drivers interviewed

Only 33.3% of the ‘other’ employment status drivers indicated that they had had any occupational violence experiences in the immediate past 12 months. While interviewees had experienced verbal abuse (25%), threats (8.3%), and been subject to road rage (33.3%), none had been assaulted.

Few made written comments. One road rage recipient wrote: ‘car drivers, virtually on a daily basis; uneducated idiots’ (210). Again there was an overlap between the verbal abuse and road rage categories, including: ‘other drivers in trucks and cars. Got a good
burst last night going down to Melbourne because I drive for [named specific company]’ (69); ‘car drivers’ (150); and ‘another driver, over radio’ (81).

Variations by highway
Violence appears to have been marginally less common on the Sturt and Great Western highways. Verbal abuse and road rage appeared to have been more common in city traffic or on highways when trucks were going up hills. Most of this aggression came from car drivers.

The distinctive patterns and types of occupational violence
Three distinct core types were identified (a) verbal abuse and road violence from other motorists; (b) abuse and threats from staff at freight forwarding or loading yards; and (c) abuse by customers when deliveries were delayed or more expensive than expected. The severity appeared to vary across these three types of occupational violence, with road violence potentially the most severe, and that from customers the least likely to result in a physical assault. In all, 67.1% of all incidents could be classed as road violence; 16.1% emanated from staff or bosses at freight forwarding yards or depots; and 9.8% from customers. A further 5.6% were interpreted by the drivers as RTA/police harassment of some kind, and 1.4% of incidents could not be clearly allocated to one or other category. The qualitative and quantitative data indicated that there were distinctly different causes for these three forms of occupational violence.

The road violence incidents most frequently occurred in heavy traffic situations near roundabouts or red lights, or on highways when heavily laden vehicles drove slowly up hills. One important contributing factor is the lack of general motorist understanding of truck stopping limitations, and space requirements for turning at roundabouts. While improved motorist education and understanding of truck capacities is clearly needed, this is not sufficient to prevent road violence directed at truck drivers. It may well be that some motorists fear large trucks because of their size and weight, and because car drivers cannot readily influence truck actions. Further, road violence perpetrators typically have similar socio-demographic features to other violent individuals: male, young, lower socio-economic group, aggressive, sometimes abusing licit and illicit substances etc. Thus patterns of road violence can be analysed within a framework of aggression, status defence and enhancement. A better understanding of the causes of the violence being played out on the widely available battleground of the road, and interventions to diminish this, are likely to have long-term benefits.

Abuse and threats at freight-forwarding yards had quite different features. The comments from truck drivers indicated a relatively low incidence of more severe forms of occupational violence at freight-forwarding yards. Only one variable stood out from the data: violence in freight forwarding yards and economic pressures were closely linked in nearly all incidents. Economic pressures are widely recognised as intense in the long distance transport industry, and as a result, bankruptcies are increasingly common amongst owner/drivers and small-scale loading yards, and mergers and takeovers are endemic amongst large fleet organisations. Undercutting on quotations is rife as competition continually intensifies. In such an environment, competition and aggression
between individual owner/drivers for contracts and loads is probably inevitable. Loading delays exacerbated these tensions and fueled aggression because waiting time was usually unpaid time. Hence it is not surprising that a number of interviewed drivers cited incidents when delays, cutting-in on queues, covert incentives provided by drivers to queue-jump, and mistakes by forklift drivers fueled tensions and sometimes resulted in lower-level occupational violence. However, none of these cited incidents threatened the life of a truck driver.

Customers were also affected by economic and time pressures which sometimes threatened their economic viability. Their survival was often under threat from larger operators, declining markets and/or increasing costs. Many small-scale customers of the long distance truck drivers had been forced to adopt a Just-in-Time approach to the purchase of goods. Thus delays in arrival of freight were critical to business survival. Hence it is not surprising that altercations occasionally occurred. Once again, these cited altercations were not in any sense a threat to the life of the truck drivers involved.

In sum, occupational violence in its various forms is a significant (but poorly recognised) OHS problem for heavy vehicle drivers. Owner/drivers and drivers in small fleets experienced more violence (especially verbal abuse) than did large fleet drivers. Road violence had been experienced by around 20% of all drivers in the past 12-month period, with car drivers the most common perpetrators. Three drivers had missiles thrown at them (86,158,208). Of greatest concern, two of the 300 interviewed drivers had been shot at in the immediately previous 12-month period (20,100). It is argued that road violence has to be understood in a wider context of aggression with offenders having similar socio-demographic features to other violence perpetrators. In contrast, aggression at loading yards and from customers arises from quite different causes and is rooted in the intense economic and time pressures endemic in this industry. In sum, occupational violence is a significant problem for all truck drivers.

3.5 Information obtained on illicit drug use

There is a significant amount of media attention directed to illicit drug taking by truck drivers – although little of this attention is directed to why drivers should do so. While no direct questions were asked during the survey, some information was obtained. Three different sources of information relating to illicit drug use by drivers were accessed.

(a) Primary data: during the field research a number of drivers made comments about drug use and/or abuse. No specific questions were asked about this topic, and the data were collected opportunistically. Sometimes driver comments related to their own activities, but more frequently to drug use by other truck drivers. The following qualitative data must therefore be interpreted with caution. Over the whole interviewed population of 300 drivers, 23 (7.7%) volunteered comments about illicit drug use. (These comments were not probed for in any way.) The comments were made by 11 owner/drivers, 8 working in small fleets, and 4 large fleet drivers. No ‘other’ employment status drivers volunteered any comments at all.
Owner/drivers stated: ‘we all take illegal substances; a big % does. You’ve got to, to do the hours to make the money. I take duromine¹ and ephedrine². Don’t touch the other stuff” (5); ‘increase [in crashes when working longer hours]. Reduction in suitable low-impact drugs has caused increase’ (39); ‘stress. On property that had a drugs raid and there wasn’t any drugs. Police never contacted me. Stressed for months and months over it ... nearly every truck driver was taking pills in the past. But that’s hopefully changed during the 90’s with quieter nicer trucks and the big macho image isn’t there as much’ (105); ‘the search annoys me. Coppers need a warrant to search your house. Why don’t they need one to search your truck? Only looking for amphetamines³ ... ’ (126); ‘still a lot of fellows use amphetamines; lot is home-made stuff which is more dangerous. Using a lot of speed – taking it orally. Don’t use amphetamines any more myself. Had to make a decision if I wanted to last in the industry’ (140); ‘more drug-testing is needed because drugs have ruined our industry... ’ (158); ‘transport department has made it harder now. That’s a good thing as it’s safer. People take a lot; used to be very bad. Now better; cleaned it up a lot. I never take drugs but many did. I’m Justice (JP) and do right thing’ (255); ‘depends [if crashes increase when working longer hours]. I hated the pills and then they sleep on the wheel’ (255); ‘kidney problems - too many drugs’ (265); and ‘70% of truck drivers are drug addicts; 30% of all trucks on the road are legally unsafe’ (297). Another owner/driver (20) discussed the US government regulation of ‘pills’ for truck drivers there, but did not elucidate on the Australian situation.

Small fleet drivers: ‘lot of these young blokes are taking drugs and doing a job to take them. They’re coming at you every night’ (6); ‘half the trouble is the drugs. They’ve taken the harmless stuff off the streets e.g. Duromine, and now speed’s on the streets. The police come up here every second week doing truck searches – put a dog in there – I live in that truck!’ (18); ‘drugs’ (49); ‘lot of drug taking in industry. My best mate is in hospital now with a massive heart attack because of drugs he was taking – speed – just sniffing it. Used to be able to get ephedrine (given to 6-year old kids with asthma). When the big Kempsie bus crash happened they took them off the market. So everybody started to use heavy drugs e.g. speed. If took ephedrine could go another 4 or 5 hours and be very alert with it. Lot of blokes got into trucking industry not to drive trucks but

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¹ Duromine is medically used for management of obesity. Adverse symptoms include cardio-vascular symptoms, tremor overstimulation, and psychotic episodes (Medical Publishers, 1995:267).

² Ephedrine is an oral form of epinephrine, or adrenaline. ‘Ephedrine is the primary precursor utilized in the clandestine synthesis of methamphetamine and methcathinone, both potent central nervous system (CNS) stimulants...’ (Cox et al, 1987). It is medicinally used for symptomatic relief in milder cases of asthma and prevention of acute attacks (Medical Publishers, 1995:187). Ephedrine is closely related in structure to methamphetamine, although its CNS actions are less potent but longer acting than those of amphetamines.

³ Amphetamines (or speed) are stimulants to the CNS and effects may last from 8 to 24 hours. ‘Ice’ is a clear crystallised form of methamphetamine that can be smoked. Use of amphetamines results in increased alertness, positive mood shift, increased talkativeness, increased aggressiveness; increased heart and respiration rate and blood pressure, dilated pupils, and possibly blurred vision, dizziness, flushing, twitching etc, - and insomnia. Frequent use of large amounts can cause brain damage resulting in speech and thought disturbances, or amphetamine psychosis which is similar to paranoid schizophrenia and which is manifested through hallucinations, delusions, paranoia or bizarre violent behaviour. These ill effects may be enhanced if amphetamine use is combined with cocaine. Amphetamines are medically used to treat depression, obesity and some other conditions (Erowid, 7/8/2000).
to get the speed. No age group; across the board. Know a 55-year old takes it’ (103); ‘...the longer you work the more likelihood of a crash. Young drivers in industry too inexperienced and use too many drugs. Most of them smoke pot and take powder’ (135); ‘lack of drugs and lack of sleep’ (147); ‘I’ve taken drugs myself; just to keep going. I know I’d rather have a guy coming towards me who’se had lots of amphetamines and who is wide awake than one who is fatigued and falling asleep’ (213); and ‘getting rid of soft drugs like duromine which means if I’m ratshit I’ve got to get some heavy shit which I don’t really like’ (216).

Large fleet drivers: ‘Australia has a drug problem in the industry. It’s a lot of it in the younger ones. The older guys are regular and do regular runs; not doing lots of crazy hours’ (8); ‘when they took ephedrine off the market and made it impossible to get. So speed and all come onto the market and now they are injecting it. You can get it for $30’ (13); ‘increase as once you get over 14 [hours of work] and on a continuous basis, you throw caution to the wind. Should be allowed to take legal stuff to get yourself home e.g. one hour down the road’ (199); and ‘other truck drivers on the radio. You just laugh at them. Probably full of drugs and don’t know what they are doing’ (272).

(b) Observational data: was gathered by the researcher conducting the face-to-face interviews with the 300 truck drivers. Of these 300, it was observed that two had pinpoint pupils during night-time interviews (pupils normally dilate as darkness increases – and with amphetamine use); three made quite unusual and inappropriate actions/reactions/comments, and two non-participant bystanders to tables where interviews were being conducted were extremely aggressive and interrupted discussions. A further three refused to participate in interviews when approached in a highly unusual and aggressive manner. (Most interviewees – and those who refused to participate - were extremely pleasant.)

(c) Secondary data: some secondary data indicators on illicit drug use were available for comparative purposes.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) data were accessed. Across the Australian population as a whole aged 14 years or older, the following proportion had used illicit substances in the 12 months prior to one survey: any illicit drugs (22.0%), marijuana/cannabis (17.9%), analgesics for non-medical purposes (5.2%), amphetamines (3.6%), hallucinogens (3%), tranquillisers (3.0%), ecstasy/designer drugs (2.4%), cocaine (1.4%), inhalants (0.8%), heroin (0.7%), injected illegal drugs (0.7%), barbiturates (0.2%), steroids (0.2%), and methadone (0.2%) (Williams, 1999).

All unpublished data on illicit drug use by truck drivers was extracted from this survey. In this survey 71 truck drivers (code 7311) were recorded. In the previous 12 months the surveyed truckdrivers had used: any illicit substance (23.9%), marijuana/cannabis (18.3%), analgesics for non-medical purposes (5.8%), steroids (5.6%), tranquillisers (3.6%), LSD (an hallucinogen) (1.6%), amphetamines (1.5%), inhalants (0.9%), barbiturates (0.1%), injected illegal drugs (0.1%), ecstasy/designer drugs (0%), cocaine (0%), heroin (0%), and methadone (0%) (pers. comm. Williams, P. unit record file, weighted sample, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra). In terms of legal substances, truck drivers smoked more than the Australian population as a whole (36.7% vs. 26.4%), and drank more alcohol (89.1% vs. 80.7%) (ibid).
That is, from this (rather small) AIHW household sample of 71 truck drivers it appears that truckdrivers use (a) any illicit substance, marijuana/cannabis, analgesics for non-medical purposes, steroids, inhalants, and tranquillisers slightly more frequently than the Australian population as a whole. (b) However truck drivers injected illegal drugs, and used amphetamines, barbiturates, hallucinogens (LSD), cocaine, heroin, ecstasy/designer drugs, and methadone less frequently than does the Australian population as a whole. One policy option that could be considered if illicit drug usage increases in the future, is routine urine and hair monitoring of truck drivers (see Makkai, 2000; Eurowid, 7/8/2000). Such monitoring would have to be in accordance with ethical considerations and employee representative input e.g. The Privacy Committee of NSW (1992), Drug Testing in the Workplace guidelines.

_In sum,_ the evidence on illicit drug use by truck drivers is limited – but of significant concern given the secondary data provided by Williams. The qualitative comments from drivers during the survey indicated that a tightening of enforcement regimes may have led to a marked increase in illicit drugs manufactured in ‘backyard’ operations. The _causes_ for the use of substances such as amphetamines – or speed – need to be identified and addressed. It may well be that illicit drug use is a symptom of a major underlying problem in the industry. However regulatory regimes remain focused on use by individual drivers with little attention paid to why they are apparently so widely available and so widely used.

### 3.6 Truck crashes in immediate past twelve months

Each of the drivers was asked ‘have you had any truck crashes in the past 12 months (since May 1, 1999)’. Possible response boxes were: ‘none’, ‘yes’, and ‘just little ones that didn’t stop you driving’. Drivers were then asked to describe the situation and time of day or night when the incident occurred (although not all provided this narrative data). In the table below, the ‘total crashes’ line includes those who answered ‘yes’ as well as those who had ‘little crashes’ that did not stop them driving. Drivers who indicated that they had had a crash in the immediate past year were also asked if there was anything different or special about their driving conditions around the time of the crash, such as rain or poor visibility. These descriptions about the situation and time of crash have been combined with those about working conditions, and are provided below the table, separated by employment status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just little ones that didn’t stop driving</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with any crashes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey*
In table 19 it can be seen that small fleet drivers (12.5%) admitted to more crashes in the previous 12 months than did owner/drivers (10.1%) or large fleet employees (5.9%). Conversely, large fleet drivers cited more ‘little crashes’ that did not stop them driving (7.1%) than did those employed in small fleets (4.8%) or owner/drivers (3%). It may be important to note that what are termed ‘little crashes’ by drivers may not be identified as such by insurance companies, for example, there may be large claims following crashes involving cars at roundabouts when little damage occurred to trucks.

**Owner/drivers**

Comments written about working conditions around the time of a crash by those who answered ‘yes’ included: ‘10am and a P-plater in right hand lane and a car ran up her bum. I came down the hill and it was either kill them or change lanes. So I changed lanes and hit another truck’ (30); ‘middle of day. Car coming the other way driving too fast and spun out and hit the trailer...no [special conditions]’ (35); ‘cow on road after dark and hit it; truck damaged and cow killed. $38,000 damage to truck and $12,000 loss of income. Six months ago, and insurance company from farmer flatly refuses to pay. We have now got to take them to court to recover losses and repair bills and they are dragging it out. Fifteen cows on the road at night!’ (61); ‘ran over a little car who tried to squeeze between me and the truck in front. It was a nice day’ (100); ‘hit a kangaroo at 2.45am. Inside the 60km sign limit at Broken Hill’ (126); ‘car stopped suddenly. Rear-end accident; 4pm day’ (229); ‘at breaking daylight a car hit in city at a roundabout. On my left-hand side. No injuries; marked my bull bar; no car damage’ (245); ‘9am in country and broke a pedestal/suspension and went off road and jack-knifed. No injuries. Damage to truck about $60,000; $15,000 to trailer. No’ [nothing special about working conditions] (270); and ‘5am in city at traffic lights. My attention was distracted by part of load and looking in mirror to check and found chain puller had come undone. Looked back and found out the car in front had never taken off from traffic lights and I hit it. He got a sore wrist, but had he parked there? No damage to truck; car $19,500 damage. No [special conditions]’ (296).

Owner/drivers who responded they had had ‘little crashes’ that didn’t stop them driving included: ‘lady shot up the inside of me at a roundabout while I was trying to turn right. Got a phone call a couple of days later - didn’t even know I’d hit her’ (109); ‘hit a roo yesterday morning just before sun-up. Only damaged spotlight and grill’ (185); and ‘backed into a loading dock around 9am. No one injured; just minor damage. Four blokes had decided to park their cars in the loading dock, which made it very tight for trucks’ (226).

**Small fleet truck drivers**

Comments written by small fleet drivers about working conditions around the time of the crash included: ‘squashed a car at Nicholson Street in Melbourne. Making a left hand turn. No [special conditions], just an idiot trying to beat me around the corner’ (6); ‘wiped the side off a car the other day. He tried to beat me into a lane but didn’t make it. No [special conditions]; mid afternoon’ (26); ‘just had a car come up on the left-hand side while making a left turn. Just wrote his car off; bounced off truck. Sun would have been shining on the indicators so he wouldn’t have seen them so clearly’ (84); ‘hitting
kangaroos. Fog’ (99); ‘backed over a car about 11pm. Just backing out of a driveway after doing a delivery’ (133); ‘11.30pm rolled a truck; $75,000 damage but not hurt. Just fatigue’ (136); ‘11.30pm on country highway. I dozed off and ran off road. No injuries but truck had about $10,000 damage. All it was was the bonnet. No [nothing special about conditions]’ (157); ‘5am in the country and another truck ran up the back of me. Took me to hospital with cut on head and whiplash. His and my truck damaged. Dark and I’d just come out of a parking bay after 7 hours sleep’ (195); ‘2.30pm in city going back to yard and car cut me off. No truck damage; no injuries. Slight damage to his car. No [special conditions at time]’ (206); ‘(a) 8.30am in Blue Mountains and rolled truck over. No injuries and truck wrote off. (b) Hit a little car in city about 10.30pm on a bend on Pennant Hills Road and she came up and underneath me and I didn’t see her coming. No injuries; no truck damage and mild car damage (just back door)’ (267); ‘country 10.00pm. Raining, nighttime, bad conditions’ (276); ‘8pm out on highway and truck ran up the backside of me. No injuries, damage minor, and other truck pretty bad. No [special conditions]’ (284); and ‘2am in country. No [special conditions at time]’ (300).

Some small fleet drivers who had ‘little crashes’ that didn’t stop them driving made comments: ‘backing into a Ute. Went through a roundabout but I couldn’t get through’ (63); ‘backed into a loading dock at night and bent the trailer a little bit. Nothing major, just some steel. Night and no good lighting there; wasn’t adequate’ (88); ‘10.30am in a transport yard and turning around and the B/double touched bull bar on other truck and pulled it off’ (174); ‘in middle of day in city. One when loading; one at set of traffic lights; one at intersection. No [special conditions at time]’ (179); and ‘car ran into left-hand side in city around 7.30am. No one injured; about $8,000 [repair costs] to truck and car written off’ (211).

Large fleet truck drivers
Comments written by large fleet drivers about working conditions around the time of a crash included: ‘4pm ran out of road at a T-junction. Slight damage, no injuries. No [special conditions], just the front of the truck was covered with grasshoppers’ (120); ‘got hit by train Friday night. Wrote the back trailer off – about 9.30pm. Night. Beautiful clear night, but train in goods yard didn’t have its lights on’ (129); ‘6.30pm in city. I went to change lanes and car accelerated to get out of way and hit gutter and bounced back and then I pushed him 60 metres up highway. No injuries; minor damage to truck; about $3,000 to car. It was wet at time’ (197); and ‘ran over a car in Sydney in afternoon at an intersection. As going round corner he came round the inside and I ran over him with back set of wheels. No injuries; nil truck damage. His left-hand guard and bit of bonnet damaged but repairable’ (273).

Some large fleet drivers who had ‘little crashes’ that didn’t stop them driving made comments: ‘lunchtime. Bloke had a bit of scaffolding sticking out back of truck and I ran into it. Just done a long shift’ (53); ‘night. Hit little car. Working off the wharf in Sydney – not my usual job. It was not my usual job to be stuck in traffic all day’ (73); ‘1.30am on country road. Went to sleep and went off road and that woke me up. $4,000 to $5,000 damage to truck. All roads are boring’ (152); ‘no [special conditions]’ (200); ‘knocked a couple of mirrors off in daytime. On the road – getting too close to another
‘Other’ employment status drivers interviewed

The only comment written about working conditions around the time of a crash was: ‘no [special conditions at time]’ (78).

Variations by highway

Variations in the types of crashes could be identified between city and country areas, rather than between highways. City and country-town incidents typically involved cars at intersections or roundabouts as well as incidents at freight-forwarding yards or delivery sites. While truck drivers and their vehicles were rarely injured during these incidents, damage to cars was frequently extensive; this must be of concern to many insurance companies. In contrast, country incidents often involved animals on roads, other vehicles ‘running up the back’ of trucks, and occasional fatigue-related runs off the road. These country incidents were often severe and resulted in significant injuries for truck drivers as well as extensive damage to their vehicles and large claims on their insurance policies.

In sum, overall, the interviewed drivers had a relatively ‘good’ crash history given the extensive kilometers driven each year. Large fleet drivers (12.9%) and owner/drivers (13.1%) cited fewer truck crashes in the immediate past 12-month period than did the small fleet drivers (17.3%) interviewed. In contrast, large fleet drivers cited more ‘little crashes’ that didn’t stop them driving (7.1%) than did those employed in small fleets (4.8%) or owner/drivers (3%).

The incidence of crashes does not, however, indicate the severity. Severity can be measured in a range of ways including medical treatment required and size of insurance claims to (a) trucks and (b) cars involved in crashes. While the available data allowed estimation of incidence, it did not adequately allow for estimations of the severity of truck crashes. Further, it may be that there is a ‘healthy worker’ affect in the qualitative and quantitative data gathered, that is, many severely injured drivers who had experienced severe crashes may have exited from the industry. Data about severely injured drivers who had exited the industry following major crashes would most likely show up in insurance claims data; if these drivers were concentrated in one employment status group or another this would also be evident.

Other possible reasons for the improved road crash history in large fleets may include greater use of shuttle systems so drivers slept at home more frequently, increased implementation of fatigue management guidelines, greater compliance with log-book requirements, and comparatively lower levels of chronic severe fatigue. Further, large fleet drivers were, overall, much younger than owner/drivers (10.6% over age 55 vs. 21.2%. See table 9). Hence theoretically, large fleet drivers should be better able to adjust to inversion of their circadian rhythms when scheduled to drive through the night. However, age does not explain the poorer crash record of small fleet drivers. Other factors must be contributing to crash propensity. Truck crashes in the previous five-year
period were then examined, and as the section below indicates, small fleet drivers again cited frequent crashes.

### 3.7 Truck crashes in previous five years

The truck crash experiences of the 300 interviewed drivers over the previous 5 years were assessed to identify if a similar pattern had existed over a number of years. Each interviewee was asked ‘did you have any crashes in the previous 5 years (May 1994 till May 1999)’. The possible response boxes were: ‘none’, ‘yes’, and ‘just little ones that didn’t stop you driving’. Each interviewee was then requested to describe the situation and time of day/night of each incident. The compiled results are shown in the table below. Detailed comments provided by drivers have been reproduced below the table, separated by employment status.

#### TABLE 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just little ones that didn’t stop driving</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with crashes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to the previous discussion and patterns seen in table 19, owner/drivers (20.2%) reported more crashes than did those in small fleets (18.3%) or large fleets (15.3%). Once again “little crashes” were cited most frequently amongst large fleet drivers and least commonly by owner/drivers.

The reasons for the higher proportion of owner/drivers citing crashes in the previous 5 years compared with the last 12-months are unclear. One possible explanation is that the ‘healthy worker’ effect has intensified in the last 12 months - resulting in more owner/drivers exiting the industry after a severe crash.

**Owner/drivers**

Comments written by owner/drivers about working conditions around the time of their crash in the previous 5-year period included: ‘I hit a car up the bum. Going down road about 60 and a car pulled up in front of me; pulled up at a yellow light’ (30); ‘day; dry road; heavy traffic. Small vehicle cut in; caused 4-vehicle pile-up’ (39); ‘roll over; overworked’ (40); ‘5am and truck went to sleep and fell over. Truck just wanted to go to the left’ (44); ‘10.30pm bloke in car hit me. He’s in 22 parts; he’s dead; they hosed him away’ (51); ‘various’ (57); ‘mid morning. Came over rise and clipped large float behind Ute’ (96); ‘rolled truck over about 5.15am in a forest road with a load of logs. Raining and dark and I should not have been there in rain and dark carting logs’ (126); ‘rolled one over about 5pm. Flat road on sharp bend’ (127); ‘tip crated over in first 12 months..."
of driving. Not enough training’ (139); ‘in morning about 9am on the outskirts of Brisbane on the Toowoomba Road. There was a previous accident and people on road and I swung off road rather than kill people. Wrote truck trailer off, plus $38,000 damage to prime mover. I wasn’t injured’ (140); ‘truck got wrote off at Tarcutta around 2am. [Also] swerved to miss a roo; just a few scratches’ (151); ‘one bloke in a van ran into the back and wrote tail off. A second ran into the back in the yard and severely damaged the tray. No one injured in the yard’ (191); ‘about 11am in a country town and I backed over the top of a car that had parked where it shouldn’t have parked. No one in it thankfully. Write-off car’ (227); ‘touched a car in Newtown but that was caused by the lanes not being wide enough for a truck. No injuries. No damage to truck. Just a bit of damage to the car - deep scratches’ (232); ‘am in country. Truck fell over; fell asleep. Minor injuries and scratches. I got sacked’ (240); ‘hit a cow about 11pm in country. No injuries. Truck about $15,000 to repair and cow killed’ (278); ‘afternoon in country town at a roundabout. Another truck came in on my right. He was in the wrong. No injuries. My truck was off the road for 10 weeks and $40,000 damage. His truck had very little damage’ (295); and ‘in daylight hit a car in country. He was stopped at roadworks and I didn’t stop in time. I just touched him and wrote his car off. No injuries, no truck damage’ (297).

Some owner/drivers who had ‘little crashes’ that didn’t stop them driving in the previous 5-year period made comments including: ‘couple of cars ran into me. Couple at night and a couple in the day’ (60); ‘little bumps and scrapes. Could be anytime e.g. when you back in somewhere’ (224); and ‘nightime in Kempsey. I pulled away and car on left side got caught between kerb and my toolbox on the trailer. No injuries, scratch on truck toolbox, and car damaged on front headlight’ (294).

Small fleet truck drivers
Comments written by small fleet drivers about working conditions around the time of their crashes in the previous 5-year period included: ‘(a) nearly rolled a truck over about midday as someone stopped in the middle of highway (car) to give way to their right. I swerved to miss them and put it up on two wheels. Not hurt; just shocked. (b) Rammed up the back of a car mid afternoon. Car up front and tow trucks up front and cars coming other way and no where to go. No one hurt’ (87); ‘car overtook me on left hand side while I was turning left and stuck up inside and he drove straight into side of fuel tank. I was only doing about 10k at time. He broke headlight and blinker – his fault. Coppers came and told me to keep going’ (88); ‘a truck pulled out in front of me. I hit him up the back’ (99); ‘driving a coach about 11pm and car tried to cut in front of me around a corner. Just clipped the rear fender of car. Nobody hurt. Car was proven wrong in court’ (103); ‘hit a camel 4½ years ago about 5pm on the West/South Australian border. Truck damage $66,000; no injuries. Camel was dead and could still smell it on the truck four months later’ (135); ‘about 5am ran into back of car at Ballarat. No damage to truck. Car a write-off and guy killed’ (136); ‘2am just outside Alice Springs main highway on Finke River. Hit 2 bulls on the road and they were killed. $25,000 damage to truck; no injury to me but had to hitchhike home’ (137); ‘(a) one where a bloke came out on the inside of me while making a left hand turn around 3pm in Sydney and when just finished loading. Damage to truck and trailer about $5,000 – I
wasn’t injured. The small van would have been about $2,000 [repair costs]. (b) Chap with little truck broken down on side of road in country near Yass at 2am. Pitch black and couldn’t see. He’d stopped but was still ½ a truck’s width in the lane. I swerved but still hooked truck. Damage to my truck about $2,000. No damage to him but damage to his freight – plums going to market’ (141); ‘car in Melbourne overtook me but there was an island and nowhere for him to go and he clipped. No damage to my truck or me. His car had about $2,500 damage and he tried to hit me for it but didn’t do him any good (through insurance)’ (142); ‘day in Sydney and ran up back of car at lights’ (153); ‘mid morning in a country town. Was crossing highway and a car came around corner and went under the trailer. Minor damage to trailer and none to me. The car was a write-off but driver not hurt’ (172); ‘4.20pm in country on a mountain; crashed. No other vehicles, no injuries and truck written off. The insurance company sued the RTA and the Armidale council and won and got $380,000 back as fault with road’ (214); ‘night in country. There was stray cattle on road that wasn’t fenced. No injuries. Wrote truck off and cattle killed’ (220); ‘daytime in city at left hand turn and car came on left-hand side. No injuries; no damage to truck but damage to her car about $5,000. She actually owned 5 trucks’ (242); ‘just backed into a Ute about 2pm in a loading yard. No injuries, no truck damage, but $2,000 damage to the Ute’ (280); ‘8pm out on highway and truck rammed up the backside of me. No injuries, damage minor, and other truck pretty bad’ (284); ‘10.10pm in country - a head-on with a car on wrong side of road. Fatal; car a write-off. Police found a suicide note in his car. Affects me still. We don’t get counseling; just have to live with it’ (286); ‘7.20am in country. Bloke coming towards me in Ute went to sleep. He died – on wrong side of road. Damage to truck 5 tyres’ (288); and ‘day in city and I ran up the car in front of me’ (290).

Some small fleet drivers who had ‘little crashes’ that didn’t stop them driving in the previous 5-year period made comments including: ‘about 10am lady came through a red light in Dubbo. She wasn’t hurt but her car was fairly bad’ (85); ‘late at night, mainly hitting poles in loading bays – not actually on the road – some of them not really well lit. Also in unfamiliar vehicles’ (102); ‘a car opened the door in front of me and I took it off’ (157); ‘4.30pm in country town. Truck parked and pulling out and turned too quick and clipped a car. No one injured; nil damage to truck. Damage to car about $2,000’ (176); ‘always having little fender-benders. It’s part of life driving in the city’ (206); ‘daylight and ran into car in the country. An idiot was trying to overtake me and I wasn’t paying attention and he came around and slipped into side of trailer. No injuries, couple of scratches on truck, and his was a wreck’ (216); ‘day and evening in the city. Usually in the depot and on the road’ (236); and ‘hit an awning in a back street of country town. Some damage to trailer and to the awning’ (246).

Large fleet truck drivers
Comments written by large fleet drivers about working conditions around the time of their crashes in the previous 5-year period included: ‘hit a bridge in the night. Sore back for a couple of days. Truck off the road for about 2 months. Nobody else involved, just me and the bridge’ (25); ‘2 cars fault’ (77); ‘had someone throw a cricket ball through the windscreen about 3 years ago. Deliberate – threw off a bridge; swerved and smashed the windscreen. The same bridge where the truck driver was killed from same thing long
after. Called the 'Mark Evans' bridge now. I rang the police but they didn’t send anyone out. I know they didn’t send anyone out because I was listening on the scanner. Happens all the time – it’s a truck driver so who cares?’ (86); ‘[one] afternoon car tried to overtake me on the inside while doing a right hand turn. Minor damage to car and none to truck’ (97); ‘lunchtime, coming at roundabout and car on left-hand side came up side and I moved over and hit her. Lot of car damage; no one hurt’ (106); ‘2 or 3pm in the city and turning on a right-hand corner and a car came out on right hand side. No injury to me or truck, but car about $6,000 to $7,000 damage’ (159); ‘I have trouble with cars cutting me off and hitting me, rather than me hitting them. Mainly around dusk 5 to 7pm and in city’ (197); ‘11.45am in country town. A lady said she didn’t see the semi-trailer and didn’t give way to her right’ (199); ‘dusk. Car stopped in front of my truck to make an illegal right hand turn’ (204); ‘early am and still dark in the city and a truck towing a trailer ripped the left hand mirror off and damaged the door. No one hurt, and about $2,000 damage’ (221); ‘2 little bumps. (a) Ran out of brakes in city and shunted a car out of the road. Taken care of by insurance. (b) Reversed into a car when reversed into loading [bay]. No injuries; just broke one tail light. Both times cars were written off basically’ (260); ‘(a) ran off the road and lost control out in the bush [when] dodging a cow about 10am. No injuries, no truck damage but big bills to tow truck back on road after it was bogged. (b) About 2am out in the bush up the coast when I started snoring before I should have (fell asleep). No injuries, truck damage was major as I ended up upside down off the road in a very big ditch’ (277); and ‘7am in regional town at a freeway exit. Fatigue and excessive fog and wet road and laid it over on its side. (It was top heavy). Fractured collarbone, fractured right ribs, collapsed lungs, plus intensive care for 2 weeks. Truck cab was a write off’ (281).

Some large fleet drivers who had ‘little crashes’ that didn’t stop them driving in the previous 5-year period made comments including: ‘morning about 10am another truck hit mine. I was stopped at traffic lights’ (15); ‘Kingsway Melbourne, 10am’ (71); ‘tapped the back of a car one day, and knocked the spoiler (boot trim) off it’ (118); ‘early am’ (175); ‘afternoon in the yard and hit a rail. No injuries and no damage to truck’ (203); and ‘about lunchtime in Sydney. Some car tried to squeeze in front of me and I couldn’t stop. No injuries, no damage to truck, but car probably a write-off’ (223).

‘Other’ employment status drivers interviewed
Only one ‘other’ employment status driver who had a ‘little crash’ that didn’t stop him driving in the previous 5-year period made a comment: ‘10am in Melbourne and car came up inside of me on left hand side while turning left. Car damaged; no one hurt. I was turning off highway’ (112).

Variations by highway
As with crashes in the immediate 12-month period, there were few variations between the different highways. Rather, geographical variations in crash experiences were divided between (a) predominantly traffic-related crashes with cars in cities or regional towns; and (b) more serious crashes (for truck drivers) on highways in rural areas.
In sum, in contrast with the pattern of crashes for the immediately previous 12-month period (section 3.6), in the previous 5-year period owner/drivers (20.2%) cited more crashes than did small fleet drivers (18.3%) or large fleet drivers (15.3%). However ‘little crashes’ that did not stop driving were again more common amongst large fleet drivers (8.2%) than amongst those employed in small fleets (7.7%), or owner/drivers (3%). Again it is important to note that what is a minor incident to a truck driver can result in major damage to a car – and significant insurance claims. Similarly the available data does not identify the costs associated with damaged freight following a road crash; indeed any crash that delays perishable goods reaching market may result in significant spoilage – and insurance claims.

3.8 Workers’ compensation and injury insurance coverage

In the event of a work-related injury or illness, or truck crash, drivers may require time-off work for treatment, recuperation, and rehabilitation. Hence access to workers’ compensation insurance or personal injury insurance that covers medical costs and loss of income can be an important mediating variable, particularly if the driver is under financial stress. Each of the truck driver interviewees was therefore asked: ‘If you get injured at work will your injury bills be paid by workers’ compensation insurance?’ The possible response boxes included: ‘no’, ‘workers’ compensation’, ‘insurance policy’, ‘not sure’, and ‘other’. The compiled responses appear in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workers’ compensation</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insurance policy</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not sure</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the above table shows, there is a significant difference in injury and illness insurance coverage between the different employment status groups. Although there was no request to describe situational coverage, a number of drivers wrote comments; these appear below separated by employment status.

Owner/drivers

Two truck drivers ticked two boxes, so totals in this column exceed 100%. One ticked the ‘no’ box and wrote: ‘I got nothing’ (54). Comments written alongside the ‘workers’ compensation’ box included: ‘our own’ (39); and ‘pay for that myself as we cover our own insurance’ (61). Comments written alongside the ‘insurance policy’ box included: ‘my own’ (16;44); and ‘ours’ (43). The ‘other’ comments included: ‘because I work for 1 bloke, he’s supposed to cover for me’ (20); ‘I’m too scared to claim on my workers’ compensation as they’ll only put it up’ (51 - who had a chronic back injury); ‘don’t have workers’ compensation for myself’ (194); ‘death cover’ (259); ‘by me’ (295); and ‘just have to wear it as I can’t afford my own insurance’ (297).
Small fleet truck drivers
Two truck drivers ticked two boxes, so this column total exceeds 100%. General comments written included: 'WorkCover – if they can slip you into Hospital Benefits on your own cover, a lot of them do' (6); and ‘own [compensation cover]’ (299). One ‘not sure’ comment was written: ‘when I get hurt, I get paid’ (110). The ‘other’ comments written were: ‘nothing’ (108); and ‘both’ (145).

Large fleet truck drivers
Thirteen truck drivers ticked more than one box; hence the percentages total to more than 100% in the table above (most frequently the ‘workers’ compensation’ and ‘not sure’ boxes). The only general comment written was: ‘if serious they contribute to super scheme with a medical clause’ (8). One wrote a comment in relation to his insurance policy: ‘have a death benefit as well as workers’ compensation’ (97). While a number were ‘not sure’, only one commented: ‘with a lot of these big companies, they don’t disclose this type of information and flaunt the system to get around it when the time comes’ (86). The ‘other’ comments included: ‘if you get injured enough, they kick you out’ (10); ‘plus income insurance’ (13); ‘in last EBA [enterprise bargaining agreement] have income protection’ (197); and ‘income protection to top us up’ (199).

‘Other’ employment status drivers interviewed
The only comment written was: ‘can’t afford it. That’s why I’ve got to get rid of the truck – got to have an operation’ (38). Another who ticked the ‘other’ box commented: ‘no’ (150).

Variations by highway
There were no obvious variations in workers’ compensation or personal insurance coverage by highway. Rather, employment status appeared to be the defining variable.

In sum, the pattern seen in the above table is, as expected, that large fleet drivers (89.4%) and those in small fleets (78.8%) are more certain of workers’ compensation insurance coverage in the event of a work-related injury, crash-related injury, or illness. That is, fleet drivers are predominantly employees with standard workers’ compensation insurance cover. As both the quantitative and qualitative data show, the owner/drivers are least likely to have workers’ compensation coverage (38.4%), are more reliant on insurance, but their qualitative data suggested cost was a barrier to owner/drivers taking out cover. (Thus the terms and conditions of insurance policies are of crucial importance to owner/drivers – and to the social security/Medicare systems on which they may ‘fall back’ if insurance cover is insufficient or absent.) Those in an ‘other’ employment situation have a similar pattern of coverage to owner/drivers – except very few have insurance cover. Drivers in ‘other’ employment situations (33.3%) and in small fleets (15.4%) are most likely to be unsure of their workers’ compensation and insurance coverage; perhaps because many are in an ambiguous employment situation, or on short-term contracts, and may not be fully aware of all details of their agreements. Nonetheless, in all employment status groups some drivers indicated that they were afraid to make claims on their policies in case this affected continued employment, no-claim bonuses, or future contracts.
3.9 Responsibility for health and safety and road safety

In order to identify who, or which organisations, truck drivers believed were responsible for health and safety and road safety, each interviewee was asked: ‘who is mainly responsible for your health and safety and road safety?’ The possible response boxes were: ‘manager/owner’, ‘company’, ‘me’, ‘depends’, ‘don’t know’, and ‘other’. A number of small and large fleet drivers, and one ‘other’ employment status driver, ticked more than one box so column totals exceed 100%. Three owner/drivers and one small fleet driver did not answer this question.

As the above table shows, truck drivers overwhelmingly identified themselves as ultimately responsible for both OHS and road safety. Drivers employed in large fleets (17.6%) and in small fleets (13.5%) were more likely than owner/drivers (3%) to identify their employing organisation as holding some responsibility. There were no obvious variations in responses from drivers on the different highways. While no narrative data was requested, a few did write comments:

Comments made by owner/drivers included: ‘me, but I’m a company myself’ (7); ‘my sister usually looks after me when I’m crook’ (52); ‘I own my company’ (60 - who ticked both ‘company’ and ‘me’ boxes); ‘department’ (255); and ‘wife’ (294).

Comments made by small fleet drivers included: ‘don’t have a say in what we do anymore’ (6); ‘mechanic’ (63); ‘RTA and whoever maintains the roads’ (87); ‘relevant authority’ (207); and ‘people who drive in cars’ (247).

Comments made by large fleet drivers included: ‘our health and safety officer is our manager – not only illegal but morally wrong’ (13); and ‘everybody has to be responsible for their own safety’ (53).

No ‘other’ employment status drivers made any comments.

In sum, the drivers interviewed overwhelmingly believed that they were themselves solely responsible for their own health and safety and road safety. Large and small fleet drivers were slightly more likely than owner/drivers to indicate that the companies they

**TABLE 22**
Responses by 300 interviewed drivers on who was responsible for their health and safety and road safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of total 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>manager/owner</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>company</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depends</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
drove for (and their managers or owners) had some responsibility. That is, the ‘chain of responsibility’ for OHS and road safety was poorly recognised by the truck drivers, with most implicitly accepting individual responsibility. This acceptance of individual responsibility reflects regulatory enforcement patterns, which also focuses on individual driver behaviour – which may be a symptom rather than a cause for rule breaking.

3.10 Organisations and people who would be contacted for information

It was believed to be important to identify who, or which organisation, a truck driver would approach if he or she required information about an OHS issue or a road transport rule. Hence each interviewee was asked: ‘if you had a health or safety problem, or needed to know about a road transport rule, who would you ask?’ The possible response boxes included: ‘friend’, ‘union’, ‘transport association’, ‘government’, ‘don’t know’, and ‘other’. Many respondents ticked more than one box so column totals exceed 100%. Three owner/drivers, four large fleet, two small fleet and one ‘other’ employment status drivers did not answer this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses by 300 owner/drivers on who they would contact if information was needed about a health and safety issue or a road transport rule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet drivers (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet drivers (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of total 300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>union</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transport association</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t know</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that the transport association is the most popular source of information, particularly for owner/drivers and those employed in small fleets. While undoubtedly this is an excellent source of road safety information, the ability of this organisation to provide accurate OHS information could be questioned. In large fleets, drivers frequently contacted their union; as previously noted a greater proportion of those employed in large fleets were members (see table 10). There were no obvious variations in information sources used, or in responses, across the different highways where interviews took place. No additional comments were called for, but a number of truck drivers provided them.

Owner/drivers made the following comments: ‘my wife. She checks it up’ (2); ‘wife. She’s the boss’ (3); ‘through the system’ (5); ‘wouldn’t ask any of them. They’re all hopeless’ (7); ‘go and see my doctor if a health problem’ (16); ‘just don’t ask as none of them know’ (20); ‘wouldn’t ask anyone. Would work it out for myself’ (24); ‘health problem, a doctor’ (32); ‘relevant body’ (39); ‘I find out myself and advise other people’ (48); ‘me’ (57); ‘brother-in-law’ (52); ‘Rafferty’s rules out there. Getting caught. Government finds us a very easy source of income’ (59); ‘nobody, as nobody cares’ (61); ‘20 years on the road. You know exactly what you’ve got to do’ (89); ‘mostly we find out
from trucking newsletters. No data going to beekeepers’ (105 – who transports bees); ‘doctor [for] health; police for traffic’ (115); ‘police’ (116); ‘don’t go to authorities, especially RTA in NSW’ (127); ‘get on the phone merry-go-round as no one gives you a direct answer’ (140); ‘internet e.g. South Australian Transport’ (158); ‘doctor for health problem’ (170,285); ‘other truck drivers’ (191); ‘ring the RTA’ (194); ‘WorkCover for health and safety’ (226); ‘wife’ (250); ‘office’ (278); ‘solicitor’ (283); ‘police officer or RTA and they’d both give you a different answer’ (293); and ‘it’s my responsibility as an owner/driver to find out’ (297). Three of the owner/drivers who ticked the transport association box wrote comments: ‘they all break the law as they’ve got to. If I can’t make any money, they can’t’ (5); RTA, not Forum. Have 4 main transport companies and four of the directors are on the RTA forum and they are the worst at under-cutting; price slashing. They stand up there and big-note themselves’ (109); and ‘usually have to sit on the phone for 3 hours before you can get through to the right person’ (256).

Small fleet truck drivers stated: ‘waste of time asking anyone. Nobody seems to know, so grey in every area’ (6); ‘no one because no one knows. They keep changing the rules all the time. Even the RTA don’t know. If you ask them a question, 99% of them wouldn’t have a clue’ (26); ‘one of mates’ (66); ‘boss’ (82,174,193,211,214,215,219,222, 237,275,284); ‘word of mouth’ (84); ‘ring OHS as they are the ones that organise all the courses I have to do (gas and fuel etc)’ (92 - dangerous goods/fuel driver); ‘local minister (politician)’ (124); [transport association] road rules, [other] employer’ (125); ‘other drivers’ (133); ‘company I contract to’ (148); ‘police. I’ve rung the police on different matters on a number of occasions and nothing happens. They just pass the buck’ (155); ‘depends where you are and what the problem is’ (156); ‘father or brothers who have been in the industry a long time’ (179); ‘doctor’ (183); ‘health problem would see doctor’ (195); ‘boss. If he couldn’t help would ring the union’ (206); ‘WorkCover’ (213); ‘boss or WorkCover’ (243); ‘owner’ (252); and ‘Main Roads department’ (290). Two of the small fleet drivers who ticked the ‘transport association’ box added comments: ‘but they never know’ (242); and ‘technical adviser at RTA, not local’ (299). One small fleet driver who ticked the ‘don’t know’ box wrote: ‘you ring the RTA and they haven’t got a clue’ (142).

Large fleet truck drivers made the following comments: ‘NCO’ (9 – in armed services); ‘take it up with our boss’ (15); ‘boss’ (17,72,217,241,273); ‘common sense. If you’re crook, ask the doctor’ (58); ‘company’ (67,223); ‘company manager’ (68,90,119,128); ‘work’ (71); ‘management’ (75,257); ‘govt. body e.g. police’ (86); ‘state manager’ (120); ‘word of mouth’ (122); ‘boss/operations manager’ (129); ‘safety officer at work’ (143); ‘just comes out in the wash, in the circle. You’d hear about it’ (152); ‘health and safety mob when you’ve got a dangerous goods licence’ (160); ‘safety officer’ (168); ‘health and safety officer’ (180,277); ‘health and safety officer - one of our drivers’ (181); ‘company. We have a bloke who handles all that’ (187); ‘Me as I do the driving instruction for our company’ (199); ‘OHS bloke’ (203); ‘OHS teams or statutory literature for the coal industry’ (205); ‘OHS committee at company’ (221); ‘when I fractured finger, the union bloke was the only one I could get information from about income protection’ (272); ‘management. Plus we have health and safety officers’ (274);
‘health and safety officer at depot’ (281); ‘self – OHS rep’ (282); and ‘safety officer in the yard’ (289).

‘Other’ employment status drivers made the following comments: ‘company rep’ (69); and ‘supervisor; go through the chain’ (212).

In sum, in all employment status groups drivers were frequently confused as to which organisation or person to contact when they required information on a health and safety problem or a road safety rule.

The transport association was the most commonly cited source of information, especially for owner/drivers (36.4%) and those employed in small fleets (33.6%), but less frequently for large fleet drivers (18.8%). Indeed, who else could owner/drivers approach? Nevertheless the qualitative data indicated that the transport association was not universally trusted, perhaps because (as the narrative data indicated) the role of this agency in enforcement diminishes its effectiveness as an information provision agency.

The role of the police was very rarely commented upon in a positive manner. Rather, the qualitative data suggested that truck drivers perceived the police to be ‘the enemy’, rather than helpers. This interpretation is consistent with a strong anti-regulatory ethos – which is consistently found in other OHS studies of small business workers. This resentment of police activities may be fueled by a perception that penalties are being inequitably applied to those at the bottom of the ‘chain of responsibility’.

Many employee drivers were reliant on their employers or company, particularly those working in small fleets. Large fleet drivers more frequently accessed their union for information (25.9%) than did those employed in small fleets (8.6%), or owner/drivers (7.1%). This pattern undoubtedly reflects differential union membership levels (table 10), with members usually indicating that the union was a trusted information source (although few non-members did).

The ‘don’t know who to contact’ category included small fleet drivers (20.2%), owner/drivers (16.2%) and those employed in large fleets (12.9%). Many of the ‘other’ sources of information cited by drivers from all employment status groups were unlikely to be able to provide accurate and reliable facts.

Only amongst those drivers who transported dangerous goods or fuel were positive statements about OHS and road transport information provision routine.

Overall, the pattern of responses clearly indicates a severe information deficit in this industry. There appears to be a lack of co-ordination on information provision between agencies with responsibility for OHS and road safety.

The discussion now turns to an understanding of deeper pressures within the industry.
Section 4

CORE PROBLEMS: ECONOMIC PRESSURES, PAYMENT, LOAD CHANGES AND FAMILIAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

This section of the report focuses on broader pressures on truck drivers’ work and livelihood, and impacts on their familial and social lives. As much of the data are qualitative, themes have been condensed into tables wherever possible to identify trends more readily.

4.1 The three ‘biggest’ problems identified by truck drivers

It was believed to be important to find out what issues were of greatest importance to truck drivers themselves and, if possible, to rank them in some way. Each truck driver was asked to: ‘list the three biggest problems in your job at present’. The aim was for them to identify a wide range of issues that impacted on their working lives and to give full expression to the contexts. The full statements made by the 300 truck drivers are listed in Appendix 3 and readers are encouraged to read these transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding. The identified issues have been condensed into 18 major themes in the table below, separated by employment status. Of necessity, judgement was used in these interpretative processes – which may not always have been correct. (It is noteworthy that only 4 drivers stated that there were ‘no problems’ in response to this forced answer question - 1 owner/driver, 2 small fleet and 1 large fleet drivers.)

TABLE 24
Main problems in job as identified by 300 interviewed truck drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of 300 truck drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fuel, rego, insurance etc costs</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTA/police and road rules</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long hours or driving hours</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other road users/other people</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freight rates, GST/financial</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road conditions</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low pay</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big companies, loading agents &amp; competition</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>log books, Safety Cam or cameras</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time slots &amp; expected arrival times</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labour or management</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loading and unloading</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor maintenance, equipment or high costs</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slow payments or nil payments</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatigue or stress</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor facilities or truckstops</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen in the table above, responses varied a little between the different employment status groups. While some ‘big issue’ categories were clearly linked, initially no attempt was made to group them together. Rather, the first level of analysis conducted was aimed at identifying variations between employment status groups.

Owner/drivers are clearly far more concerned with the costs of running a vehicle – an issue which is of little concern to those who drive other people’s trucks. Similarly owner/drivers are very concerned with freight rates and slow and non-payment for work completed (which are in effect their pay rates). Conversely, small fleet drivers are more concerned with enforcement by the RTA and police and road rules – and the behaviour of other road users. Large fleet drivers are far more concerned than are other groups of drivers with labour and management relationships and the adequacy of maintenance on their vehicles.

That is, while the concerns of drivers on some issues (such as long working hours and road conditions) are similar, priority issues appear to vary by employment status. Some direct quotations are reproduced below together with features of the data to exemplify the core issues and variations between groups of drivers.

- Owner/drivers (62.6%) are far more concerned with the costs of fuel, registration, insurance etc than are small fleet drivers (12.5%) or those in large fleets (4.7%). For example: ‘tax on the fuel; for every 5km we do the fede ral govt. gets 90c. Then they hit us with income tax and company tax so we’re the highest taxed group of people in the country’ (126).
- Owner/drivers (35.3%) are far more concerned with low freight rates than are small fleet (17.3%) or large fleet (10.6%) drivers. For example: ‘not enough money…got to work long hours and cheat on the log books’ (248); and ‘lack of money – the rates are so lousy we are working for $1 a tonne less than 10 years ago. So have to work ridiculous hours to pay for the equipment the companies want us to run. In fatigue mode most of your life as a result’ (293).
- Owner/drivers (20.2%) are far more concerned with slow or no payments than are small fleet (2.9%) or large fleet (0%) drivers. For example: ‘big companies undercutting. 60 or 90 day payment delays is way too long; our payments have to be made each month so, so should theirs’ (264).
- Small fleet (29.8%) and large fleet (21.2%) drivers are more concerned with poor driving by other road users than are owner/drivers (15.1%). For example: ‘car drivers don’t realise the size of trucks and sneak up on inside of you and try and pass’ (171).
- Small fleet (27.9%) and large fleet (23.5%) drivers are more concerned about RTA and police activities, and road rule enforcement than are owner/drivers (19.2%). For example, ‘hassles with the law: we’re used as revenue raising outfit’ (156).
- Unexpectedly, small fleet (21.1%) and large fleet (10.6%) drivers are more concerned with loading/unloading delays and difficulties than are owner/drivers (4%). For example, ‘time to get deliveries done. Parking in town main street to do deliveries – often have to double-park’ (176).
• Small fleet (11.5%) and large fleet (8.2%) drivers are more concerned with fatigue or stress than are owner/drivers (2%). For example: ‘not enough rest time between trips so get very lethargic as get in, unload, reload, and out again that night’ (103).

• Large fleet (21.2%) and small fleet (13.5%) drivers are more concerned about labour/management stresses or communication difficulties than are owner/drivers (4%). For example: ‘management inconsistencies. Three big companies joined together and harmony since then is a bit of a problem’ (198).

• Large fleet (18.8%) and small fleet (15.4%) drivers are more concerned about log books, Safety Cam and speed cameras than are owner/drivers (10.1%). For example: ‘over-zealous enforcement of the rules by authorities; they are costing us more time. Cameras: can’t drive when you should, and can’t sleep when you want’ (121).

• Large fleet (16.5%) drivers are more concerned about poor maintenance and equipment than are either owner/drivers (7.1%) or those in small fleets (5.8%). For example: ‘companies pushing drivers to exceed safe working hours. Not repairing defective trucks...not supplying essential equipment to do the job safely e.g. ladders to use instead of climbing over loads – it’s because of the expense’ (86).

• Poor facilities along the road were rarely mentioned by any drivers, although these must be of importance to their quality of life on-the-road: ‘not enough parking areas for trucks: need running water, some shade, toilets, and some sort of noise barrier between the road and parking area’ (272).

In sum, there is relative agreement amongst all drivers about the core problem issues of RTA/police/road rules enforcement, long hours of work, the need to improve road conditions, and log books and other fatigue management controls. Other core problems perceived varied somewhat between employment status groups. Owner/drivers focused on economic stress, rising costs, low freight rates, and slow and nil payments for completed work. Since freight rates and payment for work is their income, it is hardly surprising that low rates and failure to pay are of core importance to owner/drivers. Small fleet drivers more commonly identified enforcement by the authorities as a core issue, as well as loading and unloading delays, and inadequate driving skills and behaviours amongst other road users. Large fleet drivers were the only group to frequently cite management/labour difficulties – and poor truck maintenance – as one of their three major problems. Both small and large fleets drivers identified time spent in a queue waiting to be loaded or unloaded as wasted time – which often went unpaid.

There are clear links between the different sets of issues identified. First, clearly financial survival is the core issue for owner/drivers. Second, a concern with time delays is evident through comments about time slots, expected times of arrival, loading and unloading, and big companies and competition. Third, long hours, fatigue and stress are closely linked in a cause and effect relationship. Fourth, road conditions and poor facilities at rest stops or truckstops are all linked and directly impact on the quality of rest breaks along highways. Fifth, RTA and police activities, road rules, log books, Safety Cam or speed cameras, and ‘government’ are overlapping issues that affect all time pressured drivers who are required to obey rules that slow their progress to destinations.
These issues were explored further by assessing economic changes in the industry over the past 10 years.

### 4.2 Changes in payment levels over past decade

In order to identify changes in the level of economic pressure in the industry over time, each interviewee was asked: ‘do you think payment levels are better or worse since 1990?’ There were two sub-question areas listed to guide truck driver responses: (a) for cartage rates, and (b) for payments and wages. Readers are encouraged to peruse the full transcripts of quotations in Appendix 4 to gain a comprehensive understanding of the views of truck drivers.

The identified issues have been condensed into 12 major themes in the table below, separated by employment status. Of necessity, judgement and interpretation had to be made. Some direct quotes are reproduced below the table to exemplify central themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 25</th>
<th>Changes in payment levels since 1990 identified by 300 interviewed truck drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>owner/drivers (n=99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cartage rates down, or working longer for same $</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>payments/wages down/worse</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>payments &amp; wages same/average</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>payments/wages better/good/happy</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cartage rates unchanged over time</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates &amp; wages not kept up with COL, or COL up</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>costs gone up: fuel, tyres etc</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard for owner/drivers or others</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delay in payment</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cartage rates better</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>backloading rates poor</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some variations in the pattern of responses between different employment status groups can be identified from the above table.

- Owner/drivers (40.4%) are more concerned that payments/wages are declining than are small fleet (37.5%) or large fleet (28.2%) drivers. For example: ‘rates haven’t changed in 10 years. Wages haven’t changed for owner/drivers, but the company drivers have increased rates but haven’t handed that on’ (61); and ‘a barter system: only the biggest and best survive. Shocking’ (104).
- Owner/drivers (16.2%) are also more concerned that cartage rates remain unchanged over the past decade compared with those in small fleets (13.5%) or large fleets (9.4%). For example: ‘up to 15 years ago 1/3 of income would go on fuel, 1/3 on maintenance, and 1/3 for family and home to live. Now your fuel is more than half; the maintenance is up. So now instead of 30% we’re trying to keep a family on 10%,

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*OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey*
which leads to new problems on the roads. We’ve got to do more...That leads to more and more and more road accidents’ (158).

- Owner/drivers (9.1%) are more concerned with payment delays than are small fleet (1%) or large fleet (0%) drivers. For example: ‘14 days to 90 days to pay you’ (251).

- Small fleet drivers (71.1%) are slightly more concerned that cartage rates are down or that they are working longer for the same income than are owner/drivers (68.7%) or large fleet drivers (61.2%). For example: ‘I owned my own trucks in 1984 and sold out. Cartage rate has gone up by about 30% in 15 years; not real good when truck has gone up about 300% and trailers about 700%. Hasn’t changed: $600 in 1975; in 2000 today have $650’ (103); and ‘you can’t ask your employer for more money if he’s not making any’ (156).

- Large fleet drivers (21.2%) are more satisfied with their payments/wages than are those in small fleets (11.5%) or owner/drivers (10.1%). For example: ‘Wages are better. Owner/drivers are the ones doing it hard’ (90); and ‘bloke we work for in fuel industry pays really good’ (180).

In sum, decreased cartage rates and increasing working hours are clearly linked, and nearly 75% of drivers interviewed cited concerns about these. Freight rates, delays in payments, and costs are of deep concern to owner/drivers and those in small fleets. Those in large fleets are more likely to be more satisfied and less dissatisfied with their income.

### 4.3 Changes in size of loads carried over past decade

In order to identify whether the size and weight of loads carried by truck driver had altered over time, each interviewee was asked ‘do you think that the size and frequency of loads you carry have increased or decreased since 1990?’ The full responses by interviewed drivers appear as Appendix 5.

While it was difficult to separate responses into unequivocal categories, approximately 62% of the 300 interviewed drivers indicated that their loads had increased over the past decade, 19% that loads were similar, 12% that loads had decreased, and 6% gave ambivalent responses. Owner/drivers (69.7%) more frequently indicated that the size, weight, and frequency of loads had increased than did large fleet (64.7%) or small fleet drivers (53.8%). No marked variations in patterns of responses by truck drivers on the different highways could be identified. Some typical comments include the following:

- Owner/drivers: ‘increased. Trailers are getting longer. For every 2 B/doubles, one bloke misses out’ (3); and ‘everybody expects more to be carted for less money’ (185).

- Small fleet truck drivers: ‘increased because I drive a road train now instead of a single trailer’ (137). One who believed there had been no change stated: ‘the same with grain. Just fill them up’ (275). Others believed the increased number of
competitors led to less work for individuals: ‘frequency of loads has decreased. Sometimes you might spend the night over in Sydney as there’s no freight coming out’ (219); while others identified that greater enforcement of rules led to weight limits being observed: ‘decreased as you can’t overload as much anymore’ (286).

- Large fleet drivers: ‘been an increase in the size and frequency with B/doubles – and for less money’ (119,282,289); and ‘varies to the season’ (201).

- ‘Other’ employment status drivers: ‘increased as you’re allowed to get more tonnage on your truck’ (38); and ‘increased definitely since B/doubles came in’ (231).

In sum, there appeared to be agreement that larger vehicles led to increased amounts and weight of freight on these trucks. However a number believed that this resulted in less work for smaller vehicles. As was seen in table 4, those employed in large fleets more frequently drove B/doubles, with owner/drivers and those employed in small fleets more commonly driving semi’s. Logically therefore, those in large fleets would carry increased amounts of freight.

4.4 Relationship of injuries and crashes to longer working hours

The relationship between long working hours, fatigue, and work-related injuries and truck crashes has been of interest to researchers and jurisdictions for some time. Unambiguous data is not always available. In order to further clarify the views of truck drivers about these possible inter-relationships, each interviewee was asked: ‘do you think injuries and crashes decrease or increase when you work longer hours?’ The comments have been condensed into 9 major themes in the table below. As previously, interpretations had to be made of driver quotations. These quotations are provided in full in Appendix 6.

**TABLE 26**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of 300 truck drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>increase</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase through fatigue</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depends on individual or driver alertness</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no difference</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depends on circumstances</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depends on experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decrease</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Few variations in responses between the different employment status groups can be identified from the above table. Some responses which exemplify driver views are provided below:

- An owner/driver stated: ‘got to increase because of your fatigue condition. A lot of us know when to stop but there are situations where you can’t stop. Log books dictate to us when we should stop and sleep and when go to work. Everyone is different, and sometimes you can drive 3 hours and you want to go to sleep. Other times you can drive for 8-9 hours. Your professionalism as a driver shows and you know when to stop’ (293).

- A small fleet driver stated: ‘depends. Some blokes can handle it and some can’t. Depends on the circumstances’ (26); and ‘definitely increase. Related to the time-slot crap. Forces you to drive when you should be resting after hanging around for ½ day’ (214).

- A large fleet driver commented: ‘got to be a bigger chance if you’re out there longer’ (180); and ‘increase from fatigue and judgement is slower’ (281).

In sum, there is widespread agreement across the truck driver population interviewed that injuries and crashes increase when longer hours are spent on the road. Surprisingly, only a few mentioned specific road conditions with most concentrating on fatigue, alertness, individual driver capabilities, or (sometimes) structural constraints on their working times such as time slots or log books.

4.5 Impact of job on family and social life

There has been a significant amount of anecdotal evidence that truck drivers experience a significant level of marriage breakdown, as well as difficulties in family relationships. In order to be able to quantify this, each truck driver was asked: ‘does your job have an impact on your family and social life?’ The responses to this question were relatively uniform across employment status groups and highways where interviews took place.

A negative impact was reported consistently across drivers in all employment status categories studied. Overall, of those who responded to this question, 82.7% indicated a negative impact, 4% ambivalent positive/negative consequences, and 12.7% indicated that there was no negative impact on family and social life. The negative impacts were marginally more common amongst owner/drivers (85.8%), than amongst large fleet (84.7%) and small fleet drivers (77.9%). Thus it is clear that family and social relationships are severely affected by work in the long haul transport industry. The full responses are quoted verbatim in Appendix 7. Some typical responses are reproduced below, separated by employment status.

- Owner/drivers stated: ‘try to attend a party and go to sleep’ (100); ‘always working to make ends meet. Missing out on life and children growing up’ (139); ‘what social life? This is it - meal breaks’ (264); and ‘no social life. How can you fit a family life
into 3 days a week (if you are lucky)? But you are working on your trucks in those three days’ (293).

- Small fleet truck drivers stated: ‘lucky to get home 1 day in 2 weeks. 24 hour break after 6 days is usually had in the truck, away from home’ (98); ‘did have, but she got away’ (165); ‘social life- what’s that?’ (195); ‘divorced 4 times’ (216); and ‘yes. I’m separated because of my job and my daughter doesn’t want to talk to me because I was never home’ (280).

- Large fleet truck drivers stated: ‘my wife has been a ‘widow to wheels’ for 29 years’ (8); ‘don’t know one driver who hasn’t been divorced at least once’ (13); ‘yes. I’ve got 5 kids and I haven’t been home for 10 days’ (122); ‘knocks my social life around something fierce’ (181); ‘yes. I’m never there and when I am, I’m asleep’ (260); and ‘I don’t want to do it anymore. My 3 year old is screaming and crying when I go at night’ (289).

- One ‘other’ employment status driver said: ‘definitely. I married my truck’ (186).

In sum, the family life of truck drivers is severely affected by their job. Divorces, family breakdown, and strained relationships are almost the norm. Truck drivers basically have no social life – or only that obtained with other drivers in truck stops. Negative impacts were most marked amongst those who drove interstate for a period of years.

4.6 Additional issues

Finally, each driver was asked an open-ended question: ‘is there anything else that you think is important about safety in this industry?’ A wide range of problems was included in the responses. Consistent themes were economic stress and vulnerability leading to excessive hours, under-cutting of freight rates (and acceptance of these by desperate owner/drivers), and a widely held belief that the RTA and police force targeted truck drivers for revenue-raising purposes. Other ‘big picture’ issues cited were log books and excessive fatigue.

A continuing theme about the working lives of owner/drivers was excessive working hours brought on by ever-declining freight rates. A number of drivers identified competition between drivers, the lack of unity in the workforce, and economic desperation as contributing to the under-cutting of prices: ‘I’m hurting real bad right now... If we stick together we can beat this...14 day payment plan will be a saviour to us all...The licensing will keep the idiots out...Just stick together please folks and get things running together instead of arguing’ (statement by a Queensland owner/driver at a meeting of owner/drivers at Dubbo on 7/5/2000).

Drivers from all employment status groups echoed their belief that the RTA and police activity was focused on revenue raising which took precedence over road safety and effective fatigue management. For example, one owner/driver who was present at a meeting of owner/drivers in Dubbo on Sunday 7th May 2000 (and who later made a written submission to the Inquiry) stated: ‘The governments in all states use the transport
industry as a milking cow. There is no other industry that is controlled for the amount of hours you can work. In NSW you now have Safety Cam, all this does is make you stop when you are not tired and go when you are. It is also another means of milking the drivers’ (B. Harris, written submission to Inquiry 3 May 2000).

Responses by the 300 interviewed drivers are collated in Table 27 below with the full quotations reproduced in Appendix 8. A few quotations that exemplify pressures on drivers are provided below the table.

**TABLE 27**

Other issues raised by 300 interviewed drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>owner/drivers (n=99)</th>
<th>small fleet (n=104)</th>
<th>large fleet (n=85)</th>
<th>other (n=12)</th>
<th>% of 300 truck drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTA, police, laws &amp; road rules</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>log books, fatigue and Truck Safe</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freight rates and competition</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transport companies &amp; management</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other road users</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road conditions and facilities</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trip times &amp; time pressures</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long hours of work</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>truck maintenance, equipment &amp; loads</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education &amp; fitness of truck drivers</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politicians &amp; government</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illicit drugs</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speed limiters</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customers/markets</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Cam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time slots</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses from truck drivers were relatively similar, with only minor variations between the different employment status groups:

- **Owner/drivers** (25.2%) more frequently complained about the RTA, police and road rules than did large fleet (20%) or small fleet (16.3%) drivers. One owner/driver stated: ‘we’re classed as second class citizens. If we were child molesters or drug dealers we wouldn’t get hassled as much by the law as we are’ (5); and ‘one day a police car pulled me over while doing 80km an hour. I asked him ‘what’s the problem?’ He said ‘I haven’t got any problems, I’m going to see what problems you’ve got.’ They think you’re guilty and have to prove innocence’ (127).

- **Owner/drivers** (26.3%) more frequently cited difficulties with freight rates and competition than did large fleet (11.8%) or small fleet (5.8%) drivers. Typical comments were: ‘it all ties in. If the rates went up the blokes wouldn’t have to work
like they do’ (30); and ‘bigger companies dictate rates, rules, times. If you don’t do what they want they get someone else. How am I going to feed the kids and pay off the truck?’ (43).

- Small fleet drivers (16.3%) more frequently made comments about trip times and time pressures than did owner/drivers (7.1%) or those employed in large fleet (3.5%). Small fleet drivers commented: ‘the big companies push their subcontractors with arrival times. The driver endeavors to get there and gets fatigued and could lead to an accident’ (195); and ‘time pressure. Should take off time pressures in larger places. Ought to be able to have 24 hour unloading at the markets etc. Larger companies [named large food retailers] give you a time slot and if you’re not there ¼ hour either side of time slot, they won’t unload you. If you are there on time and you can get in and out in under 4 hours you’re doing well. You can’t go there and park and get in the back and have a couple of hours sleep for fear of losing your place in the queue. Last week I was given 11 hours to drive from Sydney to Brisbane overnight express. I can’t do it naturally. It’s only about 8 months ago that I was given more than 36 hours to get from far North Queensland to the Sydney markets. And it’s about 28 hours driving’ (276).

- Small fleet (16.3%) drivers more frequently commented on the inadequate skills, abilities and knowledge of other road users than did owner/drivers (10.1%) or those in large fleets (7%). Typical comments included: ‘teach the car drivers how to drive; teach them how much it takes to pull a truck up. Ban bloody caravans off the road, especially at night’ (26); and ‘public awareness of ways trucks work needs to be increased. Cars are always cutting through on corners and roundabouts. Mainly driver education needed’ (136).

- Large fleet (25.9%) drivers more commonly cited difficulties with log books, fatigue management or Truck Safe than did owner/drivers (15.1%) or those in small fleets (14.4%). For example: ‘log book times. If did to Queensland border from Wangaratta in 12 hours, I can’t drive 4 more hours into Brisbane and go home and shower and go to bed where it’s cool. Instead got to stop somewhere like Goondiwindi in heat of day where 37° and no shade and stop for 10 hour break. Get stuffed around by grocery mobs for hours, and still got to drive that night’ (122); and ‘the cameras force you to drive when you shouldn’t. The same with the log books...your body and your log book says different things’ (143).

- Large fleet (17.6%) drivers also more commonly made statements about transport companies and management than did small fleet (11.5%) drivers or owner/drivers (7.1%). Typical comments included: ‘some of the companies that force their drivers to load and unload and then drive again to get their freight to another state. Companies are members of the peak body like ATA. They should be regulated so can’t force drivers to do those things’ (199); and ‘it’s a blackmail industry. The owners go to transport forum and say they are trying to make the industry safer. But the reality is when they get back to the office, if the driver doesn’t do what is expected, he’s either taken out of the truck or given a job where he’s buggered around all day. Money rules the world’ (53).
There were other problems raised that were specific to particular forms of freight. For example: ‘should do more roadworthy’s on trucks. Trucks on local deliveries don’t get it done each year but do the same km’ (18); ‘in dangerous goods sector the public should be more aware of the dangers of unloading gas. Seen someone come up to have a look while having a smoke. Had all the signs out’ (92); and ‘cattle yards and things we load out of need things doing to them e.g. proper loading facilities. We’ve got stock on and they’re dying. You just can’t leave them on the truck. But the RTA says we have to have our 6 or 10-hour break still. Stock go down. Loss of money to company’ (128).

There were also some generic issues that are worthy of a review by enforcement authorities: ‘what we have to have on fatigue, cars should have the same thing. Fatigue is the biggest killer on the road. Cars should have log books. The coppers are after the wrong thing. They can book us but they can’t book a car for driving from Brisbane to Sydney without stopping’ (249); and ‘when governments make rules they should enforce them e.g. the RTA claim they are going to chase up the log books, but they never do. They never come to the company yards and check them out. A toothless tiger. If they get their acts together things could change. Governments allow it to happen’ (23).

In sum, while the issues raised under the final open-ended question varied marginally across the employment status groups, the pattern was relatively consistent. This pattern of responses bears a very close relationship to the issues raised and discussed in section 4.1 above.

There are four minor issues that require consideration. First, there appears to be a marked need for enhanced understanding of truck capacities amongst car drivers, including observance of ‘no overtaking’ rules around roundabouts, and stopping/braking distances required. Second, attention may need to be focused on tensions between log book requirements for break periods when livestock are to be transported in a humane way. Third, the perception of inequitable treatment of truck drivers versus car motorists will need to be addressed. For example, random RTA/police checks, and log book requirements for regular breaks are enforced on long distance truck drivers – but not other motorists. Fourth, unmarked police cars may be counter-productive to safety, and enhance the perception of revenue-raising being the primary focus: ‘if I see a police car I slow down’ (24).

The major issues are more serious and have greater impact on the OHS of truck drivers. Truck drivers repeatedly emphasised economic stress, competition between operators in the industry which undermined viability and led to rule breaking, long hours of labour, and chronic fatigue as issues of greatest concern to them.

Older and long-experienced drivers sometimes remarked on improvements in the industry over time that had been brought about by strategies such as increased enforcement through log books and Safety Cam. However, arguably, these strategies have only addressed the superficial causes of poor OHS outcomes. The underlying issues remain somewhat obscured by this focus on individuals. Some interviewed drivers pointed out these anomalies. For example, driver log books are inspected, their break times enforced, and those who do not abide by these requirements are penalised. Yet those who have
control over driver schedules remain relatively free of blame and penalties. As two drivers so eloquently stated: ‘the days of working all day and driving all night have definitely got to go’ (88); and ‘make the bosses more responsible for the drivers and their hours. Some of them are just mongrels’ (243).

The interviewed drivers repeatedly indicated that inadequate freight rates lay at the heart of excessive hours, log book evasions, and risk-taking behaviours: ‘rates and time schedules are the big problems. Rates are the main one’ (155). To focus on the individual drivers is to adopt a superficial ‘victim-blaming’ approach that has been so widely criticised in other areas of OHS. A standard OHS duty-of-care approach in any other worksite would consider whether a safe system of work existed, who designed and pre-determined the system of work, and whether risks were foreseeable. Clearly the risks for truck drivers are foreseeable: there is a clear link between an injury/crash event and excessive fatigue, and events are probably preventable if a safe system of work is implemented and followed. The inevitable conclusion is that the ‘chain of responsibility’ has to be more overtly recognised – and addressed.

The next section of this research report focuses on the health status of the 300 truck drivers interviewed, identification of the factors that influence their mental and physical health, evaluation of high-risk situations, and classification of the independent and dependent variables in the cause-effect relationship between work and health.
Section 5

GENERAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

This section of the research report focuses on the responses of the 300 truck drivers to the ‘General Health Questionnaire’ (GHQ) which formed page 3 of the questionnaire (seen in Appendix 1).

The GHQ was designed over two decades ago by Goldberg (1972) as a simple screening test with which to identify minor psychiatric disorders in a population under study. The GHQ has been exhaustively assessed and provides, arguably, a very accurate and robust assessment of the current mental health status of each interviewee. It is used in many countries for individual and group assessments and comparisons. While originally there were 60 questions on the GHQ form, this has been reduced to just 12 for use in occupational studies. Longer versions can be used, but these are difficult in empirical studies because of time demands for administration.

5.1 Aims and administration of the GHQ

The GHQ does not measure past status, but rather the current state of health of an interviewee. Prior to administration of the questionnaire, a statement is made to the interviewee to respond only on how she or he has been feeling over the past few weeks. There are four possible responses to choose from in answering each of the 12 questions: ‘better than usual’, ‘same as usual’, ‘less than usual’, or ‘much less than usual’. Using the ‘Lickert’ method of scoring, these responses are then given weights of 0, 1, 2, or 3 for each response to each of the 12 questions. The scores are then totaled for each individual.

Past studies have indicated that a score of around 8.59 is relatively normal, and a score greater than 14 is so clinically significant that the person probably requires treatment (pers. comm. P. Bohle 26/7/00). A high total score on the GHQ, it is argued, not only estimates current mental health status but also predicts future negative physical health impacts from this. As the original developer of the GHQ stated:

‘The conclusion seems inescapable. Although there may be strong theoretical reasons for measuring severity of illness in terms of the traditional phenomena of illness, many of the items that best define illness are inextricably connected with the patient’s perceiving himself to be unable to cope with his problems and to deal with social difficulties’ (Goldberg (1972:91).

Because it has proved to be very robust, the GHQ is widely used in medical and psychosocial studies across the industrialised world. However, its use is rare in empirical studies, and in particular in social science OHS research. Yet Banks et al (1980:192) have argued that use of the GHQ with the Likert method of scoring is: ‘...appropriate for use in employment studies as an estimate of the severity of psychiatric illness in groups or individuals’.
5.2 Difficulties with use of the GHQ and threats to validity

There are increased difficulties in administering the GHQ to particular groups. The original developer identified some of the expected variations in scores between groups. Three groups whose poorer health status is likely to be missed are: (a) those not prepared to describe symptoms in a ‘pencil and paper’ situation; (b) people with dementia, chronic schizophrenia or hypomania; and (c) those with very longstanding disorders who are going through a good phase of their illness (Goldberg, 1972:99). While some groups tend to suppress their scores more than others, this does not apparently reduce the validity of the instrument. For example, females usually report higher scores than do males. Divorced and separated people usually have higher mean scores – but not widows and widowers (Goldberg, 1972:96-7). Age does not appear to have an effect on mean score, although the impact of social class on GHQ scores has been debated (Goldberg, 1972:97). Difficulties have also been reported in administering it to people who are less comfortable with written materials, and who may be illiterate (Goldberg, 1972:82). Similar resistance to the acceptance of written materials has been repeatedly cited in OHS studies (using different instruments) amongst Australian small business workers; this is an important comparison as, arguably, transport workers share a number of characteristics with many small business workers (see Mayhew, 1997). For example, owner/drivers are small business workers, nearly all long distance transport drivers perform hands-on tasks, most are more comfortable with concrete rather than abstract terms, and drivers are very practical workers. All these features are common to both small business and transport workers. Hence it was unsurprising that drivers initially resisted administration of the GHQ.

Both the form of questions on the GHQ and the time taken to complete it met significant resistance during the pilot-testing of the draft questionnaire in the early stages of this research study. A frequently repeated comment was: ‘are you trying to psycho-analyse me?’ A further reservation about the GHQ was that it required at least 8 to 10 minutes to complete, and for many time-pressed truck drivers this was a significant barrier. In fact, during initial pilot-testing of the full 3-page questionnaire, it became immediately obvious that truck drivers would not readily accept and complete the GHQ section.

Strategies were adopted to overcome the resistance of truck drivers. However these strategies in themselves diminished the validity of the GHQ findings to some extent. The interviewer introduced the GHQ as an instrument that: (a) helped to predict future health status; (b) was useful in comparing health status across groups of workers in different countries. (c) Further, the interviewer herself stated that she had reservations about the GHQ; but that (d) the head of the Inquiry would greatly appreciate completion of the GHQ by as many truck drivers as possible. Finally, (e) where drivers were hesitant to complete the GHQ because of time pressures, the interviewer suggested that the truck drivers respond quickly to each question as a ‘top of the mind’ response was often quite accurate (this resulted in rushed rather than considered answers). This five-point strategy was successful in increasing response rates with 290 of the 300 (96.7%) drivers interviewed completing it in full.
A further threat to the validity of the GHQ is that interviewees may record ‘donkey’ responses. That is, the truck drivers may have simply checked the same column in response to each of the 12 questions on the GHQ. Such a ‘donkey’ response may however be logical if the column repeatedly checked is the ‘same as usual’ response. The GHQ answers of all the truck drivers were double-checked to assess the extent of possible ‘donkey’ responses. Only 1 questionnaire had all 12 column responses the same (an ‘other’ employment status driver who checked all as ‘better than usual’). Of those who checked 11 out of 12 responses in the same column, 11 were owner/drivers, 3 worked in small fleets, and 11 were employed in large fleets; all of these checked the ‘same as usual’ column. Thus it is believed that ‘donkey’ responses to the administered GHQ were minimal.

Finally, the ‘opportunity cost’ of including the GHQ in the full questionnaire was that many other questions had to be omitted because of interview time restrictions. Most notably, personal financial status and indebtedness were not assessed. Hence many responses that could have been benchmarked against other empirical OHS study findings were excluded. That being said, it needs to be reiterated that the GHQ is a widely accepted international measure of well-being. The following analysis focuses only on the most significant findings from the GHQ.

5.3 GHQ scores and employment status

For the 290 drivers who completed the GHQ, the overall mean was 10.3. The lowest score was 0 and the highest 33. That is, the mean GHQ score was high compared with many other groups. The possible reasons for this are explored below through comparisons between sub-groups of the 300 truck drivers. In these following discussions, it is the pattern of scores that is important.

The GHQ data were broken down by employment status: for the 93 owner/drivers who completed the full GHQ, the mean score was 11.5 (6 refused or only partially completed the form). For the 103 small fleet drivers who completed the GHQ, the mean was 9.8. Of the 82 large fleet drivers who completed the GHQ, the mean was 10. The 12 ‘other’ employment status drivers had a mean GHQ score of 6.7. That is, owner/drivers scored highest, and small and large fleet driver indicators were similar. Apart from the ‘other’ employment status drivers, all employment sub-groups had mean scores above the 8.59 level that has been reported to be the benchmark for a ‘normal’ score.

5.4 GHQ scores by highway

The results were separated out by the highway on which individual drivers were working on the day/night of interview. It is important to remember that the numbers interviewed on the Sturt and Great Western/Mitchell highways, and in the greater Sydney area, were low so interpretations from data collected in these areas have to be made with caution.
Drivers from all employment status groups consistently scored above the 8.59 baseline (apart from the ‘other’ drivers – whose numbers were low). Amongst owner/drivers, those on the Hume and Newell highways scored the highest, and those interviewed on the Great Western/Mitchell and Sturt had the lowest scores. For small fleet drivers, those driving on the Great Western/Mitchell and New England scored the highest, and those on the Sturt and Pacific highways scored the lowest. Large fleet drivers on the Hume and Newell had the highest scores, and those on the Pacific and New England highways the lowest.

The Hume highway has some distinctive characteristics. It is the major route between Australia’s largest manufacturing city (Melbourne) and the second largest manufacturing base (Sydney). The Hume highway carries more long distance heavy vehicles per 24 hours than any other in the state. It is dual highway throughout, and the majority of heavy vehicles are driven over-night. Because of the high volume, truck drivers can virtually always get return loads the next day. As a result many drivers routinely drive 6 legs a week – and hence they do not get held-over waiting for loads as they might in Brisbane or Adelaide; simultaneously drivers do not get long rest breaks waiting for loads. Many truck drivers interviewed commented on the Hume highway being dual carriageway throughout with few towns – which was therefore to some extent ‘boring’ to drive on. Finally, freight-forwarding agents organising consignments along the Hume highway offer very competitive freight rates. Quoted rates on offer have ranged from $1.65 per km, to $1.10 per km, and even down to $0.98 per km. The type of vehicle generally determines the size and weight of potential loads, with B/doubles having a larger capacity.

5.5 Characteristics of drivers with high GHQ scores

All drivers with a GHQ of 14 or above were separated out for close scrutiny to identify any distinctive features. The breakpoint of 14 was selected as this has been previously identified as a level at which it may be ethical for a researcher to caution an interviewee about his or her current health status as they are at extreme risk (pers. comm. P. Bohle, 26/7/00). This examination of very high GHQ scores was conducted to assist with the identification of potential independent variables, job features with a close correlation, and
variables that might be only spuriously associated. In addition, this process assisted with identification of the direction of causation: that is, are those with health problems attracted to the job of a truck driver, or, does the job create the high GHQ score?

In all, 47 drivers scored 14 or above; this was 15.7% of the interviewed population of 300 truck drivers. Of these 47 high-scorers, 21 were owner/drivers, 13 worked in small fleets, 12 in large fleets, and 1 had an ‘other’ employment status. That is, owner/drivers were markedly over-represented in the very high GHQ score group but the reasons for this were initially unclear.

Four potentially important variables were separated out for comparison against the 47 high GHQ scoring truck drivers (hours worked per week, comments about illicit drug use, age, and highway on which driver was working). Although numbers are low, some trends are apparent.

The hours worked per week by the 47 drivers with a GHQ of 14 or above were compared against the working hours of all truck drivers.

Table 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GHQ score 14 or above</th>
<th>all drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 24</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-49</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73+</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 29 indicates, the hours worked by high GHQ scoring drivers were not distinctly different to those worked by the whole population studied. This finding was unexpected. Thus, hours worked per week is unlikely to be an independent variable influencing the GHQ score of a truck driver.

All volunteered comments about illicit drug use in the industry were compared against the 47 high GHQ score drivers. High GHQ interviewees who made a comment are listed below together with their qualitative data. (No illicit drug use comments were received from drivers in large fleets or those employed under ‘other’ arrangements.)

- ‘increase [in crashes when working longer hours]. Reduction in suitable low-impact drugs has caused increase’ (owner/driver 39; GHQ score 15);
- ‘still a lot of fellows use amphetamines; lot is home-made stuff which is more dangerous. Using a lot of speed – taking it orally. Don’t use amphetamines any more myself. Had to make a decision if I wanted to last in the industry’ (owner/driver 140; GHQ score 17);
• ‘more drug-testing is needed because drugs have ruined our industry...’ (owner/driver 158; GHQ score 21);
• ‘70% of truck drivers are drug addicts; 30% of all trucks on the road are legally unsafe’ (owner/driver 297; GHQ score 16); and
• ‘drugs’ (small fleet driver 49; GHQ score 23).

These comments do not suggest any direct link between higher GHQ scores and comments about illicit drug use as there was very little overlap. However it has to be remembered that these were volunteered statements on an area in which comments were not formally solicited on the questionnaire or during the semi-structured interviews.

The age group of high GHQ score drivers was compared with that of the interviewed drivers as a whole (one of the 47 did not provide his age group).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GHQ score 14 or above</th>
<th>all drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 21</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or over</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30 indicates that there was an increase in the proportion of drivers aged 25-34 and 65 plus amongst the high GHQ scorers. However, age group could not explain the distribution of all high GHQ scorers. (See later section 5.6, table 32 and mean age score discussions.)

The highway on which high GHQ score drivers were working was compared with the interviewed drivers as a whole (see tables 27 and 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>highway</th>
<th>GHQ score 14 or above</th>
<th>all drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hume</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newell</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturt</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Western &amp; Mitchell</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Sydney</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the majority of high scorers worked on the major interstate highways, it was only on the Hume highway that variations were consistently remarkable. That is, there was a

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
clear association between high GHQ scores and work on the Hume highway. The cause of this association was unclear. (See earlier discussion in section 5.4.) Hence the highest risk sub-group of any working on the high-risk Hume highway was separated out for in-depth scrutiny.

5.6 Owner/drivers on the Hume highway

Owner/drivers on the Hume highway were the highest GHQ risk group of all. Hence they were closely examined in order to identify the ways in which they were different to owner/drivers working on the other New South Wales major highways, and the interviewed truck driver population as a whole. Part of this analysis involved an unorthodox comparison of quantitative and qualitative data.

• Owner/drivers on the Hume highway had a GHQ of 13.1 compared with 10.5 for owner/drivers on the other highways, 11.5 for owner/drivers as a whole, and 10.3 for all 300 drivers interviewed. That is, as already identified, owner/drivers on the Hume highway were at significantly increased risk.

• 60% of owner/drivers on the Hume highway worked 70-72 or 73 plus hours per week compared with 61.3% of owner/drivers on the other highways, 59.6% for the 99 interviewed owner/drivers as a whole, and 55% of all 300 drivers interviewed (compare with table 11). (It is important to note again that 70-72 hours per week is an important legal limit, and some of the driving hour estimates provided by drivers may have been artificially reduced to this constraint. This is the rationale for combining 70-72, and 73 plus hours scores together.) That is, on a superficial analysis there was little difference in hours worked between the groups.

• Yet, owner/drivers on the Hume highway who worked 70-72 or 73 plus hours per week had a GHQ score average of 12.8, compared with 10.6 for owner/drivers who worked on the other highways, 11.5 for owner/drivers as a whole across all hours worked categories, and 10.3 across all 300 drivers interviewed and all hours worked categories. That is, while owner/drivers on the Hume worked a similar number of hours to other drivers, they had an elevated GHQ score. This elevated GHQ score is likely to be the result of some other independent variable associated with work on the Hume highway.

• The age group of owner/drivers on the Hume highway was compared with owner/drivers working on the other highways, owner/drivers as a whole, and all 300 drivers interviewed (table 9). There was an increase in the proportion of younger owner/drivers with 20.6% of the Hume highway owner/drivers aged under 35 (vs. 1.6% of other owner/drivers), 52.9% were 35-54 (vs. 53.1% of other owner/drivers), and 26.5% over age 55 (vs. 28.1%). This increase in owner/drivers under age 35 may possibly be correlated with some other independent variable associated with work on the Hume highway. For example, it may be that younger owner/drivers have fewer financial resources, a higher level of indebtedness, and be at a more crucial (and expensive) early stage of family formation. However, since numbers in the younger age groups were low, this finding must be interpreted with caution.

• Nevertheless, owner/drivers on the Hume highway at every age group (except over 65) had a higher GHQ score than did owner/drivers working on the other highways, (compared with 11.5 for owner/drivers as a whole, and 10.3 for all 300 drivers interviewed). That is, it is considered that age is an unlikely intervening variable.
explaining the higher overall GHQ scores of owner/drivers on the Hume highway. Rather, a high GHQ score is likely to be the result of some other independent variable associated with work on the Hume highway.

**Table 32**
GHQ scores of owner/drivers on the Hume highway by age compared with owner/drivers on other highways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>owner drivers on Hume GHQ score</th>
<th>all other owner/drivers GHQ score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aged under 21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or over</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 94.3% of owner/drivers on the Hume highway drove interstate or both interstate and intrastate, compared with 71.9% of the owner/drivers working on the other highways, 79.8% of owner/drivers as a whole, and 69% of all 300 drivers interviewed (table 2). That is, interstate driving (or facets of work associated with driving interstate) are likely to be either: (a) correlated with a variable that causes higher GHQ scores; or (b) a dependant variable i.e. caused by some other independent variable. Associated facets of more interstate driving could include being away from family for greater periods of time, diminished quality of sleep in a truck rather than home bed, reduced overall sleep time, or more overnight midnight to dawn driving – when circadian rhythms are at their lowest point.

- High GHQ scoring drivers were compared against qualitative indicators of economic stress. Owner/drivers on the Hume highway who cited either financial pressures, slow payments, or time pressures in response to the forced question ‘list the three biggest problems in your job at present’ were separated out from other owner/drivers and their qualitative data compared against GHQ scores. These responses were also compared against those of owner/drivers working on other highways, the owner/driver population as a whole, and all 300 interviewed drivers (see Table 24 and Appendix 3).

In Table 24 pressures associated with economic viability and economic stress were the most commonly cited ‘problems’. Three core sources of this financial stress were identified: (a) costs of running a vehicle such as fuel, registration and insurance cover etc; (b) low freight rates, and expected costs of GST and other financial pressures. (The fieldwork for this research study was undertaken just before the GST was introduced.) (c) Finally, slow payments or nil payments from customers were a significant source of stress for owner/drivers. Added together these three economic stressors were the biggest issue cited by the interviewed truck drivers.
While an analysis of these economic pressures contrasted against GHQ scores is rather like comparing ‘apples and oranges’, the patterns are clear.

Table 33
Frequency of economic stress comments by employment status and high GHQ scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers on Hume</th>
<th>all other owner/drivers</th>
<th>owner/drivers as a whole</th>
<th>% of 300 drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fuel, rego, insurance etc costs</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freight rates, GST, financial pressures</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slow payments or nil payments</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHQ scores</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While this is an inexact and rather speculative comparison, the data patterns are overwhelming. That is, the sub-group of drivers who consistently had the highest GHQ scores was the same group who most frequently volunteered statements about intense financial pressures in the industry, and repeatedly named specific costs factors and other causes of their strained economic circumstances.

- Finally, all 300 interviewed drivers had their GHQ scores compared against payment methods (table 8). These payment method categories are another rather crude measure of economic stress. It was hypothesised that those paid under variable (rather than standard) methods would be under greater stress. The percentages shown in the table below are taken from those who answered both the question on payment methods and who completed the GHQ. In some cases there was no response to one or other question and in other cases drivers were paid by more than one method for different jobs. The denominator in each box was taken to be the number who responded: 11 owner/drivers did not complete both parts of the questionnaire, but 1 gave 2 responses; 2 small fleet drivers were not counted and 3 gave more than 1 response; 4 large fleet drivers did not complete all the questionnaire but 8 gave more than one response. Of the 12 ‘other’ employment status drivers, 1 did not answer a question and 1 gave more than 1 response.

Table 34
Comparison of payment system against GHQ scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>owner/drivers</th>
<th>small fleet</th>
<th>large fleet</th>
<th>‘other’ drivers</th>
<th>all 300 interviewed drivers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>award rate</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by the km or trip</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>km/trip rate plus bonus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>varies by job</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 34 indicates that: (a) the lowest GHQ scores were recorded amongst those paid by the km/trip rate with a bonus, or by the award rate i.e. those with the most secure income. (b) The highest scores were recorded amongst groups of drivers whose payment varied by the job, and by owner/drivers paid by ‘other’ means or on a km/trip rate (which may be different to the rate paid to employee drivers) i.e. predominantly drivers with a less secure income. Apart from these patterns, the differences across employment status groups were not as distinctive as expected.

In sum, just as low freight rates, increasing vehicle running costs, and slow payments are intimately connected, variable payment methods (and therefore uncertain) income levels also contributed to stress. The consequences of intense economic stress are predictable and connected. Economic stress to a great extent determines hours of work, willingness to take any contract available, and a greater readiness to accept driving schedules that require overnight work. Log book rule evasion and speeding (and even the use of performance enhancing substances) also inevitably follows for those under intense pressure. Logically therefore, as the owner/drivers were under the greatest economic pressure, it was probably inevitable that their GHQ scores would be higher. However, in the final analysis it is most important to focus on the causes, rather than the consequences.

5.7 Conclusion

The GHQ was used to estimate the health status of the 300 interviewed truck drivers. While there were a number of difficulties associated with its use in this population, it is a well-authenticated measure that is frequently used in medical and social psychology studies. The rationale for using the GHQ in this study was to aid in objective assessment of the health status of truck drivers, to identify the core stresses under which they worked, and to highlight possible causes and contributing factors. It was found that the interviewed population had a comparatively high GHQ score across almost all sub-groups compared with the norm of 8.59. High scores across the board indicated that nearly all of this working population was under significant levels of stress compared to the working population as a whole. Overall, owner/drivers performed worst on the GHQ, indicating that they were under the greatest stress.

In the attempt to identify the causes and contributing factors leading to high GHQ scores, drivers were compared across employment sub-groups, highways on which they were working, age groupings, hours worked per week, volunteered comments about illicit drug use, and other indices. The search was focused on identifying the causes, or independent variables, leading to increased GHQ scores. By identifying the causes, preventive interventions can be devised and implemented.

It was found that driving on the Hume highway had a consistent correlation with high GHQ scores, particularly for owner/drivers (which did not explain causation). Clearly the owner/drivers were at greatest risk. Those with the highest GHQ scores of all - owner/drivers on the Hume highway - were later separated out and the variables were more closely scrutinised.
Volunteered comments about illicit drug use showed no association with high GHQ scores.

On initial analysis, drivers aged 25-34 or over 65 were marginally more likely to have a high GHQ score. When owner/drivers on the Hume highway were selected out for particular attention (as the highest of high-risk groups), it was found that Hume highway owner/drivers in all age groups consistently had higher scores than other owner/drivers. But, this pattern was insufficient to explain the distribution of all high GHQ scorers. It was concluded that higher GHQ scores were not caused by age but were likely to be the result of some other independent variable.

In regard to hours worked per week, while owner/drivers on the Hume highway did not work longer hours than other owner/drivers, they had higher GHQ score. Thus increased hours of work associated with higher GHQ scores in some sub-groups was likely to be the result of some other independent variable.

Those who did more interstate work tended to have higher GHQ scores, but the extent to which this was affected by being away from their homes, sleeping in their trucks, and/or having poorer quality and quantity of sleep could not be estimated. (These sleep and fatigue issues are intimately inter-connected.) It was concluded that the extent of interstate work was likely to be the result of some other independent variable that determined GHQ scores.

The only possible independent variable identified was economic stress. There was a clear and overwhelming association identified when the qualitative data on economic pressures were compared with high GHQ scorers. It was argued that comparing these two quite different data sources from the questionnaire (one of which was qualitative and one quantitative) was like comparing apples and oranges. Nevertheless the relationship was clear, strong and consistent.

Economic stress was measured by driver responses when they identified the three biggest problems in the industry. Three core sources of economic stress were identified which are closely interconnected: costs of running a vehicle, low freight rates, and slow or nil payments from customers. Similarly the consequences (or dependant variables) from economic stress are interconnected: hours worked per week, willingness to accept overnight schedules (most common on the Hume), number of nights spent working away from home, quality and quantity of sleep, and hence health status as measured by the GHQ. Log book rule evasion, speeding and the use of performance enhancing substances almost inevitably followed for those under the most intense pressure. The contribution of economic stress to increased GHQ score was reinforced when GHQ scores were compared against methods of payment for completed freight work.

That is, it is asserted that the most probable independent variable leading to a higher GHQ score is intense economic pressure. Logically following from this, those under greatest economic stress can be expected to have higher GHQ scores – as was found for owner/drivers.
In sum, nearly all long haul truck drivers have high GHQ scores compared to the population as a whole. The scores are highest in owner/drivers, particularly those who work on the Hume highway and/or who are under severe economic stress. Some limited analysis was conducted to identify the direction of causation (i.e. whether those with a high GHQ score were attracted to this job, or whether the job led to high GHQ scores). The tasks of all truck drivers are virtually the same (i.e. driving), although those who are owner/drivers or in small fleets may be more likely to assist with loading and unloading. Because there were consistent variations in mean GHQ scores across the sub-groups, it had to be concluded that drivers with high GHQ scores were not attracted to this job. Rather, some facets of being a truck driver are more stressful than are others, and some sub-groups of drivers are exposed to these stressors more than others. That is, the job of a truck driver contributes to a higher GHQ score (and not vice-versa).

It is argued that any associations between GHQ score, age, and volunteered comments on illicit drug use, are all probably spurious. Hours worked per week, and the extent to which drivers work interstate or inter and intra-state, are dependant variables, determined to a large extent by the intensity of economic pressure. Because economic pressures are concentrated on the Hume highway where overnight driving is almost inevitable - and most intense for owner/drivers - GHQ scores are inevitably higher for drivers working on this most competitive of routes in a very competitive industry. Those who work under more secure employment arrangements and/or on other highways are more likely to experience lower levels of economic pressure (although this may still be at significant levels compared with most other jobs).

Thus it is asserted that economic pressure is the independent variable that most influences: (a) hours worked per week; (b) pressure to do more interstate work - including working away from home and driving through the night more frequently; and thus (c) determines the health status and GHQ score of truck drivers.

The final section of this report focuses on possible interventions that incorporate the ‘chain of responsibility’ and which may improve the OHS status and driving outcomes of those employed in the long haul trucking industry.
Section 6

THE POTENTIAL USE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY PLANS IN THE LONG Haul TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

As the previous sections have identified, there are underlying pressures in the long haul transport industry that fundamentally encourage – and indeed almost force – unsafe methods of conducting work. These pressures essentially stem from the lack of a standard basic rate for carriage of freight, slow payments to owner/drivers, and undercutting. It is now relatively easy for unscrupulous freight-forwarders to exploit desperate owner/drivers (in particular) and smaller companies – thus eventually forcing down the base rate for all. As a result, many truck drivers are working longer and longer hours to survive, breaching regulatory guidelines in a number of areas, and suffering a significant negative health and safety impact. Other road users are also at increasing risk because of endemic fatigue amongst most groups of truck drivers. Those who are responsible for these underlying pressures do not appear to be held responsible for the negative OHS outcomes. That is, the ‘chain of responsibility’ does not appear to be recognised. Further, enforcement of employer’s duties to maintain a safe work place and process of conducting work is uncommon.

However, simply deriding the structure and enumerating the extent of problems in the long haul transport industry is unlikely to improve OHS outcomes.

This next section of the research report focuses on a potential remedy that is relatively simple, has been tried in another industry sector, incorporates the ‘chain of responsibility’ obligations, and which should improve OHS outcomes.

6.1 Past experiences with workplace health and safety plans

Regulatory instruments are important mechanisms used to improve OHS outcomes. In the Australian states and territories, Robens-based OHS laws and subsidiary legislative instruments are frequently used for control of hazards and risks. The effectiveness of these legislative changes is frequently unknown, as is whether requirements are implemented uniformly across all sub-groups of an industry sub-sector. Thus relatively new regulatory interventions often have to be refined after initial trial periods.

In Queensland, the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 is the principal instrument. Under a change to the Workplace Health and Safety Regulation, (effective 1 January 1997), it became mandatory for all principal contractors and subcontractors to develop a ‘workplace health and safety plan’ prior to starting work on a building or construction site whenever the cost of a project exceeded $40,000. The tripartite Building Workplace Health and Safety Industry Committee supported their introduction. The risk assessment requirement is most strongly outlined in advisory standards, underpinned by requirements detailed in the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 (s.22). Failure to comply with the requirement for completion of a health and safety plan is an offence. ‘Model’ health and
safety plans focus on risks inherent in specific building industry work processes, and are tailored to each of the major sub-sectors (civil, commercial and housing), and for different occupational groups, for example, bricklayers. These ‘model’ plans were developed by the various industry groups in conjunction with the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. The development of this package involved the translation of voluminous and complex laws and standards into simple but focused guides for risk assessment and control. The plans assist builders to address hazards and risks on their sites, to assess risks associated with individual tasks, to meet their obligations under a self-regulatory model, and to improve injury and illness outcomes. Further, the plans have to be discussed with, and provided to, others on site. These workplans are essentially formalised risk assessment sheets that have to be completed and signed off by individual contractors and sub-contractors before work tasks commence.

The first formal evaluation of effectiveness of health and safety plans

The first formal evaluation of the health and safety plans requirement was conducted in 1997 amongst small-scale builders in the housing sector. For a detailed discussion see Mayhew et al (1997). This study evaluated whether the health and safety plans had been implemented uniformly across the small-scale housing sector, if their use had an effect on OHS prevention, or if there were variations in uptake according to economic conditions or across metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. This first evaluation study found that the workplace health and safety plans requirement was better accepted: (a) where the relevant industry association actively supported them; (b) when the industry association developed standardised contracts with the work plans requirement integrated; (c) where building contractors had frequent contact with the local OHS jurisdictional office – and even particular Inspectors; (d) when customers included work plan clauses in their contracts; and (e) in non-metropolitan areas where the industry association held regular ‘roadshows’ (Mayhew et al, 1997:160).

However, the workplace health and safety plans requirement was poorly accepted when: (a) small-scale builders did not belong to an industry association; (b) builders refused to believe that the requirement applied to small sites; (c) when economic and time pressures were so acute that requirements were knowingly breached to win tenders and ensure survival of the enterprise; (d) when ignorance of the requirement was claimed; (e) where benefits were so obscure to builders that only nominal acquiescence, rather than commitment, resulted; (f) when contractors worked solely on very small jobs or maintenance work which was excluded from the requirement; (g) where builders were genuinely unaware of them (for example in isolated areas); and (h) where the OHS Inspectorate focused their efforts on enforcement strategies (Mayhew et al, 1997:160-161).

Overall, the first evaluation study identified that increased implementation of the health and safety plans, improved levels of knowledge about the OHS law, more frequent inclusion of OHS clauses in contracts, heightened awareness of hazard and risk reduction strategies, and use of checklists were inter-related. Where one of these variables was at an improved level, the others were also usually more frequent. The converse also applied. The inclusion of OHS clauses in contracts was found to be of core importance.
and was increasingly common over time – and builders complied, if only to get the work. Inspectorate activities conducted in conjunction with an employer building association were crucial precursors of improved compliance. Of significant importance, increased use of health and safety plans was found to be correlated with the reduction of injury. (However correlation is not necessarily the same as causation.) The independent variable identified was the intensive combined interventions by the OHS Inspectorate and the industry association working together in a collegial manner assisting individual small-scale builders (Mayhew et al,1997:179).

*The second formal evaluation of the effectiveness of health and safety plans*

After the health and safety plans requirement had been in place for two full years, Richard Johnstone undertook a more in-depth evaluation. He concentrated attention on the opinions and experiences of Inspectors, obligation holders from larger construction firms, and policy makers. A detailed summary of the development and implementation of the work plans requirement can be found in Johnstone (1999:33-38;100-110).

Of significant importance, Johnstone (1999:x) found that Inspectors working in this industry sector did not uniformly support self-regulation. Many also identified inadequacies in their training to implement and assess completed health and safety plans, and a lack of consistency in inspection strategies. As a result many Inspectors had difficulty in ascertaining compliance, particularly if an obligation holder had prepared an inferior work plan (Johnstone, 1999:xi).

Johnstone (1999:ix) also found that the self-regulatory approach to OHS (integral to the Robens-based philosophy and legal framework) was not uniformly understood and supported by obligation holders. Smaller operators tended to have the lowest levels of understanding of self-regulation, and decreased awareness and implementation of the health and safety plans requirement (Johnstone, 1999:x,5). (Given the large proportion of smaller businesses in Queensland, this is of crucial importance.) Indeed, a more prescriptive approach would be preferred by many. Many obligation holders only complied because principal contractors enforced the requirement, or because of contract clauses. Nonetheless, as Johnstone (1999) identifies, work plans document the risk assessment process, and therefore provide evidence as to whether (or not) the parties have complied with their obligations under the general duties, the regulations, and the advisory standards. The criticism that is probably most crucial is that many obligation holders adopted a ‘tick and flick’ approach to completing health and safety plans, without cognitive involvement (Johnstone, 1999:x,70). That is, some obligation holders did not mentally involve themselves in formal risk assessments and merely completed the work plans by ticking boxes in a lip-service or ‘donkey vote’ fashion, rather than considering the issues. In the words of Johnstone (1999:xi), this: ‘...frustrates the purpose of the work plan requirement, and compounds the problems of implementing the self-regulatory model in the construction industry’. Further, it should be noted that while health and safety plans facilitate a risk assessment process and provide some evidence that an obligation holder has taken steps to minimise OHS risks, they: ‘... do not in any way provide a principal contractor, self-employed person or an employer with an argument that by doing a thorough WHS work plan, the obligation holder has complied with all
obligations under the WHSA and WHSR’ (Johnstone, 1999:178). That is, parties still have to ensure compliance with each regulation etc – doing a work plan does not ipso fact mean that the general duties and regulations are complied with. The quality of the documented risk assessment process and evidence of control measures implemented is therefore of crucial importance.

Nevertheless Johnstone (1999:xii,111) identified that the health and safety plans requirement was effective in improving awareness of OHS, and that there was a potential correlation with a fall in workers’ compensation claims, particularly from those on larger sites where such insurance cover was more common. ‘...where the work plans are being used properly, with vigorous implementation and enforcement by WHS officers, they appear to be reducing workplace injuries’ (Johnstone, 1999:112).

In sum, health and safety plans have now been in operation for nearly four years in one industry sector in one Australian state - with successful results. While not unproblematic, there is evidence to show that health and safety plans are effective in improving OHS outcomes, even in small-scale businesses. Their successful introduction was undoubtedly related to the fact that they were introduced into a regulatory environment where there was significant concern about high levels of injury and fatalities. Further, in the state where health and safety plans were introduced, tripartite decision-making structures were well established. Hence a jurisdictional and industry partnership was readily established. This partnership was shown to be of crucial importance in both the Johnstone (1999) and Mayhew et al (1997) evaluations of implementation of the health and safety plans requirement into the Queensland OHS legislative framework.

It is postulated that the workplace health and safety plans requirement could be readily re-designed and applied to the long haul transport sector. To date, the Queensland OHS jurisdiction has only produced a general health and safety guide for road freight transport, but has not, as yet, introduced the plan requirement, or developed model health and safety plans. Similar to the building industry, long haul transport has a high injury and fatality ratio, there is a significant proportion of self-employed and small business operators, and the industry is highly competitive.

As with the small-scale and self-employed Queensland builders, a significant initial amount of opposition to the introduction of ‘more paperwork’ can be expected, and serious efforts by the relevant (and overlapping) jurisdictions to communicate positive outcomes from the completion of health and safety plans will be needed. There will also have to be agreement between these overlapping jurisdictions (for example, the RTA, police and WorkCover) as to whether all (or which) body can issue improvement notices or on-the-spot fines for an unsafe system of work, for example where time scheduling is too tight. Currently OHS enforcement is almost the sole preserve of the RTA and police and this appears to be a restricted to a focus on infringement of road rules and use of illicit substances. If a health and safety plan regulatory requirement is to be introduced into the long haul transport industry in New South Wales, the particular difficulties and limitations encountered during their implementation into the Queensland building industry will need to be considered.
6.2 Essential requirements in a health and safety plan in long haul transport

A health and safety plan is essentially a risk assessment form that assists obligation holders to identify and control the range of hazards and risks in a specific job, as required by the provisions of the OHS statute. To be effective, a health and safety plan has to focus on the causes and not the consequences. In research terms, it is the independent variable that the health and safety plan has to address. As identified in sections 4 and 5 of this research report, control over the independent variable(s) is essentially concentrated at the top of the ‘chain of responsibility’ in the long haul transport industry.

In the long haul transport industry, any comprehensive plan would have to address underlying economic pressures that cause or encourage excessive working hours, log book breaches, and other infringements of a safe system of conducting work. There is a regulatory basis: the NSW *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* (s. 8 (1,2)) places the onus on employers to ensure the OHS of employees and other persons on a work site. As Johnstone argues elsewhere in the *Inquiry* report, these provisions in the NSW OHS Act lay down a ‘chain of responsibility’ to ensure truck drivers are not exposed to risks. Further, Johnstone (ibid) argues that all trucking activities (including scheduling) are part of the ‘conduct of the undertaking’ of a consignor, client of a trucking company, or an owner/driver which influence driver behaviours. However, he laments that the wording of the NSW Act means that ‘conduct of the undertaking’ is limited to activities at the employer’s workplace.

Minimum components in a health and safety plan for the long haul transport industry would have to include:

- Recognition of the duty of care of all parties in the ‘chain of responsibility’. Duty of care responsibilities include maintaining a workplace and work process that is safe and without risk to the OHS of all workers on sites where work is conducted, as well as members of the public exposed to the work site or work process.
- The total km distances to be driven should have reasonable expected times of arrival at destination(s) which take account of traffic flows in towns and cities, and regulatory requirements such as speed limits.
- The band of total working hours should always stay within the regulatory guidelines, and include driving hours, break periods, and loading and unloading times.
- Waiting periods for loading and unloading need to be included in total working hours estimations. Account also has to be taken of time required to do multiple deliveries. This is particularly important in a city like Sydney where travel times between drops may be lengthy.
- Minimum freight rates should be paid on an equivalent basis to the award salary, plus (in the case of owner/drivers or subcontractors) the costs of running a vehicle, maintenance, depreciation etc. This should decrease incentives to breach regulations.
- The weight and type of the load carried should be appropriate for the vehicle.
- A statement that the truck meets all regulatory and maintenance requirements.
- A statement needs to be included that the driver of the vehicle will obey all regulatory requirements from all relevant authorities (for example, RTA, police, WorkCover).
On the following pages a beginning draft of a workplace health and safety plan for the long haul transport industry is provided. This draft model work plan is, at this stage, heterogenous. That is, it covers owner/drivers, and employees in both small and large fleets; B/doubles, semi’s and rigid vehicles; as well as all forms of freight (livestock, fuel, furniture or general goods). Obviously, it will need to be adapted to different employment status groups, vehicles, and forms of freight. Further, at this early draft stage, the plan is really a detailed checklist which will need to be adapted to ensure cognitive involvement of the obligation holder completing it.

There are three basic problems which will have to be addressed in industry sub-group-specific adaptations of this draft workplan:

• (a) the draft plan to a great extent could (as during the introduction of plans into the Queensland building industry) result in ‘tick and flick’ responses without cognitive involvement;
• (b) each draft plan will have to be adapted to focus on the key variables affecting particular trips, and the circumstances under which each load is to be carried; and
• (c) after introduction, a formal evaluation would have to be conducted and the draft plans refined.

The draft workplace health and safety plan below has relied significantly on those developed by the Division of Workplace Health and Safety in Queensland. Our gratitude is expressed to B. Bills, G. Chaplin, J. Hodges and others who developed the original concept and first drafts.
6.3 A draft model long haul transport workplace health and safety plan

This work plan is provided as a model to be adapted by freight-forwarders, long distance owner/drivers, and customers. Ideally each company will incorporate a health and safety plan into their standard contract. The final health and safety plan should include all the different activities undertaken in specific jobs and fully recognise the ‘chain of responsibility’. The plan should consider the health and safety risks faced by all drivers, staff at freight-forwarding and delivery sites, and members of the public. The contents can be altered to match a range of tasks, for example, the carriage of dangerous goods. The following will need to be included:

- You will need to ensure that minimum freight rates are paid on an equivalent basis to the award salary (plus costs of running a vehicle where applicable) to ensure incentives to breach regulatory guidelines do not underpin this contract
- You will need to identify the health and safety hazards on all sites (including the road)
- You will need to assess the risks associated with each of these hazards
- You will need to nominate how you will control those risks
- You will need to monitor whether the risks have been controlled satisfactorily

Fill out the following pages. This becomes your health and safety plan. Give an inspection copy to the freight supervisor, and any subcontractors. To start with, indicate below the scheduled date and time of different tasks associated with this specific job.

Name of long distance truck driver .................................................................
Address of long distance truck driver ..............................................................
What goods are being carried ................................................................................
Type of truck ..........................................................................................................
Name and address where loads(s) are to be picked up ....................................... ...........................................................
Exact time and date pick-up and loading is to start ......................................
Exact time and date driving is to start .................................................................
Name and all addresses where loads are to be delivered ...................................... ...........................................................
Total estimated distance to be driven .................................................................
Total estimated time away from base .................................................................
Please put a √ (yes) or X (no) or n/a (not applicable) in the most appropriate box.

The agreed contract ensures:

- Responsibilities throughout the ‘chain of responsibility’ are fully recognised at all levels and for all activities
- The duty of care obligations of freight-forwarding companies and customers party to this contract are fully met
- The materials to be carried are appropriate for the vehicle
- The freight rate offered is calculated on the basis of the award rate plus any associated expenses e.g. owner/driver fuel, maintenance and depreciation costs etc
- Realistic time schedules have been calculated for delivery times between pick-up and destination(s)
- Paid working hours include multiple destination deliveries
- Waiting periods at ‘pick-up’ are minimal
- Waiting periods to deliver goods at destination have been reduced to the minimum possible
- Arrangements have been made if delivery depot or site will be unattended e.g. security of driver and freight
- Work scheduling, rosters and total hours required compliance with fatigue management principles
- Shift schedules are designed to fit circadian rhythm patterns, with nights spent at home as often as possible
- Shift schedules are rotated forwards, not backwards
- Night driving is minimised whenever possible
- Advance notice of driving schedules is provided to drivers and owner/drivers, with their input whenever possible
- Appropriate training has been provided on: vehicle operation, maintenance, freight, dangerous goods etc
- Contingency plans have been developed in case of emergencies en-route, and contact numbers provided
- Injury, ill-health and crash prevention strategies are in place, including reduction of noise exposure and manual handling
- All requirements of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code (ADG) Code for transportation and storage are observed
- Instruction and training has been provided to on-site staff on freight loading, use of equipment, dangerous goods, re-charging of batteries for electric forklifts in open air etc
- Regular walk-through risk assessment/audits are conducted on the site
- MSDS are available to all staff, contractors/subcontractors
- The written OHS policy and strategies are readily available to all staff, contractors and subcontractors
- All work-related injuries, illness, and crashes are recorded

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
During freight pick-up and loading, and delivery, I will ensure:

- The type of freight is appropriate for the vehicle
- The weight of the freight is appropriate for the vehicle
- The truck is not overloaded
- Freight restraints are strong enough and appropriate
- Manual handling is minimised
- Mechanical loading aids are used wherever possible e.g. fork lift trucks and pallet movers (or trolleys)
- Mechanical loading equipment is in good condition and well maintained
- Double-handling of freight is minimised
- Additional precautions are taken with awkward loads such as cattle, furniture such as a piano, and use of tarpaulins in wet weather
- Freight is positioned to maintain vehicle stability, steering and braking performance, and not overload axles and tyres
- Freight is loaded and unloaded as close as possible to final destination
- Specific precautions are taken when loading, unloading and transporting dangerous goods
- Jumping from elevated stations and between vehicles and loads is prohibited
- Any ladders used are in good condition and are secured at top and bottom
- Additional precautions are taken when freight has to be loaded from (or unloaded on to) sloping floors or up or down stairs e.g. six wheeled trolleys are used
- The pick-up and delivery of freight to unattended depots is avoided if possible. If unavoidable, special precautions are taken e.g. security systems, duress alarms provided
- Lighting is adequate for all loading, unloading, vehicle turning, and driving tasks on-site
- Adequate room exits for vehicle access, turning and egress
- Hearing protection devices are provided and used where appropriate
- Rest and recovery facilities for drivers are available
Please put a √ (yes) or X (no) or n/a (not applicable) in the most appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During driving, I will ensure:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Contractual arrangements ensure any subcontractors conform with this safe work plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drivers/subcontractors can refuse vehicles not maintained to standard without penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate signage is displayed on the vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drivers have had appropriate emergency repair instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maximum hours driven conform to legal requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Speed limits are observed at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Log book requirements are adhered to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safety Cam requirements are adhered to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All road rules are complied with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A safe stopping distance between vehicles is observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overtaking guidelines are observed, particularly up hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safe driving practices are observed at roundabouts and near red lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Freight is checked periodically to ensure loads have not shifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Freight restraints are checked periodically to ensure loads are safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All required rest breaks are taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meal breaks are observed at regular intervals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special precautions are taken during breaks by those transporting dangerous goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Steps are taken to protect driver health and safety, and to reduce excessive stress and fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whenever possible, night driving is avoided/not scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Schedules are designed so drivers can sleep at home base whenever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shuttle systems are used when possible to reduce fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No illicit fatigue-reducing substances are used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other..........................................................................................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
During truck maintenance tasks, I will ensure:

- The vehicle is maintained in accordance with guidelines
- Maintenance is done by appropriately qualified staff
- Maintenance is done according to manufacturer’s guide
- Replacement parts are of the appropriate brand and of the highest possible quality
- A safe work procedure is used while doing maintenance
- Maintenance equipment is safe, subject to routine safety checks, and without risk e.g. jacks
- Electrical power tools are protected by residual current devices, and ‘piggy backs’ are prohibited
- Hearing protection devices are provided and used
- Timely roadworthy inspections are carried out
- Other……………………………………………………………………………………………………...

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
### ADDITIONAL RISKS AND THEIR CONTROLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freight forwarder</th>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>Driver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### DESCRIPTION OF HAZARD

#### DESCRIPTION OF RISK

#### CONTROL MEASURES

The above workplace health and safety plan provides details on how I/we ……… (name of freight forwarder, owner/driver, and/or customer) will manage the health and safety risks associated with the loading, driving, unloading and maintenance activities for this specific delivery job/contract in the long haul transport industry.

**Signatures**

- ………………………
- ………………………
- ………………………

**Date**

.../.../......
OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
Appendix 1
Anonymous Questionnaire: do not write your name

1. Where do you usually drive: [ ] interstate only [ ] within the state only [ ] inter & intra state [ ] other ............

2. What do you usually carry: [ ] general goods [ ] dangerous goods/fuel [ ] cattle [ ] frozen foods [ ] other ..........

3. How long have you worked in the trucking industry
[ ] less than 1 year [ ] 1-2 years [ ] 2-3 years [ ] 3-5 years [ ] 5-10 years [ ] more than 10 years

4. What type of truck do you usually drive [ ] rigid [ ] semi [ ] B/double [ ] other..................

5. What is your employment status
[ ] owner/driver [ ] employee in small fleet (<20 trucks) [ ] employee in large fleet [ ] casual [ ] subcontractor [ ] other ............................................................

6. If you are an employee, are you [ ] permanent [ ] casual [ ] labour hire [ ] one-off trip
How long have you been with this company …… years ….. months [ ] other...........................................

7. If you are an owner/driver, how many consignors/freight forwarders do you get loads from ........
If you only work for one consignor/freight forwarder, how long have you been with it …… years ….. months
How do they pay you:
[ ] on delivery [ ] regular salary [ ] on invoice [ ] fortnight [ ] monthly [ ] different consignors pay differently [ ] other .....  

8. Do you get bonus payments if you delivery early [ ] ............ and/or penalties if late [ ] ........................................

9. If you get injured at work, will your injury bills be paid by workers’ compensation insurance
[ ] no [ ] workers’ compensation [ ] insurance policy [ ] not sure [ ] other...............................

10. How many hours a week do you work usually drive/work (include driving and maintenance work)
[ ] under 24 [ ] 25-34 [ ] 35-39 [ ] 40 [ ] 41-49 [ ] 50-59 [ ] 60-69 [ ] 70-72 [ ] 73+

11. How many hours a day do you usually work on average
[ ] under 6 [ ] 6-8 [ ] 9-10 [ ] 11-12 [ ] more than 12 [ ] varies everyday

12. What times of the day do you usually drive/work
[ ] day time only [ ] evenings [ ] night time [ ] Monday-Friday [ ] weekends
[ ] always changing [ ] other .................................................................

13. Have you had any work-related injuries/illnesses in the last 12 months (since May 1, 1999)
[ ] none [ ] yes injuries [ ] the usual little things that don’t stop you working
If yes, describe task/situation & time of day/night ..............................................................

If yes, what type of injury was it
[ ] cut [ ] burn [ ] back strain [ ] other strain [ ] bruise [ ] fracture [ ] other..........................

If yes, was this injury/illness treated by anyone:
[ ] no [ ] yes, by me/family/friends [ ] yes, doctor/nurse/hospital
If yes, did the injury(ies)/illness require time off work
[ ] no [ ] yes, but slowed me down [ ] yes, number of days off ..........................

14. Do you have any chronic injuries that have built up slowly over time
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Have you been verbally abused, threatened or assaulted at work in the last 12 months (since May 1, 1999)</td>
<td>[ ] no, [ ] yes, back injury, [ ] yes, hearing loss, [ ] yes, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe (who did it and how)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Have you had any truck CRASHES in the last 12 months (since May 1, 1999)</td>
<td>[ ] none, [ ] yes, just little ones that didn’t stop you driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe situation &amp; time of day/night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Was there anything different or special about your working conditions around the time of the crash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Did you have any CRASHES in the previous 5 years (May 1994 till May 1, 1999)</td>
<td>[ ] none, [ ] yes, just little ones that didn’t stop you driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe situation &amp; time of day/night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. List the three biggest problems in your job at present</td>
<td>a, b, c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Who is mainly responsible for your health &amp; safety and road safety</td>
<td>[ ] manager/owner, [ ] company, [ ] me, [ ] depends, [ ] don’t know, [ ] other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. If you had a health or safety problem, or needed to know about a road transport rule, who would you ask</td>
<td>[ ] friend, [ ] union, [ ] transport association, [ ] government, [ ] don’t know, [ ] other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Do you think payment levels are better or worse since 1990?</td>
<td>(a) cartage rates, (b) payments &amp; wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Does your job have an impact on your family and social life?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Do you think that the size and frequency of loads you carry have increased or decreased since 1990?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Do you think injuries and crashes decrease or increase when you work longer hours?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Is there anything else that you think is important about safety in this industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Do you belong to a union, employer, or other organisation</td>
<td>[ ] no, [ ] yes union, [ ] yes employer association, [ ] yes other organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. What age are you</td>
<td>(a) under 21, (b) 22-25, (c) 25-34, (d) 35-44, (e) 45-54, (f) 55-64, (g) 65 or over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Are you:</td>
<td>[ ] male, [ ] female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
We should also like to know if you have had any medical complaints, and how your health has been in general, **over the past few weeks**. Please answer all the questions simply by **circling the answer** which you think most nearly applies to you. Remember that we want to know about present and recent complaints, not those that you have had in the past.

**Have you recently:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Better than usual</th>
<th>Same as usual</th>
<th>Less than usual</th>
<th>Much less than usual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. been able to concentrate on what you are doing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. lost much sleep over worry?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. felt that you are playing a useful part in things?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. felt capable of making decisions about things?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. felt constantly under strain?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. felt you could not overcome your difficulties?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. been able to enjoy your normal day to day activities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. been able to face up to your problems?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. been feeling unhappy and depressed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. been losing confidence in yourself?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. been feeling reasonably happy all things considered?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2
Subject Information Statement and Consent Form (page 1 of 2)

Safety Inquiry into the Long Haul Trucking Industry

Interested parties: Professor Michael Quinlan (University of New South Wales), Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales, Roads and Traffic Authority, WorkCover New South Wales, Transport Workers Union, Australian Trucking Industry.

1. AIMS OF PROJECT: The focus of the formal Inquiry is to produce a report on safety in the industry, including occupational problems. As an integral part of the Inquiry, a substantial empirical research project will be conducted evaluating both owner/driver and employee driver occupational health and safety experiences, and factors that influence this. Aspects assessed will include:

(a) Identification of the impact of clients’ and consignors’ requirements on the safety of drivers, including:
   • Industry tendering practices
   • Transport contracts between road transport companies and major clients
   • Methods of pricing
   • Lack of client responsibility for driving hours, driving performance and remuneration for drivers
   • Client/consignor requirements as to delivery times.

(b) Assessment of enforcement in the industry over driving hours, speeding and drug use.

(c) Evaluation of current forms of regulation in the industry, whether a self-regulation or external regulation model is most appropriate to improve safety in the road transport industry, and what forms any recommended changes should take.

(d) Assessment of whether current regulatory bodies with responsibility for aspects of safety in the industry are properly coordinated with each other and sufficiently resourced.

2. PROCEDURE: Both owner/drivers and employees across New South Wales will be randomly selected for interview. Any variations in health and safety and working conditions between the groups will be identified. At least 250 transport drivers will take part.

3. FORESEEABLE RISKS FOR SUBJECTS: nil

4. FORESEEABLE BENEFITS: As objective information on the aims listed above are not currently known, the research project undertaken will provide guidance to improve health and safety.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY: No names or individually identifiable data will be recorded, and all data will be grouped for analysis

6. PARTICIPATION: Your participation is voluntary and will not be coerced in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time.

7. ANY MATTERS OF CONCERN: Please contact Professor Michael Quinlan via fax on 02-96628531, or via email on m.quinlan@unsw.edu.au, at any time if you have any concerns. Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Ethics Secretariat, University of New South Wales, Sydney 2052 (phone 02-938542134, fax 02-93856648, email ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au).

8. FEEDBACK: A detailed summary of the findings from the research project will be provided to all key industry organisations. If you would like a copy of the findings, please contact Professor Michael Quinlan on the above fax or email address, or write to him at the School of Industrial Relations and Organisational Behaviour, University of New South Wales, Kensington, NSW 2052.

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
University of New South Wales

Informed Consent Form (page 2 of 2)

Safety Inquiry into the Long Haul Trucking Industry

(a) I, ..................................................................... agree to participate as a subject in an experiment of a type described above.

(b) I agree to completion of an anonymous 3-page questionnaire and a short semi-structured interview.

(c) I acknowledge that I have read the above statement that explains the aims of the Inquiry and the nature and possible risks of the investigation, and the statement has been explained to me to my satisfaction.

Before signing this document, I have been given the opportunity of asking any questions relating to any possible physical and mental harm I might suffer as a result of my participation and I have received satisfactory answers. I understand that I can withdraw from the Inquiry at any time without prejudice to my relationship to the Inquiry or to the University of New South Wales. I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified.

(d) I understand that if I have any questions relating to my participation in this Inquiry, I may contact Professor Michael Quinlan on fax 02-96628531, or Mr Leicester Ramsey of the Motor Accidents Authority on 0419214726, or Mr Andrew Whale of the Transport Workers’ Union on 02-62735056.

Signed……………………
Witnessed by……………………
Date ………………………
Appendix 3
The three ‘biggest’ problems identified by each truck driver

A summary of this appendix appears as section 4.1 and Table 23 in the report. Each truck driver was asked to ‘list the three biggest problems in your job at present’. The aim of this question was for truck drivers to identify a wide range of issues that impacted on their working lives, to give full expression to these issues, and not to be restricted in scope. The qualitative data are reproduced in full below, separated by employment status. As in the report, the number inserted in brackets after the reproduced quotations made by each truck driver identifies interviewees. Many cited more than 3 problem issues, and some gave only one.

Owner/drivers: ‘big companies. Government charges, registrations, fuel tax, everything we touch. RTA and police department – average officer out there doesn’t know how hard our [life is]’ (2); ‘govt. charges: fuel, tyres and overheads. GST. Harassment’ (3); ‘freight rates leads to driving hours – I break the law for driving hours. You’ve got to as can’t make any money otherwise. It’s all financial pressures. Family life suffers. Law’ (5); ‘rates too low. Fuel too high. Harassment from law enforcement agencies (police and RTA)’ (7); ‘waiting around for the telephone to ring to tell you where to go and load. Waiting around to load, in Sydney especially – must get there at 10am in morning and could still be waiting at 3.30 in afternoon’ (16); ‘not enough money. RTA and coppers harassing you over stupid log books. Getting stuffed around while waiting to get loaded’ (19); ‘lack of sleep. Pressure to get out late and get in early. Increasing costs for the rate earned eg fuel, rego and mechanical repairs’ (20); ‘underpaid. Long hours. Timeslots’ (21); ‘price of diesel. I can never get my truck serviced on time as they’re not open on weekends; when put truck in for service they charge you for work that’s not done eg charge for 2 mechanics when only 1 works on it. Speed and diesel are the two biggest factors’ (24); ‘fuel costs. Freight rates too low. Bad roads’ (27); ‘rates. Fuel. Roads are shit’ (29); ‘roads. Insurances. Rates and rego’ (30); ‘fuel costs. Freight rates. Registration’ (31); ‘cost of fuel, insurance and registration. Slow payments. Get ripped off when you do get paid. Sometimes the money goes through 3 or 4 sets of hands before it gets to you and each bloke gets a cop’ (32); ‘freight rates (late payments). Fuel. Road conditions’ (33); ‘fuel costs. Low rates and late payments. Road conditions’ (34); ‘lack of money. Hours worked. Road conditions’ (35); ‘log books. Rates. Police harassment’ (36); ‘rates. Suitably skilled labour. Govt statutory charges including taxes’ (39); ‘under pay. Over worked. No assistance’ (40); ‘rates’ (42); ‘rates too low. Fuel and costs are too high. Slow payments. Modern roads are a problem as nothing to keep you awake’ (43); ‘rates. Roads. Slow payments’ (44); ‘rising costs. Slow and non-payers. Long hours’ (45); ‘getting money in from freight forwarders. Rates. Bureaucracy’ (47); ‘negotiating with the large companies for the correct rate. Over taxation of all types from state and federal governments, includes road tax. Pressure for delivery: pressure on whole industry due to the competitive nature of road transport’ (48); ‘not enough money – work too much for less money. Bank stress’ (51); ‘get sick of doing it’ (52); ‘log books. Bad payers. RTA’ (54); ‘low rates. Fuel prices. Tyre prices’ (56); ‘money. Long hours. Money’ (57); ‘waiting 10 weeks for payment; to survive in this industry you have to have 6 months money in hand. Govt. interference – pick on trucks and I haven’t got time to go to
court and fight them. Rates haven’t increased since 84’ (59); ‘freight rates too low. Fuel expenses. Harassment by the law’ (60); ‘costs are outweighing the earnings. Lack of mateship – gone because of conditions of industry and competition and you can’t trust the person beside you anymore. Irregularity of costs eg fuel’ (61); ‘bit quiet; not enough work. Fuel prices. Everything has gone up; tyres, repairs, labour’ (89); ’RTA and logbook rules. Poor parking and toilet facilities on highways’ (96); ‘rates. Fuel costs. Too many young people in the industry who have never been taught properly’ (100); ‘road conditions. Long hours. RTA inexperienced in the trucking industry; especially younger RTA staff’ (104); ‘never home. Not enough money to not be able to work so long and hard. Being by myself while driving’ (105); ‘lack of co-operation of management. Arseholes who drive out in front of you while you’re trying to stop at lights’ (109); ‘price of diesel not controlled; one week it’s 70c and next week it’s 90c. Payments too slow. Roads are not up to it’ (115); ‘price of diesel too high. Registration costs. Roads not up to standard. Older people/retirees travelling from Victoria to Queensland for the winter break with caravans. They’re not capable of driving them properly’ (116 – on Newell h’way); ‘not enough money. Too many hours. Not enough time for delivery/unrealistic time slots’ (123); ‘lack of remuneration for the work we do. Tax on the fuel; for every 5km we do the federal govt. gets 90c. Then they hit us with income tax and company tax so we’re the highest taxed group of people in the country. Inconsistency in log book rules, especially front of log book is ambiguous’ (126); ‘lack of money – not paid what you’re worth. Purpose of log books is just for revenue. I would never ever become a police witness again because of a bad experience after tried to do the right thing’ (127); ‘payment system should be 14 days or less with everyone. All loading agents should be licensed on a federal system. All trucks should be licensed on a federal system’ (130); ‘RTA rules always difficult (fines). Fuel prices. Roads’ (138); ‘not getting paid quick enough. Fuel and tyres too dear. Police and RTA harass us too much’ (139); ‘road conditions. Freight rates too low. Public’s perception of transport industry’ (140); ‘none - money is there – just got my job to do. Owner/drivers their own worst enemy: the owners more than the drivers. Roads want fixing up a fair bit’ (151); ‘the leftovers after you pay for fuel etc. Late payers and non-payers. No forum for an owner/driver to speak – no one in authority to talk to about the problems’ (158); ‘slow traffic; should be minimum speed limit. Need more overtaking lanes’ (161); ‘freight rates are not good enough for the price of fuel etc’ (163); ‘too many hours. The money isn’t good enough for the work you do. Too competitive now’ (164); ‘price of fuel. Dusty roads. Impatient drivers’ (166); ‘loads unorganised by management allocations. Bad roads. Revenue collectors: rego, insurances too dear’ (177); ‘price of diesel. Larger companies cutting rates. Poor condition of roads’ (178); ‘cost of fuel. Rego is too high. Too many hours you have to work’ (185); ‘lot of people think you are just a truck driver eg just jerk you around. People you employ to do a job, at least they should be able to do what they said they can’ (190); ‘rates, but always been a problem’ (191); ‘contractor I work for – arrogant pig. Weather – either stinking hot or raining eg put off yesterday as freezing as out in the elements all the time [snowing in area previous day]. Rough/poor roads’ (192); ‘shocking roads. Price of fuel’ (194); ‘loading and unloading is very slow eg grain, and can’t go to sleep. Lack of toilet facilities at loading/unloading. Big fluctuations in diesel prices. Some rules that apply in Queensland (eg 3 trailers), but not in NSW’ (208); ‘not enough parking bays and bad access in NSW and Qld (Victoria is good on the Hume);
should be a uniform distance between them eg every 20km. Should pay us waiting time for loading/unloading. Not enough publicity to the public or awareness of a heavy vehicle eg on a roundabout’ (209); ‘cost of fuel. Young truck drivers who are inexperienced are a big problem. Educate car drivers in what truck drivers have to go through’ (224); ‘fuel prices. Low freight rates. Having to spend too much time at work trying to make a living’ (226); ‘getting work when you’re a subcontractor. Price of diesel. Cost of insurances’ (227); ‘always changing invoices. Rates. Communication with [named place]’ (229); ‘cheap freight rates. Too many decisions made by people outside the industry eg politicians who dictate what they want and they are not concerned with safety – only with dollars. Not allowed to stop on the freeway and yet they tell you to stop each two hours’ (232); ‘getting freight payments on time. Govt. lack of understanding of industry. Mismanagement of funds for road repair’ (238); ‘paying the bills. Lack of understanding by general public and govt. Banks have no leeway or understanding of system’ (240); ‘price of fuel too high and registration too high. Can’t get a raise on the rates for last 11 years although everything else goes up. Meals are too dear in the roadhouses’ (244); ‘cost of fuel and tyres. Payment rates too low. Start cutting corners’ (245); ‘deadlines. Price of fuel. Usually having to wait for a month to get paid’ (250); ‘fuel prices. Slow payers. Time slots and trying to meet them’ (251); ‘not enough pay for job. Need minimum rate of pay’ (254); ‘transport chasing you eg overloaded. Bad payers – I lost a few’ (255); ‘high fuel costs. The way the log books are set up is stupid’ (256); ‘getting paid. Low rates’ (258); ‘lack of quality drivers. Over-regulation in the industry. Ignorance of business practice amongst truck drivers’ (259); ‘employing good staff. The hours we have to work eg night and morning’ (261); ‘big companies under-cutting. 60 or 90 day payment delays is way too long; our payments have to be made each month so so should theirs. Lack of car driver education on how to drive with trucks’ (264); ‘big companies under-cutting. Safety Cam is a lot of shit’ (265); ‘overworked and underpaid. Changing flat tyres. Getting paid – fighting for your money’ (266); ‘freight payments too low. Time at the wheel. Cost of replacement parts’ (269); ‘rates are too low. Too much over-nighting on long distance. Attitude of car and truck drivers’ (270); ‘people never satisfied with the quantity of stuff you put on. Lot of people dissatisfied with what you charge. Some car drivers are very intolerant of trucks’ (271); ‘money shortage as freight rates are terrible. Rising costs. Lack of education of car drivers concerning trucks’ (278); ‘being smart enough to outsmart the other bastard and stay in front’ (283); ‘too much pressure put on drivers through their company. Meeting deadlines. Some of the roads want a good look at, especially up the coast (NSW): some holes 2 foot deep along the edge’ (285); ‘money – the rates are not good enough. Fuel costs and general running costs. Not home often enough’ (291); ‘lack of money – the rates are so lousy we are working for $1 a tonne less than 10 years ago. So have to work ridiculous hours to pay for the equipment the companies want us to run. In fatigue mode most of your life as a result’ (293); ‘rates are too low. Govt. telling me how to run my business eg log books. Car drivers – they cut me off and overtake on double white lines and bends. Driving too slow in middle lane on freeway’ (294); ‘underpaid for the work we do. Over-regulated by the police and RTA re pulling you up for log books - I’ve never seen an accident caused by a log book yet. Fuel increases’ (295); ‘need a fair days pay for a massive amount of work. The multi-nationals expect the impossible. All time slots should be banned as they are making you break the law’ (296);
and ‘lack of money/freight rate. Multi-nationals have absolutely no responsibility to the industry. We have to work longer hours to make the same amount of money we used to get years ago for shorter hours’ (297).

**Small fleet drivers:** ‘not enough time to get job done. Always waiting for a load. Conditions of the bloody roads’ (1); ‘delivery around town’ (4); ‘road conditions causing stress and fatigue. Stupid laws on driving hours’ (6); ‘not enough money. Govt. stopping you from doing the job: GST is going to break the industry. Revenue hunting by police’ (18); ‘underpaid. Timeslots: get out of Sydney 10pm and have to be in Melbourne by 7am – 9 hours. Always stressed out as always on the go’ (22); ‘meeting the required times. State the roads are in. The price of living on the road; got to keep the equivalent of two houses going’ (26); ‘time slots. Car drivers’ (49); ‘other drivers’ (55); ‘none’ (62,65); ‘lack of money. Changing drivers at stops eg at Ballina or the Sydney to Brisbane run. Lack of loyalty from the boss’ (63); ‘lack of time off. Trip times are unrealistic. 100km speed limit is dangerous – should be higher limit; should be 10km higher for trucks than cars’ (64); ‘foreman gives me the shits. Roads bad. Rates bad’ (66); ‘RTA. Police. Speed limiters – they are dangerous. When you go past someone and they don’t let you back in again and you’ve lost the speed to go past them’ (82); ‘pay low. Hours you’ve got to work. Law: log books – you can’t keep them legal. Attitude of the coppers’ (84); ‘hours you have to do’ (85); ‘falling asleep. Taking too long to load trucks. Not enough pay’ (87); ‘cost of fuel is putting pressure on everyone. Camaraderie of industry has gone due to the pressures. Lack of education for car drivers, motor bike and taxi drivers. Lot of them never sat in a truck in their lives’ (88); ‘fuel is too dear. Living away expenses are getting dear. Pay too much tax’ (92); ‘managment; no proper management; no organising skills eg walked up to me 3pm this afternoon in Melbourne and asked me to come up here [interviewed on Hume h’way]. Should have done that at 8am to give time to organise things’ (94); ‘trip times have been shortened. Management do not have any people skills. Loading and unloading times’ (98); ‘harassment from RTA. Lack of sleep/not enough time at home. Under paid’ (99); ‘going to unionised yards and sit around half the day to get loaded and unloaded. Dealing with motorists’ (101); ‘change of directions in job from operations manager. Using different and unfamiliar vehicles all the time. Non-understanding of other motorists of handling heavy vehicles’ (102); ‘not enough rest time between trips so get very lethargic as get in, unload, reload, and out again that night. Not enough maintenance on trucks; no time for it. Other truck drivers as they are in same boat: fuel, pushed to get in, and not fully aware’ (103); ‘bad roads in NSW. Car drivers not respecting you eg pulling out in front of you, or pulling up without giving you enough time’ (110); ‘not enough money. Not enough rest. Education of motorists not good enough, especially city drivers when they get out on the road’ (111); ‘rates too low. Not sufficient rest periods. Police and RTA harassment’ (114); ‘fuel and rego costs for owner/drivers. Lack of parking bays in some places. Some car drivers are not aware of room we need sometimes especially at roundabouts’ (117); ‘need better roads. Price of stuff for maintenance has to come down. Need higher payment rates for owner/drivers’ (124); ‘rates too low. Too much rate-cutting in the grain industry to get jobs. Time spent sitting around waiting to load and unload’ (125); ‘not enough hours in the day. Not enough pay. Poor food in truck stops/costs too much to eat through the week’ (131); ‘driving when your log book tells you – you can be dead tired but you’ve got
to go. Should never be a backload: get $1,200 Melbourne/Sydney but $600 to go back’ (132); ‘getting out late. RTA. Wages’ (133); ‘making times. Wages have dropped: earning $100 less a week than 15 years ago’ (134); ‘public demand things overnight and therefore put the pressure on the drivers to go for it. Loading agents are unscrupulous and don’t care how you get there so long as you get there and then the boss won’t get paid for it for at least 90 days. Inexperienced car, bus and truck drivers’ (135); ‘govt. regulation. Time it takes for loading and unloading. Harassment from authorities’ (136); ‘rates too low. Harassment by the RTA and coppers, mainly with these safety cameras. You don’t get paid for what you do’ (137); ‘no management comprehension of what goes on; what they want you to do or don’t want to know. Cold stores where you deliver to; they think you are their [property]. They don’t give a stuff about you or about your booking time. Talk of police and RTA harassment but I’ve been lucky’ (141); ‘log book hours and way set out. Lot of police are good, but do tend to raise a lot of revenue. If there’s a revenue hunt on there’s no holds barred. Time to get from point A to point B’ (142); ‘RTA. Log books. Cameras’ (145); ‘lack of drugs and lack of sleep. No life. Cameras and log books’ (147); ‘law enforcement harassment – every trip I’ve got a ticket (not for speeding). Time slots for deliveries. Conditions on the roads’ (148); ‘under paid. Not enough sleep!!!’ (149); ‘too many work hours. Being away from home so much’ (153); ‘lack of communication between customers and operations people. Driving hours are too short. Whole industry needs to be changed. You only get 12 points to lasts you for 3 years, but taxi drivers get 24’ (154); ‘govt. cameras as they cause more fatigue. speed limiters are dangerous: after 100k you’ve lost control over your accelerator. Time schedules’ (155); ‘long hours. Time away from home. Hassles with the law: we’re used as revenue raising outfit’ (156); ‘with B/doubles they tend to leave them last to load which means you don’t get as much sleep as you could. Log books: the way they work your 12 hours driving is calculated from when you first pull up and not from midnight to midnight. Time slots for unloading’ (157); ‘price of fuel. Poor roads’ (165); ‘lack of sleep’ (167); ‘bad roads – not good for B/doubles. Car drivers don’t realise the size of trucks and sneak up on inside of you and try and pass’ (171); ‘not enough money. Time slots – they load you too late and give you an unreal time to get there’ (172); ‘overworked. Not enough money for the hours put in’ (174); ‘time to get deliveries done. Parking in town main street to do deliveries – often have to double-park. Turning left at traffic lights and pedestrians walking on red lights and change and you’re stuck’ (176); ‘industry bosses are the biggest problem; pushing drivers and breaking all the rules. Amount of hate between truck drivers, coppers and RTA, plus car drivers. Road conditions and not enough parking bays’ (179); ‘not enough money. Log book times – not enough time to do your job. Driving hours not long enough eg a taxi driver has 14 points in Melbourne and we’ve got 12’ (183); ‘log book hours – not long enough. Pay not enough’ (184); ‘constant driving pressure. People other than drivers make deadlines instead of asking me. Nuisances on road: car and truck drivers but mainly taxi’s’ (188); ‘people hold you up and think you’ve got all week and expect you to move around in impossible places. Arrogance of people in an office who treat you like a piece of shit. Sometimes when I was a subcontractor a lot of problems getting paid’ (189); ‘expectations of contractor and customers. Working conditions: weather, load’ (193); ‘cartage rates not good enough. Truck drivers work longer hours because rates not good enough. Not enough time at home – away 6 days a week sometimes. A lot of wives can’t get used to it’ (195);
'inconsistency of work – can sit around drinking coffee and all of a sudden you are flat out. Idiot bosses that don’t know what they are doing. Morons on road in cars who don’t know the capabilities of trucks’ (206); ‘long hours. Freight rates. Fuel costs’ (207); ‘boredom on the highway. Trying to get in and out of places that are too narrow when loading/unloading. Ignorance of car drivers – not knowing the size of trucks, chopping lanes, and stopping and pulling up in front of you’ (211); ‘freight rates aren’t right. Log books tell you when you’re tired; anyone with any sense knows when they’re tired and need a break. Company is just push, push, push. Police and revenue raising: they look at trucks as a soft touch. We’re getting knocked for 105km at 3am on an expressway to pay for the Olympics – it’s definitely not going back into the roads’ (213); ‘inconsiderate/uneducated car drivers. When we subcontract freight, the waiting around – especially groceries – and the non-existent time slots. Law enforcement officers: everyone of them has a different interpretation of log books’ (214); ‘shortage of freight. Non-existent time slots. When you subcontract freight, excessive deliveries they expect you to do’ (215); ‘speed limiters. Getting rid of soft drugs like Duromine which means if I’m ratshit I’ve got to get some heavy shit which I don’t really like. No education for car drivers’ (216); ‘owner/drivers getting a hard deal; not getting paid properly. Some car drivers eg cutting you off’ (219); ‘too many pick-up and drops. Getting held up loading and unloading. Roads are atrocious’ (220); ‘wet weather and so hard to load the trucks. Auction houses – getting in to get your cars you lose a lot of time’ (222); ‘lot of the blokes are pushed too hard. Rates are too low. Cost of fuel’ (225); ‘RTA are not realistic in the way they go about things. Employers pushing too hard. Traffic; cars mainly’ (228); ‘rates too low’ (230); ‘freight costs. Long hours. Everyday hassles with traffic, RTA, police’ (233); ‘too much pushing all the time from the milk factories. Too much cut pricing/cutting other people’s throats; some carting for nothing. Cost of trucks and fuel going up but rates going down’ (234); ‘long hours. Vehicles average. Maintenance on vehicles’ (236); ‘getting unloaded/waiting around. Traffic. Road conditions; they let them go too far before they fix them’ (237); ‘communication. Lack of understanding by everyone’ (239); ‘too many hours. Loading and unloading and trying to get into places. Traffic’ (242); ‘varied hours. Rate of pay for some people. Schedules are too tight; sometimes fellows are given unrealistic times’ (243); ‘no respect from motorists. Car drivers not being taught properly by driving school eg to deal with trucks. The road rules not being taught properly’ (246); ‘putting up with people in cars on highways. Not enough time off; got to get there and drive. Do too many hours for the amount of money you get’ (247); ‘a fellow workmate. Lack of communication between boss and drivers. Not getting loads out early’ (249); ‘other drivers jumping the queue in-line for loading’ (252); ‘rates. Lack of understanding for heavy vehicles between cars. New England highway in bad need of repair. Demerit points unfair for professional drivers - earn the right for extra points on licence given amount of hours spent on road each week’ (253); ‘loading and unloading by drivers – company should do it. Time slots – need to better’ (262); ‘the rates are too low’ (262); ‘RTA. Poor roads. Log books – a revenue raiser’ (267); ‘lack of communication between the agents and bosses’ (275); ‘crazy driving hours in 24 hour period. Shocking road conditions. Uncaring attitudes of freight forwarders and receivers’ (276); ‘go, go, go all the time and overnighting. Some places they are screaming with loads and overnighting where you shouldn’t be and it makes it hard with your log book. Don’t get paid enough’ (280); ‘attitudes of bosses. Owner/driver industry
– it’s too tough on them. Fuel’ (284); ‘big companies screwing the little companies and forcing them to break the laws so they look good. Tourists with caravans who don’t know what they are doing. Poor conditions of the bloody highways’ (286 – on New England h’way); ‘hours we are doing. Poor signage on roads eg at T-junctions too late. Attitude and ignorance of car drivers; the way they cut in in front of you and pull up’ (288); ‘competition for work’ (290); ‘lack of control over rates in the industry’ (292); ‘things are getting pretty tight for employers. Not enough appreciation from car drivers. Not enough time off’ (298); bigger companies put the thumb on smaller companies/subcontractors. Fuel costs. ‘Car drivers need more education on trucks’ (299); and ‘road conditions. Other traffic. Management decisions’ (300).

**Large fleet drivers:** ‘NSW police dept in the interests of revenue collection and not truck safety. RTA just hound you and check you every damn trip. Distance cameras and the times between cameras (some) are unrealistic so got to go too slow. Check your time between cameras’ (8); ‘management. Interpersonal relations. Equipment’ (9); ‘not enough money. Time away from home. Idiots on the road’ (10); ‘lack of communication between drivers. Not enough rest time’ (11); ‘away from home too much. All the goody-goodies in the industry are the worst offenders eg the ones with the safety signs on them’ (12); ‘scheduling. Treated like we don’t matter by our employers – they wouldn’t make a dog sleep under conditions like we have to. Money’ (13); ‘management. Conditions of the roads. Other drivers – tourist/terrorists’ (14); ‘we’re never home. They could pay a lot better. Road works’ (15); ‘none – bloke I work for is pretty good; you gets lots of rest; country people’ (17); ‘fatigue. Other road users, mostly cars, causing us trouble. Lack of money by companies to improve OHS. Rates are crazy’ (23); ‘motorists under-skilled’ (25); ‘freight rates. Road surfaces. Albury by-pass needs to be built’ (28); ‘customer demands. Time slots. Not much time at home’ (37); ‘drivers work too many hours for what they get – do your legal driving but then you’ve got to load and unload. Lot of bickering between drivers caused by bosses and competition in the industry’ (53); ‘no money in the job. Fuel costs. Low rates’ (58); ‘log book rules because they don’t let you manage your own fatigue’ (67); ‘lack of communication between driver and management’ (68); ‘putting up with cowboys on the road. State of highways – terrible’ (70); ‘who cares? No one’ (71); ‘waiting for next shuttle truck’ (72); ‘customer expectations are very high causing rate cutting and unnecessary tight deadlines; all to stay in business against company rivals’ (73); ‘long hours. Being away from home’ (75); ‘management. City traffic’ (77); ‘fatigue. Over-governed. RTA’ (79); ‘rough trucks’ (80); ‘regulated too strictly, including driving hours eg I’ve stopped here now because my time is up. But I’m ready to go on another hour or so’ (83); ‘companies pushing drivers to exceed safe working hours. Not repairing defective trucks. 12-hour shift one week and next week different 12 hour shift with only 1 day off to adjust your body clock. Not supplying essential equipment to do the job safely eg ladders to use instead of climbing over loads – it’s because of the expense’ (86); ‘not enough consecutive days off’ (90); ‘wages. Low horsepower of the truck. Long hours’ (93); ‘truck is a heap of garbage/unsafe. Attitude of the boss; not quick on getting repairs done. No phone in truck – a safety issue’ (95); ‘everyone wants everything in a hurry. General attitude to truck drivers by motorists. Too many inexperienced drivers in trucks’ (97); ‘I get paid to do my work and not others; but have to do their jobs myself. My time is my time and not work’s – but when it’s time to
go home they get me doing another job’ (106); ‘working every weekend. Never finish when it’s time to finish’ (107); ‘working for the government you just don’t get problems except for the bosses; all out to try to impress the other bosses’ (113); ‘the whole job is a problem – truck owners don’t take an interest in the job anymore. All the cameras; you can’t move – an inconvenience’ (118); ‘government. Price of fuel. Taxes’ (119); ‘taxes on vehicles and industry’ (120); ‘not enough driver hours. Over-zealous enforcement of the rules by authorities; they are costing us more time. Cameras: can’t drive when you should, and can’t sleep when you want’ (121); ‘log books too restrictive; designed for 12 hours driving time, 2 hours load/unload. Persecution by police of trucks but not cars; target us’ (122); ‘lack of sleep. I just try and work too much I suppose – run a farm at weekends’ (128); ‘lack of sleep. Maintenance is inadequate’ (129); ‘RTA are arseholes. I’ve a ticket out there to prove it. Road conditions on Newell highway. Warehouse waiting times’ (143); ‘RTA could be more sympathetic; coppers are the same. Food stores where you unload – the hold-ups can be 4 hours to unload; a big issue for a long time. You mightn’t be doing any work but still standing around. Poor roads’ (144); ‘running gear is shit (truck worn out). Bosses are useless as we don’t get paid on time’ (146); ‘RTA as they won’t leave you alone. If they can’t find anything wrong they pull you up to look for it. The clown trucks that do 130km hour. Food prices at truck stops are getting worse with GST coming in’ (152); ‘inexperience of boss’s son – just doesn’t know. Mechanics not doing what they should to keep vehicles in proper order and we’ve got to do it on the road. Tyres not changed soon enough’ (159); ‘speed limiters are dangerous, especially in a B/double. Rates need to go up for drivers’ km rate. Need to get paid for the hours you put in’ (160); ‘rate cutters. Too much petty bureaucracy’ (168); ‘long hours. Not enough money. Bad roads’ (169); ‘excessive work hours. Unpaid work hours. Company pushing to get back, reload, get going again’ (173); ‘log books: make you drive when you should be resting and rest when you feel like driving’ (175); ‘lack of parking bays for trucks on roads. Trying to work out B/double routes with the information given by RTA. Positioning of road signs – if you are trying to find somewhere eg coming off harbour bridge and there’s about 87 signs and none of them telling you where you are going’ (180); ‘wholly and solely against Safety Cams as they are more of a safety hazard than anything. Make you drive when you don’t want to drive. Hate log books as system doesn’t work. NSW roads a joke’ (181); ‘lack of freight. Condition of the roads. Driving laws: log book times’ (182); ‘car drivers. Road rage – especially NSW. Police/highway patrol trying to stitch you up all the time – revenue raising (only in NSW)’ (187); ‘long work hours. Too self-regulatory. Delivery deadlines’ (196); ‘need more training of drivers to relieve when on holidays. Getting weight right on truck and not over-loading. Servicing of vehicles not done on time’ (197); ‘subbies not getting paid the right money which forces them to do other things. Management inconsistencies. Three big companies joined together and harmony since then is a bit of a problem’ (198); ‘not getting freight out of depots on time. Waiting to be unloaded. Waiting for equipment to come out of workshop’ (199); ‘dangerous chemicals’ (200); ‘loading (time it takes)’ (201); ‘hours. Management with staff. Having no proper family time’ (202); ‘necessity to meet delivery times. Driver’s suggestions being ignored by management’ (203); ‘lack of sleep. Lack of respect from bosses. Lack of suitable equipment’ (204); ‘uncertainty of continuous work as we work under contracts. Companies under-cutting each other. Plus individual lousy drivers’ (205); ‘not home enough. Driving the log book hours – some days you can do 18
hours and some you’re tired. But you have to drive the log book hours’ (217); ‘company I work for is a contractor to a major retailer and the interaction between the two companies always results in conflict and inefficiencies eg my truck fits 16 pallets but load to Newcastle is only 10. Minimum rates in the industry’ (221); ‘rates too low. Should get paid for what we do’ (223); ‘deregulation’ (235); ‘not enough pay. Need better roads – some are disgusting’ (241); ‘not enough money. Police and RTA keep harassing you. Got to work long hours and cheat on the log books’ (248); ‘over-worked and under-paid’ (257); ‘being hounded by police. No liaison between management or workers; they don’t ring us. All women motorists – should be compulsory they wear short dresses so we have something to look at when they overtake us’ (260); ‘log books stop you sleeping: making the job worse. Car drivers don’t respect the size of trucks and when you’re pulling up at traffic lights they dart in. Overhead cameras are bad as they are forcing you to drive when tired to get in your times for next day’ (268); ‘supervisors who organise your loading sometimes don’t realise how long it takes and wonder why you’re late down the road. Attitude of car drivers – not educated on how to share the road with trucks; all road users. Not enough parking areas for trucks: need running water, some shade, toilets, and some sort of noise barrier between the road and parking area. They are pushing for us not to park in towns e.g. local residents so they need to have the parking bays. For example some Queensland drivers can’t even take their trucks home’ (272); ‘under paid and over-worked. Had a problem getting maintenance done on truck in past. Car drivers not aware of how long it takes you to pull up and cut you off’ (273); ‘some of our trucks need better maintenance and more power. Trucks need more power – not designed for B/double use. Management is usually consistent – what they require is not always the way it gets done’ (274); ‘car drivers who have no understanding of what a truck can or can’t do. Other whingeing truck drivers. Log book and Safety Cam regulations’ (277); ‘police and RTA bothering you. State of the roads. Rates of pay and what everybody is getting’ (279); ‘poor roads – takes a lot out of you. Depends on who you work for’ (281); ‘home time suitable to employees. Wages. Conditions’ (282); ‘general road ignorance by car and truck drivers. Condition of roads is shocking’ (287); and ‘hours. Money. Never home’ (289).

‘Other’ employment status drivers: ‘lack of money. Time schedules eg pick up freight in Sydney, say Monday, and have to be at [named store] in Adelaide Tuesday. They give you a time slot. Log books: 90% of drivers drive to a body clock and know when they are tired and pull up and sleep. But in NSW Safety Cam cameras force you to sleep when you’re not tired and when you can go again after your break you’re tired and you’ve got to drive’ (38); ‘uncertainty of hours; never know when you’re going to work. Makes it hard to rest up properly. Cars on roads – drivers ignorant of truck requirements’ (69); ‘management’ (76); ‘not enough pay. Not enough freight – not paid enough for it. Long working hours’ (112); ‘cars. Caravans. Obnoxious people’ (150); ‘traffic. Not enough money/rate for backloading too low’ (162); ‘prime contractors cutting rates. Police and RTA heavy handedness because trucks are an easy target. Average motorist doesn’t know how to work in with a truck’ (186); ‘major companies under-cutting and not paying right. Deadlines. RTA out to screw you’ (210); ‘communication eg if changes in law/road rules nothing is coming down – a lot of confusion. Organisation of jobs. Some drivers are being made to do excessive hours’ (212); ‘long working hours. Laws and regulations eg
log books. *Times to get out of places/loading times* (218); and *police and RTA. Road conditions* (231).
Appendix 4
Changes in payment levels since 1990 identified by 300 interviewed truck drivers

A summary of this appendix appears as section 4.2 and Table 24 in the report. Each interviewee was asked ‘do you think payment levels are better or worse since 1990?’ There were two subsections listed to guide truck driver responses (a) for cartage rates; and (b) for payments and wages. The qualitative data are reproduced in full below, separated by employment status. As in the report, the number inserted in brackets after the quotations identifies interviewees. Because replies to the two sub-sections often overlapped, these have not been separated. However when a driver provided two distinctly different issues/answers, these probably relate to the two different sub-questions. A few drivers in each sub-group did not answer this question.

Owner/drivers: ‘cartage has gone down. Wages have gone up to buggery; for us it’s crap. Subbie and owner/driver money gone down’ (2); ‘got to cart more for less; worse’ (3); ‘Worse. Don’t make a living, just take what I need. The missus works and it’s her money keeps the house running’ (5); ‘worse. Pay myself and that’s worse too as if the rates are not good enough, you can’t pay yourself. You’ve just got to cut down’ (7); ‘not what it used to be. Wages are worse’ (16); ‘worse; shitty’ (19); ‘someone is making money out of it but it’s definitely not me’ (20); ‘worse; worse’ (21,27,29,30,33,35,36,39,40,42,51,56,57,227,240,250,265,278,296); ‘nothing wrong for me as I put my own price on. Definitely people who prostitute the business as they go in too cheap and ruin it for everyone’ (24); ‘all gone bad. All gone bad’ (31); ‘worse. Not too bad on a km rate’ (32); ‘worse. Worse, haven’t had a rate rise in 35 years’ (34); ‘less. Less’ (41); ‘still the same; no increase for 15 years. No better, worse’ (43); ‘worse. Wages haven’t gone up’ (44); ‘are worse. Very slow in coming’ (45); ‘worse. Slight increase’ (47); ‘gone down. All gone to government taxation, excise etc’ (48); ‘worse’ (50); ‘worse. I just pay myself, but worse’ (52); ‘worse every day. In the last [months], since last November just going downhill’ (54); ‘about the same but costs have gone up 18-20%’ (59); ‘haven’t changed. Delayed a bit more than what they used to be’ (60); ‘rates haven’t changed in 10 years. Wages haven’t changed for owner/drivers, but the company drivers have increased rates but haven’t handed that on’ (61); ‘worse. Same rate; hasn’t changed at all; hasn’t gone up’ (89); ‘worse. Average’ (96); ‘worse. Less money now than 20 years ago. Worse’ (100); ‘a barter system: only the biggest and best survive. Shocking’ (104); ‘never have been paid this way. Better but worse in inflation terms’ (105); ‘much less; shocking. We get paid by the book and now they are being undercut. The 4 big fellows (companies) walk in and do a job for a dollar profit’ (109); ‘terrible. Just draw what I want to draw; if doing it a bit tough one week don’t draw so much’ (115); ‘worse. Hasn’t varied for 18 years and always been good but that’s only me personally’ (116); ‘hasn’t got any better. Hasn’t got any better for me; not quicker payments’ (123); ‘no movement whatsoever. Wages have crept up 4c km’ (126); ‘getting worse all the time. Hardly any movement’ (127); ‘very unreliable. Some jobs you wouldn’t know you’d get paid for, but eventually you do but it’s too late. Drivers it is better, but not for owners’ (130); ‘worse. No change’ (138); ‘worse. Same’ (139); ‘worse. On average okay’ (140); ‘everything has gone up a lot, but company allow me 3c a litre more to cover me. My rate is reviewed

OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey
every 6 months and that's the way it should be’ (151); ‘up to 15 years ago 1/3 of income would go on fuel, 1/3 on maintenance, and 1/3 for family and home to live. Now your fuel is more than half; the maintenance is up. So now instead of 30% we’re trying to keep a family on 10%, which leads to new problems on the roads. We’ve got to do more. Before 300,000 was enough; not got to earn an extra 100,000 to make a bigger 10%. That leads to more and more and more road accidents’ (158); ‘similar. Similar’ (161); ‘worse. I always get paid’ (163); ‘much worse. Much worse’ (164); ‘better. Better and better; they are over-paying me’ (166); ‘better than ever. Alright’ (170); ‘better, but could be better than it is. They are fair’ (177); ‘should be better. Alright’ (178); ‘up a bit, but price of fuel has gone up. Little bit better’ (185); ‘can’t answer. Can’t answer – haven’t been in it that long’ (190); ‘same. Better than ever before as I get more hours now’ (191); ‘worse. Improved’ (192); ‘couldn’t answer. About the same, but bills keep going up eg fuel’ (194); ‘worse; rates haven’t gone up but the expenses have. Worse’ (208); ‘rates haven’t gone up in 5 or 6 years and absorbing $300 more a round trip in fuel Brisbane/Sydney than 6 years ago. Worse’ (209); ‘worse. Same’ (224); ‘no better. No better, if anything gone backwards as your running costs are going up all the time’ (226); ‘worse. Worse in perspective’ (232); ‘worse. Payments worse – wages better’ (238); ‘same, nothing going up. Worthless’ (244); ‘completely down. Don’t take any wages if you’re an owner/driver’ (245); ‘haven’t changed: some have gone down. Still the same: 14 days to 90 days to pay you’ (251); ‘worse’ (254); ‘no idea. Better now’ (255); ‘haven’t changed. Still the same’ (256); ‘on a par. Not getting any better’ (258); ‘worse. Wages are higher but payments are slower’ (259); ‘no problems. No problem’ (261); ‘worse. Worse – a hell of a lot worse’ (264); ‘much worse. Always waiting for your money; can’t get paid’ (266); ‘worse. Average’ (269); ‘worse. Worse – if freight doesn’t go up, you can’t pay a driver more money’ (270); ‘not altered/worse. Pay myself a pretty low wage’ (271); ‘no different. No different’ (283); ‘no better; the same price virtually. Have to pay more or they wouldn’t have anyone’ (285); ‘down – carting fertiliser for $28 tonne and 15 years ago got $28 tonne for the same area. Don’t work for people who don’t pay me’ (291); ‘bloody lousy. We’re not getting the money, we are only existing. Since diesel went up it costs me at the end of the month an extra $1,500 per month per truck’ (293); ‘worse, worse in large letters. Terrible – gross’ (294); ‘worse. Worse – there is none – we’ve lost them now. I’m $1,500 a month worse off than 7 months ago because of the fuel increase’ (295); and ‘absolutely terrible. They only pay you enough to keep you operational’ (297).

Small fleet drivers: ‘rates are worse; price of fuel goes up and rates go down. Don’t work for anyone who doesn’t pay right’ (1); ‘not getting any better. Still expected to do a lot for nothing’ (4); ‘haven’t gone up in 35 years; gone backwards. Don’t know; I’m getting enough. Can’t earn too much or I’ll have to pay tax. I’m sick of the bastards (from when I had the company); rules and registrations are crap’ (6); ‘still carting for the same price as 13 years ago, haven’t changed for 13 years and may be worse. We cart out of Melbourne for $1,400, get $700 to come back same mileage. Why?’ (18); ‘worse, cartage rates aren’t enough. Worse; I made more back in 1984-86 than I do now’ (22); ‘worse, carting for same price as carting for in 1973. Worse’ (26); ‘worse. Worse’ (49, 55, 62, 82, 101, 114, 124, 131, 132, 136, 141, 145, 153, 155, 172, 174, 207, 213, 225, 228, 237, 239, 284); ‘bit hard to say as only in industry for short time’ (63); ‘worse – fuel and costs keep going up yet get screwed on rates by large companies. Worse; rates don’t keep up with
the costs of things’ (64); ‘better. Better’ (65); ‘worse. Last 18 months on wages and they’re bloody shocking’ (66); ‘haven’t improved. Still on same money as 5 or 10 years ago; only difference is the CPI’ (84); ‘same. Same’ (85); ‘bugger all; it’s all wrong. Cartage rates $1,200 Melbourne to Sydney and back only $850. Should be the same both ways. Better’ (87); ‘worse. Worse now – coming out of Adelaide for $500 to Melbourne – ridiculous. Wouldn’t even pay your fuel load’ (88); ‘gone up’ (91); ‘worse. I don’t have any problems but a lot of people do’ (92); ‘gone backwards. Stagnated: all living and operating costs gone up but everything has stagnated’ (94); ‘up but lost because of higher tax bracket’ (98); ‘worse. Heaps worse’ (99); ‘about the same. Not a lot better, but not worse’ (102); ‘I owned my own trucks in 1984 and sold out. Cartage rate has gone up by about 30% in 15 years; not real good when truck has gone up about 300% and trailers about 700%. Hasn’t changed: $600 in 1975; in 2000 today have $650’ (103); ‘no different. No’ (108); ‘don’t know. A lot of blokes get paid not real good, but I get paid good and can’t complain’ (110); ‘worse – fuel’s gone up, tyres, everything has gone up. Worse; same with own living, everything has gone up’ (111); ‘worse. About average; just that everything else is going up’ (117); ‘worse. For the hours you do it’s not enough’ (125); ‘don’t go up, only go down. Haven’t improved’ (133); ‘exactly same; haven’t changed. Less’ (134); ‘worse - haven’t gone up, they’ve gone down. Worse - haven’t gone up they’ve gone down’ (135); ‘worse. Worse – gone up but not enough’ (137); ‘worse. Haven’t been too bad. Our mob have to belong to a timber association and they watch what our company do. Timber association says they pay 2c km more and has to go to drivers – whatever rises come in we get straight away’ (142); ‘definitely worse. Worse’ (147); ‘well below; haven’t had a pay rise for years. Blokes still on 28% which is really 20c a km’ (148); ‘haven’t changed. Gone from trip money to km driven plus we get paid for loading and unloading’ (154); ‘worse, far worse. Only basic: you can’t ask your employer for more money if he’s not making any’ (156); ‘couldn’t say as wasn’t in the industry’ (157); ‘gone to shithouse; costs gone through the roof and freight rates haven’t gone up at all. Wages are pretty ordinary’ (165); ‘couldn’t say’ (167); ‘don’t know much about it. Could be better’ (171); ‘better. Worse’ (176); ‘ridiculous; no better at all; all the under-cutting that goes on. Under ‘Team 200’ scheme - a QA thing you have to be in stopping under-cutting and making wages more equal. It’s helping’ (179); ‘worse. Worse – haven’t gone up’ (183); ‘yes – worse. Yes – worse’ (184); ‘can’t say as changed from chemicals to general goods. Prior to this I was earning a lot more money’ (188); ‘worse. Proportionately no better’ (189); ‘wouldn’t know. Had a lot of jobs; all varies; this is an average point’ (193); ‘worse. Wages no worse, but certainly no better’ (195); ‘couldn’t answer. Wages are better, but I’m still overworked and underpaid’ (206); ‘worse/lower. Wages haven’t gone up with the price index’ (211); ‘up the shit. I couldn’t work for a better boss’ (214); ‘up the poor – worse. I’m more than happy’ (215); ‘down. About the same’ (216); ‘terrible. I’ve never had any problems with my boss’ (219); ‘haven’t gone up; if anything they have gone down. Gone up slightly but not enough’ (220); ‘gone down. Not sure’ (222); ‘can’t answer’ (230); ‘a problem – worse. I’m on a pretty good wicket’ (233); ‘worse. Not much better’ (234); ‘not real good. Probably better’ (236); ‘worse. Average’ (242,280); ‘worse. Up a fair bit, but I get looked after fairly well’ (243); ‘down severely. Depends on who you work for’ (246); ‘haven’t changed. A bit better’ (247); ‘don’t know. Don’t know’ (249); ‘about the same. A bit better’ (252); ‘worse; have not gone up to cover inflation. If owner does not receive rate increase he
cannot pass on to his driver’ (253); ‘basically the same. Haven’t changed’ (262); ‘worse. Mine are pretty good’ (263); ‘payment levels have gone down. All virtually gone down’ (267); ‘still the same/haven’t altered. Can’t go any better because of price of freight’ (275); ‘don’t know. Not enough for the work I do’ (276); ‘worse. Better’ (286); ‘worse; payments are slow eg 90 and 120 day accounts. My wages are okay’ (288); ‘don’t know. Don’t know’ (290); ‘worse. Worse because my wages are worked out on a %’ (292); ‘worse. Kept up reasonably well. I get paid $13.98 an hour for 8 hours. A girl in [named grocery supermarket] gets more per hour. But I’m responsible for $300,000 worth of equipment plus lives of public’ (298); ‘got worse. Same; but when I wanted to put on a school kid to help at Christmas that was going to cost $12.50 an hour, so didn’t’ (299); and ‘better’ (300).

Large fleet drivers: ‘dropped; more competitive for company. Wages better worldwide than in New Zealand or United States and I’ve worked in both these countries’ (8); ‘?’ (9); ‘might get a bit more since 1990, but twice as much work’ (10); ‘want a lot doing to them; too low; too many cut-throats in the industry. Always someone who will cart it cheaper; they don’t last long – go broke. Once they cut the rates can never get it back up again. Worst offenders are the big companies. [Wages] no problem’ (12); ‘worse; price of everything has gone up especially diesel but cartage rates aren’t matching the costs. Worse’ (13); ‘worse. Worse’ (14,23,58,70,113,120,121,146,182,196,199,223,260,281,282); ‘don’t know as wasn’t driving in 1990’ (15); ‘worse; going backwards. Could earn better money in the 70’s and 80’s than I can now; worse’ (17); ‘worse. Are better’ (25); ‘might be the same but everything else has gone up. Worse’ (28); ‘worse. Better’ (37,79); ‘worse. Worse, get less money now but I do a little bit less now too’ (53); ‘they are getting less today than 10 years ago. Wage gone up but costs have also gone up’ (67); ‘no idea. Better’ (68); ‘worse – cost of living increases’ (71); ‘worse’ (72,200,235); ‘shitfull. Ok for company employees’ (73); ‘same’ (74); ‘yes’ (75); ‘worse. Same’ (77); ‘B’ (80); ‘better’ (81); ‘haven’t changed. Hourly rate has gone up but km rate hasn’t changed for 9 years’ (83); ‘worse – it’s going backwards because of large companies under-cutting. Worse – direct result of cartage rates’ (86); ‘doesn’t affect us, but owner/drivers worse off than 1990. Wages are better. Owner/drivers are the ones doing it hard’ (90); ‘wages: I was getting more dollars when I started with the company 17 years ago than I’m getting now and I was only pulling 1 trailer then and now I’m pulling 2’ (93); ‘couldn’t answer. Slightly better’ (95); ‘no. Don’t really get paid for the hours you do’ (97); ‘don’t know. Better as keep going up every year’ (106); ‘still at school [driving school]’ (107 - aged 22-25); ‘don’t know. Little bit better’ (118); ‘worse – rates go up by 5% and costs go up by 50%; ridiculous. Worse – absolutely disgusting’ (119); ‘worse. In 15 years transport drivers have had 1 pay rise: 3c a km is all it’s gone up. Kids at [named fast-food outlet] earn more than us per hour’ (122); ‘haven’t gone up for years. Better now’ (128); ‘don’t know’ (129); ‘doesn’t affect me. Happy with rate’ (143); ‘worse. Get paid alright’ (144); ‘worse. I was earning just as much money in the late 70’s’ (152); ‘getting cheaper because of B/doubles. Probably a bit better’ (159); ‘payment on a par with cost of living. Price of everything has gone up’ (160); ‘worse. Worse – haven’t had a pay rise in 5 years’ (168); ‘worse. Same – haven’t gone up or down yet’ (169); ‘no better. No better as cost of living gone up’ (173); ‘worse. Under award better’ (175); ‘worse. Bloke we work for in fuel industry pays really good’ (180); ‘a disgrace. We’re in a pretty good spot, but
a different answer in most other places’ (181); ‘don’t know. About the same’ (187); ‘trying to cut them all the time. A little better’ (197); ‘gone down. Wages have gone up’ (198); ‘good’ (201); ‘yes’ (202); ‘worse. Depends on who you work for’ (203); ‘yes worse. Equivalent’ (204); ‘dropped. Wages are okay’ (205); ‘down. Same; haven’t really changed except got to do more miles’ (217); ‘don’t know. Higher but it’s all relative to the cost of living’ (221); ‘don’t know. Paying us just above the award so keeps the union out of the road’ (241); ‘haven’t altered. Don’t know but hasn’t changed much over last 10 years’ (248); ‘hasn’t changed. Hasn’t changed’ (257); ‘worse. Pretty good’ (268); ‘haven’t gone backwards; owner/drivers suffer a bit more. Not keeping up’ (272); ‘no better. No better: about the same money now as then’ (273); ‘we have nothing to do with that. Happy’ (274); ‘worse than ever been. My wages: I’m on the best money I’ve ever had’ (277); ‘worse. Pay alright’ (279); ‘way down. Around the same’ (287); and ‘no change. No change’ (289).

‘Other’ employment status drivers: ‘worse. Worse’ (38,162); ‘[wages] are great, better than working for a living’ (69); ‘worse: fuel, tyres, everything gone up. Worse’ (112); ‘no. No’ (158); ‘worse. I was making more money 6 years ago than what I do now’ (186); ‘worse, absolutely. Okay, but some companies don’t pay real well’ (210); ‘don’t know. Some drivers are making reasonable money’ (212); ‘worse. Same’ (218); and ‘worse. Worse: haven’t gone up with fuel prices’ (231).
Appendix 5
Changes in size of loads carried over past decade

A summary of this appendix appears as section 4.3 in the full report. Each truck driver was asked ‘do you think that the size and frequency of loads you carry have increased or decreased since 1990?’ One owner/driver, two large fleet, and one ‘other’ employment status drivers did not answer this question.

Owner/drivers: ‘increased. They are getting bigger and bigger and less trucks are getting on the roads’ (2); ‘increased. Trailers are getting longer. For every 2 B/doubles, one bloke misses out’ (3); ‘increased. We’ve got to work longer’ (5); ‘much the same’ (7,19,104,138,163,170,224,232,250,251,271,283); ‘definitely increased’ (16,227); ‘increased because trailer length has increased’ (20); ‘yes’ (21,39,42,238,254); ‘stayed the same for me. I just pick up new customers all the time’ (24); ‘doesn’t really apply to me’ (27); ‘trying to get more on to get more money out of you’ (29); ‘increased’ (30,31,33,34,35,36,40,41,43,44,45,50,51,57,100,109,115,140,151,158,166,177,178,190,208,209,259,261,264,269,278,285,294); ‘increased dramatically’ (32); ‘tonnage/truck increased’ (47); ‘size has increased. Bigger payloads and less profit’ (48,61,258,265,266,295); ‘not getting the loads I used to get’ (52); ‘decreased’ (54,139,191,192,240); ‘no’ (56,96,126); ‘gone up 15%. Got to go harder, faster and longer’ (59); ‘size of loads increased. Frequency – not quite as busy as it used to be’ (60); ‘increased a bit, but the rego has increased double’ (89); ‘increased as made our trucks bigger, so has to be’ (105); ‘no weight increase’ (116); ‘increased. Always trying to get more on you’ (123); ‘no. Only increase is an increase in weight’ (127); ‘n/a’ (161); ‘loads getting bigger’ (164); ‘everybody expects more to be carted for less money’ (185); ‘trucks always loaded to max. Legally to what truck carrying capacity is’ (194); ‘increased as trailer sizes have increased. So put more weight on’ (226); ‘weights are up so carry more’ (244); ‘carry more weight than 1990’ (245); ‘increased because trains don’t carry’ (255); ‘increased. Standard load used to be 22 tonne and now it’s 24. But rates haven’t gone up on a load rate basis’ (256); ‘same. I just do the one thing’ (270); ‘size the same. Can’t overload now’ (291); ‘size has decreased since [named company] has taken over all the freight’ (293); ‘increased as gone from 38 tonne to 42½ tonne gross’ (296); and ‘weights have increased all the time’ (297).

Small fleet drivers: ‘size wouldn’t have varied. Demand is greater so there is more trips’ (1); ‘increased’ (4,62,65,66,82,92,99,101,102,108,114,117,132,133,136,154,155,165,167,176,183,189,207,220,237,242,249,252,262,267,280); ‘loads are decreased. Number of jobs around decreased’ (6,94,148); ‘about the same’ (18,22,26,98,111,125,156,171,206,228,243,263,284); ‘?’ (46); ‘no’ (49,91,298,299); ‘increased, but pay has not’ (55,131); ‘bit hard to say. From what I’ve heard it’s gone down’ (63); ‘can’t generalise as everybody is different’ (64); ‘size increased as far as trailers go’ (84); ‘probably increased. Got a bit heavier’ (85); ‘probably decreased as we were allowed to carry over-height things before, but now we’re not’ (87); ‘frequency of loads is less. With new equipment can definitely get more on than used to’ (88); ‘increased because weight limit increased. 38 tonne in 1990; now allowed 43 tonne’ (103); ‘same. I can only take so much’ (110,141); ‘lot have decreased’ (124,145); ‘didn’t have B/doubles in 1990, so loads
have increased’ (134, 174, 211, 246, 292); ‘increased size’ (135); ‘increased because I drive a road train now instead of a single trailer’ (137); ‘yes size. Frequency – haven’t moved on’ (142); ‘been pretty good’ (147); ‘yes’ (149, 276); ‘about the same in furniture’ (153); ‘couldn’t answer’ (157, 193, 290); ‘about average’ (172, 236, 239); ‘increased. Not overweight but just as the company gets recognised and gets more work’ (179); ‘not driving long enough’ (184); ‘have increased over the past 10 months’ (188); ‘increased. Not so much size but frequency’ (195, 214, 215); ‘people want us to carry more on your truck for the same price’ (213); ‘still flat out. Makes no difference what year it is’ (216); ‘frequency of loads has decreased. Sometimes you might spend the night over in Sydney as there’s no freight coming out’ (219); ‘hasn’t changed. Always been 7 or 8 cars on’ (222); ‘standard size truck so it doesn’t vary’ (225); ‘can’t answer. Loads vary everyday’ (230); ‘increased over the last 12 months’ (233); ‘they will decrease after 1st July for milk with deregulation’ (234); ‘increased as now legal to carry 24 tonne’ (247); ‘size up; rates down’ (253); ‘the same with grain. Just fill them up’ (275); ‘decreased as you can’t overload as much anymore’ (286); ‘size has decreased’ (288); and ‘decreased load size and frequency of load’ (300).

**Large fleet drivers:** ‘increased because of configuration of vehicle. Used to carry 39 tonne and now 42½ tonne’ (8); ‘changes all the time’ (9); ‘don’t know’ (10); ‘have to increase I’d say’ (12); ‘increased’ (13, 14, 17, 23, 25, 28, 37, 53, 67, 70, 71, 75, 81, 83, 86, 90, 97, 113, 129, 143, 144, 146, 169, 173, 180, 181, 196, 200, 203, 205, 223, 248, 257, 272, 273, 279); ‘getting bigger’ (15, 93); ‘size has increased and money has decreased’ (58, 122); ‘stayed the same’ (68, 72, 118, 120, 159, 197, 221, 241, 260, 287); ‘yes’ (73, 74); ‘increased. More cars’ (77); ‘decreased’ (79, 175, 182, 187, 235, 281); ‘no’ (80, 168, 202); ‘about level/stable’ (95); ‘wouldn’t have a clue’ (106); ‘definite. Been an increase in the size and frequency with B/doubles – and for less money’ (119, 282, 289); ‘weights and trailer lengths have increased’ (121); ‘increased as can put more weight on’ (128); ‘decreased. Don’t have the pressure we used to have with this company. Some companies they do’ (152); ‘only with the introduction of B/doubles, but basically the same’ (160); ‘very different. Frequency stayed the same but weights have increased’ (198); ‘yes definitely’ (199); ‘varies to the season’ (201); ‘similar’ (204); ‘definitely increased. Gear’s got bigger’ (217); ‘increased a little bit’ (268); ‘definitely increased. Used to carry 40 cages and now carry 90 [transports mail]’ (274); and ‘frequency has increased’ (277).

**‘Other’ employment status drivers:** ‘increased as you’re allowed to get more tonnage on your truck’ (38); ‘can’t say’ (69); ‘yes’ (78); ‘same’ (112, 186, 218); ‘yes/no’ [yes to size; no to frequency] (150); ‘increased’ (162, 210); ‘doesn’t really affect us. Our company avoiding excessive loading’ (212); and ‘increased definitely since B/doubles came in’ (231).
Appendix 6

Relationship of injuries and crashes to longer working hours

A summary of this appendix appears as section 4.4 and Table 25 in the report. Each interviewee was asked ‘do you think injuries and crashes decrease or increase when you work longer hours?’ Very few failed to respond to this question. The qualitative data are reproduced in full below, separated by employment status.

**Owner/drivers:** 'just go slower and keep your wits about you. We know when to pull up' (2); 'you know when to pull up when you work longer hours' (3); 'got to increase haven’t they? Certainly doesn’t decrease' (5); 'much the same' (7); 'got to increase. That’s where driver fatigue starts, with waiting around for loads' (16); 'depends on the person. Some people can hack more hours and some can’t' (19); 'increase the more hours you work' (20); 'yes' (21,47,138); 'have to increase. Fatigue has got to have a big part in it' (24); 'increase' (27,30,31,33,35,36,40,45,50,51,60,96,109,115,140,224,229,238,254,296); 'have to get worse wouldn’t it?' (29); 'naturally increase. They call it fatigue now. All a bloke wants is a week off for a good sleep. Body’s run down' (32); 'increase; but I haven’t had any' (34); 'increase. Reduction in suitable low-impact drugs has caused increase’ (39); 'same' (41); 'no’ (42,56,294); 'government ruling: having to take a break when don’t feel like it. Forced to take 10 hours break when not necessary’ (43); 'lot more than there was on the old road’ (44 – interviewed on Hume highway); 'must increase’ (48,116); 'got to have a certain amount of sleep. If you keep going you’ve got to crash’ (52); 'yes increase. They’d have to if the driver works too long. Lot of people don’t know when to stop’ (54); 'does not affect it. If it is going to happen it will’ (57); ‘the longer you’re on the road the greater the chance. Taxi drivers have an average of 1 a year simply because of what they do. It’s like winning the lotto; the more you get the greater the chance. Once you get over 80 hours a week it increases exponentially’ (59); 'irrelevant; the longer you drive the more liable you are to having accidents’ (61); 'depends on yourself. When I’m tired I go to bed’ (89); 'crashes aren’t related to the amount of time you work’ (100); 'decrease as you want to pull over and go to sleep’ (104); 'if anybody works longer hours they push themselves further so it has to increase. Personally it hasn’t. I’ve never run off the road or had an accident’ (105); 'don’t make much difference’ (123); 'don’t know’ (126); 'if you go too far, you put yourself at increased risk’ (127); 'off course they’d increase’ (130); 'depends on how you manage yourself’ (139); 'definitely increase because a lot of them haven’t got the brains to pull up when they get tired’ (151); 'off course they do’ (158); 'probably increase’ (161); 'definitely got to increase’ (163); 'increase when get tired. You just can’t focus and you’re just not switched on’ (164); 'don’t work long hours’ (166); 'increase definitely’ (170); 'would increase. Because longer hours increase the risk’ (177); 'depends on your level of awareness and alertness’ (178); 'doesn’t matter’ (185); 'some people can get in a truck and do their hours no problem. Others have had it after a couple of hours’ (190); 'fatigue is a factor as mind starts to wander. 9/10 caused by inattention as in a daydream’ (191); 'definitely increase. Longer we’re on the job there’s more chance of us getting hurt’ (192); 'not a clue. Depends’ (194); 'increase because of fatigue. Because we’re not making enough money: because expenses have gone up and pay rates haven’t. We have to double the hours to survive or meet your commitments. So competitive and'}
everyone’s over-committed with their equipment’ (208); ‘increase. You’re not over-committed when you go in, but as fuel and expenses have gone up we have to find an extra $2,500 a month. So work longer hours’ (209); ‘lot of companies work their drivers very very hard. They get very little sleep and yet they have very little accidents. So, hard to say’ (226); ‘increase because of fatigue’ (227); ‘amount of hours don’t matter. A professional man does it all the time’ (232); ‘comes back to inexperience’ (240); ‘some days you feel you can do a lot. Others you just want to go to sleep’ (244); ‘naturally increase’ (245); ‘people get frustrated the longer they work’ (250); ‘haven’t had any. But longer hours would have to be contributing to it’ (251); ‘depends. I hated the pills and then they sleep on the wheel’ (255); ‘suppose they’d increase when you get tired. A lot of people don’t know when to stop’ (256); ‘doesn’t make much difference’ (258); ‘statistically they increase’ (259); ‘they increase as fatigue-related’ (261); ‘doesn’t change at all. It’s not so much pushing hard as the other cars; like the cars on the road who do the wrong thing’ (264); ‘on an average. You can feel good and drive but the Safety Cam is down the road so you can’t’ (265); ‘don’t know. Probably naturally have to increase’ (266); ‘increase because of stress and tiredness’ (269); ‘increase because of fatigue’ (270,278); ‘definitely increase because of fatigue’ (271); ‘try not to work longer hours’ (283); ‘increase because of driver fatigue’ (285); ‘don’t vary’ (291); ‘got to increase because of your fatigue condition. A lot of us know when to stop but there are situations where you can’t’ (293); ‘probably increase. Don’t really know’ (295); and ‘increase because of fatigue. It’s against all a human beings lifestyle to stay awake for 18 hours a day’ (297).

Small fleet drivers: ‘increase’ (1,22,49,62,65,91,108,111,114,124,132,149,154,167,171,172,176,189,230,236,253,276,286,300); ‘definitely increase if working longer hours. Some companies push their drivers to the limit, so something has to happen’ (4); ‘depends on your metabolism. Lot of these young blokes are taking drugs and doing a job to take them. They’re coming at you every night’ (6); ‘depends on the bloke. A lot of blokes don’t know when to pull up and have a nap’ (18); ‘depends. Some blokes can handle it and some can’t. Depends on the circumstances’ (26); ‘decrease’ (46); ‘depends on whether person involved are friendly’ (55); ‘no’ (63); ‘can’t generalise as everybody is different’ (64); ‘never had one’ (66); ‘if you work longer hours, more chance of you having an accident’ (82); ‘injuries definitely increase during longer hours. Because of fatigue’ (84); ‘probably increase’ (85); ‘don’t know. Hard to say’ (87); ‘off course the chances increase’ (88); ‘have to increase if you work longer hours as the risk increases’ (92); ‘always increase because you get tired. When you get tired your concentration lapses and when that lapses you end up asleep’ (94); ‘yes’ (98); ‘depends on the individual’ (99); ‘fatigue has got something to do with it, but not all’ (101); ‘don’t know’ (102,148,246,249,263); ‘don’t know. A lot of young fellows – early 20’s to 30’s - who don’t have the experience. When I started you got a little truck for experience and drove around. Now they are just given a truck and told to drive to Melbourne’ (103); ‘don’t know. Never had injuries from crashes’ (110); ‘increase. Depends on how you rest’ (117); ‘got to increase’ (125,156); ‘have to increase as you get too buggered’ (131); ‘the risks are always there.
The more you do, the more the risk’ (133); ‘the longer you are exposed, the more risk’ (134); ‘one of these goes over you’re going to get injured whether you’ve been working 1 hour or 10 hours. The longer you work the more likelihood of a crash. Young drivers in industry too inexperienced and use too many drugs. Most of them smoke pot and take powder’ (135); ‘doesn’t make any difference’ (136); ‘no difference. Accidents 90% stupidity’ (137); ‘got to increase when you work longer hours’ (141); ‘course they have to increase’ (142); ‘both’ (145); ‘have to increase’ (147); ‘increase. For sure’ (153); ‘depending on the person. No education regarding it. Should be an apprenticeship system for long-distance drivers. 2 years with an experienced driver’ (155); ‘definitely increase’ (157,174,188); ‘driver fatigue has a lot to do with crashes’ (165); ‘depends on the operator’ (179); ‘no change. Some guys would probably have a problem. When you’ve been in it that long you know when to stop’ (183); ‘no. Drive to survive’ (184); ‘sure there is going to be more accidents’ (193); ‘increase through fatigue; without a doubt’ (195); ‘increase as you’re getting tired and getting fatigued’ (206); ‘increase as longer hours means no time off and no chance to relax’ (207); ‘depends where working the longer hours and what happened prior to working. e.g. if you’ve had a good weekend with your family it’s fine. If you’ve had a blue you’re all cut up’ (211); ‘it’s a lot to do with the person. A lot is to do with management pushing them if they’re buggered but they still have to get there’ (213); ‘definitely increase. Related to the time-slot crap. Forces you to drive when you should be resting after hanging around for ½ day’ (214); ‘up to the individual. For example if he is stupid enough to drive out of hours, he is looking for a crash’ (215); ‘less chance of an accident if working longer hours as I have to be alert’ (216); ‘increase as you haven’t got the concentration you have when you’re fresh’ (219); ‘increase because you get worn out’ (220); ‘increase because of fatigue. Always passing trucks on the road who have gone over’ (222); ‘increase as you’re tired’ (225); ‘in some cases it increases, depending on the individual’ (228); ‘increase because of tiredness’ (233); ‘increase because too much rushing and pushing you’ (234); ‘increase through fatigue. Too many are pushing too hard. Not enough like me who say no and wait till tomorrow’ (237); ‘increase as human body has to have rest. If you don’t have your rest, can’t operate at full potential’ (239); ‘increase as lack of concentration’ (242); ‘increase as tiredness and fatigue’ (243); ‘increase as get more tired’ (247); ‘if you work longer hours, you get hurt more’ (252); ‘increase probably’ (262); ‘hours haven’t got anything to do with crashes’ (267); ‘more accidents happen when you work longer hours as you’re pooped/buggered/not thinking. Your mind wanders and ‘bang’ you do something silly’ (275); ‘increase because of fatigue mainly’ (280); ‘increase because a bit wheezy when you’re tired’ (284); ‘I work 140 hours a week and never had an accident in my life, or one I’ve caused. You’ve got to realise when you’ve got to pull up. I don’t really care if my boss tells me he’ll sack me if I don’t get there as no wife or kids. But you get a bloke with wife and kids and has to have his wages. The bosses know you can’t answer back’ (288); ‘increase as people get tired and lack of concentration’ (290); ‘increase the more tired you get’ (292); ‘increase because of lack of concentration’ (298); and ‘increase cause we have to do, to work, 14 hours. I can’t see any sense in it (fatigue management) because once your body wants you to shut down it doesn’t matter what courses you do. Your body tells you when it’s enough’ (299).
Large fleet drivers: ‘if you pace yourself you shouldn’t [have crashes]. A lot of the truck accidents are media-generated bullshit. Just got to pace yourself when you drive. Gone from a 12 hour system to a fatigue management system. So company is working us to the maximum of 14 hours’ (8); ‘increase’ (9,10,14,23,25,28,37,68,70,72,75,79,81,86,90,93,97, 106,113,128,129,173,200,203,221); ‘have to increase I’d say’ (12); ‘increase. It only stands to reason’ (13); ‘always more accidents when get tired’ (15); ‘no one drives as good when they’re tired. That’s when you make mistakes’ (17); ‘increase definitely’ (53); ‘irrelevant. Just idiots they give licences to that shouldn’t be in the job’ (58); ‘depends on individual’ (67); ‘they haven’t increased as I have had only the one in the morning. Some years ago’ (71); ‘increase off course’ (73); ‘yes’ (74); ‘depends’ (77); ‘no’ (80,202); ‘probably they increase’ (83); ‘risk is there if you work longer’ (95); ‘?’ (107); ‘depends who you are. Some people can do it and some can’t’ (118); ‘once fatigue is into it, an increase’ (119); ‘have to increase’ (120,152); ‘increase as older drivers/experienced drivers are leaving as they can’t work like they used to’ (121); ‘depends on individual. Younger drivers haven’t had the experience even to do the log book hours’ (122); ‘doesn’t make any difference’ (143); ‘depends on the person’ (144); ‘varies. Some people can handle it and some can’t’ (146); ‘hard to say’ (159); ‘if an accident is going to happen, it will happen’ (160); ‘for some people. But not everyone’ (168); ‘got to increase’ (169); ‘depend on individual person, condition of vehicle, road conditions’ (175); ‘got to be a bigger chance if you’re out there longer’ (180); ‘the longer you are out there, the more chance of something happening’ (181); ‘doesn’t make much difference’ (182); ‘about the same. 71% less accidents now than 10 years ago’ (187); ‘increase because of fatigue’ (196); ‘increase because you’re tired and not concentrating’ (197); ‘increase as getting tired and fatigued’ (198); ‘increase as once you get over 14 [hours] and on a continuous basis, you throw caution to the wind. Should be allowed to take legal stuff to get yourself home e.g. one hour down the road’ (199); ‘no. If drive and work to log book hours it is okay’ (201); ‘definitely yes’ (204); ‘difficult one. Had accidents in livestock; the longer hours have an impact as it’s less regulated. In coal industry more complacency’ (205); ‘without a doubt. The longer hours you work the less smarter you are or less alert’ (217); ‘can’t say’ (223); ‘increase. The more you are out there it increases the possibility of fatigue’ (235); ‘increase. More chance’ (241); ‘probably increase because of fatigue’ (248); ‘more’ (257); ‘have to increase as your mind wanders off when you start getting tired’ (260); ‘if you work real longer hours, increase as fatigue’ (268); ‘depends on individual. Everyone should know their limits no matter how hard they are being pushed. Time of day is important’ (272); ‘have to increase as the more chance of having an accident’ (273); ‘have to increase as you get tired’ (274); ‘don’t know’ (277); ‘increase because of tiredness’ (279); ‘increase from fatigue and judgement is slower’ (281); ‘increase with fatigue’ (282); ‘increase because of fatigue’ (287); and ‘never had any accidents. But probably more of a chance with increased hours’ (289).

‘Other’ employment status drivers: ‘not sure. I can drive long hours. If I pull up for a sleep, even for ½ an hour, I go to bed and relax’ (38); ‘increase’ (69,78,112,162); ‘may be’ (150); ‘decrease. When you’re on the road all the time you know what you’re up to and what you have to do’ (186); ‘bound to increase as you’re tired’ (210); ‘increase – and turn into Noddy’ (212); ‘increase as fatigue’ (218); and ‘increase because you’re on the road longer’ (231).
Appendix 7

Impact of job on family and social life

Each truck driver was asked ‘does your job have an impact on your family and social life?’ A summary of responses is provided in section 4.5 of the full report.

Owner/drivers: ‘yes; lucky to get home once or twice a year’ (2); ‘yes. See my wife once in five months’ (3); ‘yes’ (5, 21, 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 50, 56, 57, 96, 109, 115, 116, 127, 130, 138, 164, 190, 208, 209, 226, 229, 232, 238, 258, 271, 283, 285, 296); ‘my family is not with me now’ (7); ‘not particularly. I’m always home Sunday and Monday nights’ (16); ‘yes. You’re rooted when you get home. Don’t want to go out’ (19); ‘yes definitely’ (20); ‘course it would. If you’re married, you’re never home’ (29); ‘yes. You’re never home’ (31); ‘yes it does, definitely’ (34, 54); ‘yes. Reduced social life. Family stress caused by business strain’ (39); ‘got to have’ (43); ‘socially yes’ (47); ‘yes, terrible. Tragic possibly’ (48); ‘yes it does’ (51); ‘no’ (52, 151, 161, 166, 227); ‘what family and what social life? You don’t have one’ (59); ‘ohhh yes’ (60); ‘most definitely’ (61); ‘no social life at all in my job. Nothing but stress’ (89); ‘never had much of a social life; never have one. Try to attend a party and go to sleep’ (100); ‘yep; never home’ (104); ‘yes. An extreme disadvantage on family’ (105); ‘yes. Well you’re never at home. Can’t organise a social life as you never home. You go home and think you can and then the phone rings and you’ve got to go again’ (123); ‘yes, 100% job first’ (126); ‘yes. Not home enough; always working to make ends meet. Missing out on life and children growing up’ (139); ‘yes. On my third marriage’ (140); ‘totally. Got no family life; no social life’ (158); ‘not really’ (163, 192, 194); ‘I’m single’ (170); ‘yes, but it’s a job that I chose’ (177); ‘yes, never get to see them’ (178); ‘yes. Don’t get much of that’ (185); ‘divorced, probably that’s why. I was doing interstate in those years’ (191); ‘minimal’ (224); ‘haven’t got one’ (240); ‘yes. Haven’t got a family’ (244); ‘naturally’ (245); ‘yes, big one. Never home and no social life’ (250); ‘social life definitely. Family life too’ (251); ‘very much so’ (254); ‘the money is good for the family’ (255); ‘yes, keeps me away from the pub’ (256); ‘off course’ (259, 278); ‘destroys the social life’ (261); ‘what social life? This is it - meal breaks’ (264); ‘yes, social life’ (265); ‘has to. Never at home’ (266); ‘not at this stage. It used to’ (269); ‘depends on what you’re doing’ (270); ‘no social life’ (291); ‘no social life. How can you fit a family life into 3 days a week (if you are lucky)? But you are working on your trucks in those three days’ (293); ‘sometimes’ (294); ‘I got divorced because I’m a truck driver. So yes, it did have an impact’ (295); and ‘yes, yes, yes, very much so’ (297).

Small fleet drivers: ‘yes it does. Social life - haven’t got one. Missus can come out with me if she wants [in truck]’ (1); ‘yes, not at home much. When I’m home I’m usually sleeping’ (4); ‘this is my 4th wife’ (6); ‘yes. By the time you get home and mow lawns and cut wood, Saturday’s gone’ (18); ‘yes definitely; you’re away 6 nights a week’ (22); ‘yes’ (26, 49, 63, 84, 85, 87, 101, 102, 110, 132, 133, 136, 137, 145, 147, 148, 149, 153, 154, 157, 167, 183, 207, 213, 225, 228, 230, 236, 242, 249, 298, 300); ‘no’ (46, 65, 91, 108, 117, 124, 125, 131, 171, 174, 193, 219, 234, 252, 262, 263); ‘yes; see my wife 2 days a week’ (55); ‘yes, very much’ (62); ‘yes. Got no family left and got no social life’ (64); ‘social life, yes’ (66); ‘certainly does’ (82); ‘yes. Social life big time’ (88); ‘yes as I don’t see them very often’ (92); ‘not
now’ (94); ‘yes. Lucky to get home 1 day in 2 weeks. 24 hour break after 6 days is usually had in the truck, away from home’ (98); ‘very much so’ (99); ‘lost 2 marriages through it’ (103); ‘that’s why I don’t have a family’ (111); ‘yes, have to’ (114); ‘not really. Was doing it long before I got married’ (134); ‘yes definitely. I’m on wife no.3. Not much family or social life’ (135); ‘yes. I’ve got no social life’ (141,155); ‘bloody oath it does [from wife sitting with driver]’ (142); ‘for sure’ (156); ‘did have, but she got away’ (165); ‘not really’ (172); ‘no. Used to when I worked night shift – the first 11 years here’ (176 – now drives in local area); ‘yes, very big’ (179); ‘yes. I don’t see them’ (184); ‘it does’ (188); ‘past socialising, so don’t worry’ (189); ‘yes. Social life what’s that?’ (195); ‘yes. I live in Sydney and my girlfriend lives in Newcastle and they want me to work weekends. Don’t get to see her’ (206); ‘yes, I’m not home’ (211); ‘absolutely’ (214); ‘yes it interferes’ (215); ‘divorced 4 times’ (216); ‘got no family, but does on social life’ (220); ‘don’t have a family. Has impact on social life’ (222); ‘yes, social life a bit’ (233); ‘yes, at times’ (237); ‘definitely’ (239); ‘yes certainly does. No social life’ (243); ‘ohh yes’ (246); ‘just my missus goes crook. I’m not home enough to take her out. Not home long’ (247); ‘yes, never home. When you are, maintenance to be done or too tired to do anything’ (253); ‘did have years ago. I don’t have a family now’ (267); ‘yes. I’m never bloody home’ (275); ‘yes. What family social life?’ (276); ‘yes. I’m separated because of my job and my daughter doesn’t want to talk to me because I was never home’ (280); ‘yes, sure does’ (284); ‘yes – big’ (286); ‘I never get home. From Christmas to Easter I spent 4 nights at home’ (288); ‘did at the time’ (290); ‘yes, off course it does’ (292); and ‘yes, different working hours’ (299).

Large fleet drivers: ‘yes. My wife has been a ‘widow to wheels’ for 29 years’ (8); ‘yes, rarely see’ (9); ‘yes’ (10,28,37,67,72,74,77,79,80,81,83,86,90,113,143,146,168,169,182,198,200,202,203,221,223); ‘what family and social life?’ (11); ‘ohhh yes’ (12); ‘my word. We don’t spend enough time at home. Don’t know one driver who hasn’t been divorced at least once’ (13); ‘yes, a major fact. Don’t have a family or social life’ (14); ‘yes because can’t say going to be home at 6 o’clock for example’ (15); ‘no. I’m single’ (17); ‘yes, if we do shift work’ (23); ‘does, but it’s self-inflicted because I chose to do what I do’ (25); ‘definitely’ (53,152,205); ‘off course. Slave labour. Quality of life is shot to shit’ (58); ‘yes sometimes. Because of hours you do’ (68); ‘no’ (70,95,159,187,235,257,287); ‘yes. It has to fit around work’ (71); ‘sometimes planning for social events is a bit hard’ (73); ‘sometimes’ (75); ‘has over the years. Kids have grown up now. When kids were growing up it had a big impact’ (93); ‘yes. Just been divorced after 27 years’ (97); ‘now and again’ (106); ‘yes. Not home some nights’ (107); ‘a little bit’ (118); ‘yes, I’m divorced’ (119); ‘yes, affects social life. Don’t see the kids as much as I’d like’ (120); ‘yes because of stupid hours’ (121); ‘yes. I’ve got 5 kids and I haven’t been home for 10 days’ (122); ‘yes, very big’ (128); ‘mediocre as I’m single’ (129); ‘not married, but social life yes’ (144); ‘certainly does’ (160,173,199); ‘sometimes yes’ (175); ‘does’ (180); ‘knocks my social life around something fierce’ (181); ‘yes for sure’ (196); ‘yes. When I leave home my wife says when will I see you? I say 3 or 4 days time’ (197); ‘yes and no’ (201); ‘yes for the worse’ (204); ‘definitely. Divorced and trying to do it again’ (217); ‘to an extent as away’ (241); ‘yes, because you’re not home’ (248); ‘yes. I’m never there and when I am, I’m asleep’ (260); ‘yes definitely’ (268); ‘haven’t got a social life. The social life is on-the-road. The family understand what I do and that I can’t be home’ (272); ‘yes, I’m
on-the-road’ (273); ‘yes; a rather large impact’ (274); ‘don’t like being away from home all the time, but that’s part of the job’ (277); ‘yes, never home’ (279); ‘off course it does. Only see my family once a week’ (281); ‘yes. I have a live-in nanny to care for 18 year old and 15 year old’ (282); and ‘yes it does. I don’t want to do it anymore. My 3 year old is screaming and crying when I go at night’ (289).

‘Other’ employment status drivers: ‘yes’ (38,69,76,78,162,210,212); ‘yes. Get in trouble all the time’ (112); ‘yes, never home. What’s home?’ (150); ‘definitely. I married my truck’ (186); ‘no social life’ (218); and ‘off course. If I don’t go to work I don’t get paid, and no money affects my family’ (231).
Appendix 8

‘Other’ issues raised by 300 interviewed truck drivers

A summary of this appendix appears as Section 4.6 and Table 26 in the report. Each driver was asked ‘is there anything else that you think is important about safety in this industry?’ The qualitative data are reproduced in full below, separated by employment status.

Owner/drivers: ‘should throw the log books out as they’re trying to rule our times for owner/drivers. Government is out biggest problem’ (2); ‘should have same rate all over Australia; north and south. Should not be a difference. Union does nothing for us’ (3 – not a union member); ‘it all comes back to freight rates: too low. It will go lower with GST and my attitude is ‘shove it’. I’ll park it up. I won’t work any lower. We’re classed as second class citizens. If we were child molesters or drug dealers we wouldn’t get hassled as much by the law as we are. We all take illegal substances; a big % does. You’ve got to, to do the hours to make the money. I take duromine and ephedrine. Don’t touch the other stuff’ (5); ‘Some of the stupid laws that are enforced. They’re only done by the white collar people in the office. They know nothing about the safety of a law. That’s the stupidity of it. New log book idea: not bad if drive in daytime... but stupidity 12 hours driving time. Can’t take off other days. The log book hours is an unworkable situation’ (7); ‘personally I’m pretty right. There’s a lot of people have to work 70 or 80 hours a week. I’ve heard blokes say they haven’t been home for 6 or 8 weeks’ (16); ‘take speed limiters off trucks; they’re dangerous. You go out to pass a car and you’ll be sitting there and in double lanes and come to the end. Who is going to give way?’ (19); ‘yes, get rid of the police and the RTA and let us regulate ourselves. I know when I’m tired and I don’t need a log book to tell me if I’m tired. Need to regulate the industry the way the Americans do. If you get tired you pull into a roadhouse. The government regulates the pills and there’s rates that mean you make money and the job carries on merrily’ (20); ‘unworkable – log books’ (21); ‘if I get tired I go to sleep. I know there’s other blokes who push themselves and try to get too far. If the police made their presence shown more, visible to people, people would slow down. But they hide to catch people speeding – not just trucks but cars too – and that’s just for revenue. If I see a police car I slow down’ (24); ‘driving hours. A lot of company drivers are pushed pretty hard and pretty much ignore driving hour rules’ (27); ‘better rates so you don’t have to work so hard’ (29); ‘it all ties in. If the rates went up the blokes wouldn’t have to work like they do’ (30); ‘it’s all go go go. You’ve got to go so hard to make a living’ (31); ‘body gets run down. Just walking zombies because they’re whipped by the employer to do more miles’ (32); ‘if you fix 19 you’ll fix safety [question 19 responses] freight rates, fuel, road conditions, late payments’ (33); ‘motorist education towards big trucks’ (34); ‘want the roads fixed. Expect us to drive on these goat tracks. All the politicians put the dollars into cities and forget about the country’ (35); ‘roads and highways’ (36); ‘safety can only be achieved at a cost. When rates are below operating costs, first thing to suffer is safety’ (39); ‘more money. Don’t have to work as long’ (40); ‘more money for your job’ (41); ‘bigger companies dictate rates, rules, times. If you don’t do what they want they get someone else. How am I going to feed the kids and pay off the truck?’ (43); ‘dickheads working in it. Owner/drivers are their own worst enemies as
undercut’ (44); ‘get us a rate of pay we can live on’ (45); ‘monotony on new style of freeway’ (47); ‘completely against way driving licences are allocated for trucks and cars. Should not be issued unless they can drive properly and if proven to be wrong should get licence taken off them for long time’ (48); ‘no’ (52); ‘all safety is up to the individual’ (54); ‘tell RTA to stop harassment; unnecessary. And to get facts straight about road transport’ (56); ‘better rates so we can do it better. Harassment from RTA is the biggest problem regarding the ridiculous law on enforcement’ (57); ‘trucks should be licenced like a taxi. They should be restricted. I probably put about 60,000 – 80,000 in the government coffers. I don’t pay tax as [income] too low. Like a black hole you throw money into, same with truck. We fall into the gypsy’s category: here today and gone tomorrow. So [named large transport companies], if I die tomorrow some other owner/driver takes over and they work him till he drops’ (59); ‘driver fatigue. A lot has to do a lot of courier services in the capital cities. Then we’re expected to drive all night to be on time’ (60); ‘if they paid the right rates you wouldn’t have to do the extra hours to earn a living’ (61); ‘too many rules. These speed cameras make it worse as got to stop and waste time when you’re not tired’ (89); ‘education of car and truck drivers’ (100); ‘needs to be more done about speed signs in NSW. Needs to be more ‘60 ahead’ and ‘80 ahead’ signs’ (104); ‘should be more solid radio stations that you can listen to, and radio station information signs. Road conditions affect fatigue: in the 80’s there were that many holes. Now they’ve fixed the holes; they look good but it’s very hard on our vehicles and us. Log books should be abolished as are a tool to book truck drivers. Don’t serve any purpose, only red tape for government and discriminating against one form of driver. We are already professionals. They don’t give them to people who aren’t professionals eg car drivers. One of the reasons we don’t have crashes is because we plan the trip beforehand and have a sleep. Log books don’t help. Believe an owner/driver has responsibility to himself and his family to have a safe workplace and he has to be the breadwinner. Nearly every truck driver was taking pills in the past. But that’s hopefully changed during the 90’s with quieter AND nicer trucks and the big macho image isn’t there as much’ (105); ‘the equipment has improved greatly. Attitudes need to be published more about driving in front of trucks. With car-carrying industry we’re allowed 4-6 metres in height anywhere throughout Australia except Great Western Highway through Katoomba which is 4.3m. Fines used to be $89 for over-height till two months ago they lifted them to $800. I drop a car off at Katoomba and never know what I’m picking up. If it’s a hilux it puts me up to 4.4m and I have to go back to Penrith, to Windsor, to a 4.6 metre route (for the sake of 5 minutes)” (109); ‘Freight forwarders put the load on someone at night and expect it in the next capital city the next morning. It’s a recipe for disaster: got to speed to make the time up. You’re probably tired before you leave as been working all day’ (115); ‘No; except to get rid of B/doubles. The majority who pass you on the highway are B/doubles; they go too fast. We don’t want the GST as more paperwork for me and accounting work’ (116); ‘not regulated’ (123); ‘the search annoys me. Coppers need a warrant to search your house. Why don’t they need one to search your truck? Only looking for amphetamines. What we want is driving hours changed. I don’t care about the total of 72 hours a week. If I work 3 hours today I’m only allowed to work 12 hours tomorrow. So then I lose 9 hours off the week and I can’t work any overtime’ (126); ‘one day a police car pulled me over while doing 80km an hour. I asked him ‘what’s the problem?’ He said ‘I haven’t got any problems, I’m going to see what problems you’ve
They think you’re guilty and have to prove innocence. The log book forces a tired driver to keep driving’ (127); ‘log books should be abolished and a fatigue management system should be put in place. Caravan drivers should have to have training before they are allowed to go on state highways or federal roads. Truck drivers should be recognised in their job activity more so than the general person on the road at the same time’ (13); ‘no’ (139); ‘the young fellows, the company drivers, in the industry today are under terrible pressure. Their job is at risk if they don’t do what the company asks. It’s affecting all their life, their families etc. That’s why I’m an owner/driver, because I couldn’t put up with the garbage from management; especially depot managers’ (140); ‘Everyone is running pretty good equipment so things should be a bit better than they are. Before they used to use old equipment which is dangerous. In road transport, the owner/drivers are their own worst enemy because they cart out of places they know the rates, and they keep carting for low rates instead of black-banning low paying places. They are running B/doubles out of Brisbane to Melbourne for $1,470. That’s why the industry is buggered. I get $2,100 to run Brisbane/Melbourne empty but same money to return. I’ve had it for years. My driver goes North Coast NSW to Melbourne and return and clears after tax $509 a trip and does 2 a week’ (151); ‘More drug-testing is needed because drugs have ruined our industry. Should be more work done on stopping speeding. Speeding is the biggest cause of truck and car accident involvement. Everybody’s judged on speed limits e.g. pulling out, coming towards you. Once you’re an owner/driver you can’t get out without losing the lot e.g. usually you’ve got your house mortgaged. So that adds to your 10% [10% of gross income goes to keeping family]’ (158); ‘not too bad. Long hours a problem’ (161); ‘things are pretty safe with unloading at all the big places you go to. When you go to small places it’s up to yourself really; your own discretion and have to use your brain a bit’ (164); ‘bring speed limits down a bit’ (166); ‘should make the roads a lot better’ (177); ‘country road conditions. The minor highways are in shocking condition. Not fit to drive on’ (178); ‘needs better roads in the country, especially out west. A Western District RTA person was failing people for a driving test and when people complained about it, the RTA took her for a driving test and she failed. So how did she get there in the first place?’ (190); ‘forcing drivers to work longer hours. At one company the drivers jacked up and they got shown the gate’ (191); ‘major/prime contractors forcing us to work longer hours and take bigger loads’ (192); ‘half the time it’s car drivers overtaking where they shouldn’t or coming up the left hand side where you can’t see them’ (194); ‘road conditions. 100% tax on diesel but it’s just not going into the roads’ (208); ‘log book rules. Only allowed to drive 12 hours in any 24 hours, so can’t sleep when you’re supposed to’ (209); ‘younger truck drivers should be educated more’ (224); ‘trouble is, the Transport Minister is being ‘wined and dined’ by the larger companies and has lost touch with owner/drivers’ (226); ‘a good knowledge of OHS rules’ (227); ‘all they are interested in is dollars, not safety. Brakes on trucks for purpose of safety, but when you go down a hill in Sydney in built-up area, you’re not allowed to use them as too noisy’ (232); ‘not enough RTA inspectors checking older trucks’ (238); ‘car drivers get up your nose because they are not educated. Should have a basic knowledge of how a truck can’t stop and length of space it takes. Log books just make us tell lies. Need to slow B/doubles down. In a parking bay, the RTA guy knocked on the side of truck, dragged me out of the bed at midnight. I told him to rack off and he went and got a policeman in Warwick. The copper told me you never knock off. You’re
still working when you’re sleeping because you’re in your truck’ (244); ‘if you can stop when you’re tired and drive on your own. Sometimes you’ve got to drive to the log book which is no good’ (245); ‘should be uniform rules for everyone: cars and trucks. If you get booked in a car for doing 100km it costs $200, but for us it costs $400’ (250); ‘enough money to maintain vehicles; meaning increase in industry’ (254); ‘transport department has made it harder now. That’s a good thing as it’s safer. People take a lot; used to be very bad. Now better; clean it up a lot. I never take drugs but many did. I’m Justice (JP) and do right thing’ (255); ‘load restraints: should be more education for people. A lot of young inexperienced blokes don’t know how to tie them on’ (256); ‘education of both car and truck drivers is lacking. More and more in our society people don’t accept responsibility for their own direction and action, but tend to blame others’ (259); ‘everything that could be done is being done. Always talk of pressure from companies to get jobs done. Probably the owner/drivers who are battling as the big companies seem to have everything worked out’ (261); ‘not your fault half the time e.g. forklift’ (266); ‘need good equipment. RTA are pretty well on the ball now with inspections’ (269); ‘up to the individual’ (270); ‘driving hours is extremely important; shouldn’t be too long’ (278); ‘just keep thinking’ (283); ‘make sure trucks are roadworthy’ (285); ‘most trucks are in real good condition. That’s the secret – keeping gear in real good nick’ (291); ‘when we go to load we can be held up for 6 to 8 hours because we have people who load us who don’t care. At the end of that we have to turn around and drive to Melbourne’ (293); ‘rest areas are really bad for truck drivers. They had a survey and truck drivers told them. They’ve given it to the car drivers but not to the truck drivers’ (294); ‘truck drivers and car drivers should be taught to drive a bit better; as in Europe’ (295); ‘people out there in cars and trucks who don’t know what they are doing. People telling you how to load a vehicle when they don’t even drive one’ (296); and ‘safety should be legislated from the government. We share the road with the public and have a responsibility. 70% of truck drivers are drug addicts; 30% of all trucks on the road are legally unsafe’ (297).

Small fleet drivers: ‘not enough education for common road users on what it is like to work in one of these things. How hard it is. They should advertise more on TV on what happens to a car if it gets in the way of a truck. What happens to the passengers’ (1); ‘roads could be a lot better’ (4); ‘think young drivers got to be properly trained; can’t even tie a rope. We’re forced to drive when we shouldn’t be driving. Fatigue management is all bullshit because the crap has got nothing at all to do with the job. It’s an office-related decision made by turkeys. Controlled by big companies as well as by regulators. If you’ve got a lot of pressure on you, you’re buggered 3 to 4 hours out. I’m a gambler so... ’ (6); ‘should do more roadworthy’s on trucks. Trucks on local deliveries don’t get it done each year but do the same km. Half the trouble is the drugs. They’ve taken the harmless stuff off the streets e.g. Duromine, and now speed’s on the streets. The police come up here every second week doing truck searches – put a dog in there – I live in that truck!’ (18); ‘not enough learning for the younger blokes. It’s up to the older blokes to teach the younger ones, not the company’ (22); ‘teach the car drivers how to drive; teach them how much it takes to pull a truck up. Ban bloody caravans off the road, especially at night. You can have all these surveys but unless you actually go in the truck yourself and do the actual hours, you’ll never know what it is like’ (26); ‘drugs’ (49); ‘mainly locals [deliveries]. Only come up here about once a week’ (62); ‘got to get rid of the log books. Got to get rid of the Safety Cams in NSW; everyone is going through the
back roads to avoid the Safety Cams. Get more realistic trip times with reasonable rates. In Sydney traffic lights go on yellow for 4 seconds; on lights that have red light cameras. Pure revenue raising; another tax. Get the RTA to stop harassment. [Two named grocery supermarkets] need a kick up the backside’ (64); ‘don’t think so as I’m safe enough’ (65); ‘there is none’ (66); ‘speed limiters – agree with them in theory but being set at 100km is too dangerous. Probably about 120 would be better to allow us to pass a car safely. Log books: need longer driving hours so we can manage our fatigue without interfering in minimum hours of rest’ (84); ‘amount of hours you work. For us to come from Warnambool to Sydney you can’t actually do it legally – the amount of hours. You should be able to do it in 12½ but it takes 13½ or a bit more if you take in the time you stop’ (85); ‘regulated driving hours are a big priority. The days of working all day and driving all night have definitely got to go. These big companies, if an owner/driver is carting for them, just let them go depot to depot interstate and no unloading. Let their own company trucks do the little stuff’ (88); ‘in dangerous goods sector the public should be more aware of the dangers of unloading gas. Seen someone come up to have a look while having a smoke. Had all the signs out’ (92); ‘just keeping the trucks in good roadworthy condition’ (94); ‘trucks should be speed limited at 110 to 115km hour. 100km hour causes fatigue and lack of interest of surroundings. Travelling slightly in excess of limit keeps you awake’ (98); ‘education of everyone: motorists; anyone with a licence’ (101); ‘road conditions: 90’s age vehicles but roads are 60’s standard’ (102); ‘speed limited to 100km. Have no safety outlet if something happening and have no more power. Lot of drug taking in industry. My best mate is in hospital now with a massive heart attack because of drugs he was taking – speed – just sniffing it. Used to be able to get Ephedrine (given to 6-year old kids with asthma). When the big Kempsie bus crash happened they took them off the market. So everybody started to use heavy drugs e.g. speed. If took Ephedrine could go another 4 or 5 hours and be very alert with it. Lot of blokes got into trucking industry not to drive trucks but to get the speed. No age group; across the board. Know a 55-year old takes it’ (103); ‘with my company, if you’re tired you can pull over. There’s no great pressure’ (110); ‘worrying about driver coming towards you. Truck and car drivers – and how much sleep they’ve had. Log books are just a joke. The fines are just stupid. The rudeness of some of the highway patrol; treat you like dirt’ (111); ‘more education and training for the drivers and the motorists. Got to educate the motorists as they don’t understand’ (114); ‘every one should go at an easy constant pace and rest when needed’ (117); ‘no; use common sense’ (124); ‘trucks are getting safer as more policed by RTA. RTA got a lot more technology. Good thing really as don’t want unroadworthy trucks on the road’ (125); ‘most of it is pretty well covered. Can’t be loaded unless you’re covered’ (131); ‘trucks shouldn’t be speed limited’ (133); ‘should be more education for the public car driver’ (134); ‘NSW is over-regulated and over-policed. We’re the milking industry for the whole state. Fines are double anywhere else. The RTA and police ought to belong to the SS or Gestapo. Not all of them, but there are a hell of a lot. Should be a campaign to educate the public on how to drive and share road with heavy vehicles sensibly and safely e.g. car towing a caravan tried to overtake over a double line coming up to the crest of a hill ½ hour ago’ (135); ‘if you were allowed to do your own thing, you wouldn’t be forced into driving when you’re fatigued. Yesterday fined $150. I drove 12 hours and rested for 12 hours. But didn’t have a 6 hour continuous rest. I had one break of 4½ hours and 2 breaks of 3 and that
goes against the rules. Public awareness of ways trucks work needs to be increased. Cars are always cutting through on corners and roundabouts. Mainly driver education needed’ (136); ‘people drive now because they have to drive to fit in with the cameras. Due to set up of log books, you drive when you’re not tired. All these courses they are making us do on Truck Safe and Fatigue Management (not dangerous goods as that’s fair enough) don’t make sense and are a waste of time’ (137); ‘government needs to commit to more training facilities. Industry won’t go anywhere till governments sets in. Government needs to set a freight rate and not let anyone go below it’ (141); ‘road side lay-bye’s in NSW are rubbish. In Victoria they are brilliant. There’s room for trucks, cars, caravans. And there’s toilets, BBQ’s and everything plus shade, and they are off the road and always beautifully clean. In NSW they’re shit’ (142); ‘more time at home’ (145); ‘need more time at home’ (147); ‘cameras and log books are forcing you to drive when you don’t want to drive’ (148); ‘should all be 2-up drivers’ (153); ‘fatigue has become a 4-letter word as it’s made car drivers more paranoid about truck drivers as they haven’t explained it to them. The poor old owner/drivers are coping it. They have to look at what it costs to run the trucks. The big companies can run around loading and unloading trucks everywhere. The smaller guys can’t afford to pay extra people to load and unload’ (154); ‘government never asks the drivers. You only have to look at the road restraints the NSW government/RTA have brought down. It’s all garbage. Rates and time schedules are the big problems. Rates are the main one’ (155); ‘I drive to please myself. I don’t believe any freight is worth injuring yourself to get there. It suits me to do it easier’ (156); ‘roads don’t help much’ (157); ‘make the speed limit higher e.g. 110 or 115’ (165); ‘just make people aware of the size of the vehicle and that you can’t stop like a car’ (171); ‘pretty good at the moment’ (172); ‘trucks are getting faster and more horsepower. Younger generation haven’t had much experience with that much horsepower’ (174); ‘factor where they expect you to rush like mad to get all your work done in a certain period of time. That’s not real good for your safety and health’ (176); ‘less unmarked police cars and more marked ones. Just get the dickheads out of the office and get them out on the road to see what we’re doing and what we have to put up with’ (183); ‘no’ (188); ‘get rid of speed limiters because when you pull out to pass someone at 90km you haven’t got enough time. Driver training should include how to load vehicles, secure loads and things like that. Biggest problem is people like [name] and he goes to transport association and makes the rules and doesn’t stick to them. He’s a hypocrite and a thief. Half the RTA people who take you for a test who can’t drive themselves. With fuel you get overloaded quite easily as they have different densities and therefore different weights for same product’ (189); ‘the big companies push their subcontractors with arrival times. The driver endeavors to get there and gets fatigued and could lead to an accident’ (195); ‘get rid of the cowboys and fly-by-night operators as they are only in it for a quick buck and don’t care who they hurt to get it’ (206); ‘unreasonable trip times’ (207); ‘log books: I disagree. Because the hours they tell you to rest, you’re not necessarily tired. If you don’t use all the driving hours, you can’t use them tomorrow’ (211); ‘speed limiters on heavy vehicles are a hazard. They create dangerous situations. Politicians need to go with an owner/driver or small companies so they can get first hand experience of what it is really like. (Not one of the big companies that are so regulated.) I’ve taken drugs myself; just to keep going. I know I’d rather have a guy coming towards me whose had lots of amphetamines and who is wide awake
than one who is fatigued and falling asleep’ (213); ‘freight forwarders and major contractors have to get their act together in regards to all this waiting around and time slots’ (214); ‘speed limited trucks are ridiculous. Should be able to do the same speed as any other vehicle’ (215); ‘these truck driving schools; the diploma drivers. They’re scary as know all the theory but can’t drive a truck’ (216); ‘getting held up is the major concern when delivering or loading. The longer they hold you up the less sleep you get that night’ (220); ‘should be more time on the deadlines for drivers. A lot of them are running pretty tight schedules’ (222); ‘they say WorkCover is there for the safety of things. You’ve got so many rules about what you can and can’t do, they actually make the job more dangerous’ (228); ‘broke, stress, nervous breakdown, and marriage breakdown’ (234); ‘tight schedules, long hours to survive, and low wages’ (236); ‘safety is up to scratch today, although it went through a period that was pretty slap-happy’ (237); ‘make public more aware of our job. What we have to do and road sense etc’ (239); ‘need more education of car drivers. Not enough knowledge about heavy vehicles’ (242); ‘make the bosses more responsible for the drivers and their hours. Some of them are just mongrels’ (243); ‘cars will travel along at 80km and when you can pass them safely, they’ll speed up. The harassment levels by police and RTA over log books. We do the right thing by not speeding. Log books are supposed to be for fatigue management but they are forcing you to sleep when they want you to sleep. So instead of being able to pull up, you have to keep going to use the time in your log book’ (246); ‘ought to educate these people in cars more about trucks’ (247); ‘what we have to have on fatigue, cars should have the same thing. Fatigue is the biggest killer on the road. Cars should have log books. The coppers are after the wrong thing. They can book us but they can’t book a car for driving from Brisbane to Sydney without stopping’ (249); ‘every job is different’ (262); ‘teaching drivers to drive the old way, not through the schools they way they do now. They teach them how to read a book and nothing about the roads’ (263); ‘a lot to do with safety in the industry is to do with the driver himself’ (267); ‘your own common sense. Get all the young fellows off the road who yahoo. But you’ve got to have them or the industry will die in the future’ (275); ‘time pressure. Should take off time pressures in larger places. Ought to be able to have 24 hour unloading at the markets etc. Larger companies [named large food retailers] give you a time slot and if you’re not there ¼ hour either side of time slot, they won’t unload you. If you are there on time and you can get in and out in under 4 hours you’re doing well. You can’t go there and park and get in the back and have a couple of hours sleep for fear of losing your place in the queue. Last week I was given 11 hours to drive from Sydney to Brisbane overnight express. I can’t do it naturally. It’s only about 8 months ago that I was given more than 36 hours to get from far North Queensland to the Sydney markets. And it’s about 28 hours driving’ (276); ‘if bosses weren’t to push so much, wouldn’t be so fatigued’ (280); ‘education for car drivers. Better training for truck drivers when they are starting off’ (286); ‘before they get a car licence, they should sit in a truck and see what it takes to pull them up e.g. hard to pull up in 50 metres. Poor visibility with signage’ (288); ‘driving is common sense’ (290); ‘truck management are taking care of personal liability to drivers in regards to safety’ (298); and ‘need more education of car and public re trucks. Learn to respect the road and professional drivers who have a job to do’ (299).
Large fleet drivers: ‘Australia has a drug problem in the industry. It’s a lot of it in the younger ones. The older guys are regular and do regular runs; not doing lots of crazy hours’ (8); ‘lack of reading traffic’ (9); ‘knowledge of some jobs’ (10); ‘get the coppers to get the car drivers to dip their headlights. That causes a lot of the head-on crashes. Bloke can’t see where he’s going and wanders over the line. A lot of the trouble in this industry is the companies that expect their drivers to go out in the evenings and get in in the morning. Not all the companies; the small fleet operators trying to keep head above water’ (12); ‘when they took ephedrine off the market and made it impossible to get. So speed and all come onto the market and now they are injecting it. You can get it for $30. We don’t have any faith or trust in the coppers or their masters. They are supposed to be out there chasing the bad buggers. But they are out on the highway chasing us. It’s to get revenue’ (13); ‘government and transport officials should make it safer for the transport industry and general public. President of the long haul industry is [name]. I’d like to get the Minister of Transport of NSW to come to the half-way café and sit and talk to us; get over with passengers and in general. Government not to stuff around, get on with the job and care about road safety’ (14); ‘people have got to learn to sleep when they’re tired. Not just truck drivers; car drivers as well’ (15); ‘all the reforms in the transport industry. The only thing that’s changed is the paperwork. Hours of work have got more and are unrealistic because of time slots’ (17); ‘when governments make rules they should enforce them e.g. the RTA claim they are going to chase up the log books, but they never do. They never come to the company yards and check them out. A toothless tiger. If they get their acts together things could change. Governments allow it to happen. Hard work and dedication should count for something but it doesn’t any more. It’s all dollars and cents and safety is out the window. [Named company] is too big and too strong and the RTA and police in Woolongong don’t care’ (23); ‘fact the load had to be there yesterday; excessive stress. Pressure to deliver the goods’ (25); ‘produce and foodstuff get pushed too fast, too hard. Got to be there and left till the last minute’ (28); ‘more enforcement personnel needed on highways. NSW Safety Cam hasn’t worked on the Newell as drivers are told to go around them’ (37); ‘so much disharmony in the industry that is causing stress. Once it was tiredness, now it’s stress that is causing us problems. It’s a blackmail industry. The owners go to transport forum and say they are trying to make the industry safer. But the reality is when they get back to the office, if the driver doesn’t do what is expected, he’s either taken out of the truck or given a job where he’s buggered around all day. Money rules the world’ (53); ‘something has to go as soon as possible. As soon as the government steps in and starts giving us some quality of life, some backing, the better it will be. I just think the whole road industry sucks. The government with its Safety Cam is bull. Government has to pay for it and back us up. Not with the RTA and harassment, but financially back us so we can get quality-of-life back’ (58); ‘they should ask drivers about fatigue management when making the rules. Instead of fleet owner trying to work out shuttle runs to suit them instead of driver’ (67); ‘some of the loads especially generally trailers (flat tops). The tarping of high loads needs to improve. Some friends of my father have fallen off high loads and one of them died from it’ (68); ‘speed limited vehicles a concern when over-taking’ (71); ‘we need to back off and increase safety’ (73); ‘more police visible on roads’ (75); ‘fatigue’ (79); ‘no’ (80); ‘more self-regulating of hours. Would be safer’ (83); ‘they shouldn’t be increasing the maximum weight on trucks because the truck tyres (especially) and roads can’t

*OHS amongst 300 long distance truck drivers: results of an interview-based survey*
handle it. They should not introduce B/triples on the eastern states. When you try to get something done through government bodies (RTA) e.g. defective vehicle, they give the companies too much leeway. Like they give them time to fix the vehicle whereas with a car they pull it off the road straight away. And the company is not fined whereas the car driver is. WorkCover gives the company warning of its intended visit which gives the company time to cover-up any problems’ (86); ‘cutting prices on owner/drivers and forcing them to work longer hours. We can pull up and go to sleep at night but they’ve got to keep going’ (90); ‘maintenance of trucks is slipping. Really bad from what it used to be to now’ (93); ‘up to individual. They know what they should and shouldn’t do’ (95); ‘wish that companies wouldn’t push so hard. Be a bit more laid back’ (97); ‘good equipment’ (106,107); ‘why do WorkCover never investigate an accident? It’s political. Just the long hours they expect you to work. Work all day and drive all night for the normal transport industry, but not for government (state). We’re exempt from using the log books’ (113); ‘need smoother roads with wider shoulders. Our industry gives us no incentive to give more than our basic service’ (119); ‘need better road conditions, wider’ (120); ‘log books: 12 hours in every 24 forcing us to sit on side of road for 10 hours minimum. I should be able to pull over and sleep when I want to. Union doesn’t want to know about interstate drivers. Big companies like [two named large grocery supermarkets] they should ban the slot hours. To take 5 hours to unload 34 pallets (and most companies can do it in 45 minutes). So can’t sleep and you’ve got to stand there with them’ (121); ‘log book times. If did to Queensland border from Wangaratta in 12 hours, I can’t drive 4 more hours into Brisbane and go home and shower and go to bed where it’s cool. Instead got to stop somewhere like Goondiwindi in heat of day where 37° and no shade and stop for 10 hour break. Get stuffed around by grocery mobs for hours, and still got to drive that night’ (122); ‘cattle yards and things we load out of need things doing to them e.g. proper loading facilities. We’ve got stock on and they’re dying. You just can’t leave them on the truck. But the RTA says we have to have our 6 or 10-hour break still. Stock go down. Loss of money to company’ (128); ‘sale and cattle yards need updating’ (129); ‘the cameras force you to drive when you shouldn’t. The same with the log books. Sometimes you can have 5 hours on your log book and you’ve got to keep driving to get through the next camera, but you don’t feel like it. Your body and your log book says different things’ (143); ‘get rid of the cameras’ (144); ‘more home time’ (146); ‘tarping loads. If you have a load of 4.2 metres you have to get on top to spread your tarps e.g. windy days get blown off. So you’ve still got to get on top. If it’s a windy day and the tarp blows, you’ve gone with it’ (152); ‘a lot of companies could have a bit more safety equipment around the yard’ (159); ‘way log books set up forces you to drive when you’re tired. Because if you don’t keep driving for your first 12 hours it upsetting you whole book e.g. Melbourne to Brisbane. If you don’t drive for the first 12 hours you’re forced to have 2 12-hour breaks’ (160); ‘needs to be more driver training. More attention to how loads are secured’ (168); ‘different running hours to the log book so you can sleep when you want to. A person knows when he is tired, and it’s not when the log book or RTA tells him’ (169); ‘company has done a stress management/fatigue management course. Bu, it’s just not working’ (173); ‘other road users, car drivers etc. should have knowledge in heavy transport. Training course would be good for this’ (175); ‘people who make the decisions like [named company] and on the RTF are making the decisions for their own back pocket and not what the industry really needs. Log
books make you drive when you’re tired and sleep when you’re not. Everybody is different. Set of rules say you do ‘that’ whether you feel like it or not’ (180); ‘the people who make the decisions should be ex-drivers. Blokes sitting in offices making decisions that we’ve got to stick by who have no idea. Safety Cams are a bad thing and that’s not coming from a bloke who breaks the rules. They make you drive when you’re tired and vice versa’ (181); ‘I work for a company that prides itself on safety’ (187); ‘lack of enforcement of work hours. Too self-regulatory’ (196); ‘if they didn’t cut the rates so much, the owner/drivers wouldn’t be pushing themselves so much so they could get the next one’ (197); ‘a lot of fleet owners who run with poorly maintained equipment and cheap wrong-paying labour. Smaller companies give more pressure on the drivers than larger companies. Seatbelts: we’re professional drivers and it should be left up to our discretion if wear them as every truck is different’ (198); ‘some of the companies that force their drivers to load and unload and then drive again to get their freight to another state. Companies are members of the peak body like ATA. They should be regulated so can’t force drivers to do those things’ (199); ‘police department and their harassment e.g. licence; log book; warrants etc.’ (201); ‘truth from company management’ (202); ‘the industry has got to address the work hours and the work habits that have been in. It has got to change’ (203); ‘people are not aware of certain aspects’ (204); ‘the RTA heavy vehicle inspection should be maintained and kept out of the hands of the employers and major transport companies’ (205); ‘30 years ago a truck driver was a glorified labourer. Today some are operating $1/2 million of machinery and some have only learnt by trial and error. If I don’t know how to operate the machinery I could do an enormous amount of danger and kill 10 people’ (221); ‘biggest hassle we have is fatigue management. Learning how to do it’ (223); ‘need better roads. It’s my main concern’ (241); ‘never be able to police it’ (248); ‘drive carefully and don’t speed’ (257); ‘if you could keep the general public informed re stopping distances. How long it takes a truck to stop, like at lights. They are always jumping in on you’ (260); ‘speed limiters. Car drivers will be sitting on 90km and you go to overtake them and the car speeds up and you’re left on the wrong side of the road and can’t overtake them or speed up because of limiters’ (268); ‘not supposed to exceed 144 hours in 12 working days in the fatigue management program, but we do. Sometimes we do and sometimes we don’t. Can work 12 days straight’ (272); ‘road maintenance needs to be improved’ (273); ‘should teach car drivers to drive first and then let them out on the road. We have to have a medical each year to drive a truck, but car drivers don’t. The doctors look at you: ‘Are you alright?’ As if they are giving you a mental examination as well’ (274); ‘regulations on driving hours are ridiculous e.g. with log books they are trying to tell you when you can sleep and when you can’t. You can be as fresh as a daisy but you can’t drive e.g. I’ve been sitting down the road here for 8 hours picking my nose’ (277); ‘build better roads. Our roads are shocking’ (281); ‘no time limits on deliveries would make it better’ (287); and ‘signage is a big thing’ (289).

‘Other’ employment status drivers: ‘Truck Safe has created a safety problem because the big companies have gone into Truck Safe and their maintenance has fallen off’ (38); ‘road conditions the biggest. Monotony; some of these freeways it gets so monotonous’ (69); ‘worrying about what’s coming the other way at night. Got fined $150 for not putting rego number in log book just before Christmas. Got pulled up again the same
day and copper said I didn’t even need to put it in’ (112); ‘cars should not be there’ (150); ‘could improve road conditions. If they didn’t spend it all on the Olympics and all this other crap, they could spend it on the roads. GST is going to be a nightmare for the transport industry; for small owner/drivers’ (186); ‘they should go a bit harder on machinery, easier times, deadlines. Need better roads’ (210); ‘need better roads’ (212); ‘speed limiters are dangerous’ (218); and ‘regulate driving hours better’ (231).
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See also Amphetamines and Drug Tests (7/8/200), http://www.erowid.org/chemicals/amphetamines/amphetamines_testing.shtml


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