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MEDIA RELEASE

Quick Action Needed to Ensure Truck Drivers Have Safe Access and Use of a Viable Service Station Network

The Australian Road Transport Industrial Organisation NSW Branch calls on the National Cabinet to ensure owners of service stations, service centres, road houses and other facilities to implement measures to ensure truck drivers can continue to eat, shower, go to the toilet and rest in a safe, comfortable and dignified manner whenever they use their premises.

“This means ensuring an exemption is in place for these facilities to serve food and beverages in an environment in which truck drivers can sit while adopting acceptable social distancing measures,” ARTIO NSW Secretary/Treasurer said.

“This will also give truck drivers the opportunity to manage their fatigue in the interests of all road users and to ensure they have the opportunity through appropriate meal choices to address health issues such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

“This practical measure needs to be put in place quickly to minimise risk exposure to COVID-19 by ensuring all truck drivers have full access to these facilities whenever they stop and rest.

“ARTIO NSW understands why recent announcements by governments aimed at minimising the spread of COVID-19 have led to restrictions on eating, resting, going to the toilet and showering at these facilities.

“However, they deny a truck driver access to working conditions to which we are all entitled.

“ARTIO NSW urges owners to move swiftly to obtain the necessary workers and supplies to ensure they continue to offer a safe, clean, welcoming environment for truck drivers.

“Clear communication is also necessary to explain why facilities may have to operate differently for the benefit of workers at these facilities, and for truck drivers, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“ARTIO NSW understands representatives of regulatory bodies are in consultation with the owners of these facilities and we urge them to ensure practical, workable measures are developed and implemented so the freight all Australians rely on can continue to be delivered safely by truck drivers working under decent working conditions.”

“Importantly, ARTIO NSW also appreciates that service stations, service centres, road houses and other facilities have lost a significant amount of trade which will not recover in the foreseeable future and even maintaining staff levels would have a potentially devastating impact on cash flow.

“National Cabinet should consider whatever steps are necessary to ensure service stations, service centres, road houses and other facilities remain open.

“It should not rule out additional direct financial support to ensure at least a basic network of these facilities continues to operate on our interstate highways and key intrastate routes.

“The alternative is the risk of closure of service stations, service centres, road houses on these strategically important routes.”

ENDS

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