

Bigger trucks 'boost efficiency'

Key role to FWA: Oliver

John Kerin

Bigger trucks should be used more widely on key freight routes in NSW, Victoria and in Tasmania to boost efficiency and reduce fuel use and pollution, a new land freight strategy has proposed.

It also urges ministers to examine the use of road charges, making better use of existing infrastructure and fairer, more sustainable financing arrangements.

The recommendations are contained in the latest national land freight update released by Transport Minister Anthony Albanese on Friday. It will be considered by state and federal ministers.

The report recommends greater use of B-Triple and B-Double trucks in NSW and Victoria on key freight routes such as the Hume Highway as well as major economic routes in Tasmania for a charge.

Australian Trucking Association chief executive Stuart St Clair said the move would not only boost productivity but improve road safety and reduce environmental impacts.

"It takes 42 semi-trailers to deliver a thousand tonnes of freight but only 20 B-Triples," Mr St Clair said.

"If we take the example of moving a thousand tonnes of freight again by using B-Triples you would emit 32 per cent less carbon dioxide than the 42 semi-trailers you would otherwise need," he added.

Michael Kilgariff, managing director of the Australian Logistics Council, which represents freight transporters, said the national strat-

High road

Indicative map of a national land freight network



SOURCE: NATIONAL LAND FREIGHT STRATEGY UPDATE

Hannah Low

Australian Council of Trade Unions secretary Dave Oliver has called for Fair Work Australia to have broader powers, saying it would help resolve industrial action more quickly.

He said the lengthy dispute between Grocon and the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, which ended on Friday, could have been resolved more quickly if the independent umpire had greater power.

"Clearly what was needed in this particular dispute was to be able to have an independent arbitrator get in there with the powers to resolve it," Mr Oliver told the Ten Network on Sunday.

Arbitration has been a long-standing area of conflict between employers and unions. Unions want Labor policy and workplace laws to allow for more compulsory arbitration. But employers have consistently argued against any such move.

Mr Oliver also criticised the involvement of the legal profession, saying, "what happens is you've got lawyers in here that are getting paid thousands of dollars on the hour and it is in their interests to prolong these disputes. They don't get resolved in the courts, they get resolved around the table."

There was no point prolonging disputes in the courts long after issues had been resolved, Mr Oliver said.

"lifeflood" of the economy, but it was struggling to cope with existing demand, let alone a doubling in freight volumes by 2030. He said road charging options would be examined, citing a system in Germany where trucks were charged a distance toll through a black box attached to a vehicle.

The Council of Australian Governments has proposed road charges for heavy vehicles and in July it gave the green light for work to start on options.

identified urgently needed projects. It suggests new transport corridors linking the ports of Esperance, Port Hedland, Geraldton/Oakajee and Fremantle in Western Australia.

It also says South Australia needs better mining-port transport links. In Queensland, it suggests improved rail access from growing areas to the Port of Brisbane.

In launching the report, Mr Albanese said the freight network was the

Door open on education

