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MEDIA RELEASE

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Stricter heavy vehicle controls to improve safety on NSW roads

The Auditor-General, Mr Peter Achterstraat, today called for stricter controls of heavy vehicles on state roads.

"Road safety is a basic need for all of us but excessive speed and driver fatigue can cause problems on our roads especially with heavy vehicles. Most motorists have experienced a heavy vehicle travelling at excessive speed and this needs to be stopped. The facts are that drivers of heavy vehicles speed as much as other drivers but get only one third the rate of speeding fines.", he said.

"I am delighted that the Minister for Roads did not wait for my report to be published before he announced that he is implementing my first recommendation to implement point to point speed enforcement.", Mr Achterstraat stated.

"The immediate enforcement of point to point speed monitoring will not only slow drivers down but will also cause them to think about how to manage their fatigue better by planning rest stops more frequently. Victoria and some countries of the world are already doing this and so should NSW", Mr Achterstraat added.

These were some of the findings that were released today by the NSW Audit Office in a report into 'Improving Road Safety - Heavy Vehicles'. The audit report looks at the impact on road safety by heavy vehicles.

One of the other findings is that fixed speed cameras currently don't distinguish between a heavy vehicle and a standard car. This means that in a 110km per hour zone a heavy vehicle can get away with exceeding their restricted speed limit of 100km per hour.

"We already have the technology to differentiate between a heavy vehicle and a standard car but we are not using it. We must enforce our speed limits for everyone and we must do it now", Mr Achterstraat declared.

Mr Achterstraat outlined other solutions to the current problem.

"Heavy vehicle safety needs to be toughened up as well. Even where the RTA detects a heavy vehicle that may pose a safety risk, only one in seven are pulled in for inspection at a checking station. Unsafe vehicles are a danger on the roads regardless of the speed they are travelling."

Mr Achterstraat summarised the report by stating:

"The people of NSW need to feel safe on their roads. The tougher enforcement of existing laws must occur immediately. The RTA is not doing all it can to catch truck drivers and operators that are breaking the law. If truck drivers and operators are not being caught and penalised for breaking the law, they will keep doing it."

Further Information

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The full report is available on the Audit Office's website www.audit.nsw.gov.au