

TRUCK MOVES' STAND AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

Some truck drivers are not receiving the pay they are due

It's time for the truck moving industry, unions and regulators to come together to stop blatant wage theft and exploitation of truck drivers. I've been in this industry a long time, and I'm hearing more complaints than ever before about illegal driver pay and conditions.

Because of our reputation as honest and trustworthy operators, and with 30 years of experience in the industry, drivers who work for other truck moving companies contact us regularly to complain about wage theft and poor treatment by dodgy business owners. These drivers are being paid less than half the Award, and in some cases 75 per cent under the Award.

My drivers report that when they are in airports and truck stops wearing their Truck Moves Australia gear, they are approached all the time by unhappy fellow truckies with terrible tales of wage theft and exploitation at the hands of a few unscrupulous operators in the industry. We've even helped some of them make claims against these rip-off merchants.

The rules to protect drivers have been in place for three years, when the Road Transport & Distribution Award took effect on July 1, 2018. At that time, we made significant changes to how we operated, employed and paid our valued drivers to make sure we were complying with the new regulations. Every operator has had plenty of time to adapt, follow the rules and become compliant by paying drivers what they are owed.

Unfortunately, there's a number of dodgy

operators out there who just don't care about the drivers they employ. And what about the customers who engage these guys to move and deliver their trucks? They are at huge risk of breaching NHVR and the Chain of Responsibility. And even Modern Slavery regulations. Modern slavery! In Australia in 2020. Hard to believe.

We've had a number of brave men and women come forward to us with shocking evidence of pay rates of less than \$10 per hour, and no overtime or weekend/public holiday rates. Not only that, these drivers are being pushed to meet unrealistic deadlines, putting their safety and that of the general motoring public at risk.

To add insult to injury, we've also heard that drivers end up in places like Toowoomba and have to make their own way to Brisbane to catch a flight home, with no travel costs paid. It's a scandal and it's happening right now, all over Australia.

The good news for honest, hardworking drivers is that they don't have to put up with this shoddy treatment anymore. When we are approached by drivers with evidence of having been cheated and mistreated, we've directed them to the Members Services Team for the TWU in their state. There are a range of these cases being investigated right now. And the penalties for breaching the Award are very high.

At Truck Moves Australia, we are committed to helping drivers who feel trapped by these shonky operators. We'll cost up their jobs to calculate what they should have been paid, and



point them in the right direction to make claims against their employer.

Together, we can rid the industry of shonks and cheats and ensure that drivers have a safe and secure workplace with fair pay for their hard work.

We are all responsible to create a level playing field, where companies compete on the merits of their service offering and they don't undercut on price, or prop up their bottom line, by underpaying and ripping off their hard-working drivers.

By Matt Whitnall, Director, Truck Moves Australia

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0413 599 669 or at
matt.alexander@aremedia.com.au

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