



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **ARTIO and peak industry groups lay out case for ATO scrapping recent Tax Determination**

The Australian Road Transport Industrial Organisation (ARTIO) – which the VTA and other state-based industry groups are part of – joined the Transport Workers Union, the ATA and NatRoad at a meeting in Sydney with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to explain why its 2017/19 Tax Determination should be withdrawn.

The meeting came after industry groups and the union united to express concern over the ATO determination, which reduces the amount of “reasonable meal expenses” drivers can claim without substantiation by a massive 43%.

VTA CEO Peter Anderson – in his capacity of ARTIO Treasurer and Secretary – said that in the meeting industry delegates reiterated the lack of any consultation or warning about the ATO’s determination, and associated meal expenses able to be claimed without receipts by employed truck drivers.

“Delegates also indicated that there didn’t appear to be any logical explanation behind the reduction, and that it appeared the ATO had used the behaviour of extreme outliers to regulate the industry by cutting existing arrangements by almost 50%,” Mr Anderson said.

“The industry also made the point that there are EBAs, contracts and over-award payments made by employers to employed truck drivers around meal allowance payments (\$90 was confirmed as common), and that employed ‘long distance’ drivers are legally required to keep a work diary detailing in 15 minute increments of where, when and whether they are working or on a break.”

Since 1985, truck drivers have been treated as part of a wider group whereby “reasonable meal expenses” can be claimed, provided the money has been expended by the taxpayer, up to a specified level without the need to keep receipts.

“With the recent ATO determination, truck drivers have now been singled out and treated differently to every other occupation,” Mr Anderson said.

The industry delegates sought the cancellation of Tax Determination 2017/19 and a return to the 2016/17 Determination, increased by a small component for CPI. This would then allow the industry to participate in a proper and detailed consultative process to determine what would be a fair amount for truck drivers to be able to claim, without receipts, into the future.

“We appreciate the ATO taking time to hear our position and await their response, which they have undertaken to provide within the next week. We hope that common sense will prevail and the recent Determination cancelled, so that truck drivers who are already under financial pressure can be relieved of this additional unfair tax burden,” Mr Anderson said.

**Ends...**

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