

SUBMISSION

Considering new
safety requirements
for vehicles entering
the NZ fleet

A combined submission from:

Bus & Coach Association

Motor Industry Association

National Road Carriers

Rural Contractors New Zealand

Transporting New Zealand



About the submitters

This submission is made on behalf of the following automotive associations, in a coalition coordinated by national road freight association Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand. All associations have provided input and insights supported by the experience and expertise of our respective members.

- Bus and Coach Association
- Motor Industry Association
- National Road Carriers
- Rural Contractors New Zealand

This transport coalition recognises the importance our associations place on productivity, safety, and efficiency. It highlights the importance that our members place on the land transport rules supporting the adoption of innovative and efficient heavy vehicle technologies. New Zealand's transport sector employs 108,000 people and contributes 4.8 percent of New Zealand's GDP.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss our submission with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and Ministry of Transport directly. The lead author and coordinator of this submission can be contacted at the details below:

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The BCA represents 230 operator and supply chain companies, with 12,000 passenger service vehicles contributing \$900 million annually to GDP.	The MIA represents official importers and distributors of new motorcycles, light and heavy vehicles, representing 91 marques and accounting for 98% of all new vehicle sales.
	
NRC represents 1,500 supply chain company members, who collectively operate over 16,000 trucks throughout New Zealand.	Rural Contractors NZ represents over 600 members employing 2,500-3,000 staff and contributing over \$2 billion to GDP.
 Transporting New Zealand is a national association representing over 1,200 road freight businesses (with a combined fleet of 14,000) and supply chain partners across the country.	

Submission on considering new safety requirements for vehicles entering the NZ fleet

Introduction

- 1 Our comments focus on the proposals as they relate to heavy vehicles, unless otherwise noted.
- 2 There is nothing confidential in our submission and we permit it to be published in full.

Feature 1: automatic emergency braking – light and heavy vehicles

- 3 We consider that mandating AEB is desirable, but there needs to be clarity over what level of AEB is being mandated, as there are varying levels of maturity in source markets for heavy vehicles (the newest ‘third generation’ is cyclist-recognising AEB).
- 4 An example of the different level of technology maturity can be seen across passenger service vehicles. While the passenger transport industry would be comfortable with the mature technology seen in coaches being mandated, that would not be the case for school and urban buses. That is because the technology is less mature and less tested. World leaders in urban public transport (like Transport for London) are only now testing this feature.¹ The presence of standing passengers and different driving conditions mean NZTA should wait for confirmation this feature is safe for standing passengers before considering mandating it.
- 5 However, we don’t support AEB being mandated in NZ for applicable heavy vehicles until after it has been mandated (and thus a standard set) in all the jurisdictions from where New Zealand typically sources its heavy vehicles, i.e. Australia, Europe, Japan and USA (we note it is due to be mandated in the USA from September 2027).
- 6 Further, the ADR standard exempts omnibuses with standing passenger areas from requiring AEB, while both the ADR and UN regulations also exempt vehicles with four or more axles, and off-road vehicles. It is important that any Rule amendment recognises these standards and thus adopts the same exemptions.
- 7 Additionally, we propose that (heavy) agricultural vehicles as a class be specifically excluded from any AEB mandate, which is consistent with other jurisdictions.

Feature 2: lane keep support systems – light and heavy vehicles

- 8 We support mandating the fitment of *Lane Departure Warning* (LDW) for heavy vehicles as proposed, from a date after all key jurisdictions from where New Zealand typically sources its heavy vehicles, i.e. Australia, Europe, Japan and US, have mandated it (we observe that it is not yet mandated in the USA, so this will be problematic).

¹ <https://www.volvobuses.com/en/news-stories/stories/2025/aug/braking-new-ground-london-s-buses-to-become-smarter-and-safer.html>

- 9 Further, the ADR standard exempts vehicles with four or more axles, off-road vehicles, and omnibuses with standing passenger areas from requiring LDW systems, and so any Rule amendment should adopt the same exemptions.
- 10 We do not support mandating Lane Keep Assist (LKA) for light vehicles on the grounds that manufacturer LKA systems are too variable in functionality i.e. the technology is not yet mature.
- 11 We support mandating LDW systems for new light vehicles on the proviso a sufficient lead time is provided. We suggest this phase-in period be one year after the Rule comes into force.
- 12 It should also be made clear what rights owners have to disable this feature if significant false positives are assessed to be creating a greater risk of driver distraction than the benefits accruing from leaving the feature functioning, i.e. that disabled LDW won't trigger a CoF failure.

Feature 3: electronic stability control – heavy vehicles

- 13 We support mandating ESC for heavy vehicles entering the NZ fleet, but with no time lag for imported used heavy vehicles on the basis that ESC has been mandatory in Japan (the main source market for used vehicles) for some time. The safety benefit does not merit a time lag for used import trucks or buses on the basis that they will remain in the NZ fleet for many years and to delay the introduction of ESC for used heavy commercials would delay the safety benefits by permitting older used-imports not equipped with ESC.
- 14 As with our comments above, the applicable standards from the key source markets should be adopted into any Rule amendment. As with AEB, both the ADR and UN regulations exempt vehicles with four or more axles, and off-road vehicles, from the requirement to fit ESC, and those exemptions should also apply in NZ.

Feature 4: anti-lock braking systems – heavy vehicles

- 15 We support mandating ABS for all heavy vehicles entering the NZ fleet (including trailers), but we do not support the proposal to mandate that ABS is retrofitted to any trailers undergoing re-certification. This is on the grounds that the cost is uneconomic for older trailers that are used sparingly only as a back-up or during peak seasons, and for which re-certification may only be due to fitting a new towing coupling. This requirement would render many trailers worthless as they are not worth the cost of upgrading the brakes – and the safety benefits will be inconsequential due to their limited use.

Feature 5: acoustic vehicle alerting systems – quiet light and heavy vehicles

- 16 We support mandating this feature for vehicles entering the fleet where the source market mandates it. However, we do not support retrofitting these features as this would require a

standard to be set in the Vehicle Equipment Rule, and in the absence of a strong supporting case we do not support unnecessary disruption to and integration with factory systems and settings.

Appendix 1: Transporting New Zealand member survey on vehicle safety equipment

Results of an online survey of Transporting New Zealand members from 3 November to 21 November, with 190 responses. Survey questions asked about the fitment rates of various safety equipment to new heavy vehicles purchased or ordered since January 2023, and opinions on mandating this technology to heavy vehicles entering the fleet.

1. Of new motorised heavy vehicles (excl. trailers) purchased since January 2023, only 50% of respondents said all new purchases were equipped with AEB. 20% of respondents said none were fitted with AEB.
2. 27% of respondents said none of their new heavy motorised vehicles were equipped with Lane Departure Warning, while 35% said all vehicles were fitted with it.
3. For ESC, 52% of respondents said all new heavy motorised vehicles purchased since January 2023 were equipped with it, versus 18% saying no vehicles had it.
4. For ABS however, 77% of respondents said all new purchases were equipped with it and only 2.75% said it wasn't fitted to any.
5. Similarly, for new heavy trailers ordered or purchased since January 2023, 81% said all new trailers were equipped with ABS, and 7.45% said none were.
6. 68% of respondents supported mandating AEB vs. 32% opposed. Comments on this included:
 - AEB not available in all new trucks
 - Not all AEB is equal because some can activate in non-emergency situations creating a more dangerous road safety situation
 - Too many false braking events and unreliable
 - Support provided it can be turned off in certain situations
 - Not suitable when carrying livestock, not made for NZ conditions and roads
 - Sometimes the sensor picks up objects that are not a hazard then the system will apply the brakes on the truck which then causes more of a hazard for following vehicles
 - On rural roads it is a hazard in itself. Large signs on corners or a vehicle parked on the side of the road on a corner it will automatically apply brakes
 - More work required by certain truck brands to make the AEB less sensitive on rural roads as we have problems where harsh braking is applied at low speed and is a hazard
7. Support for mandating Lane Departure Warning on heavy vehicles was more neutral with 52% in favour and 48% opposed. Comments included:
 - This system is the first thing most drivers deactivate before setting off. It does not work on our narrow winding roads
 - Annoying and unreliable with faults
 - This system on NZ roads is defective. Lots of NZ roads are narrow and have white lines that our trucks have to exceed to get around corners

- This safety feature does not work on trucks in NZ. In fact it malfunctions enough that it causes a safety risk from distraction.
 - Not a hard no, however the operator must be permitted to shut the system down for certain trips as many NZ roads are too narrow to justify its use, and constant warnings lead to distracted and frustrated drivers, which I believe could contribute to an accident.
 - Fatigue and sleep apnoea is a growing concern; we are seeing more cases and again anything that can help drivers and dispatchers alerted to possible issues is a good thing.
8. 73.5% of respondents supported mandating ESC on new heavy vehicles, and 27.5% opposed it. Typical comments included:
- ESC has been proven to reduce rollovers in heavy vehicles
 - support with option of turning it off when required in certain situations, in certain back country road and off-road situations this can be a disadvantage
 - This makes it hard when new vehicles need alterations to comply with some of NZ's rules such as having to increase decrease a vehicles wheelbase to suit some of regulations
 - while most European systems work well American brands don't and can slam the brakes on in critical spaces which can cause an accident, more fine tuning required
9. There was strong support for mandating ABS on new motorised heavy vehicles, with 87% in favour and 13% opposed. There were fewer comments on this, best summed up by the comment: *"If something is coming in the country now and it isn't fitted with ABS, then it shouldn't be coming."*
10. Support for mandating ABS on new heavy trailers was similar, with 91% support and 9% opposed. General feedback was that respondents thought it was already mandated, with this comment generally summing it up: *"Again another great safety feature that works well on NZ roads."*
11. However, support for retrofitting ABS on existing trailers if they were getting their brakes re-certified was mixed, with 53% in favour and 47% opposed. Feedback included:
- not financially viable option for most old trailers in use
 - the cost could cripple a rebuild for a trailer that is needed for parts of the year --i.e. summer silage hay season -- but otherwise sits for the rest of the year
 - yes, if going through a recert as this will deter old trailers being used and update the fleet over time
 - stick with grandfather rights to give those that have trailers that don't do much work an option to upgrade without being forced to add ABS, most operators will most likely upgrade to EBS/ABS anyway
 - not unless NZTA are going to pay for it... we have multiple low use trailers doing seasonal rural work that we would be better off writing off if we had to make those sorts of changes. Not economical
 - I have retro fitted EBS systems to older trailers it is a 5-8k cost for some trailers it wouldn't be worth it for the use they get
 - this will make many low km trailers redundant-worthless. these are trailers that only work in local area and often left loaded on site/swap type systems

- A lot of older trailers in fleets that do minimal work that simply do not justify the investment. Mandate all new, and encourage older fleet where appropriate
12. 70% of respondents supported acoustic vehicle alerting systems being fitted to new electric and hybrid heavy vehicles, with 30% opposed. Feedback included:
- at lower speeds, yes
 - support a mandate for this at low speeds, provided the sound levels and types are strictly regulated to minimise unnecessary noise pollution
 - have had electric cars approach without being aware of them so this could be a positive step
13. Some free-form comments from the survey included:
- I'm all for safety, but the more safety devices added to trucks becomes a distraction and drivers can become fatigue trying to avoid warning buzzes going off and what's being recorded rather than just concerning on driver. Stop and think of all the pressures being put on driver's every day. It's become overwhelming
 - While I fully support some systems such as ABS, I believe most of these systems are designed to compensate for poorly trained or poorly educated drivers. Surely proper driver education, and stricter licensing criteria (for both light and heavy vehicles) would be a more effective, and cost efficient way of making our roads safer
 - Not all safety features are compatible with NZ roads and not all safety features actually create a safer environment. Please only mandate those systems that are proven to work
 - the reliability and repairability of these systems can lead to delayed diagnostic and repair times. I believe it is essential that consideration be made of this and reasonable allowances made for the vehicles to be operated with compromised systems while faults are diagnosed and/or repaired
 - I would also support mandating reversing cameras on new metro trucks
 - Has there been any thought to follow EU GSR which mandates Driver Drowsiness and Attention Warning for all new vehicles?
 - All these devices are great when new but as with any electronics in a vehicle and especially vehicles operating in harsher environments (i.e. rural conditions) as they get out of warranty these devices start producing issues which can be costly and time consuming to rectify