

View this email in your browser



www.qtlc.com.au

# Newsletter January 2025



Welcome to 2025 - its going to be a big one!
QTLC has captured some of the latest on strategic Qld transport issues for you in our ensuing newsletter.
Like you, we're hoping that despite sticky inflationary and USD/AUD rates placing pressure on consumers and businesses, the news isn't all bad.
Many of our commodities, particularly our primary industry sector are in good shape, albeit exposed to global trade influences.
The US is providing Australia with a fascinating view of what happens when a country steps back from renewables, EVs, diversity, equity and inclusion policies and more.
Locally, we are seeing leadership changes within the NHVR with Sal departing after a long tenure, and some others also which will be reported on, however we are confident a new set of pragmatic leaders is ready for the task.
The issues above all have a bearing on the performance and viability of Australia's industries, and the transport and logistics sectors who support them, and of which we are deeply embedded.

## Industry Updates

### Bruce Highway

If, somehow, the holidays absorbed you completely and you missed this announcement, **\$7.2 billion has been committed by the Feds** to raise the base level of safety across all of the Bruce's minimum three-star standard.

### Wondering why everyone is talking chickpeas?

There's been a buzz word on rail, road and in ports for six months or so now – and it is 'chickpeas.'

Last year, in response to droughts in Asia, India suspended its hefty tariff on any chickpeas received in country by 31 March 2025. For Australian grain growers, this presented a once-a-decade opportunity for profits given the high value of chickpeas. But as anyone in transport knows, moving such a potentially large and heavy crop in a short space of time can be challenging – that's why QTLC pulled disparate portions of the Queensland supply chain together in August at a workshop aimed at sharing the facts, issues and opportunities to improve transport of a looming mega-crop.



The workshop resulted in industry players cataloguing their ideas for supply chain improvements through a discussion paper penned by QTLC. The report was used by many to communicate within the supply chain and get ahead of a potentially difficult transport task. Players like the Port of Brisbane, Grain Growers Limited, AgForce, Port of Townsville, Gladstone Ports and GrainCorp writing to agencies like DTMR, Cross River Rail, QR and the NHVR to implement concessions articulated in the report. The requests were ultimately all declined due to safety concerns and progress on the harvest transportation has been tracked in fortnightly meetings coordinated by DAF.

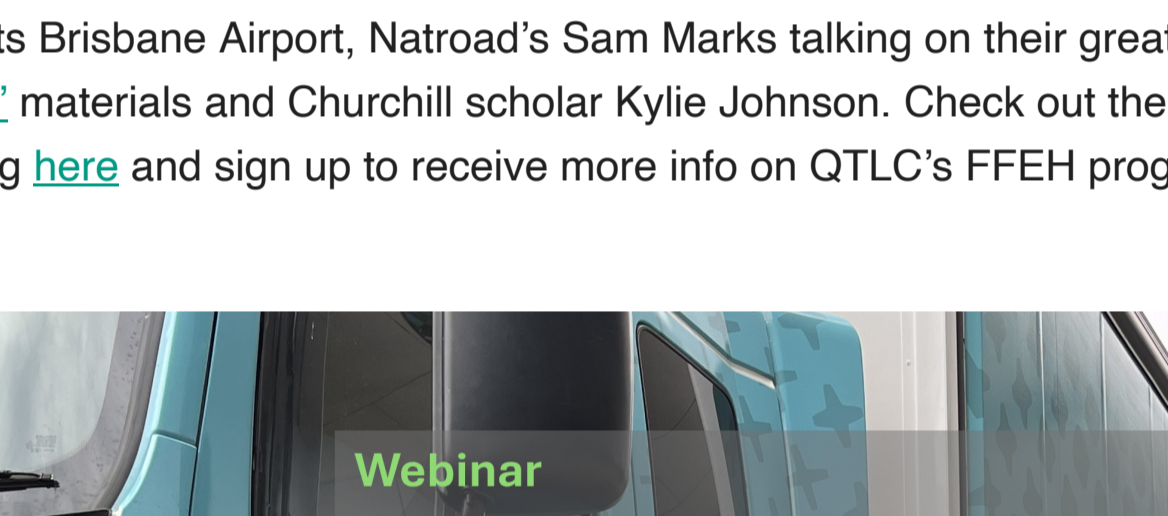
The wrap? The good news is that near-perfect weather meant that yield was significant. The Queensland harvest is all done and making its way to various ports both in Queensland and NSW. The transport task appears to be smooth, albeit there is agreement that it has been expensive, at various points incredibly inefficient and there is always a need to continue to improve safety of a freight task of this size. The exercise also shone a light on the factors at play within agencies regarding access and regional issues and regional trends. This provides us with a basis for looking at long-term improvements post-harvest. QTLC and DAF have agreed to host a workshop in February for this purpose.

## Class 1 HVAMS Project

Late last year, QTLC attended a workshop for Port of Brisbane operators on the impending new **Class 1 Heavy Vehicle Access Regime Program**. It was the first time we've heard a tentative deadline for the program's implementation – mid 2025 – so operators posed an array of questions to TMR about what access and transition will entail. A recurring theme from the workshop was the request to get access to a 'soft' version of the access regime well prior to launch given there is no visibility from wider industry about what bridge access is affected, how and what alternative routes are available. TMR has committed to considering this request.

QTLC is currently compiling a summary list of the issues raised by industry along with potential solutions for consideration of TMR – please ping out if you wish to contribute.

In the meantime, if you're not already subscribed to TMR's update emails on this important project make sure you do so (email [Revised\\_Class\\_1\\_Vehicle\\_Access\\_Regime@tmr.qld.gov.au](mailto:Revised_Class_1_Vehicle_Access_Regime@tmr.qld.gov.au)). QTLC will be publicising any further info about industry workshops and information on the project.



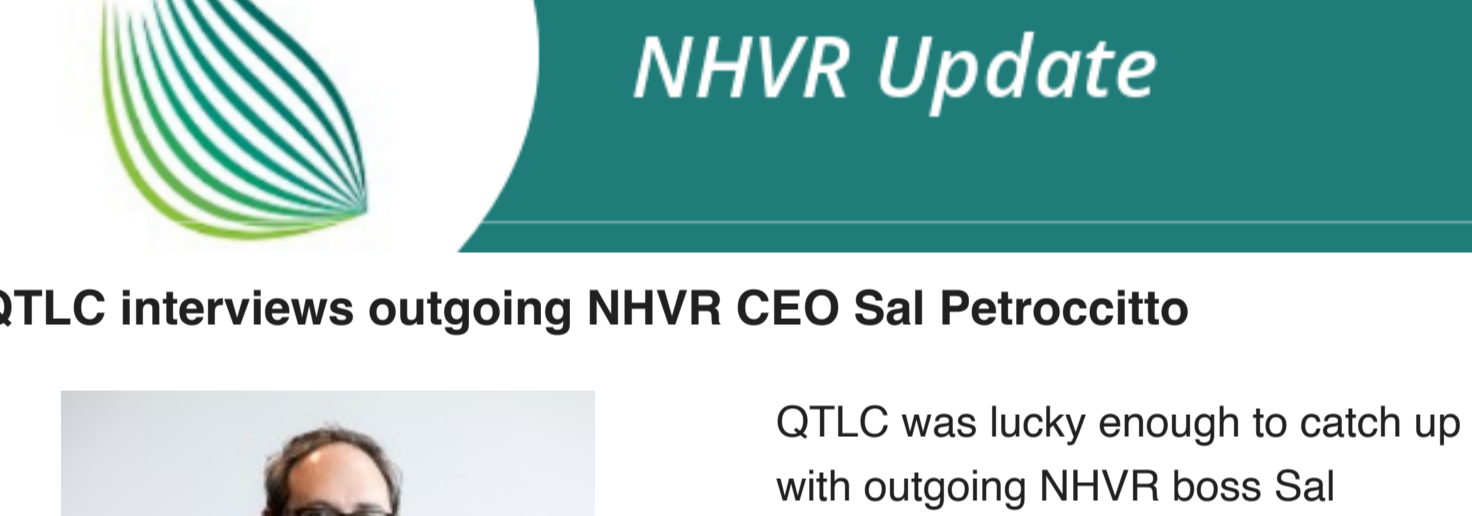
It was a busy few months for QTLC's Future Freight Energy Hub (FFEH) program with our second drive day – for the [Toowoomba Surat Basin Enterprise up at the Toowoomba Showgrounds](#).

### EVENT PROGRAM

**MAKE IT HAPPEN PANEL**  
Address a panel of industry experts who will expand on the key practical aspects of how to make low emission trucks work in your application.

**FEEL THE WHEELS**  
Attendees will then have the opportunity to ride in a selection of zero emission trucks.

We also ran another successful and well-attended webinar 'Accelerating Zero Emission Truck Adoption in Australia' featuring speakers from FFEH grant recipients Brisbane Airport, Natroad's Sam Marks talking on their great ['Get Fleet Fit'](#) materials and Churchill scholar Kylie Johnson. Check out the recording [here](#) and sign up to receive more info on QTLC's FFEH program [here](#).



### QTLC interviews outgoing NHVR CEO Sal Petrocitto

QTLC was lucky enough to catch up with outgoing NHVR boss Sal Petrocitto whose legacy at NHVR will be missed by many.

Sal shared with us some insights into his time at NHVR and the outstanding issues facing the freight sector...

**1. With over 10 years at the helm of the NHVR, what achievement/s are you proudest of during this period?**  
After nearly 11 years with the NHVR, it's safe to say we have reached many significant milestones over the years. While it would be impossible to touch on them all, there are certainly a few standout achievements I know will have long-lasting benefits for our heavy vehicle industry.

This year marked 10 years since the NHVR began enforcing the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), revolutionising Australia's heavy vehicle industry and road network. During this time, we have built on the work of jurisdictions, collaborating with a diverse range of stakeholders to make genuine progress for the industry.

**2. What do you see as the biggest issue facing the heavy vehicle transport sector in the next 10 years, and what advice do you have for industry in facing it?**  
The NHVR recognises there are several challenges the heavy vehicle industry will face into the future. These include balancing a growing freight task while ensuring fatigue is effectively managed, working to reduce Australia's road toll, addressing environmental and health impacts, shifting from asset preservation to optimisation, navigating unplanned disruptions to the supply chain, and driver shortages.

**3. Having worked in local, state and federal governments now, what have been the lessons you've taken from each?**  
It is a great privilege to have had the opportunity to work with all levels of government. I must say, working with local government really does give you a grass roots view of things and a great grounding. State government can and do achieve many positive outcomes, but as a national regulator it is always important to remember that Australia is bigger than any one state. At a federal level, the opportunity really does exist to achieve national outcomes, but it's 'bloody' hard work. What is common across all three levels is to know your customer, understand them and their needs, listen and be transparent in your decision making.

**4. Like NHVR, industry sees enormous potential in the PBS scheme to drive continued efficiency – especially if freight volumes continue to increase. But for a cash-strapped state government a limited money for infrastructure upgrades, access hasn't always been granted. What advice do you have for all government and industry seeking to balance these challenges?**  
As industry knows, at the NHVR, we have always been firmly committed to the development of a safer and more productive heavy vehicle fleet. Despite the benefits of being the safest, most productive, and least polluting vehicles in Australia, PBS vehicles do face more barriers to get on the road than a standard 'prescriptive' heavy vehicle. As a result, we are seeing opportunities to reduce crashes and emissions, while increasing productivity, being lost. It's also no secret that PBS vehicles must go through potentially expensive design approval and road access processes to get on the road. My advice for industry and government is to work with the NHVR to update the HVNL, so we can change PBS standards. This would provide greater flexibility in updating them and allow us to keep up with improvements in safety technology. The PBS scheme needs to be modernised, and one of the best ways we can do this, is to change the HVNL.

**5. Because at QTLC we're big believers in getting freight on rail rather than road we're keen to hear if you have any insights on the opportunities for this in Queensland?**  
As you know in a previous life, I was strongly advocating for the right modal balance and still believe rail can play a larger role in moving freight. What I have seen over the past ten years is the heavy vehicle industry being much more innovative in the way it tackles moving freight. While this maybe a little more difficult in rail, it is something which may help. For the record I'm a big supporter of rail and would like to see it play a role moving forward.

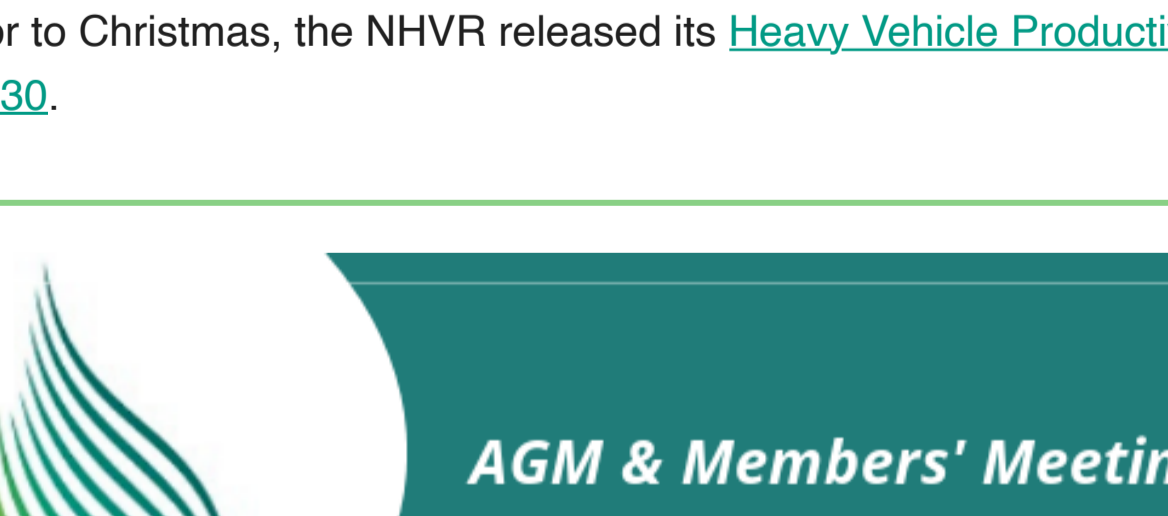
**6. What 3 things are you most looking forward to when you hang up your NHVR boots come January?**  
First and foremost, I look forward to spending some quality time with my family. While my journey as CEO has been extremely rewarding, it has also meant I have been kept very busy for the past 11 years!  
Following this, I look forward to whatever the future holds for me in my career. I am excited for a new challenge.

### NHVR calls for submissions for heavy vehicle safety grant program

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) has opened submissions for Round 10 of the Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, to fund new industry-led heavy vehicle safety projects.

The NHVR is calling for applicants who have a project addressing an existing safety gap or issue for the heavy vehicle industry and all road users. Project submissions are open to any group or individual involved in Australia's heavy vehicle industry or across the wider supply chain that have a project, program, or campaign that will increase compliance and promote safety on our roads.

Submissions close on **5pm AEST Monday 17 February 2025**. The application form and guidelines, which detail eligibility and the submission process, are available at [www.nhvr.gov.au](http://www.nhvr.gov.au)



Days before Christmas, the ACCC released its [Container Stevedoring Monitoring Report for FY 2023/24](#) which includes some interesting insights.

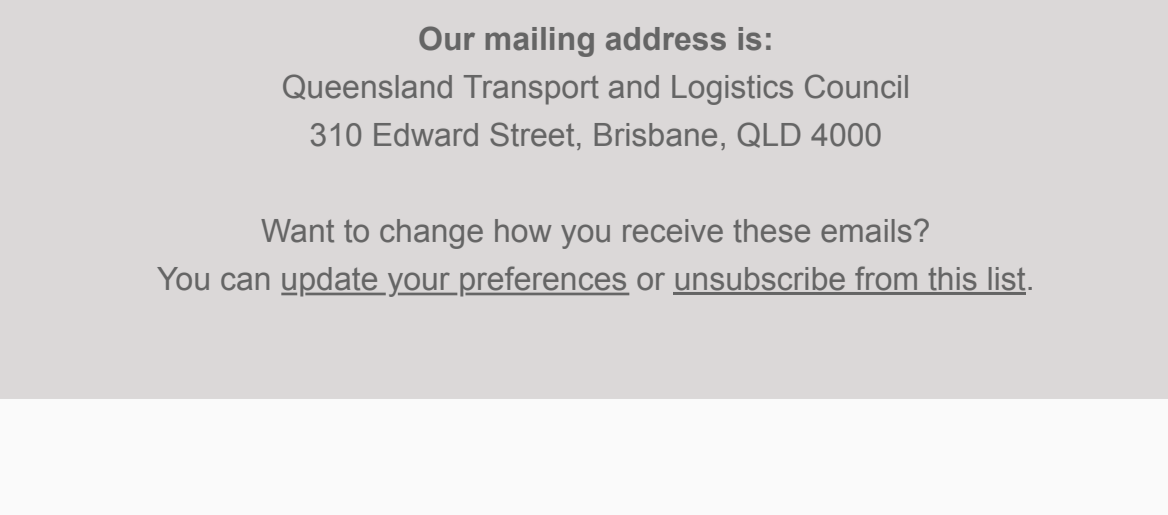
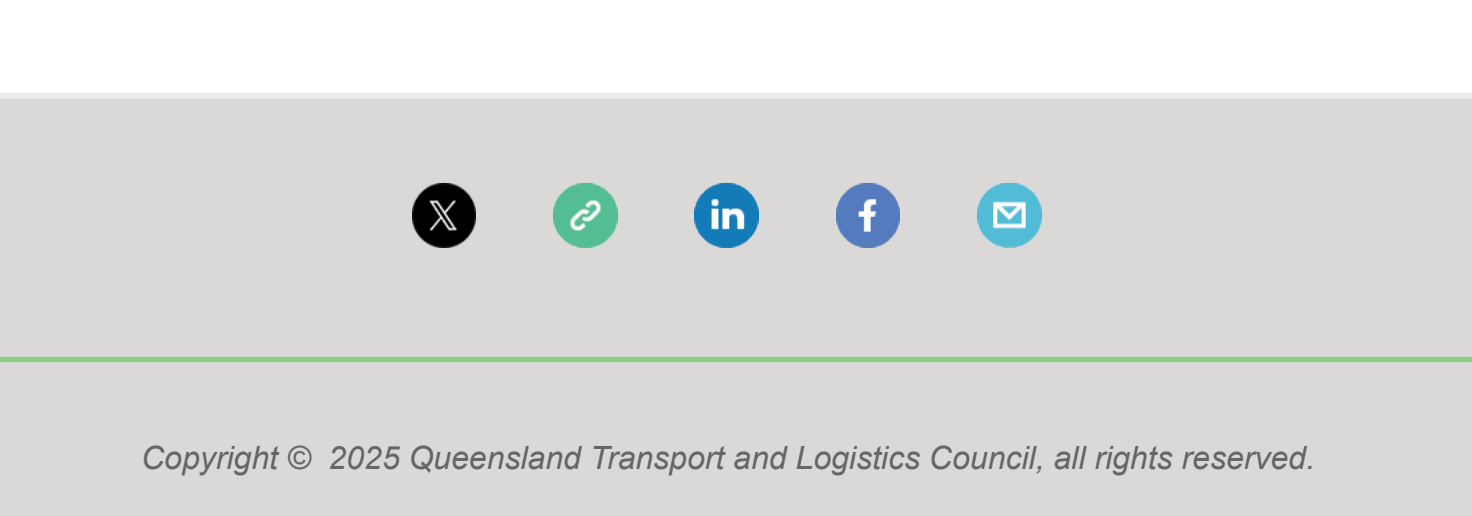
[Queensland Major Projects Pipeline Report](#) by QMCA provides a good 5-year insight into our major engineering and construction projects along with regional insights so as to plan transport opportunities and potential disruptions.

Just prior to Christmas, the NHVR released its [Heavy Vehicle Productivity Plan 2025-2030](#).



Thanks to our members, QR and guest speakers from the National Transport Commission, National Trunk Rail and Port of Brisbane for their insights at our 2024 AGM and members meeting.

Our annual formalities were followed by a set of practical discussion on the opportunities for rail freight in SEQ. This was topped off by a behind-the-scenes tour of QR's Rail Management Centre (RMC) conducted by some clever and committed QR staff.



- [Lion H2 Energy Information Day](#), Port of Brisbane, 5th February
- [Livestock and Rural Transporters Association of Queensland Annual Conference](#) 13 – 15 February 2025: Gold Coast
- QTLC-DAFO Post-harvest Chickpea Transportation meeting, Port of Brisbane, 20<sup>th</sup> February
- [QTLC Exclusive Site Tour](#) – 6th March – limited entry invites coming soon.
- [Brisbane Truck Show](#), Brisbane, 15<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> May.
- [ITS Australia Summit 2025](#) is coming to the Gold Coast – 19<sup>th</sup>-21 November.

