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## Newsletter January 2026



2026 stands to be another big year for Queensland freight in terms of both volume, change and the way that the supply chain must adapt.

It's only mid-January, but we've already seen the significant impact of rain in northwest Queensland causing extensive road damage as well as outages on rail, including the essential North Coast Line – kudoo to QR for getting the line back open with the aid of some pre-season planning of ballast and equipment. However, even with this wise pre-planning, remote communities and local business have been cut off again and are now rightly asking to build back better after this wet season. Proactive regions like TMR's CW are responding and in the last week have pulled together a case (OTLC supporting it) for a roads betterment package. The resilience of Queensland's supply chains was key for many of the industry experts that were interviewed as part of Queensland's new Freight Delivery Plan (which is due for release this year) – more on that later in the newsletter.

This year, OTLC will be continuing our focus on growing freight tasks that haven't yet got themselves the solutions they need – and which pose a significant risk to other parts of the supply chain – the energy transition, eg, the looming 2032 games and how we do all of this in the most productive way possible. At the heart of our ability to deliver change is the input of our members and stakeholders – please do drop myself or OTLC Directors a line to discuss how we ensure you are part of the solution.

Lauren

## Industry Updates

### Investment boost for local beef industry

Late last year, the Central Queensland beef industry saw a significant funding boost via the release of the Central Queensland Beef Roads Investment Strategy (COBRIS).

A first of its kind, the COBRIS is a 10-year plan to progressively seal sections of nine unsealed beef roads under the jointly funded \$500 million [Central Queensland Beef Roads program](#), with delivery of the \$47.5 million early works package already underway. This is a well-supported initiative developed by TMR in partnership with the Australian Government, and refined through a group comprising seven regional councils, and key stakeholders including transport operators and primary producers.

### QUBE Heavy Tour

On a warm December day, OTLC joined with industry leaders for a site tour of QUBE Heavy Lift's Renewables Hub at the Port of Brisbane.

With a crew comprising WSP, Port of Brisbane, Qld Renewable Energy Council (QREC), TMR, NHVR, Infrastructure Association Queensland and Treasury Queensland it was a great opportunity for those involved in these growing OSOM loads to see things up close and personal.

In the words of QREC's CEO, it is load and clear that BaU won't see even the current energy infrastructure projects delivered – and that with 2027 shaping as a crunch point, the next 12 months is critical for reform to ensure efficient and safe network. The group discussed key issues to reform being reviews of pilot and escort policies, OSOM corridors and the need for a targeted community safety campaign to safeguard all road users.

### The Long March to HML on Super Singles - an update

Super single tyres, as an alternative to dual tyres, can provide cost savings to the road transport industry through reduced tare weights, fuel consumption, and tyre wear. However, wide single tyres are often stated to produce more pavement wear than dual tyres, for the same axle load. Quantification of this allegedly increased pavement wear of wide single tyres, relative to dual tyres, is necessary in order to seek a balance between increased savings to the transport industry, and increased costs to road managers.

When compared to dual-tired vehicles, those fitted with super-single tyres demonstrate enhanced roll stability and thus reduced safety risks. Furthermore, increased productivity allows more freight to be carried safely, resulting in fewer trips for the same freight task. This reduction in heavy vehicle trips decreases road exposure and promotes safer freight movement overall.

While the widespread adoption of wide single tyres in place of dual tyre configurations has occurred in Europe and the USA, the existing regulations in Australia limit a wider adoption of these tyres as the maximum axle loads for axle groups fitted with super single tyres is reduced and these axle groups are not eligible for axle load concessions under higher mass limits (HML).

In addition, the Australian regulations have not changed and don't consider the significant changes and developments in tyre technology. In this context, a super-single tyre is defined as a tyre with a section width of at least 375mm. For instance, a tandem axle group fitted with a single tyre with a section width at least 375mm but less than 450mm is allowed to carry 13.3t while the same group fitted with dual tyre can carry 16.5t regardless of the tyre widths.

In addition, Vehicle Standards Bulletin 11 (VSB11) states that a road-friendly suspension (RFS) must be fitted with dual tyres. This prevents axles with single tyres from being certified as RFS, and subsequently excludes an axle fitted with single tyres from operating at HML. The PBS Scheme provides a legislative framework for demonstrating the operational safety of PBS vehicles fitted with super single tyres as they are assessed against specific safety and infrastructure standards.

Under the PBS scheme, combinations fitted with super single tyres and exceeding the existing legislative limits can obtain a mass exemption. The table below summarises the maximum allowable masses under this exemption for axle groups fitted with super-single tyres (with a section width of at least 375mm)

	GML (t)	CML (t)	HML (t)
Single	9.0	9.0	9.0
Tandem	16.5	17.0	17.0
Tri	20.0	21.0	22.5
	GML (t)	QML (t)	
Quad	20.0	27.0	

As a condition of obtaining of a mass exemption, a suspension fitted with super-single tyres need to comply with the performance requirements of VSB11.

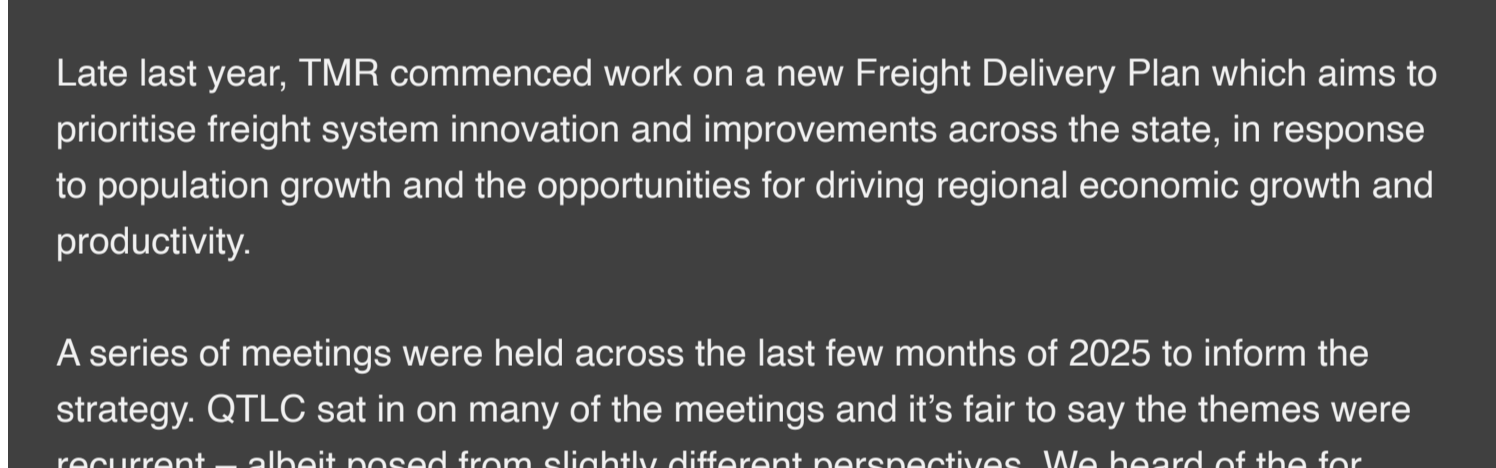
If any axle group\* fitted with super-single tyres exceeds the following limits, it must be tested to comply with the performance requirements of VSB11.

**Axle Group scheme** When operating under HML  
 Single ≥ 6.7t  
 Tandem ≥ 16.5t  
 Tri ≥ 20.0t

**Axle Group scheme** When operating under QML  
 Single ≥ 6.7t  
 Tandem ≥ 16.5t  
 Tri ≥ 20.0t  
 Quad ≥ 20.0t

\*Does not apply to steer/twinsteer axles on the hauling unit.

The NHVR is working on a discussion paper that will summarise both the benefits and the potential impacts of these tyres.



### Keeping Queensland's Safe of the Transport Network

With the festive season upon us, and drink driving involved in one in five road deaths, TMR will be re-running the StreetSmarts award-winning 'In your hands' campaign with hard hitting brews, to remind Queenslanders of the bitter consequences of drinking and driving.

Road safety is everyone's responsibility and whether you're a driver, rider, passenger, or pedestrian, every decision you make on the road has the power to save a life or take one. For more information, visit the [StreetSmarts website](#).

### 2026 Queensland Freight Plan

Late last year, TMR commenced work on a new Freight Delivery Plan which aims to prioritise freight system innovation and improvements across the state, in response to population growth and the opportunities for driving regional economic growth and productivity.

A series of meetings were held across the last few months of 2025 to inform the strategy. OTLC sat in on many of the meetings and it's fair to say the themes were recurrent – albeit posed from slightly different perspectives. We heard of the for building resilience into Queensland's road and rail networks, a desire to move beyond permits for road access, for rail to play a greater role in the future given forecast freight volumes and congestion and to align investment with growing industries.

We understand TMR are pulling together the final plan now, but if you've somehow missed input, [reach out via our website or here](#) – none of us can afford to get this wrong.

### OTLC Queensland Agricultural Industry Consultative Group

Late in 2025, OTLC established the Queensland Agricultural Industry Consultative Group up (QAICG) – a consultative body, established to facilitate communication and consultation between industry, industry peak bodies, and the Queensland Government (TMR and DPI). Like the government, we see agriculture as one of Queensland's fast-growing opportunities – and there is much improvement to be made in its often complex supply paths.

The QAICG focuses on the growing demands of the freight task in Queensland of the grain and cotton industries. It will work toward gaining efficiencies through strategy and projects and adopt a holistic approach to manage the movement of freight in a way that supports economic prosperity of the agricultural sector in a sustainable manner.

Chaired by OTLC's Andrew Rankine, in its two meetings thus far, the group has provided a platform for innovation (such as Port of Townsville's bulk loading of chickpeas), discussed opportunities for specific rail and road improvements (from operators including Watco and also [peak bodies such as Grain Growers Limited](#)) and has started to shape up projects for redressing [grain issues](#).

If you would like to be involved in this group please [contact me](#).



### OTLC Interviews Matt Hollamby, Patrick

Last month OTLC interviewed Matt Hollamby (arguably Patrick Terminal's proudest and most ardent ambassador). Matt current manages the Patrick Brisbane Autostrad Terminal and is known in the Port community as a passionate and capable leader, whose desire for innovation has led to a world-leading terminal facility. Matt's industry insight and his generosity with sharing his time to better all of industry prompted us to ask him a few pertinent questions...

**Patrick, what are the biggest successes you've seen on the wheel in Australia and at Patrick?**

- **Investor readiness for things that have changed profoundly across the industry in 2025.** – The focus on safety. This is a real and clearly held belief at every level of our business. It is not negotiable. Our Home Safety Everyday mantra has stood the test of time, and we are constantly looking for ways to improve the safety of our employees. This is challenging as we work shifts from around the world, of differing climates and configurations. As we are fond of saying, our workplace changes every shift every day as we work different vessels, thus requiring situational awareness, well understood operational procedures, and a shared approach to keeping people safe.
- **The systemisation of our operations through e-commerce, remote control, and automation.** We have introduced process characteristics into terminal stevedoring that have changed the face of the industry. Not just the obvious – the fact that the paddle carriers are now automated – but other steps, such as the electronic transfer of import and export paperwork, and access to online booking systems to interface with the terminal. I started at a time when paper and pencil was still being used for RL and proforma documentation, so this has been particularly significant and beneficial in reducing errors and expediting exchange of cargo handling information.
- **The focus on our landside operations.** This is something I am very proud of. Notwithstanding recurrent (yet largely performative) angst from the usual sectional interests, the evolution of our landside operations has been a standout success. Prior to the introduction of vehicle booking systems trucks would queue for hours outside terminals, at huge cost and impact on efficiency and asset use. Through adoption of booking systems, enhancement of gate processes (optical character recognition cameras) and now automated truck handling, we have been able to deliver specific class truck turn times (notwithstanding considerable growth in cargo volume. The schematic below – delivered to a recent PBC Landside Logistics Forum – says it all, there have been around the world and here ever since a port environment in which the road transport operators, and by extension shippers, are so fully accommodated as in Australia. Ask any long-term road transport operator, their engagement with the terminal now bears no resemblance to how it was in the dark days before the orderly management of the truck terminal interface.



[Click here to read full article](#)

### NHVR's new Education Bulletins

The NHVR has released a series of educational bulletins designed to support current training activities with the trucking industry. The bulletins highlight key areas of focus identified during recent audits of RTOs, and they aim to reinforce critical aspects of compliance, safety, and operational practices within the heavy vehicle industry.

The bulletins are intended to provide clarity on repeat issues that arose across multiple assurance activities with existing RTOs and fatigue core competency training. They aim to strengthen industry understanding of regulatory requirements and improve overall safety standards. It was noted that Primary duty / Chain of Responsibility although not a part of fatigue competency came up multiple times during the audits and training content review, so the NHVR has included a bulletin to provide a basic overview of this area also.

The key areas identified were:

- [Safe Rest Breaks](#)
- [Long/Short Hours](#)
- [Fatigue Duty](#)

Each link takes you to a printable version.

## Interesting Reads

- Value of Rail - [The value of rail-2025.pdf](#)
- I thought it was just Queensland local government's lamenting the progress of Inland Rail, however Moree Plains Regional Council's new Mayor has put pressure on finalising the Narrabri to North Star section of Inland rail stating that their agricultural powerhouse of >\$1 billion of produce/year doesn't "need connection to Queensland or Brisbane to deliver value." A scary but credible concern that is shared by many in Queensland supply chains.

## Whats on in 2026

- Truck Show X – HVI's dedicated conference on decarb, transport productivity, sustainability, efficiency and safety is being held [in May 2026 in the Hunter Valley](#).
- The hard-working crew at the Australasian Rail Association will be coming to BrisVegas for their [annual networking function in June](#).
- People speak highly of the MegaTrans conference for supply chain developments – held every [second year in September in Melbourne](#).



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 Our mailing address is:  
 Queensland Transport and Logistics Council  
 310 Edward Street, Brisbane, QLD 4000

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