

LACK OF RESPECT SHOWN TO INDUSTRY VETERANS

Wage theft and exploitation rife among older drivers, writes Matt Whitnall, director, Truck Moves Australia

One of the best things about being in the truck moving business is having a crew of long term, reliable, older and experienced drivers as part of the team at Truck Moves Australia.

With a solid work ethic and trustworthiness, I know my drivers can get the job done without any fuss. And I'm happy to pay them what they are worth – they deserve it. Unfortunately, not all employers think this way.

One of the worst things about wage theft in the truck moving industry is how it affects older drivers. I'm disgusted at some of the stories I'm hearing about certain unscrupulous business owners and how they are treating older drivers:

I'm sitting on actual evidence of this exploitation and outright theft because

these drivers didn't know where else to turn.

Some older drivers feel vulnerable and unable to get better pay and conditions, so they just keep quiet and put up with being exploited for fear of losing their jobs.

Drivers need to know that the Road Transport & Distribution Award came into effect three years ago, and no matter what some bosses might say, it applies to the work they are doing right now. All drivers who move trucks should be getting:

- Award pay rates under the RTD Award
- overtime pay after 7.6 hours
- travel home and waiting time – every hour
- weekend and public holiday loading.

And of course, all operators should be providing a safe work environment and

ensuring drivers are not being pushed to meet unrealistic deadlines with unsafe driving practices.

I'm continuing to take a stand about this because it's the right thing to do for these drivers, and the industry in general. Not to mention protecting customers who contract dodgy operators and are exposed to prosecution and potential massive fines under Chain of Responsibility laws.

At Truck Moves Australia, we're encouraging any drivers who think they are being ripped off to get in touch with us. The next step is to escalate complaints to the TWU and Fair Work Australia.

These older blokes have given a lot to the industry, and they still have a lot to offer. I say we should treat them with the respect they deserve and pay them fairly. **A**