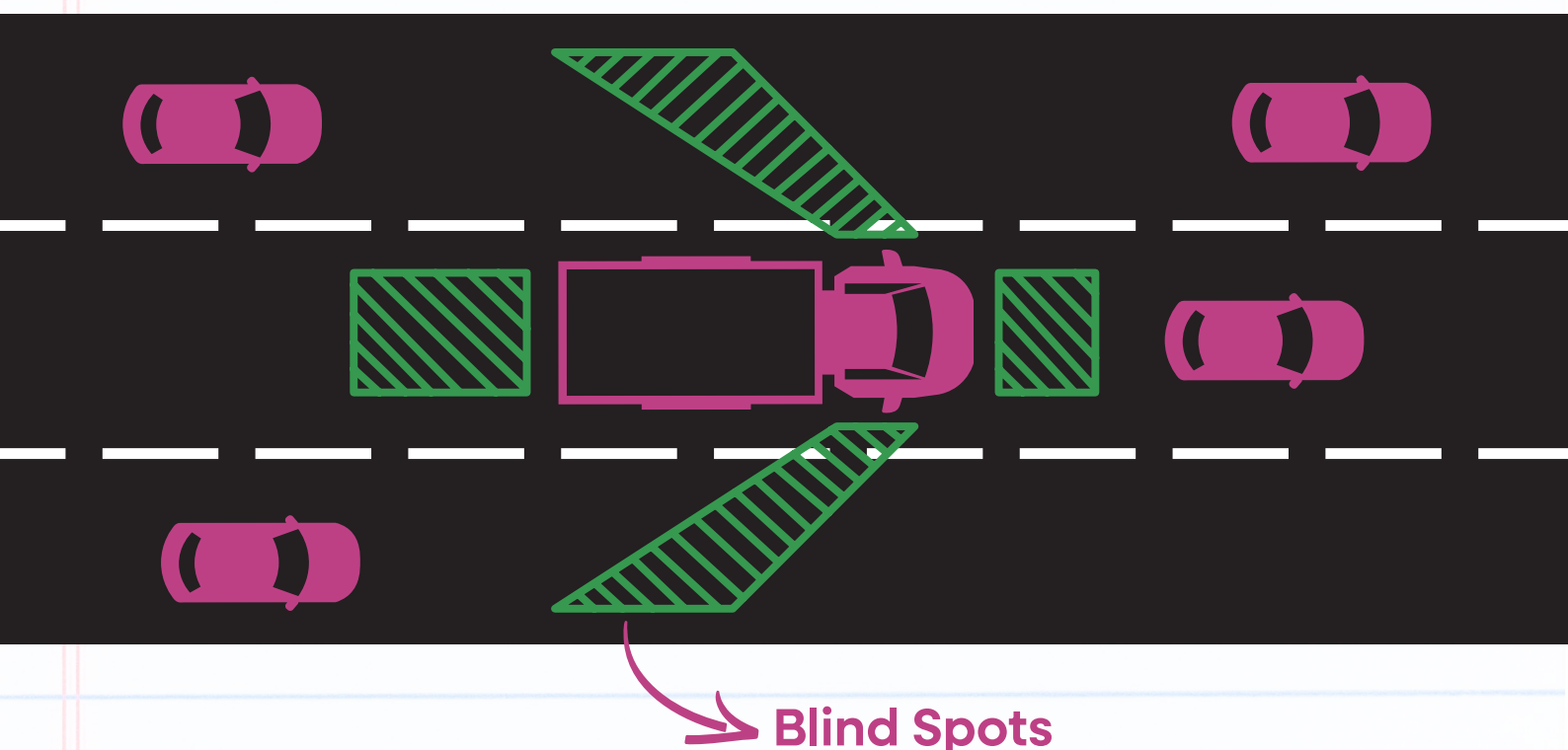


# Think big, Give space and be safe



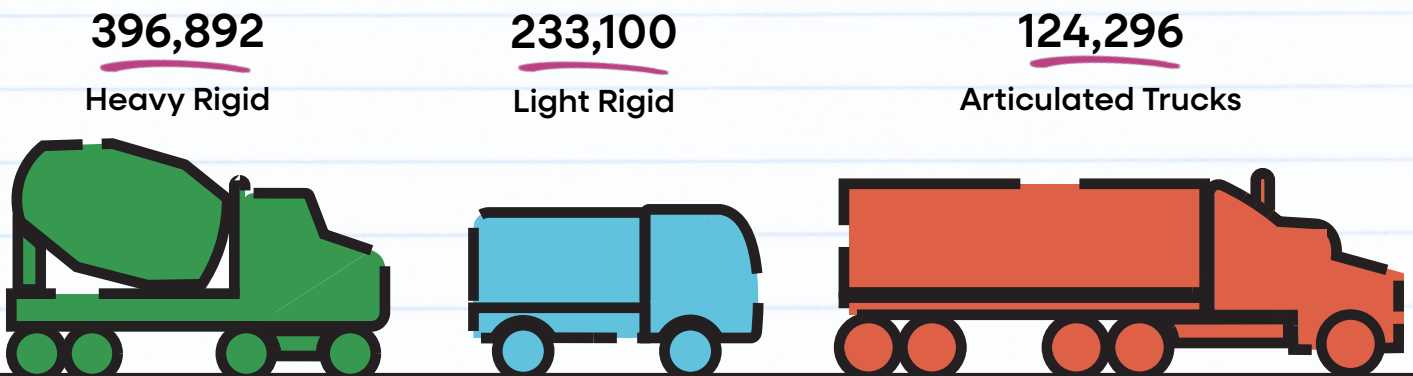
## Truck Interactions

The behaviour of light vehicle drivers can significantly impact the safety of heavy vehicle drivers, often resulting in high-risk situations. Greater awareness of heavy vehicle characteristics leads to safer interactions between road users.



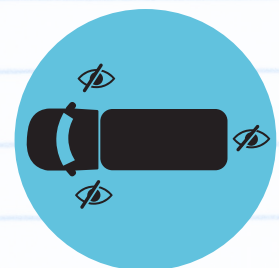
# Truck Numbers on the Rise in Australia

According to the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE), the number of trucks in Australia has grown rapidly over recent decades. As of January 31<sup>st</sup> 2024, there were 396,892 heavy rigid trucks, 233,100 light rigid trucks, and 124,296 articulated trucks registered nationwide. Light rigid trucks are the fastest-growing vehicle type, increasing by 13.7% between 2023 and 2024<sup>1</sup>.



## Key Challenges and Safety Concerns

- Driving Behaviours Near Trucks:**  
Light vehicle drivers often adjust their behaviour near trucks. Abrupt stops or slowdowns by a heavy vehicle can disrupt traffic behind it. Additionally, the size of trucks may induce stress in other drivers, causing unnecessary acceleration or deceleration<sup>2</sup>. To reduce risk, it is recommended to maintain at least a 4-second gap when driving behind a truck<sup>3</sup>.
- Blind Spots and Direct Vision:**  
Trucks have significant blind spots around the front, sides, and rear. While mirrors and cameras improve visibility, they do not eliminate these hazards. Research shows that drivers react 0.7 seconds faster when seeing a pedestrian directly rather than through mirrors or cameras<sup>5</sup>. Direct vision is critical for preventing serious injuries in urban environments<sup>4</sup>.
- Stopping Distances and Space Requirements:**  
Due to their size and weight, trucks require much longer stopping distances than light vehicles. Insufficient spacing often leads to dangerous scenarios like tailgating or cutting in front of trucks, increasing the risk of crashes<sup>6, 7</sup>. Additionally, trucks may need two lanes to execute a left turn, further complicating interactions with smaller vehicles<sup>8</sup>.

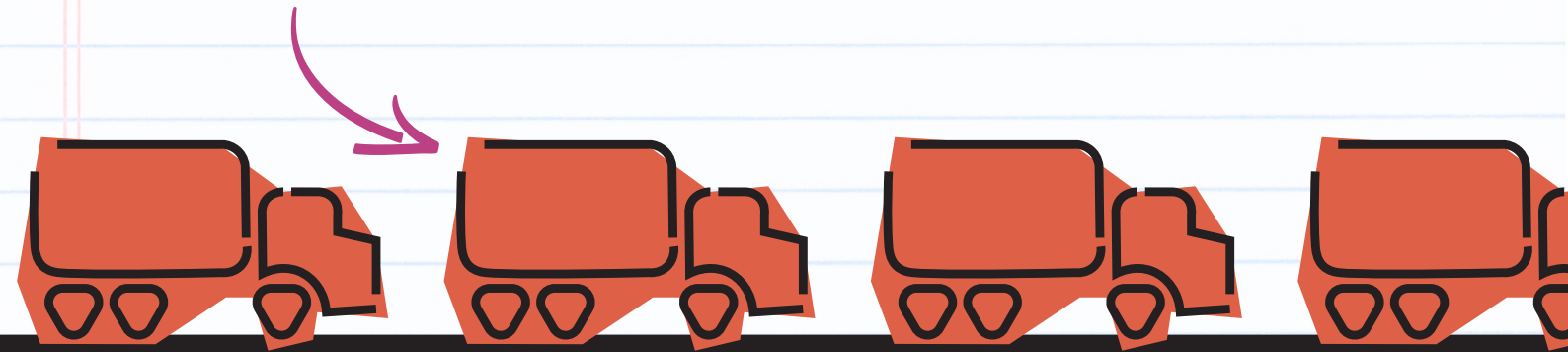


## Fatality Increase

The number of fatalities involving heavy vehicles has increased over the past decade. In 2023, there were 200 fatalities in crashes involving trucks, accounting for 16% of road deaths, an increase of 23 deaths from the previous year.



**+23**  
deaths from  
the Previous year.

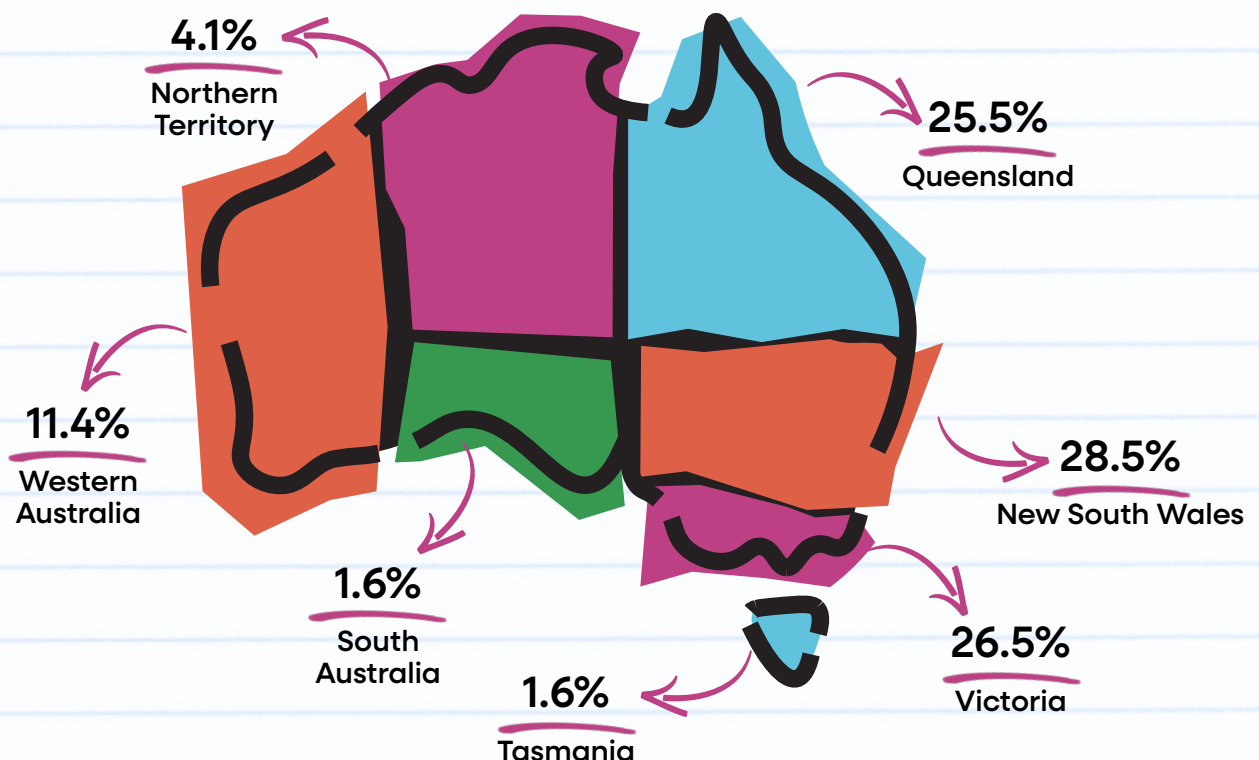


## Vehicle Fatalities by State

Most fatalities occurred in New South Wales (28.5%), Victoria (26.5%), and Queensland (25.5%)<sup>9</sup>. Following this is Western Australia (11.4%), then Northern Territory (4.1%), Tasmania (1.6%), and finally South Australia (1.6%).

With Australia's reliance on road transport for freight, addressing high-risk behaviours around heavy vehicles is essential for reducing fatalities<sup>10</sup>.

## Fatality Percentages





# Recommendations

## As a Driver



### Avoid Blind Spots

If you cannot see the truck driver in their side mirror, assume they cannot see you.



### Respect the gap in front of a truck.

Do not cut in front of trucks, especially when they maintain a 3-5 second gap. Let them pass if needed.



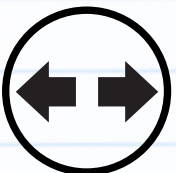
### Maintain a safe following distance.

Stay at least 4 seconds behind a truck to ensure adequate stopping distance.



### Allow extra turning room.

When a truck is manoeuvring, give them extra space as they may need to use multiple lanes to turn.



### Avoid unsafe manoeuvring and speeds around trucks.

Announce any movement with your indicator lights.



### Avoid areas with high traffic of heavy vehicles.

Such as ports, industrial zones, and large construction areas.

# Recommendations

## As a Manager



### **Educate on the characteristics and requirements of trucks.**

Compare with light vehicles and emphasise the importance of keeping a safe distance on the road and when manoeuvring.



### **Review routes and areas to minimise interactions with heavy vehicles.**

Consider using alternate paths or timings to avoid high-traffic periods commonly associated with heavy vehicle movements.



### **Reinforce the importance of professionalism.**

Emphasise that giving space is a demonstration of their expertise and professionalism, and represents the company on the road.



### **Driving safely is more than controlling the vehicle.**

It is also controlling our emotions on the road. Educate workers on the management of triggers that can cause high-risk behaviours on the road.