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December 2024



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BRIDGESTONE

From the Editor



Well, the end of the year is rushing towards us – and what a year it's been! Political change, new transport initiatives, and new technology have all played a big role. Transporting New Zealand has continued to support road freight operators and give them a helping hand in what has been a challenging business environment. In this final edition of Transporting News, which is published both online and in print, we highlight the main events of the year. You can also read about our new chair, economist Cameron Bagrie, and Outstanding Contribution by a Woman in the Road Transport Industry award winner, Shona Robertson. We also feature news about road research, solar power, the new Vehicle Booking System, and more. Wishing you and your loved ones a very Happy Christmas and every success in the New Year, from your Transporting New Zealand team. Transporting News will be back in February 2025.

David Killick
Content Editor

Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting NEW ZEALAND

Transporting News

About us

Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand is the central point of communication for the road freight transport industry. Visit the Transporting New Zealand website **here** to keep up to date on media releases, chief executive blog, submissions, and advisories.

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Email: info@transporting.nz with "magazine" in the subject line. Please note, Transporting New Zealand reserves the right to edit all material, for space, style or other reasons.

Website: transporting.nz



A truck is loaded with road shingle at Road Metals near Rolleston, in Canterbury. A new solar installation at the plant is one of the largest in the South Island, cutting energy bills and emissions. Cover photo: David Killick









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OUR ADVISORY NETWORK

Our team of advisors can be contacted with questions or concerns relating to industry issues, and our full range of member services. We treat each call confidentially and can help with all your issues, and provide a great range of member benefits.



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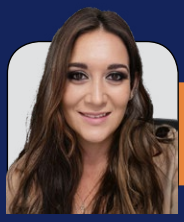

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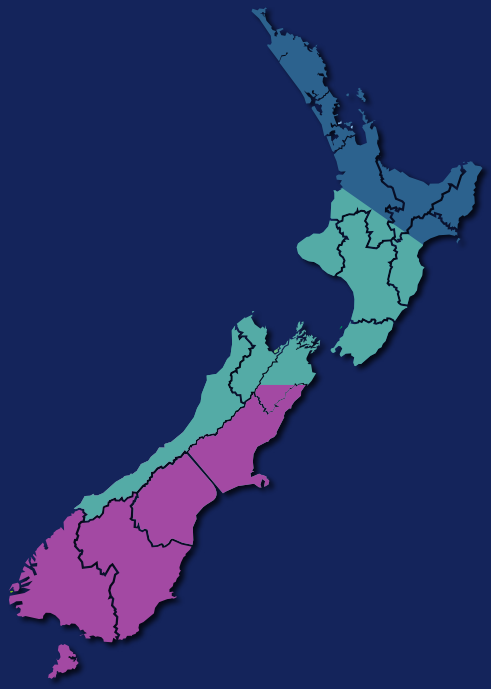

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Te Ara Aotearoa Transporting NEW ZEALAND

BUSINESS

A SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR YOUR ASSOCIATION



By Dom Kalasih

The year 2024 has been marked by significant change, with some welcome progress by the new National-led coalition government, notably an action plan for roads and new legislation to get things done.

Transporting New Zealand also notched up some notable wins. We held two successful seminars, one in Twizel in June, and the other in Napier in October. We introduced a new constitution and a single national membership structure, supported by regional branches and sector groups. It's a significant move that we believe will streamline efficiency and help give members a stronger voice.

Our new Board met in November and very quickly got into action, appointing economist Cameron Bagrie as Independent Director and Chair.

We have always been lucky to have had Boards filled with very successful, passionate, and committed people from the transport industry and they have been good fits for the time. The last few years have seen unprecedented change and the timing is now perfect to add the additional skills, experience, and knowledge that Cam will bring. (You can read about Cam and his main priorities over the page.)

Two of our previous core member associations, Central Area Road Transport Association (CARTA), and the Region Five Road Transport Association – both groups with a tremendous amount of history – are in the process of winding up. Major change is always difficult, but from my observation, the respective executives and memberships got the right balance by being brave, rational, and future-focused on what's best for the industry. It's been a long and fascinating journey to watch, and hats off to both these organisations.

Advocating for positive change

Be assured, Transporting New Zealand will continue to advocate strongly for members, supporting and contributing to initiatives where we believe they are in members' best interests and opposing them when we don't.

The government's announcement that it is refreshing New Zealand's Public Private Partnership (PPP) framework was good news. This is an important part of the government's plan to deliver, maintain, fund, and finance infrastructure in smarter ways, and to attract international capital and expertise to New Zealand projects.

Even better was the news that the new PPP framework has backing from the Opposition. Having a bi-partisan government position provides greater certainty that projects can be delivered.

The introduction of fast-track legislation, while controversial, was the right move because it will speed up much-needed infrastructure work. Even so, many projects are going to take some time.

I enjoyed a presentation at the NZTA National Freight Forum on what NZTA is doing differently to make our roads better, like using asphalt rather than chip seal, and incorporating drainage under the shoulder.

I was left thinking that NZTA has really taken onboard that whatever was being done before hasn't been working as well as it should, so it's doing things differently to make that better. To me, that's a really good change with a huge upside for everyone.

Roading still a huge issue

This summer there will be a record number of roadworks around New Zealand. Improvements are much needed, but they will be disruptive. For example, the Desert Road



Stay safe out there! Dashcam footage shows terrifying near miss between two trucks and car on Desert Rd - NZ Herald

will be closed for about two months early next year while a major programme of work between Piarere and Waiouru is completed. NZTA's approach of closing the whole road is new, and it's been done this way because it thinks it can complete the work faster and safer. We have been supportive of a "short-term pain for long-term gain" approach but clearly it comes with considerable inconvenience and cost to road users. Let's hope the work is done on budget, on time, and lasts its design life.

Doing a "back of the envelope" analysis, the additional time for trucks equates to about $6m of direct additional costs, and ultimately we hope operators impacted are able to recoup that off their clients.

What is perhaps less appreciated, is that an average additional 30 minutes equates to about 24,000 man hours of lost productivity over the two months. Filling this gap by taking on additional drivers could be a bigger challenge for transport companies than recouping the direct additional costs.

Our new Board Chair has shared his concern about our country's low productivity. I think, in some cases, we need to challenge ourselves as to whether we and other parties in supply chains are giving this due consideration.

Time and again our industry has shown great levels of resilience and regardless of what's thrown at us, we still find a way to make sure freight gets where it needs to, and ultimately I suspect this occasion will be no different.

Where is the money for roading improvements coming from? The 2024 to 2027 NLTP forecasts net RUC income of being $6.7 billion, and while light vehicles also pay RUC, the vast majority of RUC is paid by heavy vehicles. Make no mistake: Our industry pays the lion's share for the roads. We need to make sure that this money is spent wisely and well. However, we also agree that new funding sources will be needed, which is why we support toll roads in some cases – but not everywhere: for example, we opposed tolls for the Manawatū-Tararua highway, Te Ahu a Turanga as this was not a new road; in effect it was a just a replacement of the Manawatū Gorge road.

Work health and safety a concern

New Zealand's health and safety performance lags behind Australia and the UK. The five-year average fatality rate to 2024 remains much higher than in Australia (1.6 times) or in the UK (6.4 times). Given that context, we believe significant improvements need to be made.

Transport of road freight is typically just one link in most supply chains, and when other parties in the supply chain act without due consultation, that can cause adverse impacts on road transport operators. We hope that will change.

We have continued to do proactive work in the form of rollover prevention courses, which have been held around the country. These are free and we plan to hold more next year, so make sure, if you haven't already taken part, you sign up for one of these valuable courses.

Having polices and systems in place is only part of the management system, as the judge in a recent court case noted. It may be timely to reflect on your level of confidence in how well-embedded and effective your safety systems are.

I hope you can reflect on some positive achievements over 2024, and I wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy Christmas and a successful New Year.



BIG WINS FOR ADVOCACY

By Policy Lead Billy Clemens

As the leading voice of the road freight industry, Transporting New Zealand engages directly with local and central government to promote member priorities and concerns. Some of this is big picture stuff – successfully advocating for billions more in funding for roading maintenance and improvements in the land transport budget and national land transport programme. We also get into the detail of local transport issues – preventing excessive use of raised platforms and speed bumps, or pushing for specific cases like road widening and bridge strengthening.

This year, our team made formal submissions on more than 40 pieces of legislation, transport proposals, and operational policy changes. This was supported by over 50 press releases, and regular meetings, letters and phone calls with ministers, senior officials, and NZTA managers. We have the strongest media profile of the various road freight bodies across print, radio, television, and online media.

Some particular highlights included:

- Delivering the temporary residence pathway for migrant truck drivers;
- Road maintenance, resilience, and improvements being prioritised in the transport budget;
- A repeal of the blanket approach to speed reduction across the country;
- Winding back excessive use of raised platforms, speed bumps, and disruptive temporary speed management;
- Adoption of our practical suggestions for emission reduction, including government commitment to VDAM reform and pavement strengthening for low and zero emission vehicles;
- The introduction of realistic timeframes for Euro VI implementation.

Our advocacy is pragmatic, driven by members, and evidence-based. We were assisted by our annual policy survey that had great member response. We also supported our advocacy with credible data from DOT Loves Data, Official Information Act requests, custom data requests from Stats NZ, and fleet and network information sourced from members. This evidence-based approach is a priority for our incoming Board, particularly chair Cam Bagrie.

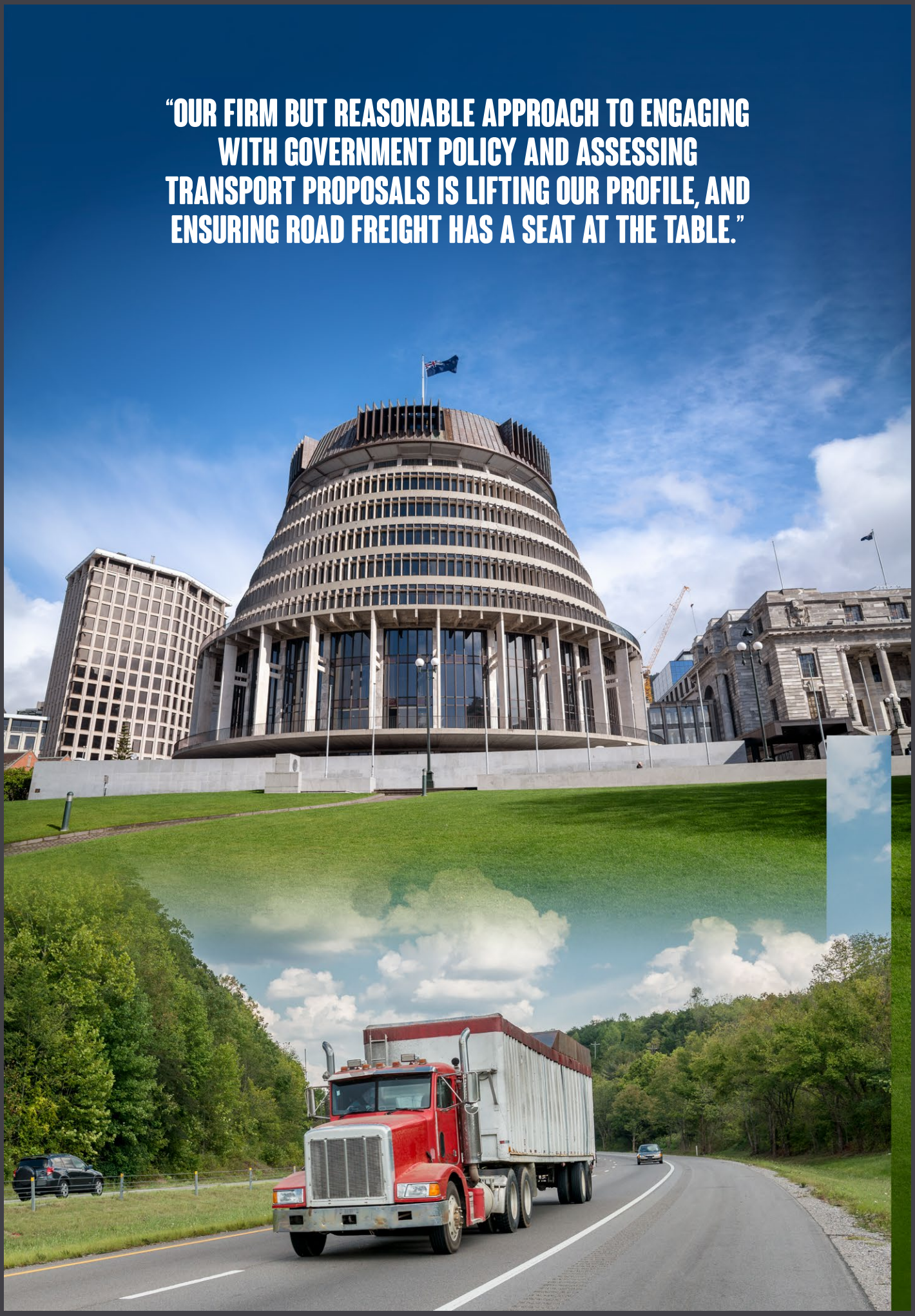
Our firm but reasonable approach to engaging with government policy and assessing transport proposals is lifting our profile, and ensuring road freight has a seat at the table. Organisations including Ministry of Transport, NZTA, local councils and MBIE are reaching out proactively, due to our constructive engagement. Recent examples include helping shape proposals on the Accredited Employer Work Visa, the implementation of universal RUC, a congestion charging proposal in Auckland, and Land Transport Rule changes including VDAM, Driver Licensing, and network fixes including safety improvements on Remutaka Hill Road.

We achieve our best wins when we're working closely with members. This might be through an operator telling one of our membership advisors about a particularly dangerous intersection, or our Ports and Intermodal Sector Group telling us how port fees are piling costs on their customers. It's easy for lobby groups to be dismissed by politicians and officials – but not when we're promoting authentic stories and challenges for trucking operators.

If you would like to become more involved in supporting our wins for industry and the wider supply chain, please email or call our Wellington office and ask about joining one of our Sector Groups.

Information: info@transporting.nz or call (04) 472 3877.

“OUR FIRM BUT REASONABLE APPROACH TO ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY AND ASSESSING TRANSPORT PROPOSALS IS LIFTING OUR PROFILE, AND ENSURING ROAD FREIGHT HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE.”



AN ACTIONED-PACKED YEAR



Transport Minister Simeon Brown has had a major impact on the sector over the past year.

The year 2024 has been full of action, with plenty happening on roads and new legislation, plus more challenges and some wins for the road transport industry. Here are the highlights.

January

The new coalition government ushered in the New Year by rolling back many initiatives of the previous government. We liked the priorities outlined by new Transport Minister, Simeon Brown, especially Roads of National Significance.

We said it made sense to end the clean car discount and to introduce road user charges for electric vehicles. We also supported axing light rail for Auckland and Let's Get Wellington Moving, both projects that were going nowhere.

The government also axed the iReX Interislander Cook Strait ferry proposal because of spiralling costs. It was unclear what alternatives would take its place. We said we couldn't afford to put off this vital investment, because Cook Strait is an extension of State Highway 1 and critical for New Zealand's economic well-being.

Transporting New Zealand chief executive Dom Kalasih presented a bravery award to Hall's Group driver Tony Cook in Christchurch. Cook, a former firefighter, stopped to help an elderly Australian tourist couple whose vehicle had rolled near Ward, in Marlborough.

February

The Wine Harvest Guidelines for Transporting Grapes in the Marlborough Wine Region were launched in Blenheim. The guidelines were developed by Transporting New Zealand together with Marlborough Wine and other key parties to ensure that grapes are transported safely and efficiently during the

Tony Cook, of Halls Group, receives a hero award. From left: Transporting New Zealand chief executive Dom Kalasih; Hayden Reed, Hall's Group Christchurch Transport Manager; driver Tony Cook; Hall's Group South Island Regional Manager Tim Dickson; and John Collins, EROAD Market Development Director.





Trucks ready for the Marlborough grape harvest.

harvest, without spillages.

There was a big turnout at EROAD's Fleet Day, held at the Air Force Museum in Christchurch. Dom Kalasih's presentation, Decarbonising the Heavy Transport Fleet, focussed on relative fuel efficiency of heavy transport. The venue contrasted old and new technologies, with its collection of historic aircraft side-by-side with new EVs.

March

We said scrapping the Road to Zero initiative of the last government, while controversial, was the right move, because it had failed to deliver the intended results.

We welcomed another controversial move, legislation for fast-track infrastructure projects, which we believed would be essential to delivering a modern, fit-for-purpose roading network.

We raised our concern over port charges at a meeting of the NZ Council of Cargo Owners (NZCCO).

We were pleased to launch the Transporting New Zealand Terms and Conditions for Carriage of Goods, developed together with Ford Sumner Lawyers, a template for general freighters.

April

Chief executive Dom Kalasih was delighted





to attend the launch of the Fairfield Freight Hub, an intermodal rail and trucking hub in Ashburton. The hub is wholly owned by Transporting New Zealand member Wareing Group Ltd. It was completed ahead of schedule and under budget.

The 4ha site includes warehousing facilities for import/export product. It combines rail operations with container transfer services, warehouse storage, and grain handling facilities. Other services comprise pre-trip inspections, empty container supply, general purpose container survey checks, container cleaning and fumigation, de-vanning, and potato and produce handling facilities.

May

The government unveiled its Budget on May 30. We said it was clear that we are facing tough economic times, as predicted, and unfortunately this is impacting the road transport industry in particular.

A major player went into liquidation with absolutely no warning, a report described how the transport industry was leading the statistics for insolvencies, and the number of applications for job vacancies increased.



The Fairfield Freight Hub, in Ashburton, handles both trucks and trains.



The ferry Aratere runs aground in the Marlborough Sounds.

June

Transporting New Zealand held a successful South Island Seminar in Twizel.

Independent economist Cameron Bagrie said that times were tough and that division was having a major impact. He didn't think tax cuts were a good idea and would have preferred more money being invested in key services and infrastructure projects.

Four major awards were presented: The EROAD Young Driver Award was jointly awarded to Naomi Toimata, from Alexander Group, and Craig Welsford, from Icon Logistics; the EROAD Health and Safety Award went to Mickalya Kerr, of Hegney Brothers, in Blenheim; the Fruehauf Outstanding Contribution to Innovation Award went to Mark Kenworthy, of TR Group; and the VTNZ Supreme Contribution to Road Transport Award went to Mark Wareing, of Wareing Group Ltd.

Meanwhile, Transport Minister Simeon Brown announced that $4 billion will be spent fixing potholes over a three-year period and the government also announced it would reverse blanket speed limit reductions.

InterIslander ferry Aratere, which had has a new



VTNZ Supreme Award winner Mark Wareing.



The South Island seminar in Twizel.

steering control system installed in May, veered out of control and ran aground in the Marlborough Sounds.

July

In our submission to the government, we supported changes to speed limits, but we also went further by surveying members on the current heavy vehicle limit of 90 km/h, which was outside the scope of the review. We also sought members' opinions on workforce and training challenges, compulsory third party insurance, and standards for heavy vehicle lighting.

August

In another actioned-packed month, we announced our new constitution and a single national membership structure, supported by regional branches and sector groups. It's a significant move that we believe will streamline efficiency and help give members a stronger voice.

We had a win when



Joint Young Driver Award winner Craig Welsford, of Icon Logistics, with Grant Keen, also of Icon Logistics.





EROAD Health & Safety award winner Mickayla Kerr.

Wellington City Council amended its plan for Thorndon Quay by agreeing to reduce the number of raised speed platforms from five to two. This followed submissions from Transporting New Zealand together with with the Heavy Haulage Association, the Bus and Coach Association, FENZ, and the AA.

We supported a proposed Land Transport (Drug Driving) Amendment Bill and introducing legislation to allow congestion pricing; made a submission on upgrading the northern side of SH2 Remutaka Hill; met with Tertiary Education Minister, Penny Simmonds, to discuss proposed changes to tertiary vocational education and training; and called for the Ministry of Transport commit to review the RUC legislation.

We launched a new membership benefit scheme with Samsung.

September

The National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) a 32.9 billion, three-year programme, was unveiled. Roads of National Significance (RONS) are a key part of the programme – 15 for the North Island but just two for the South Island.



Joint Young Driver Award winner Naomi Toimata and Ieli Lamese, of Alexander Group.



The National Land Transport Programme (NLTP) was unveiled in September.

That lack of investment in the south was criticised by VTNZ Supreme Contribution to Road Transport award winner, Mark Wareing.

Transporting New Zealand met with Qube Logistics to discuss its prepaid VBS system for its new national empty container depot network. Some of our members raised concerns about the new system.

In the latest Cook Strait ferry mishap, Bluebridge ferry Connemara lost power after leaving Wellington Harbour and had to be towed back to port.

Tyrewise, a new scheme to recycle old tyres, was launched.

We interviewed Mickayla Kerr, chief executive of Heagney Bros. in Blenheim, who was the winner of an EROAD Health & Safety award.

Dave "Skoda" Ching joined Transporting New Zealand as a part-time membership liaison person for the Canterbury region.

October

Transporting New Zealand held a successful North Island seminar in Napier.

We also elected the new Transporting New Zealand board. Scott Johnstone, general manager of Brenics in Christchurch, and Murray Young, general manager of NZ Express Transport, also based in Christchurch, took over from Peter Heagney, of Blenheim, and Lower Hutt's Deborah O'Brien.

Independent economist Cameron Bagrie became the new chairman of Transporting New Zealand, taking over from Warwick Wilshier, and Dom Kalasih was confirmed as chief executive. (He had previously been interim chief executive.)

A second round of industry award winners was announced: the EROAD Young Driver of the Year award went to Josh Adamson, from J Swap Contractors, Matamata; the EROAD Outstanding Contribution to Health and Safety award winner was K & S Freighters, of Cambridge; the Fruehauf Outstanding Contribution to Innovation award winner was Coda Group, of Auckland; the TrackIT Logistics Outstanding Contribution by a Woman in the Road Transport Industry award went to Shona Robertson of Road Transport Logistics, in Tapanui, Otago; and the VTNZ Supreme Contribution to Road Transport Award winner was Warwick Wilshier.

The worst storm for more than 100 years hit Dunedin, severing state highways, damaging houses and closing highways.

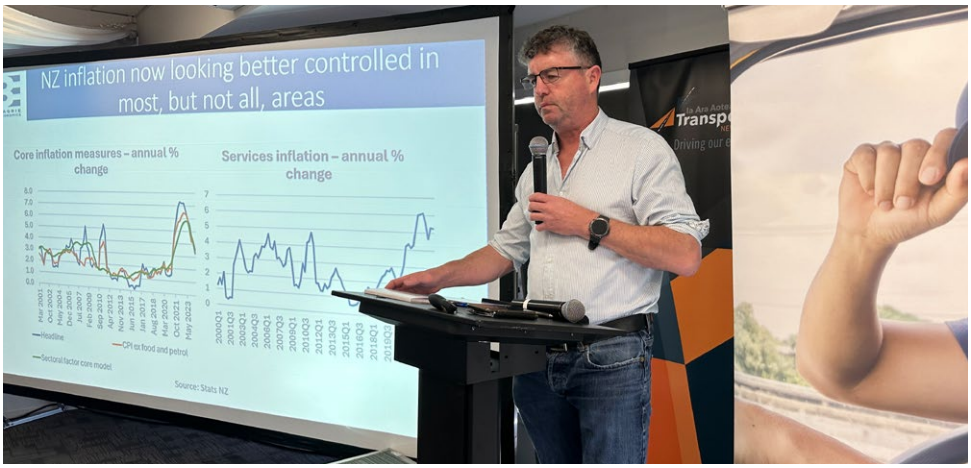
The government announced its plan for fast-track infrastructure projects. Locals opposed tolling the new Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway, and so did we.



Outgoing Transporting New Zealand chair Warwick Wilshier receives the VTNZ Supreme Contribution to Road Transport Award winner, announced in Napier, from Andrus Lei, VTNZ Area Manager Central North Island.



Two new Transporting New Zealand board members: Scott Johnstone, general manager of Brenics in Christchurch, right, and Murray Young, general manager of NZ Express Transport, also based in Christchurch, took over from Peter Heagney, of Blenheim, and Lower Hutt's Deborah O'Brien.



Independent economist, Cameron Bagrie, was a speaker at both the Twizel and Napier seminars. He was appointed chair of Transporting New Zealand in November.

November

NZTA announced the next steps on the SH1 improvements for Wellington as part of Roads of National Significance (RONS). These include a second Mt Victoria Tunnel that will run parallel to the existing tunnel, a duplicate Terrace Tunnel, and upgrades to the Basin Reserve to reduce travel times and improve reliability for commuters on the north-south bus corridor.

Transporting New Zealand's long-serving Business Manager, Jenny Murray, retired. She handed over the reins to Kelly Smith, who has over 20 years' experience in business operations, finance, and senior management roles.

The big international bombshell was the U.S. election win for Donald Trump. It's unclear what impact Trump's return to the White House will have, but it may well affect trade worldwide, as well as oil prices and exchange rates, with flow-on effects for the transport industry.

December

We finish by looking ahead to a New Year full of both challenges and opportunities. Although much of New Zealand closes down for Christmas and the New Year, that's not the case for the road transport industry, which keeps working 24/7.

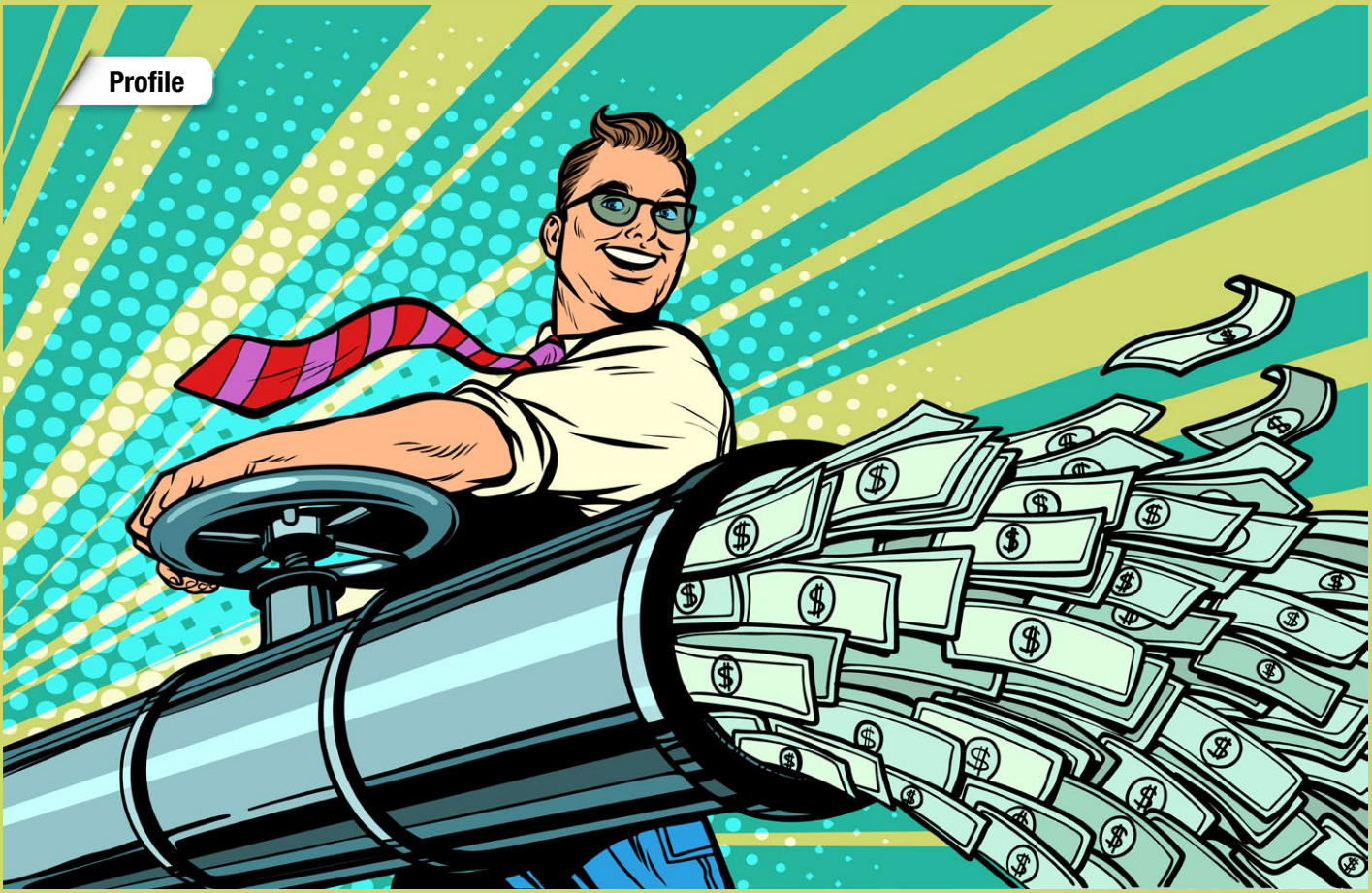
Summer marks the beginning of roadworks season, with a record amount of work scheduled. Part of this includes closing the SH1, the Desert Road, for two months. We are concerned by the impact this will have on road freight operators.

At the time of writing, no replacement for KiwiRail's Cook Strait ferries has been announced.



Above: The Port Sector group holds a meeting at the Napier seminar. Below: The partners' programme, at the Napier seminar.





A VISION FOR MAKING THE COUNTRY WEALTHIER

By Bill O'Byrne

Transporting New Zealand board chair Cam Bagrie is known for being direct about the things New Zealand has to do to improve economically – and that applies to the transport sector.

If we don't boost productivity, he says, we don't grow the economy, and if we don't do that, people start going to places where they can do better. It's not something he wants to see happen, particularly in regards to young people.

(As an aside, his daughter Emma is off to Stanford University next year on a rowing scholarship. He's a proud dad, as she has rowed for New Zealand under-19 two years in a row and was the under-18 sculls champion.)

"If you have a low-productivity economy, then your living standards go nowhere. And if your living standards are going nowhere, all the young people bugger off."

Bagrie says New Zealand has a weakness in management skills, which is an inhibitor to technology uptake. He points to the OECD's 2022 economic assessment of NZ: "Management boards in New Zealand's firms are often more focused on preserving existing value and regulatory compliance than on growth strategies."

Some of our inefficiencies can be put down to a number of companies being, to put it nicely, competitor-lite.

"When you are shielded from competition you tend to take the easy road and not be quick adopters of technology, for example. Look at the groceries sector, banking, some of the parts of the construction sector."

Anybody who has heard him talk at Transporting New Zealand events in recent years has heard Bagrie say tough times make companies better.

"The strong take over the weak… and ultimately you end up with better businesses."

A trucking youngster

Bagrie got to see the trucking industry from up close at a very young age, living in Clydevale, not far from Balclutha.

"My dad had a couple of trucks, so some of my earliest memories are being transported around in them."

The family then moved to Alexandra, where his dad

drove for what was then Alexandra Transport. Bagrie went to Otago University, where he had plans to be either a lawyer, or an architect, but he went with economics because he found it more enjoyable .

"You always do a little better with the topics you enjoy."

He did a master's degree at Canterbury University and ended up at Treasury, which is not a bad place for a young economist. He then joined the National Bank and then ANZ, where he was chief economist for 11 years.

One of the initiatives developed in his time there was the Truckometer, which measures the amount of light and heavy truck traffic on the roads to give a feeling for the levels of economic activity. It was created by another ANZ economist, Sharon Zollner.

"Sharon's husband Ernst was working at NZTA and when she joined the economics team she said, look, there's this information that's sitting there, let's do something with it. I let her loose, and she got stuck in to all the data."

The Truckometer is still used as a way of getting a good snapshot of economic activity.

"It's not perfect but it's timely and very useful. Its shortcoming though is we don't know the loading, how full is the truck, has it got a backload, etc."

Making things happen

There are a couple of things Bagrie wants to see happen as chair of Transporting New Zealand. One is to lift the membership base, which means providing even more services that members want.

That's aligned to another vision, which is to have one representative body for the road freight sector.

"If there is a way for that to happen, I'll be open to that."

Overall, the holy grail for all of New Zealand, he says, is to lift its productivity. In regard to the transport sector, roading infrastructure is where the country has really dropped the ball.

He cites the two-month closure of SH1 between Waiouru and Turangi this summer as a case in point.

"The productivity hit from that stuff is just massive."

That's where being an effective industry organisation comes in.

"We've got to be working with government."

However, Bagrie warns there aren't any easy ways to fix these issues given our political structure and the rapid ageing of the population. Having a three-year term where governments chop and change means infrastructure plans do as well.

It might not be easy, but it is necessary, he says.

"We will not turn the dial on productivity unless we address the state and management of infrastructure and the price of constructing it."

He also says the industry needs get ready to decarbonise, and sourcing staff is getting tougher as the population ages.

"That's going to be a challenge, but that has to happen, too."

New Transporting New Zealand chair Cameron Bagrie has a bold vision for the road transport industry.





HEAVY VEHICLES FOCUS AT FUTURE ROADS

The Future Roads 2024 conference in Hamilton was a big hit this November, drawing around 300 industry leaders from across New Zealand's roading sector. Transport Minister Simeon Brown kicked things off by discussing progress on the Roads of National Significance programme. The minister also revealed that NZTA had spent $786 million dollars on road cones and temporary traffic management in the past three years – a figure NZTA had been unaware of until he requested the data.

The minister reiterated the government's expectation that NZTA will reduce expenditure on excessive road cone and traffic management spend by taking a risk-oriented approach to its spending. Transporting New Zealand has been very supportive of the government's drive for value for money in transport investment, with this being another positive step.

Transporting New Zealand advocacy lead



Future Roads

The New Zealand roading industry conference





Speakers at Future Roads 2024 in Hamilton addressed pressing needs , challenges, and new opportunities for the road transport sector







Billy Clemens facilitated a panel on road user charges and the challenges and opportunities new technology presents for heavy vehicle operators.

It was a great opportunity for Transporting New Zealand members Ian Wilson and Mat Sheldrake to set out the need for better engineered roads and bridges that can accommodate efficient high-productivity motor vehicles, and eventually electric and hydrogen heavy vehicles. This was an important message to promote to the road constructors and council officials in attendance.

The conference also included presentations on sector leadership, time-of-use charging for Auckland, and future-proofing infrastructure in the face of more frequent extreme weather events. There was also a focus on promising tech developments and sustainability. AI developments and innovative materials for road construction, including greater use of recycled materials, are both exciting trends to keep an eye on.

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FREIGHT OPERATORS GATHER IN TARANAKI

NZTA's Geoff Taylor and Mike Dickson and Transporting New Zealand's Dom Kalasih updated members on a range of issues at a gathering of freight operators at the TET MultiSports Centre in Stratford, Taranaki, on November 11.

Main topics of interest included the quality and maintenance of roading, farmers using tractors and trailers to do tasks that freight operators usually do, possible accelerated pathways for drivers licensing, and questions about NZTA's compliance monitoring and follow up actions which can impact on operator permits.









TAKE CARE ON THE ROADS THIS SUMMER

By Bill O'Byrne

Do every road user a favour during this summer's annual festival of road sealing – slow down, make the roads last longer.

That was the message from Matt Arthurs from the police's Commercial Vehicle Safety Team at the Napier Seminar in October.

Arthurs said if trucks slow down, all the traffic slows down, and that's critical for bedding in road seal to make it last longer.

"I was talking to some paving guys about the damage done to roadworks in the first 24 hours," he told the Transporting New Zealand audience. "I know everyone gets annoyed with roadworks, but their feedback was in the first 24 to 48 hours the chip seal is down, it's really vulnerable, and if HMVs are going over it quickly, they will damage it.

"So, if, as an industry, you can get your speeds down through the works, there are two benefits: you'll do less damage, and you will be moderating other people's driving so everyone will flow through slower. That means fewer issues for you and fewer roadworks in the long run."

The panel discussion focused on what regulators are doing to the trucking sector. Arthurs had a simple message.

"The behavior you ignore, is the behavior you condone – because if you're not interacting and stopping bad behaviors, you really are part of the problem."

Arthurs covers East Cape through to north of New Plymouth. He says the current tougher times have seen some big falls in freight movements, and some companies have tried to shave costs a bit too much.

"Some operators are taking shortcuts – we've got unpaid RUC and undercutting rates, which is just a race to the bottom. Operators are starting to take safety devices out for financial savings and cutting costs. I do get that, it's unfortunate, but it's what's happening."

Arthurs also deals with the aftermath of accidents, like one in Ruatoria, a DSI incident (deaths and serious injuries).

"It was in a roadworks zone, in the dark, the truck was going too fast, no seatbelt, and [the driver] hadn't filled out a logbook."

He says it's unlikely police will be able to prevent all crashes like this, "which is why we rely on your guys with your compliance and your systems to keep your people safe."

He says if he had to be pinned to two key messages for the industry, it's the oldies, but goodies.

"ARTHURS SAYS 21 PER CENT OF DSI CRASHES INVOLVE DRIVERS FAILING TO WEAR A SEATBELT OR RESTRAINT. IT'S A SIMPLE MESSAGE – THE MOST LIKELY WAY FOR A TRUCK DRIVER TO DIE IS FOR THEM TO NOT WEAR A SEATBELT."



Matt Arthurs, from the police's Commercial Vehicle Safety Team, speaks at the Napier Seminar. He has clear advice for truck drivers to help keep everyone safe on the roads.

"Always keep off the phone, and have your seatbelt done up. Seatbelts keep the drivers in the best place for all the survival tools in the truck to do their job properly and for the driver to regain control of the vehicle."

Arthurs says 21 per cent of DSI crashes involve drivers failing to wear a seatbelt or restraint. It's a simple message – the most likely way for a truck driver to die is for them to not wear a seatbelt.

"They either get bounced around the cab or they're getting thrown out and ether crushed or run over by the truck. That's frustrating for me – we've got a safety device that's been around for years, and we're just not using it. So, my plea to people is if you've got systems and policies, make sure you are applying them. And make sure you're having conversations when you're finding people not following them."

Arthurs says under the road policing investment programme, police are expected to issue 60,000 seatbelt tickets in the next year. Cellphones are next.

"We've had two drivers in Area 2 and 3, south of the Bombays, who have plead guilty to dangerous driving causing death. Both of them on their cellphones. If you're seeing it, deal with it."

The other big issue is the rising numbers of drivers under the influence of drugs.

"Thirteen per cent of all deaths in crashes involve impairment, which is drugs, alcohol, or fatigue. The last drug test result I saw had ketamine and fentanyl and we're seeing other prescription drugs."

He says many drugs being picked up are not illegal, they are prescription opiate ones being used to manage pain, and this is particularly an issue with casual workers. Alcohol is the old drug of choice, and it is still a big concern.

"One driver was over a 1,000 (micrograms of alcohol per litre of breath), driving a B train. One of the IPT [Impairment Prevention Team] was out breath testing and got two HMV drivers in Taumarunui in one night.

"We can't be everywhere all the time, so it is up to the industry to play its part."

Police are expected to do 3.3 million breath tests this year, and are planning for 50,000 roadside drug tests, although the laws for that are not in place yet.

"There's a real chance now for truck operators to get ahead of the game with drug and alcohol testing," says Arthurs.

He says a positive drug test will lead to an immediate 12-hour park-up, "which will have a big impact on truck firms."

A STRONGER VOICE FOR TRANSPORT

By Bill O'Byrne





Shona Robertson received the Trackit Logistics Outstanding Contribution by a Woman in the Road Transport Industry award at Transporting New Zealand's Napier Seminar.

Shona Robertson says the transport sector has to have a stronger voice and learn to pivot in the face of challenges in both the national, and the global economies.

Shona received the Trackit Logistics Outstanding Contribution by a Woman in the Road Transport Industry award at Transporting New Zealand's Napier Seminar.

As the CEO of Road Transport Logistics or RTL, based in Tapanui, West Otago, Shona knows how important it is to be flexible and adaptable. Her vision was always to create an innovative, progressive company that was fully focused on sustainability, customer service and smart solutions.

Transporting New Zealand CEO, Dom Kalasih, says Shona has been an incredibly hard worker for her local area, being president of the local rural sector group.

"She's also been a brilliant spokeswoman for the industry at a national level, where her experience has been called on by ministers and government departments," he says.

Shona was born into the transport industry. Her dad, Jim Dynes, who passed away in September, founded Dynes Transport with his brother John in 1969. Her mum, Anita, was the first woman to be inducted into the New Zealand Road Transport Hall of Fame.

Shona told the Otago Daily Times that while it is still a very male-dominated sector, it has been great to see more women coming through to add another viewpoint, and other voices to the sector.

"There's a big challenge in the industry at the moment and it's not just our industry, it's right across New Zealand. The world is changing really quickly, and a lot of the people don't like change."

She says bringing in a more diverse group of people will help with new ideas, bringing in efficient solutions. She says the road transport sector has also been rather poor at marketing itself as a good industry to be in.

"We're not promoting ourselves enough. The transport industry is

WE'RE NOT PROMOTING OURSELVES ENOUGH. THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF NEW ZEALAND'S ECONOMY, WE'RE ACTUALLY A BLOODY COOL INDUSTRY TO BE A PART OF."

– Shona Robertson

an integral part of New Zealand's economy, we're actually a bloody cool industry to be a part of. There are so many different roles within the industry and we don't market that enough."

The problem, Shona says, is everyone is "too busy, bloody working at the coal face and trying to survive!"

Shona couldn't make the seminar, so her acceptance speech was by video. (There's a great shot of her elf dogs at the end!)

She said she was very grateful for the award.

"Our industry is full of unique, hard-working people that are forever burning the midnight oil to try and find solutions for our customers. The world has changed a lot over the last few decades so it's really important that our industry keeps up!"

Shona says the industry's customers need it to be flexible and willing to change to match the changes that they are all going through. She says bringing new people through the right way is vital.

"We've got to invest in the next generation of drivers. We can't just put them behind the steering wheel of a truck and say 'there you go'. We actually need to give them quality training and time and to help them understand the required work ethic and initiative that's needed to be a professional truck driver in today's world."



Shona says she is keen to see people move into the sector groups, such as the Rural group she has been a key part of. However, there are issues which many freight firms are dealing with.

"It's important we all start working together within our industry to ensure there is a future for our businesses and our team members. The transport sector is seen as being at the end of the food chain. Because we've got big shiny trucks, people think we must have plenty of money.

"We work so hard and we aim to please because we're all about the service. But sometimes we're not actually looking after ourselves."

Other critical rural issues include the need for more effluent disposal, and changing land use in farming. This has resulted in less livestock to cart, making it as tough a time for many rural operators, as it is for farmers.

For transport, she sees more amalgamations and "right sizing" of fleets happening – all of which comes back to her call for working smarter, taking advantage of all the technology and broadening the brainpower of the sector.

"It's all about the people. Your company's brand is only as good as the person that's driving your truck and on the end of the phone delivering the service."

These people deserve to be noticed, says Shona.

"There's some pretty special people in our industry and I just don't think we acknowledge that enough."

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KIWI INNOVATION PRODUCING BETTER ROAD SURFACES

By David Killick

Innovative road surfacing products developed in New Zealand have the potential to significantly improve road surfaces around the country.

The products use epoxy blended in to bitumen, which makes roads last much longer. This reduces the need for ongoing maintenance and replacement. The surfaces are also quieter, quicker, and safer compared with both current traditional surfaces.

EMOGPA (Epoxy Modified Open Graded Porous Asphalt EMOGPA has been extensively developed and tested at CAPTIF (The Canterbury Accelerated Pavement Testing Indoor Facility), NZTA Waka Kotahi's road research centre in Christchurch.

Team Lead, Dr David Alabaster, says EMOGPA is also more sustainable, with reduced embedded carbon.

The Epoxy bitumen used in EMOGPA was originally developed by Shell Oil during the Cold War as a material for building runways that wouldn't melt as jet fighters took off. Although the epoxy used in the manufacturing process is imported, the EMOGPA concept was developed in New Zealand with WSP Research and Fulton Hogan, with all major contractors now supplying the product.

"Using Epoxy bitumen in EMOPGA is 30 per cent more expensive initially than using conventional bitumen, but long-term it's more economic," says Alabaster.

The old solution was OGPA (Open Graded Porous Asphalt). If used on Roads of National Significance (RONS), it would have an average 7.2 year lifespan, compared with a 40-year life cycle for EMOGPA – that makes it one-sixth of the cost to use in the long run.

Alabaster explains bitumen oxidises as it ages and gets brittle. EMOGPA has reduced susceptibility to oxidation, and the new surface for motorways is also quieter.

Alabaster says another innovative product in field trialling is epoxy bitumen chipsealing, which can be used to repair badly flushed chipseal surfaces (the most common surface used on New Zealand's rural roads). Epoxy binds to chipseal and stops the bitumen tracking down the road. In really bad cases, the only solution had been relaying the whole road. The new solution is reducing the need for transporting and laying an aggregate base layer.



Team Lead, Dr David Alabaster, left, Transporting New Zealand's Billy Clemens, and senior construction engineer, Rob Craw, discuss how the testing is conducted.

"BENEFITS ARE FEWER ROADWORKS AROUND THE COUNTRY, COMPARED WITH REGULAR, AND COSTLY, REPAIRS."



Benefits are fewer roadworks around the country, compared with regular, and costly, repairs.

The surface is also more resilient, in both hotter and colder conditions, with no texture loss from the field trials suggesting it will last considerably longer and can also be made quieter.

It is applied just like a conventional chipseal, with the only noticeable difference being the spraying truck has two tanks on the back. "For flushed chipseal, it's a very good life-cycle value-for-money proposition," says Alabaster.



Different road surfaces behave differently – with some proving to be far more resilient and durable, creating long-term gains in savings and performance.



A is for "ahs-fawlt"

HOW DO YOU SAY ASPHALT?

Is it "ass-falt" or "ashfelt"?

"It doesn't worry me; the general public would typically say ashfelt. Industry would generally use ass-falt," says CAPTIF road research Team Lead, Dr David Alabaster.

There's no ash or felt in asphalt, however. According to an online source, "asphalt is a semi-solid form of petroleum. It has a few basic ingredients, including a mixture of crushed stone, gravel, sand, and a material called bitumen. Bitumen is a sticky, black byproduct of petroleum that holds the aggregate together."

Brits use the general term "bituminous mixes". Asphalts and macadam or tarmac (after 19th century Scottish engineer John McAdam) are two difference mixes.

AMERICANS SAY "AHS-FAWLT" AND ALSO CALL IT "BLACKTOP".



A spinning arm connected to a road wheel tests a series of roads surfaces in all kinds of conditions at CAPTIF (The Canterbury Accelerated Pavement Testing Indoor Facility), NZTA Waka Kotahi's road research centre in Christchurch.





WHAT SPINS YOUR WHEELS

CAPTIF was originally set up by the University of Canterbury 1970, and was significantly upgraded and then went undercover in the mid-1980s. It is now maintained by NZTA Waka Kotahi. It is one of 40 similar research facilities around the world and the only one in New Zealand.

CAPTIF's slogan is "real loads on real roads".

Testing takes place inside a concrete tank for the most control. At the heart of the facility is the Simulated Loading and Vehicle Emulator (SLAVE). It consists of a pair of rotating 9.2m arms connected to a road wheel that spins around a circular track. The maximum speed is 50 km/hr but it looks faster than that.

The machine simulates all kinds of different loads, pavements and surfaces, explains senior construction engineer, Rob Craw, who throws a switch and literally sets the wheels in motion.

SLAVE can run 24/7, with two wheel paths realistically simulating dynamic loads, with steel or airbag suspension. Up to six 10m test sections can be laid, allowing precise measurement of pavement performance.

CAPTIF can simulate the equivalent of 40 years of loading on a road as busy as the Huntley Bypass in 18 months. When testing new ideas, the alternative, says Alabaster, would be to wait for 40 years.

Temperature also fluctuates wildly on New Zealand road surfaces, from a winter low of minus 25.3C to a summer high of 78.4 C; CAPTIF can replicate a range from 80C to minus 35C.

CAPTIF has generated considerable national and international interest, says Alabaster, from research projects for the OECD into road-friendly truck suspension, to international researchers wanting to calibrate advanced pavement design models.

CAPTIF research outputs are used in the NZTA's pavement design, surface design, and materials assessment, with implications for RUC (Road User Charges), HPMV route studies, and dTIMS (deterioration modelling).

SOLAR ENERGY PAYS OFF FOR CANTERBURY BUSINESS

By David Killick



Mountains of concrete-gravel aggregate dot the landscape. Conveyer belts whir continuously, topping them up. Big trucks move between them, fed by front end loaders. The trucks then depart, taking the aggregate away to become part of New Zealand's roads.

It's what you might expect to see at Road Metals' Rolleston site in Canterbury. What you don't expect to see are the solar panels – 1100 of them, three long rows facing north. The Southern Alps glisten in the background. It's one of New Zealand's biggest privately-run solar arrays.

The solar panels power three crushing and screening plants, one concrete plant, two workshops and 900m of overland conveyors.

"The panels generate enough power per year for our whole site," says Road Metals general manager, Jared Johnston.

The panels generate 528kW, or just over half a megawatt. (To put that into perspective, that's about 100 times more than a typical home photovoltaic (PV) system, which might generate up to 5kW.) Surplus electricity is exported to the grid; there are no batteries.

Road Metals, which operates about a dozen largescale quarries around the South Island, decided to install the panels in February and March this year as a long-term investment. Local solar company, Platinum Energy, tailored the PV system for the site's unique requirements.

"As our operations at our Rolleston site expanded, and with the introduction of additional quarry plants, we recognised a corresponding rise in our electricity consumption," says Johnston.

"The technology works; it's now at the stage that it's worthwhile pursuing. We are proud to be leaders."

He says Road Metals prides itself on being at the forefront of cutting-edge technology that enhances sustainability and environmental initiatives.

"It's been in the works for a long time; we were waiting for the economics to be right. We like the fact it's renewable energy and sustainable and we like being clean and green, but the commercial side had to stack up. We do care, but there's no green washing here. It's sustainable when it works financially. We are proud of it."





SOLAR ARRAYS WIN AWARD

Road Metals has won the MIMICO Environment and Community Award with its solar farm at the Rolleston quarry.

Wayne Scott, who judged the MIMICO Award, says Road Metals stood out in a very strong field of entries due to the originality of this project in providing power to quarry fixed plant, while delivering significant reductions in CO2 emissions. The solar system also complemented work already done at the site to replace diesel-powered trucks with an overland conveyor.


ROAD METALS
KIWI
ROAD METALS


13mm
Firth


MACK
23
GRANITE
HVAR
1300
HBU426

As well as reducing dependence on the grid and decreasing its carbon footprint, the solar PV system can offset about 150 tonnes of CO_2 emissions annually or more than 55,000 litres of diesel. Panel manufacturer, Phono Solar, operates solely on 100 per cent green electricity, a world first.

Johnston says they are lucky to have high-voltage lines close by, which makes feeding electricity back into the grid simpler and cheaper. A step-up, step-down transformer link was inspired by power distribution technology used in Antarctica. This minimizes buried cables and also makes it easier for future expansion. The land is rehabilitated using cleanfill. Chief operating officer, Dan Francis, says building another plant is part of Road Metals' 10-year plan. There is also potential to use this set-up to manufacture green hydrogen onsite.

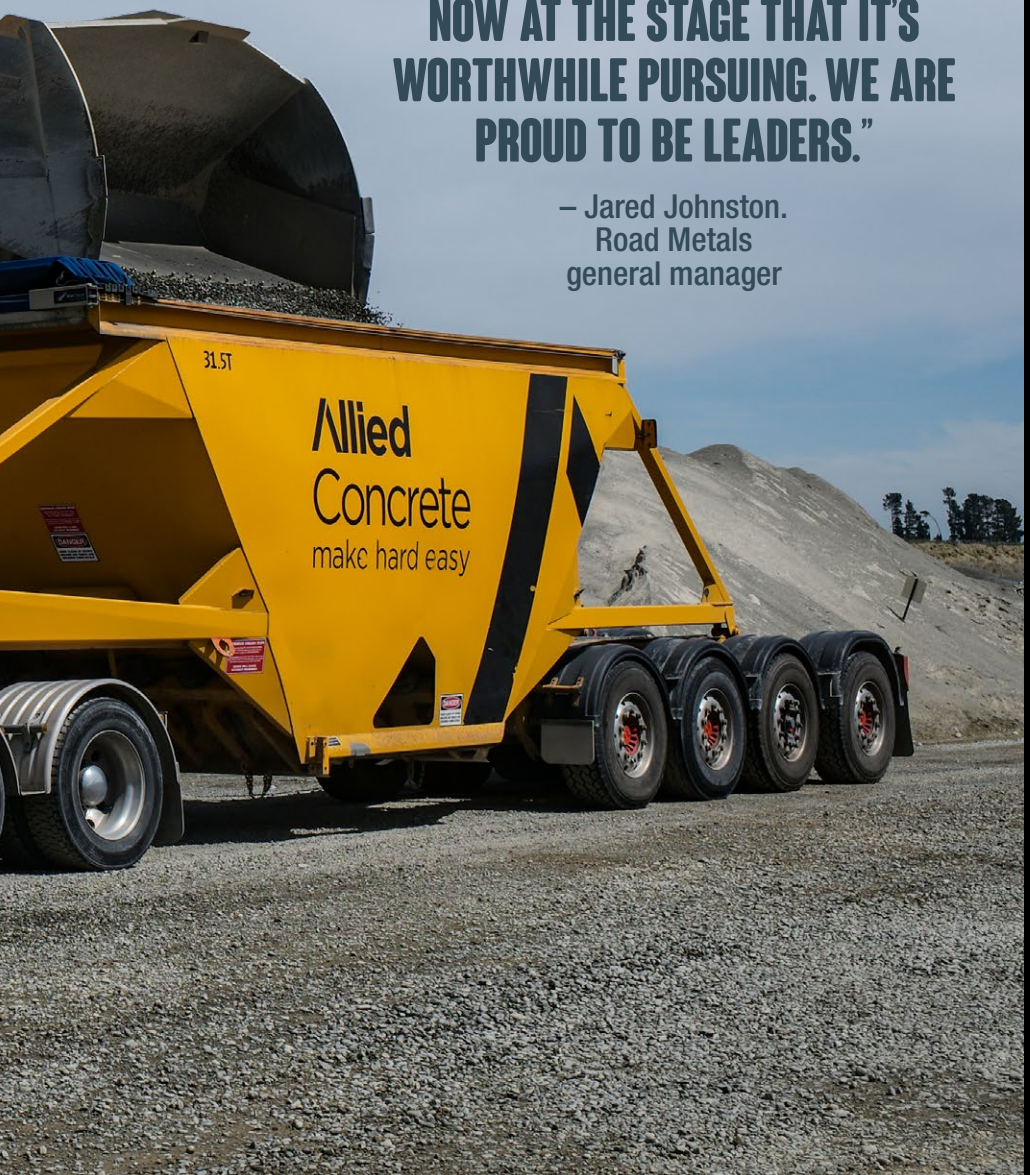
Green hydrogen has numerous potential applications – new generation excavators, loaders, and trucks using fuel cell technology. Alternatively, green hydrogen could be used as an energy storage solution, smoothing out the peaks and troughs of generation.

"There is potential for EVs, but we're waiting for the point that it's viable. We are more interested in hydrogen technology," says Johnston.

High electricity prices have forced paper mills in the North Island to close this year, with widespread loss of jobs and a devastating impact on local economies. The benefits of investing in solar panels for commercial plants and factories may be worth closer examination – and may prove to be a long-term energy solution that is only now beginning to be realised.

"THE TECHNOLOGY WORKS; IT'S NOW AT THE STAGE THAT IT'S WORTHWHILE PURSUING. WE ARE PROUD TO BE LEADERS."

– Jared Johnston. Road Metals general manager



SOLAR FOR BUSINESSES

Visit some countries, for example, Germany, and just about every factory or large building you see is covered by photovoltaic solar panels. German solar architect, Ralph Disch, says there is enormous potential for "plus energy" buildings – buildings that actually generate surplus electricity.

"We need plus-energy settlements, plus-energy city areas, and plus-energy regions.

"Architects, the construction industry, investors and tenants, regulators, and authorities have a great responsibility. And with plus-energy we all have the possibility to break through into the Solar Age."

New Zealand is lagging behind – but it still makes sense for businesses to consider whether the return on investment is worthwhile – particularly given the certainty of rising electricity prices. Here are some factors to consider:

- What will you use the electricity for? Running lights and the office, plants, machinery, or perhaps recharging EVs;
- Has your site got a suitable roof space or land area to install solar panels? How many could you install?
- What is the total cost? How much could you save on your electricity bill? Consider different plans and rates in kilowatt hours. What is the payback time?
- Get several quotes. Make sure you get the best panels you can. Some are more efficient than others;
- How future proof is the system?
- DC versus AC: It gets complex, but an AC system uses micro inverters on each panel to convert from DC to AC. A DC system uses string inverters and a larger central inverter. The advantage of micro inverters is that even if some panels are shaded, that won't affect the output, while a DC system produces only as much energy as the lowest producing panel.



TR GROUP MAKES SUSTAINABILITY APPOINTMENT

TR Group has appointed Scott Donnelly to the newly established role of New Energy & Emissions Reduction Lead.

With over 20 years of industry experience, including six years with TR Group, Donnelly brings extensive expertise to drive TR Group's sustainability initiatives forward. His leadership will support both TR Group and its customers in adopting new, more sustainable technologies as part of their vehicle solutions, reflecting TR Group's commitment to reducing emissions and leading the industry toward cleaner, greener transport.

Donnelly will lead a dedicated team of industry specialists who are focused on helping businesses navigate the wide range of options available for zero or low-emission vehicles. His team will work closely with customers to identify and implement the most effective solutions tailored to their specific business needs and customer



requirements.

Donnelly, a qualified diesel mechanic, has held various positions inside and outside TR Group, including most recently monitoring the performance of the company's fleet of Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs). His experience working directly with customers, industry experts, and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) has equipped him with the skills necessary to lead TR Group's efforts in emissions reduction and energy transition.

Donnelly and his team will promote and implement new energy technologies, including BEV, FCEV, dual-fuel, and other emerging solutions, ensuring that TR Group's customers have access to the best options for reducing their environmental footprint.

"We are thrilled to have Scott lead this critical initiative," says Andrew Carpenter, managing director of TR Group. "Scott's extensive experience, combined with his passion for sustainability, positions him perfectly to lead our specialist team. Together, they will help guide our customers through the complex world of new energy options, ensuring they have access to the best zero and low-emission solutions for their business."

To learn more about TR Group's initiatives in new energy and emissions reduction, or to speak to Scott and his team, please contact TR Group directly.



KIWI LEADS SAFETY CAMERA ROLLOUT IN AUSTRALIA

One of Australia's road transport leaders is a Kiwi who is on a mission to make life safer for truck drivers in both countries.

Mainfreight Australia's national support manager, Ashley Taylor, is powering up driver safety efforts with the installation of nearly 600 new-generation MiTAC camera units from AutoSense in the company's rigid, local fleet vehicles across Australia.

Currently, Mainfreight also has 667 MiTAC units installed around New Zealand.

Taylor, who was previously based in Napier, understands the rigours of life on the road. The former owner-driver has traversed the Napier to Taupo road hundreds of times.

"It's a tough life being a driver. There are many drivers out there, but it's tough to find good drivers. It's so important to us as a business to look after our drivers, to ensure they are looked after health-wise and feel fresh when they are working.

"I know the 'nearly there' thinking. When a tired driver thinks they only have a bit further up the road to travel before their destination, sadly 'nearly there' is when most accidents seem to happen. By harnessing this camera technology, we're making sure we do not have tired drivers on the road, and that our drivers are 'always there'.

"We want all drivers to know they can pass a Mainfreight vehicle on the road without hesitation."

With around 180 Guardian by Seeing Machines cameras already installed in linehaul (interstate) trucks,

Taylor says adding MiTAC to their arsenal is an obvious next step for their local fleet.

"Fatigue events have dropped significantly since Guardian has been installed and the cameras have also helped with education and changing driver behaviours. We believe the same positive results will be seen with MiTAC once the three-month install is complete and the cameras are all up and recording."

Since adopting Guardian technology in 2019, Mainfreight AU has reported a 96 per cent reduction in recorded fatigue events: In July 2019, Guardian cameras installed in Mainfreight Australia vehicles recorded 15.48 fatigue events per 10,000km driven. In August 2024, the cameras recorded 0.49 fatigue events per 10,000km driven.

Guardian's driver facing camera monitors fatigue and distraction and prevents fatigue incidents by up to 90 per cent. (You can read the study here.) MiTAC is the perfect complement to Guardian: A front-facing camera monitors the road ahead as well as the driver-facing camera with an advantage of recording footage in real time. It can also detect potential safety issues, like distracted driving and aggressive behaviour, allowing fleet managers to take corrective action to prevent accidents and improve driver safety.

"It will be a fantastic solution for our drivers," says Taylor. "Our local fleet is growing significantly and this means we get complaints from the public from time to time. But there are three sides to every road incident: the driver's perception, the public perception, and what actually happened."

He says MiTAC technology helps give the full picture thanks to its incident investigation functionality which could exonerate drivers who are not at fault.

While he says he anticipated some push back, drivers welcomed the new technology with open arms.

"The team has been receptive, which is fantastic. Some of our drivers have even asked us if they can be first for the installation because they've previously been involved in an incident where they were not at fault and can see the value of MiTAC cameras in proving their case.

"Our drivers are professional people – driving is their career and their livelihood. When an event has happened, we pull the Guardian camera footage and four out of five times our drivers are not at fault. But importantly, we learn from the event by asking ourselves how the accident happened and how can we prevent it from happening again?"

This unwavering commitment to driver and road safety is Mainfreight's motivating force, and that makes AutoSense, with its portfolio of advanced and industry-leading driver monitoring technology on offer, an ideal partner.

"We collaborate with the New Zealand team regularly on health and safety when it comes to our drivers, and share knowledge inside the business. Australian legislation is tough; we have a responsibility to all play a part in stepping up for the safety of our people and those they share the road with."

Regardless of which side of the Tasman their drivers are on, AutoSense is providing Mainfreight with the very best in world-leading safety solutions – and that's an investment that is worth its weight in gold.

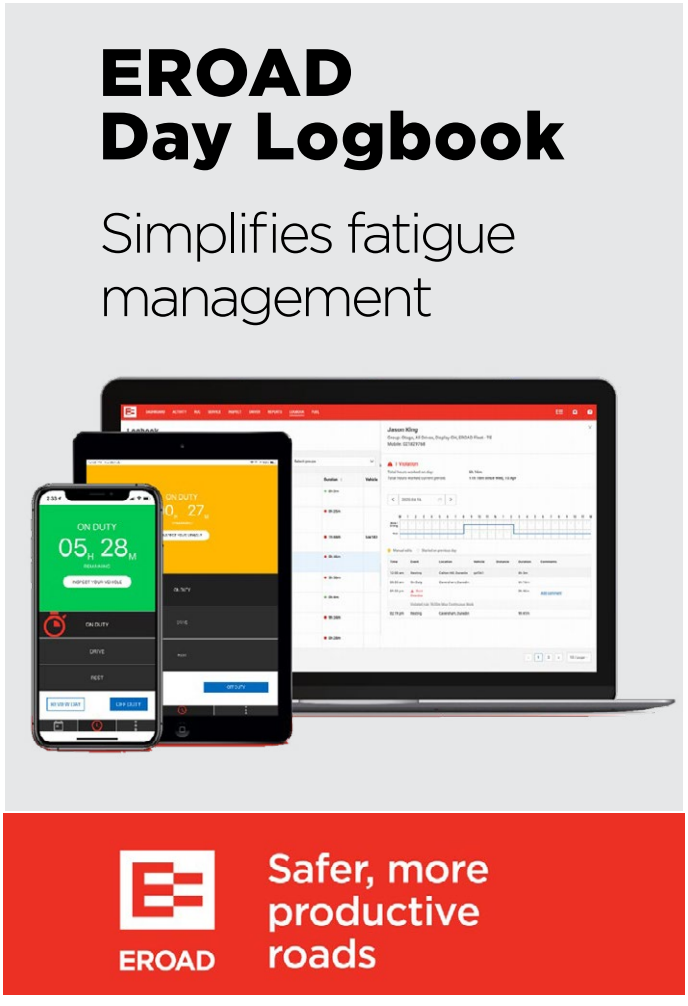
"Our business is dedicated to improving the safety standards across the industry," says Taylor. "We are always asking ourselves what can we do better to help our drivers be safer, how can we make their job safer, and how can we make the roads safer for all other road users?"

"Every morning I review the monitoring from the previous night's driving; we ask – did we take the right actions, what can we do to improve our work?"

Click here for more information about MiTAC by AutoSense.

"BY HARNESSING THIS CAMERA TECHNOLOGY, WE'RE MAKING SURE WE DO NOT HAVE TIRED DRIVERS ON THE ROAD, AND THAT OUR DRIVERS ARE 'ALWAYS THERE'."

– Ashley Taylor, Mainfreight Australia





SECTOR GROUP ROUND-UP

One of the two Otago effluent sites that are currently closed. Talks are underway to get them reopened.

A wrap-up of what's going on around the country with our sector groups:

Ports and Intermodal

The Ports and Intermodal Sector Group appointed Craig Foster (LHT Group) as Chair, and the group set priorities of efficiency, safety, and communication within ports and supply chains.

At the New Zealand Council of Cargo Owners' annual meeting in Auckland, the group addressed key industry concerns.

Craig led a session on Vehicle Booking Fees (VBS) and port charges, highlighting frustration with Auckland's escalating VBS fees and the Port of Tauranga's proposed gate charge. These issues were raised directly with senior port leadership, emphasising the need for cost transparency.

The group's next steps include finalising a one-page strategy document and planning engagement with the Port Health and Safety Leadership Group, reinforcing their commitment to improving operations and safety across the sector.

General Freight Group

The group held its first meeting, focusing on the Cook Strait ferries connection.

Key points were:

- Identifying feedback for Interislander at an upcoming industry meeting, including ensuring capacity for livestock transport during the May-June peak, maintaining their operator phone-line (alongside email and postal services), and the need for more truck parking facilities (acknowledging the additional 10 parks opened in Picton);
- Identifying the Land Transport (Driver Licensing) Rule 1999 reform, and increased driver training in schools as a priority for the group. Billy Clemens summarised Transporting NZ's work to date on both issues;
- Will agree on their combined meeting with the Transporting New Zealand Board, Chair, and one-page strategy document at their first meeting.

Roads and vehicle Sector Group

Ian Wilson was appointed the new Chair of the group at its meeting on November 13.

- A number of sub-groups were established:
- Permitting – HPMV, Portal, OD & OW
- Roading Network – maintenance (closures 24/7 new normal) Nat Std
- Infrastructure (national/

regional/ local)
- Congestion (charging) / network access
- Compliance – regulator(s) standards, technology & AI – opportunities
- RUC – Simplify process for variability – identify opportunities
- VDAM proposed changes – vehicles combinations (7x 10Axl 55T Trial).

Tasks and actions the groups are targeting include:
- Feedback to NZTA on new HPMV permit portal – updates and suggestions;
- Planning for road closures (SH1 T2W) including routes/ detours;
- National standard for major closures to ensure key stakeholders are consulted;
- Check operator representation on local Regional Transport Committees;
- Group to provide feedback to Keith McGuire on areas of interest/expertise and regional interest;
- Identify key work streams – and allocate and assign regional and topic leads.

Rural and livestock

The inaugural Livestock/ Rural Sector group meeting was held on November 6.

Jim Crouchley and Dom Kalasih have been in discussions with the Waitaki District Council about the sudden closure of two stock effluent dumps in the region. There have been ongoing discussions with NZTA and the Otago regional Council to try and get them opened ASAP.

The National Livestock Transport & Safety Group is in discussions with Farm Assurance Incorporated about using them to manage the NZ Livestock Assurance Programme. This should get us closer to the processing plants and other stakeholders.

The Farm To Processor Animal Welfare Forum (FPAWF) was held on November 13. The ongoing issue of "holdups" in unloading stock at some processing plants is of interest to this group because of the heat stress caused to animals waiting in stationary trucks.

FPAWF is also interested in seeing driving hours managed better through the alternative fatigue management trial (AFMT) to reduce heat stress.

Contacts

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Rural:	Jim Crouchley, **027 261 0953**,	jim@transporting.nz
Ports and Intermodal:	Billy Clemens, **(04) 471 8283**,	billy@transporting.nz
Roads & Vehicles, Bulk, Logs:	Dom Kalasih, **027 441 4309**,	dom@transporting.nz

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UNDERSTANDING VEHICLE BOOKING SYSTEMS

Grant Lowe, chair of the South Island Port Users Working Group, examines the financial and operational impact on transport operators.

In today's fast-paced logistics environment, Vehicle Booking Systems (VBS) are designed to streamline the arrival and departure of trucks at ports and depots, improving scheduling and reducing congestion. While these systems have helped manage traffic, particularly during peak times, their implementation has also introduced new financial and operational challenges that weigh heavily on transport operators. Freight forwarders, importers, and exporters should be aware of these issues, as the costs incurred by transport operators will ultimately affect the entire logistics chain.

Prepayment requirements and financial implications

Many VBS systems now operate with a prepayment model, requiring transport operators to maintain positive balances before booking time slots. This approach can disrupt cash flow, as companies accustomed to credit arrangements may not be prepared for prepayment requirements. It also adds a layer of financial management, requiring operators to monitor balances continually to ensure they can secure time slots when needed.

For established operators, this shift is often challenging, especially within a B2B (business-to-business) framework, where longstanding relationships and agreed-upon terms typically govern transactions. While prepayment might make sense for newer operators without a history of financial reliability, requiring it across the board disrupts established credit terms and cash flow models that transport companies rely on for day-to-day operations.

Additional costs: credit card fees and transaction charges

The need for prepayment often leads operators to use credit cards to top up their balances quickly, incurring transaction fees – typically around 3 per cent. While credit card usage may offer minor rewards, these benefits do not offset the added costs. Ultimately, transport operators absorb these transaction fees, which contributes to rising costs and decreased cash flow flexibility.

For many operators, these transaction costs are yet another expense added to the already complex task of balance management. This added financial layer has the potential to influence the rates that transport companies charge their clients, impacting the overall logistics costs for all parties involved in the supply chain.

Increased administrative load and operational inefficiencies

With prepayment comes the added administrative burden of monitoring account balances and ensuring sufficient funds are available for bookings. In a logistics environment where schedules and cash flows can be unpredictable, this adds extra complexity.



Many VBS systems require bookings per container rather than per truck, further complicating utilisation rates, particularly for high-productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs).

This increased administrative load impacts dispatch operations, as dispatchers now need to factor in payment monitoring along with scheduling. In essence, dispatchers must juggle financial tasks alongside their logistical ones, adding time and cost to what was once a streamlined operation.

Penalties and overhead costs in VBS management

Missing a booking slot or arriving outside the allocated time can result in penalty fees, which operators may or may not be able to pass on to their clients. Proving fault in these cases can be challenging, and the added cost of penalties, along with the administrative burden, creates financial strain. To manage these demands, many transport companies have had to bring on additional staff, which drives up operating expenses.

Transport operators may also face indirect costs due to delays. For example, a single delayed booking early in the day can disrupt the timing of subsequent bookings, leading to further penalties or missed slots. To manage these risks, transport operators must allow more buffer time in their schedules, which may lower productivity and add costs to their operations.

Impact on truck utilisation and efficiency

Many transport operators are finding it difficult to secure booking times that align with optimal truck utilisation. Without guaranteed time slots for both pick-up and drop-off, trucks may run empty on return trips, resulting in additional mileage, fuel consumption, and operational expenses. These inefficiencies are especially costly when VBS usage is mandatory at multiple points in a trip, such as at both the port and depot.

The result is a decrease in fleet efficiency, which can lead to rate increases for the clients of transport operators. Freight forwarders, importers, and exporters should be mindful that VBS requirements affect not only their rates but also the availability and efficiency of transport services, particularly when demand is high.

A look at the global VBS trend

Internationally, VBS implementations have generally led to gradual fee increases over time. This trend is likely to continue as systems evolve, and costs associated with their management increase. Transport operators will need to account for these rising costs, which may affect their pricing structures. Freight forwarders, importers, and exporters who rely on port and depot services should be prepared for potential rate adjustments and increasing logistics expenses as VBS requirements and associated fees continue to evolve.

Key takeaways

For freight forwarders, importers, and exporters, the rise of VBS means that planning and adaptability are more crucial than ever. Understanding the financial and operational strains faced by transport operators helps all parties in the supply chain align on shared expectations and priorities. To help mitigate these impacts:

- Engage in proactive planning: Schedule bookings and time-sensitive movements well in advance, as last-minute changes may incur penalties;
- Communicate openly with partners: Keep lines of communication open with transport operators to anticipate delays or changes in costs due to VBS requirements;
- Consider budget adjustments: Be prepared for potential increases in logistics expenses as VBS fees and associated costs are likely to evolve;
- Allow flexibility in scheduling: Providing flexibility for transport operators helps mitigate risks associated with VBS, such as missed slots or added penalties.

As VBS systems continue to gain traction, the logistics industry will need to remain agile, adapting to the financial and operational realities that VBS introduces. By planning effectively and keeping communication lines open, freight forwarders, importers, and exporters can help ensure a smoother transition into this evolving landscape

If you have any queries or concerns about VBS, contact Grant Lowe, 021 334 108 or email grantlowe.nz@outlook.com, or Transporting New Zealand policy lead Billy Clemens, 027 304 1877, or email info@transporting.nz.



QUESTIONS OVER NEW EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS BILL

By Amanda Douglas and Kathryn Evans

What impact will the Employment Relations (Termination of Employment by Agreement) Amendment Bill have on my business if it were to pass into law?

A new bill has been introduced into Parliament which promises "risk-free" exits for employment.

In a nutshell, under current law, without prejudice discussions are only protected if you have a "serious relationship problem". The Employment Relations (Termination of Employment by Agreement) Amendment Bill aims to protect employers by removing the need for a "serious relationship problem". If it were passed, it would mean that employers and employees can mutually agree to bring the employment relationship to an end by way of a negotiated settlement, without the employer taking on the risk that such discussions and agreements could be used against them if an employee were to raise a personal grievance down the line.

While the legislation intends to achieve clarity and streamline long drawn-out processes where the end goal may be the same, it remains to be seen how effective it will be. The legislation still sets out requirements for discussions to be considered truly "off the record". In particular, the discussion or offers must be made before the termination of the employment relationship, with a view to bringing it to an end. An agreement reached on this basis is then only enforceable when:

- The agreement is in writing and signed by each party;
- The agreement states the relevant legislation which applies to such settlement agreements;
- Before the employee signed the agreement, the employer advised the employee they should seek independent advice on the proposed agreement before signing; and
- The employer gave the employee a reasonable opportunity to obtain independent advice before the employee signed the agreement.

While, generally, evidence of any pre-termination negotiations will be inadmissible under the Bill, there is also an overarching discretion of the [Employment Relations] Authority to admit this evidence in certain circumstances (e.g., where there is a case that the communication was made for a dishonest purpose). There are also exceptions, for example, the restriction doesn't extend to the terms of the agreement itself, or where it may be necessary to prove the existence of an agreement in a proceeding.

Ultimately, should the Bill be passed, if an employer engages in these discussions without legal advice, there still remains a real risk it could backfire in the long run. Accordingly, we would always suggest you talk to your lawyer before starting termination negotiations.

Recently, a $432,500 penalty was imposed on Kiwirail in relation to the Interislander ferry Kaitaki losing power outside Wellington Harbour. What was the penalty in relation to? Is Kiwirail responsible for the safety of its passengers?

In January 2023, the Kaitaki made a mayday call after it lost propulsion outside Wellington Harbour with 880 people on board.

Following a significant investigation, Maritime New Zealand filed a charge under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. We have touched on an employer's Health and Safety obligations in a previous issue, but the Kaitaki situation highlights the true extent of the obligations. In particular, such duties extend beyond merely protecting the health and safety of employees of a business, but to protecting all those who enter and exit the workplace from a risk of harm. (Section 37, Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.)

In this case, Maritime New Zealand filed a charge for exposing all those on board to harm, including ferry workers, as well as passengers. During its near year-long investigations, Maritime New Zealand reviewed Kiwirail's processes and procedures connected to safety and maintenance management, undertook interviews, and conducted an examination of the Kaitaki following the incident. This investigation uncovered failures to undertake appropriate maintenance. Upon hearing the evidence, including several Victim Impact Statements, the Wellington District Court imposed a penalty of $432,500 on Kiwirail.

Leading up to the hearing, Kiwirail entered into an early guilty plea and commenced remedial steps. These were considered to be mitigating factors which reduced the penalty imposed, which can be up to $500,000 per breach in respect of a business, and $100,000 per breach in respect of an individual who is considered to be in breach of its obligations under the Act.

The case serves as a timely reminder of the importance of robust maintenance policies and procedures, as well as the responsibility employers have for anyone who enters a workplace (not just employees). Employers should consider what steps they can take to safeguard the safety of site visitors, such as sign-in procedures or notification of any Health and Safety policies which may be in place, so the risk of an incident occurring is reduced.



If you are a member of Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand and would like to discuss the implications of this article on your business, or have an employment, health and safety related or other legal question, please submit it to Wynn Williams Employment Team, **kathryn.evans@wynnwilliams.co.nz** and **amanda.douglas@wynnwilliams.co.nz** with the subject line: Transporting NZ Ask a Lawyer. Feel free to also make use of Wynn Williams' Legal Helpline, in which the first 15 minutes are free for Transporting New Zealand members, by calling Kathryn and Amanda on **(03) 379 7622.**



DO ALL FORKLIFTS AND JACKS REQUIRE EMPLOYEE TRAINING?

By Manage Group in association with Driver Training



Different types of forklifts and pallet jacks serve different purposes and it's not uncommon for a company to have at least two types. The main types of forklift are:

- Counter-balance
- Reach truck
- Off-road forklift
- Side loader
- Order picker and narrow aisle forklift
- Walkie and electric-powered hand truck

These can be broken down further into the fuel type used (electric, diesel, LPG, or hydrogen) and the types of tyres (solid or pneumatic).

You also have different attachments that can be used, too – for example, you might have a pallet jack for boxes and an electric forklift that uses a bale clamp inside your warehouse, but a general-purpose diesel counter-balance for the yard which uses forks and a gib lifter attachment.

Each type of machine has its own configuration, controls layout, characteristics, load rating, steering method and sensitivity, pre-start check and shutdown process. Each one will also have different dimensions to the others. Therefore, getting off one forklift and then pulling an electric pallet jack can take some adjustment time.

Documentation about the machine will help and this is in the form of the O&M (Operation and Maintenance) manual. If you are privately buying a second-hand machine then try to source the manual online if it's not available.

How much do you need to train?

The theory behind how all forklifts work is the same, so the training Safety Online provides for the forklift operator's certificate theory modules will cover everything that they need to know about safe operation of a forklift. The wallet stacker/pallet jack operator's certificate theory modules will cover human and electric-powered pallet jacks. However, operators must be inducted and trained on the specific operating processes of each machine as well as any requirements that your company has. The most important example of this variation is the load plate that shows how much the machine can lift.

If you have two slightly different models of the same brand, it may only be necessary to point out the differences, but if a newly acquired forklift is significantly different, it pays to get the manufacturer in to train one or more of your team who can then induct and train other users.

However, the difference between an off-road forklift and a reach truck is significant; you would be expected to provide more detailed training on this equipment and ensure that the operator is competent.

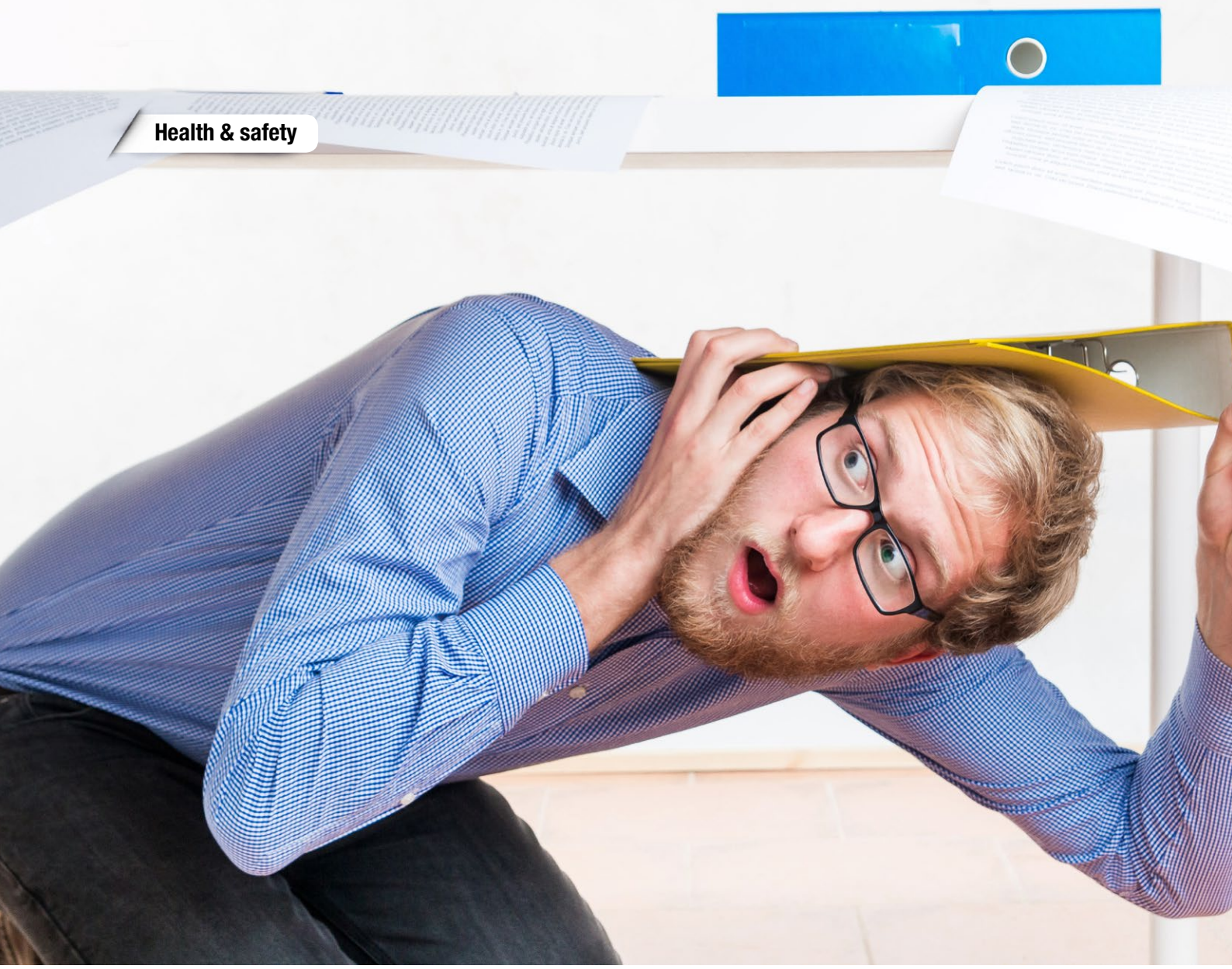
What does WorkSafe NZ say?

WorkSafe says: You must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, those who carry out work of any kind, use plant of any kind, or deal with a substance of any kind that is capable of causing a risk in a workplace:

- either have adequate knowledge or experience of similar work so they are not likely to cause harm to themselves or other people or are supervised by someone who has the relevant knowledge and experience, and
- are adequately trained in the safe use of all plant, objects, substances, or equipment the workers are or may be required to handle, as well as all personal protective equipment (PPE) that the workers are or may be required to wear or use.

It helps to keep training records and document everything you do in case you need to prove that an operator has had induction and training on a specific piece of equipment. The competency register is a very useful tool in this regard.

More information: www.safety-online.co.nz



BE PREPARED WITH AN EMERGENCY DEFENCE KIT

By Manage Group

Is your business prepared for an emergency situation? Does your team know where to go and what to do if something happens? This is a great time of the year to get your emergency plan in place as we start to wind down and tidy up before the holiday break. One important factor you should check during this process is your Emergency Defence Kit. Put simply, it is an assortment of essential tools and supplies designed to help your team protect themselves and respond effectively during emergency situations.

As well this kit, there are several other things you should think about when preparing your team for an emergency.

Stock up on supplies

Your emergency defence kit will need enough supplies for three days for each person. Some key items to consider having include:

- long-lasting food
- toilet paper
- first aid kit
- flashlight (with spare batteries)
- at least three litres of water per person, per day (nine litres total per person)

Useful tip: Create a log of the expiry dates on the items in your kit, to save you time in the future.

Spot the risks and hazards

Do you have a staircase with a broken light? Or a staff member with specific medical needs? When creating your emergency









plan, you will need to take these things into consideration. Make sure building wardens are made aware of these risks and hazards. Information is power!

Create an emergency plan

You should make sure your emergency plan covers all kinds of events including earthquakes, fires, tsunamis, and severe weather.

Staff should be made aware of assembly points and fire wardens should be helping staff in these instances. Making sure you have some staff trained in first aid should be part of your emergency plan. Lastly, make sure you have ways to contact staff. It might be handy to make sure someone has everyone's number saved in their phone.

Interesting fact: Did you know it takes 75 litres of water to make one pint of beer? However, you will only need nine litres of water per person for the three-day recommended minimum.

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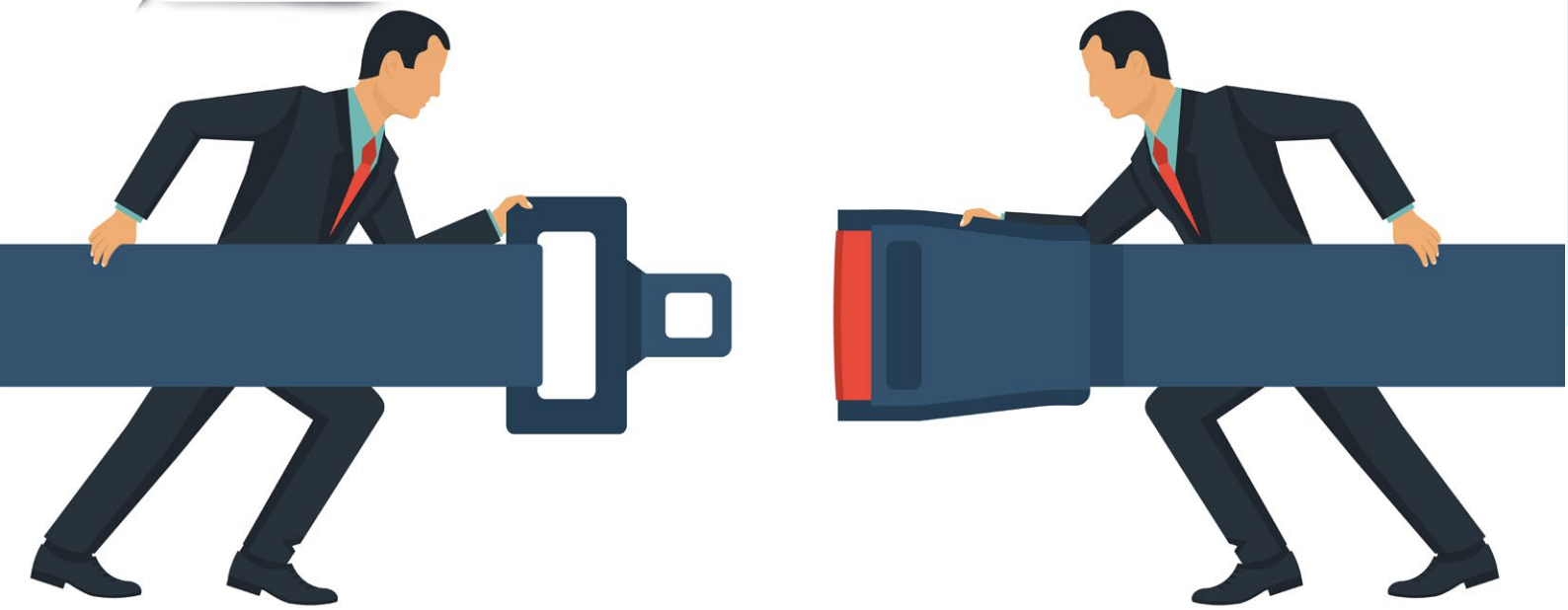

BELT UP, UNLESS...

These statistics, presented by Police CVST at our Napier seminar, make for alarming reading:

- A lack of restraints is a contributing factor in 21 per cent of death and serious injury crashes;
- Road Policing expect to deliver 60,000 seatbelt infringements next year.

Police are currently providing information to operators in regard to the exemption from wearing a seatbelt in 50 km/h zones.

Section 7.11 of the Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 refers to the "Exceptions to application of requirements relating to use of child restraints and seat belts".

More specifically, sub-clause (3)(d) states exemptions apply to a person who:

(i) is engaged in the course of his or her employment in the delivery or collection of mail or newspapers or other goods, or the servicing of the vehicle, or meter reading or other similar duties, or spraying or other similar duties from the vehicle; and

(ii) for that purpose is required to alight from and re-enter the vehicle at frequent intervals, so long as the vehicle is travelling at a speed not exceeding 50 km per hour…"

For this exemption to apply, the activity that the driver is undertaking must require them to frequently get in and out of the vehicle. If you cannot prove that is the case, then the driver may be at risk of receiving an infringement fine for not wearing a seatbelt.

The use of this exemption is an operator/business choice. Some members may elect to require their drivers to wear seatbelts at all times in 50 km/h zones regardless of the exemption available.

This may also be an appropriate time to consider whether you have a seatbelt policy in place and whether it is well communicated to drivers.

"SOME MEMBERS MAY ELECT TO REQUIRE THEIR DRIVERS TO WEAR SEATBELTS AT ALL TIMES IN 50 KM/H ZONES REGARDLESS OF THE EXEMPTION AVAILABLE."

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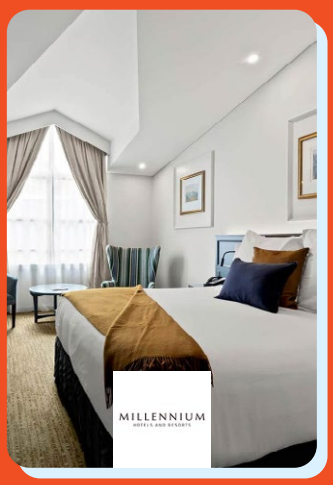

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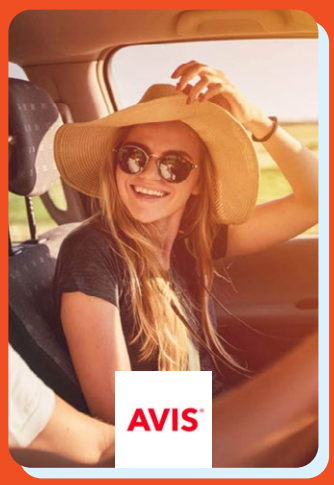

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