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## **Media Release**

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### **National Truck Driver Appreciation Week**

This week is the perfect opportunity to acknowledge the hard-working men and women of the New Zealand road transport industry, says Road Transport Forum Chief Executive Ken Shirley.

“National Truck Driver Appreciation Week is upon us and is a great time for organisations around the country to recognise the critical role played by truck drivers in keeping our economy moving.”

“Every day road transport operators haul tens of thousands of tonnes of freight all over the country; be that food for supermarket shelves, logs from forestry skid sites, export product to our ports or building materials to the construction site.”

“While putting up with a fair degree of negative publicity from the ill-informed, New Zealand’s truck drivers are on-the-whole highly-skilled professionals doing a very challenging job. They often work in remote locations through the dead of the night to make sure that freight is delivered safely where and when the rest of us demands it, a service that most New Zealanders just take for granted.”

“New Zealand, like other developed economies is currently going through an acute professional driver shortage. RTF estimates that we are around 4,000 drivers short of where we need to be to sustain the future growth of our economy.”

“The fact is that if we can’t transport our goods to market, whether that be domestically or to international customers our economy will grind to a halt. Needless to say the industry is working extremely hard to recruit and retain

young motivated New Zealanders who are keen for a life on the road. Next week's NZ Truck Driving Championship Final and NZ Road Transport Industry Awards in Dunedin are evidence of the effort we are putting in to celebrate the professionalism and skill of our drivers."

"The dedicated men and women of the road transport industry very rarely ask for it, but this week is a chance for the rest of us to finally say 'thanks' for all they do. They really are the driving force of our economy," says Shirley.

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