



## Media Release

15 May 2019

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### **Drug driving policy needs to focus on saving lives**

No matter how long, or what method it takes to road-side drug test, if it saves one life it is worth it, says Road Transport Forum chief executive Nick Leggett.

“The Road Transport Forum (RTF) is pleased to see the Government today announce it will be consulting on this critical issue, as it is one that impacts high frequency road users such as professional drivers,” Leggett says.

“We don’t believe road-side testing should be a stumbling block when 71 people were killed on New Zealand roads last year by drivers with drugs in their system.

“We would like to see this consultation reach a point where it was recommended that drug driving be treated like drunk driving in that there is a robust system of education, testing and enforcement.

“We certainly believe the current system needs to be enhanced given the statistics around drug use and driving and the consequent loss of, and damage to lives.

“We want to protect both professional drivers from others who put them at risk by taking drugs and driving while impaired, and road users who might be at risk from professional drivers impaired by drug use, whether pharmaceutical or illegal.

“We may be facing the complication of New Zealand legalising marijuana use, so we believe any testing system will need to be cognisant of that, and therefore focused more on impairment, rather than the mere presence of drugs.

“RTF will be making a submission and we look forward to being part of policy and law making to get this right and save lives – sooner rather than later,” Leggett says.

#### **For more information contact:**

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#### **About Road Transport Forum New Zealand (RTF)**

RTF provides unified national representation for several regional trucking associations. RTF members include Road Transport Associations NZ, National Road Carriers, and NZ Trucking Association. The affiliated representation of the

RTF is about 3,000 individual road transport companies which in turn, operate 16-18,000 trucks involved in road freight transport, as well as companies that provide services allied to road freight transport.

The road freight transport industry employs 26,600 people (3.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports about 70% of New Zealand's land-based freight measured on a tonne/kilometre basis.