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## **NZ road safety could benefit from Australian research**

To strengthen road safety and reduce deaths, New Zealand needs better accident data, Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett says.

Success Formula and the RTF hosted a trans-Tasman webinar today to present the findings of the Australian NTI's 2020 National Truck Accident Research Centre Accident Investigation Report.

"Insurers have the best data because they are always measuring risk. What isn't measured accurately, isn't attended to," Leggett says.

"It would be great to see similar data available in New Zealand and I'd like to call on New Zealand insurance companies to help with that.

"For example, we see trucks demonised in New Zealand because the impact of a large object hitting a smaller one in an accident means the smaller one comes off second best. Trucks are labelled dangerous and politicians call to get them off the roads. This is a very narrow-lens view.

"Australian research shows that while there has been an increase in the number of truck driver deaths on Australian roads, in 80 percent of all serious crashes involving cars and trucks, the car driver was at fault.

"It also found that the number of truck driver deaths caused by distraction more than doubled in the past two years and that 82 percent of the crashes involving truck drivers aged 25 years and under were caused by distraction.

"Insurance data deals in facts because their business depends on it. We see slanted interpretation of data from others in this space, but my view is the insurance data is the good oil and we can trust it.

"We shouldn't shy away from what the data shows as it gives us a chance to do better and develop solutions. The industry must take more of a hold in embracing information and using it to improve their safety and competency practices to improve safety results.

"The better the quality of data we have, the better our policy settings can be and the more likely we are to be able to influence the causes of road accidents and deaths.

"We don't believe the New Zealand government has addressed road safety in a way that will reduce road deaths significantly. We think there should be more collaboration on this issue with professional drivers. Driver behaviour stands out as the biggest cause of accidents over mechanical failure. Yet much government

time and sweat goes into obsessing about the truck, rather than improving the skills of the driver.”

The Australian report is available [here](#).

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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 Association 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 32,868 people (2.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports 93% of the total tonnes of freight moved in New Zealand.