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## Talk to business – request to new Government

The trucking industry wants to see Labour engage better with the business community in its second term of Government, says Road Transport Forum chief executive Nick Leggett.

“Solutions to the issues and opportunities that Covid-19 has thrown up lie in the knowledge and expertise held by New Zealand’s businesses, rather than its bureaucracy,” Leggett says.

“Covid-19 has highlighted a critical need for better understanding by Government and its officials about how the global supply chain works and how that flows through to moving goods into, out of, and around New Zealand. There are some significant supply chain issues ahead and we have asked the Government for immediate attention to this.

“Both through the New Zealand Government’s lockdown of New Zealand and its Level 3 lockdown of Auckland, little consideration was given to the supply chain and no intelligence from relevant businesses was sought. That can’t happen again.

“As we do with each incoming Government, we have sent the new Transport Minister Michael Wood a briefing about the critical role road freight transport plays in the New Zealand economy.

“Our economy is driven by exports and imports – goods that need to get where they are going as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, given our disadvantage of being so far away from the rest of the world.

“This is a well-oiled, logistics-driven machine, and the Government could learn a lot from the businesses involved. They only have to open the door and ask.

“We believe the Covid-19 experience has highlighted the need for a formalised Freight Strategy for New Zealand. For example, we saw the major issues that arose from trying to distribute a flu vaccine around New Zealand earlier this year; how does the Government plan to distribute a Covid-19 vaccine should one ever get to market?

“And if there is no Covid-19 vaccine, what are the Government’s plans? We can’t be cut off from the rest of the world for much longer – the strain is starting to show in both the supply chain of goods and of skilled workers. Without materials

from offshore and skilled workers, the big ticket projects to boost the economy won't get off the ground.

"We are keen to hear what the Government is planning in its response to Covid-19 and can only hope they ask for advice before making decisions with broad sweeping adverse impacts."

The Road Transport Forum's briefing is available [here](#).

**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 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.