

# Let's get in behind TruckR



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**H**ow often while driving across the country, especially in unfamiliar regions, do you wish you had better information on the journey you have ahead? Well, now is your chance to support an initiative that could improve life on the road for long-haul truck drivers around New Zealand.

NZTA, with assistance from the Road Transport Forum, has been working to redevelop the TruckR phone app and expand its capability to provide useful route information to truckies all over the country. However, before the project goes to its next stage, NZTA needs to hear from us about our thoughts on the current version of the app, what features we find useful, and what kind of improvements could make it better.

The survey—available on [surveymonkey.com/r/KHCWHYT](http://surveymonkey.com/r/KHCWHYT)—is brief and only takes five minutes to complete.

The main purpose of the survey is to gauge the level of driver and operator interest in a new version of the app. However, from what RTF tells me, the industry has so far failed to get behind the initiative. The reality is if drivers and operators do not illustrate a reasonable level of support for the app, NZTA will discontinue the development of it. I, therefore, encourage as many people as possible to complete the survey and prove to the folks in Wellington that this is something that will be useful to us.

The original TruckR app, developed with support from RTANZ, in the wake of the 2016 Kaikoura Earthquake, was initiated to help truck drivers travelling

on the alternate Picton to Christchurch route. In 2018, the app was extended to State Highway 1 north and south of Kaikoura and all the way down to Dunedin. It proved its usefulness then and now surely is the time to extend it across the rest of the country.

WIRT, as long-time supporters will know, has a particular interest in the notification of rest areas that are convenient and safe for large combination vehicles and include good-quality bathrooms and amenities for women drivers. The number of such rest areas has for many years been a real problem for the industry. New Zealand's state highway network is not blessed with the frequency of well-designed conveniences and service areas that are common overseas.

The current app, while limited geographically, provides this information along with the location of passing lanes, trailer swap areas, one-lane bridges, and places with limited cellphone coverage. It includes information on the location of petrol stations, food outlets, and public toilets. The app also connects to the traffic alert system, providing notification of road works, crashes, and road closures. It is a one-stop information centre for truckies.

So if you think you and your fellow drivers would benefit from an enhanced version of the app, please complete the survey and let's make it happen.

Finally, it was fantastic to hear the story of Hawke's Bay mum Benny Hone, who with the help and support of the road transport industry, is about to realise her dream of supporting her



family by becoming a truck driver. For those unfamiliar with Benny's story and who may have missed Radio New Zealand's coverage of it, I recommend going to [rnz.co.nz](http://rnz.co.nz) and looking it up. The Road Transport Forum, Work and Income NZ, and Emmerson's Transport must all be acknowledged for putting their heads together to help fund Benny's training and getting her an opportunity in the industry.

Road transport desperately needs more keen and motivated women like Benny so we must all make sure we do our best to provide such people with the best assistance we can to help them make a career in our industry. ■