

Give the new mental health app a go

IMAGES BY LARISSA-J SWANN



WORDS BY MERYN MORRISON, WIRT CHAIRPERSON

Buried between the publicity of the election campaign and changes to the COVID-19 alert levels, this year's Mental Health Awareness Week largely flew under the radar. While that was a shame, I was impressed to see one of our major industry associations, National Road Carriers, take the opportunity

to get behind Mentemia, an app-based tool truckies can use to manage their mental health.

The road transport industry is a fantastic sector to work in, but it undoubtedly comes with significant pressures. The responsibility of piloting a 50-tonne combination vehicle on New Zealand's difficult roads, spending

time away from family, or the ongoing financial worry that afflicts all business owners can lead to high levels of stress that have a negative impact on our mental health.

Mentemia, co-founded by ex-All Black and mental health advocate John Kirwan, is a completely free app that introduces users

to evidence-based ideas and tools to help them learn how to be well and stay well. It's intended to help people deal with the most common stressors in today's world—poor sleep, anxiety, and stress.

"These stressors, if left unattended, can significantly impact quality of life at home and work. Mentemia is the fence at the top of the cliff rather than being the ambulance at the bottom," says Kirwan. "With Mentemia, you discover what things can help you feel more energised, more productive, and better equipped for whatever the world throws at you."

As NRC's chief executive David Aitken said in launching the partnership with Mentemia, "people in the road freight industry work tirelessly to ensure freight is being delivered on time, and COVID-19 is contributing to an increase in stress and anxiety levels."

The Mentemia app is completely free so while it may not be everyone's cup of tea, there will be heaps of people out there that could benefit from the tips and strategies it provides. You can visit mentemia.com to find out more about it or just download it straight from the App Store.

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Have camera, will travel

I'm sure most *Deals on Wheels* readers would agree there aren't many industries as photogenic as the trucking industry and let's be honest, for those of us with diesel in our blood, a well-taken photo of a combination vehicle going about the task of hauling freight is an alluring image.

It was in this context that I recently came

upon the Facebook page of an inspiring young woman who's dedicated to the art of truck photography.

Larissa-J Swann always wanted to drive trucks and had a soft spot for Kenworths. Unfortunately, her health meant that she didn't have the opportunity to follow that dream. Nevertheless, this hasn't dimmed her enthusiasm for trucking so instead of driving

trucks she began taking pictures of them.

It all started a couple of years ago when she met Robbie Shefford from Geraldine. Robbie helped encourage Larissa into truck photography through the videos he had made using his Go-Pro. Larissa, borrowing one of his cameras, went down to State Highway One and they sat there for hours taking photos and talking trucks. From that

point on she was hooked. Larissa had found her passion and has since travelled the length of New Zealand riding in a variety of different vehicles from stock trucks to crane trucks. She reckons she has travelled thousands of kilometres back and forth to the North Island from her home in Timaru perfecting her photographic skills and talking to lots of people in the industry.

Several of her images have been published in trucking industry, magazines, and some have even appeared on TV.

"I really enjoy taking truck photos and travelling around New Zealand," Larissa told me. "I never get sick of it. I have met so many amazing people and taken some spectacular photos."

Larissa's photographic journey confirms

the old adage that with opportunity comes experience and with experience comes further opportunities.

If you're interested in seeing more of Larissa's photography or even commissioning her to take some photos of your fleet, look up L-J Swann Truck Photographer on Facebook or contact her directly at swannphotographer@yahoo.com.