

Women who keep our country moving

Earlier this the year I wrote about Rose Pradhan and Kerry Crosby, a couple of women who are making their way as truck drivers and are an inspiration to others thinking of taking the plunge into our industry. In this column, I want to profile a few of the other women behind the wheel who are out there doing their bit to keep our country moving. If you see these women on your travels, give them a wave for they are doing what they love and are the future of trucking in New Zealand.



WORDS BY MERYN MORRISON, WIRT CHAIRPERSON



Rachel's Isuzu carrying steel and pipes

Rachel Knauf

Rachel work at Asmuss Group in Taupo as a steel storeman and truck driver. As a storeman, she operates an overhead gantry crane, forklift, bandsaw, and grinder picking out and prepping steel and pipes for customers specific requirements.

When she's not working in the warehouse, Rachel is driving an Isuzu with an eight-metre-long semi-trailer for deliveries. It has a removable rear bearer to allow her to carry 12-metre-long pipes and steel. It has a gross combination weight of 9000kg, allowing a load up to 4500kg, so while it may be little, Rachel's truck has no trouble with the big jobs.

Emma Louise Satherley

Emma is 30 and has been driving trucks for four years. She started in refrigerated transport with a Class 2 truck and moved into bulk haulage based around civil construction and driving Class 4 and 5 vehicles. She enjoys doing bulk work throughout the Waikato and the wider region and has great support from all the local drivers, who, I'm told, have been very encouraging, even when she was still learning to reverse her trailer.

Emma is stoked to see more women join the industry and hopes to show other women that the road transport industry is just as much for them as it is for the boys.



Running a load to Firth Concrete in Whitianga. A few trips over the Kopu-Hikuai hill is thirsty work for the DAF.



Danielle Carrington with her dad

Danielle Carrington

Danielle is 26 and has been working for Farmers Transport for nearly six years now. She carts mostly cattle or sheep around the back-blocks and got into driving because she grew up at Farmers Transport with her dad and his family. Danielle loves the freedom of the job and being out and about enjoying New Zealand's incredible landscapes.

Danielle, Emma, and Rachel's stories show that women are indeed part of the trucking scene and are doing some great work in our industry. However, they are still only eight percent of the industry's workforce. While we may never achieve a 50/50 split between men and women, I know that there are far more women out there who want to give our industry a crack. So let's keep encouraging them into it, support them when they are having a tough time, and turn that eight percent into 10, 20, and then 30%.

Finally, I am hopeful that through the Road Transport Forum's new Te ara ki tua Road to Success programme, more young women will be able to follow their dreams and find a career driving trucks. Road to Success is being set up to combine on-the-job practical training with theoretical components leading to qualifications and employment in the industry. I look forward to it being formally launched early next year and believe that it will assist more women into our industry and provide operators with the required support to take on new, inexperienced staff. ■