



# Media Release

8 August 2017

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## Joining the line an important milestone

Road Transport Forum Chief Executive Ken Shirley has welcomed the news that KiwiRail and NCTIR have successfully linked up the railway north of Kaikoura for the first time since last November's earthquake.

"This really is a critical milestone in the recovery process," says Shirley. "Trains can begin to use the line, which will start to reduce the pressure on trucking companies to solely maintain the flow of goods across the top of the South Island."

"Trucking companies have done an amazing job since November's quake forced all freight on to the alternate route over the Lewis Pass. Despite dire predictions and incredibly trying circumstances, including poor road conditions and a much longer journey time, there has been minimal disruption to the movement of freight up and down the country."

"The ingenuity and adaptability of the road transport industry to meet this challenge is really an incredible story that unfortunately goes largely unrecognised."

The opening of the rail line also means that the reconstruction of State Highway 1 is that much closer as trains can now be used to move construction materials up and down the coast.

"The road transport industry congratulates KiwiRail and NCTIR on reaching today's milestone and looks forward to the reinstatement of State Highway 1 later in the year and a return to a true multi-modal freight network between Christchurch and Picton," says Shirley.

**Contact:**

**Ken Shirley**

**Phone: 04 472 3877**

**Mob: 021 570 877**