



# Media Release

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## **Resilience and adaptability theme of 2017 RTF Conference**

Over the last year the road transport industry has faced some pretty significant challenges in carrying out the freight task, says Road Transport Forum Chief Executive Ken Shirley.

“The closure of State Highway One and the main trunk rail line through Kaikoura has put significant demands on operators using the inland route, while the closure of the Manawatu Gorge, the prevalence of floods and other weather events, price fluctuations and increasing traffic congestion have also provided testing circumstances for road freight operators.”

“Most New Zealanders just do not realise how much effort goes into maintaining the country’s freight links, especially in times of adversity,” says Shirley.

“Within hours of the Kaikoura earthquake and the news that the road and rail link would be out of action road transport operators had plans in place to maintain the delivery of freight. It was a stark illustration of the resilience, adaptability and flexibility of the road transport industry.”

This year’s Road Transport Forum Conference, taking place in Hamilton in three weeks, will look at how the industry can adapt to meet future challenges, not only from adverse natural events but economic and environmental demands also.

Representatives from NZTA and KiwiRail will discuss progress on State Highway 1 and the re-joining of the rail line through Kaikoura. The MetService will introduce the industry to what it is doing with new forecasting technology and Tom Nickels of Waste Management will discuss his organisations move towards electric vehicle technology.

Economist and political commentator Bernard Hickey, Z Energy CEO Mike Bennetts and Abbie Reynolds of the Sustainable Business Council will also provide thought-provoking views on the state of the economy, the environment and the political direction under the new government.

The 2017 New Zealand Truck Driving Championships Final will run alongside the Conference and is a chance to watch some of New Zealand's top drivers in action and find out who is crowned New Zealand's champion driver.

The prestigious New Zealand Road Transport Industry Awards Dinner will be held on the final night of the conference and will be a celebration of success in our industry and the people who go the extra mile to make road transport an innovative and productive part of the economy.

"The awards are also an appropriate opportunity to acknowledge the members of our industry who have shown resourcefulness and ingenuity in dealing with the challenges over the last year or so," says Shirley.

"Conference 2017 promises to be a fantastic event, so don't miss out."

Tickets to the Conference on 10 and 11 November and the Road Transport Industry Awards Dinner can still be purchased at [www.rtfconference.co.nz](http://www.rtfconference.co.nz).

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