



## Media Release

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### **Award winners show the changing face of road transport**

Celebrating diversity was the key to the New Zealand Road Transport Industry Awards at a dinner at Wairakei Resort last night.

“With an ageing workforce, and the average age of our truck drivers being mid-50s, it’s important the industry is inclusive and promotes diversity,” Road Transport Forum chief executive Nick Leggett says.

“While we have appropriately awarded those who have been in the industry a long time, we added two awards this year to recognise women and young drivers. In fact, of the five awards, three have gone to women.”

Carla Seymour Mansell, from Seymours Transport Services in Gisborne took out the EROAD Outstanding Contribution to Health and Safety Award; Ayna Shamim, from Angel Transport in Auckland received the first ever Teletrac Navman Outstanding Contribution by a Woman in the Road Transport Industry Award; and Summer Ratima Thompson, from G J Sheldrake in Tokoroa was EROAD Young Driver of the Year.

Word in the industry is that as Health and Safety Manager, Carla Seymour Mansell is the toughest and strictest around. Female, Māori, and demanding that the health and safety standard is lifted across the industry, it’s fair to say that her road hasn’t been easy.

Ayna Shamim studied nursing, but elected to start Angel Transport with her father in 2005, when she was just 19. She employs three female drivers and is seen as a role model for other women wanting to enter the road transport industry.

Summer Ratima Thompson was a barista at Robert Harris in Tokoroa when she talked her now employer, Graham Sheldrake, into employing her to drive logging trucks. At 27 years old, she has achieved what take many others years to achieve and is an inspiration to other young people who want to be part of the road transport industry.

Jeff Mear, from Fruehauf New Zealand in Auckland, received the VTNZ Supreme Contribution to NZ Road Transport Award. He started in the industry as a boy with a broom on the factory floor under the watchful eye of his late father, Pat Mear, one of the founders of Roadmaster Trailers. Now National Sales Director at Fruehauf, Jeff is a passionate advocate for the transport industry and works hard encouraging young drivers to be their best.

The Castrol Truck Driver Hero award went to Rex Temm, from Riordan & West in Te Awamutu, who saved a young toddler he saw wandering along the side of the road on the very busy State Highway One, near Tokoroa. But for his quick thinking and action, the wee boy could have been killed and a major traumatic accident could have occurred. Rex pulled off an extraordinary driving feat to protect the child from a heavily laden logging truck bearing down on him.

"We are thrilled that these awards show some different faces, and tell some different stories, to what people might expect to see in the trucking industry," Nick Leggett says.

"There are some outstanding women and young people who make their careers in our industry and they are contributing fresh ideas and new ways of thinking to the companies they work for.

"And they will continue to be guided by the likes of Jeff Mear and Rex Temm who are still as passionate about the industry as they were when they entered."

**Full citations on the winners and photos available on request.**

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### **About Road Transport Forum New Zealand (RTF)**

RTF provides unified national representation for several regional trucking associations. RTF members include Road Transport Associations NZ, National Road Carriers, and NZ Trucking Association. The affiliated representation of the RTF is about 3,000 individual road transport companies which in turn, operate 16-18,000 trucks involved in road freight transport, as well as companies that provide services allied to road freight transport.

The road freight transport industry employs 26,600 people (3.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports about 70% of New Zealand's land-based freight measured on a tonne/kilometre basis.