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## **Thanks to truckers and government for going the extra mile**

As New Zealand emerges from the Alert Level 4 lockdown, thanks are due to the essential workers in the road freight industry, and the Government for assisting them in getting the necessary goods through, Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett says.

“Thousands of truck drivers have been leaving their safe home bubbles each day to deliver essential goods such as food to supermarkets, health and safety supplies to health workers, exports to generate income for the country and keep our supply routes open, and petrol so essential workers can get to and from work. This has required new ways of looking at and doing things and plenty of co-operation,” Leggett says.

“Those truck drivers are backed up by a whole team of other essential workers, often working from home, including despatchers who check their welfare on the road. For many road freight operators, the lockdown has meant running at a loss because the normal business rules haven’t applied and they haven’t been able to run their trucks as efficiently as they normally would.

“Food has of course, been a high priority, and that New Zealanders have been well fed during the lockdown has been in no small part, due to truck drivers.

“The Government has been willing to listen to the RTF as we have explained some of the intricacies of the supply chain and has made some changes along the way to ensure the smooth delivery of freight. We thank them for that.

“Government officials have been working long hours to solve unpredictable problems, and we appreciate the regulator also listening and applying common sense to the application of rules during this period of stress.

“Civil Defence Director Sarah Stuart-Black heard our plea for public toilets to be open for truck drivers out there during the lockdown, and we thank her and the local authorities that responding to that.

“The Covid-19 lockdown has been a learning experience for everyone and it has been good to see a willingness from Ministers and their officials to solve problems as quickly as possible.

“More people have certainly learned how absolutely essential road freight transport is and how complex the logistics of moving goods around New Zealand and the world are.

“There are certainly challenges ahead as the world grapples with Covid-19, but truck drivers will keep doing what they do to ensure the essentials of life are there when we need them.”

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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 Association 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 32,868 people (2.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports 93% of the total tonnes of freight moved in New Zealand.