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Roads must figure in economic recovery – election manifesto

Roads are the lifeblood of the economy and as we head into a general election with the focus on Covid-19 recovery, we need a clear view of the economic recovery plan, Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett says.

“The RTF has gone to the five main political parties with our [Election Manifesto](#) and asked how they will ensure the road freight industry’s ongoing health, and subsequently, the health of our economy as a trading nation,” Leggett says.

“Pretty much everything you need, every day, comes to you on a truck – something I think people came to appreciate during the Government’s Covid-19 lockdown and response level changes.

“With 93 percent of freight going by road, those high value food exports that are going to save us from economic ruin need to be able to get to ports and airports and that is done on trucks. Train lines do not reach into the farm land of New Zealand.

“We are concerned that while there has been a lot of talk about building roads as a means to boost the New Zealand economy, we don’t believe there is the capability to contract and manage such projects within the New Zealand workforce. With our border closed indefinitely, how are we going to get the people needed to get these projects underway?

“We have picked four areas of greatest concern to road freight transport and asked the five main political parties to answer questions. These include plans for economic recovery from Covid-19; what is planned to ensure truly fair conditions for employers and workers that allow freedom of choice and flexibility; what the investment will be in green freight; and views on the Cannabis Legislation and Control Bill and how that will impact workplace health and safety for an industry that shares the road with the public.

“Legalising recreational cannabis is a big concern for people whose workplace is the public road. This concern is based in safety, and evidence that recreational cannabis and road safety don’t mix. We believe there are a lot of unintended consequences that have been given no consideration in this legislation.

“We want our industry well informed on political party policies that will impact them and their futures, so we have set up a website page dedicated to Election 2020,” Leggett says.

The responses to our questions from the five main parties are available [here](#).

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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.