



Media Release

29 August 2016

Road transport industry mourns passing of Jim Barker

“The New Zealand road transport industry has lost a true icon with the passing of Jim Barker over the weekend,” says Road Transport Forum Chief Executive Ken Shirley.

Jim first began Otorohanga Transport Group in 1963. In 1992, with three partners he established Strait Shipping, which immediately led to a massive decrease in domestic freight costs. In 2002 Strait Shipping was expanded to include a regular and popular passenger service.

In late 2007 Otorohanga Transport Group restructured, bringing about the formation of the Jim Barker Group of Companies and encompassing Freight Lines Ltd, Manawatu Transport, Stock Lines and Strait Shipping. It has become one of the largest locally owned and operated freight transport companies in New Zealand.

Jim also introduced to the industry a driver training scheme and supported the introduction of the iShift transmission into New Zealand, contributing to a safer and more fuel efficient truck fleet.

Jim was inducted into the New Zealand Road Transport Hall of Fame in 2012 and received an ONZM in the 2016 New Year Honours.

“The legacy of what Jim achieved, not only with Strait Shipping and Otorohanga Transport, but across the entire industry will be felt for decades to come,” says Shirley. “He was instrumental in modernising the efficient movement of freight across the country.”

“The thoughts of the Road Transport Forum, our associations and the entire road transport industry are with Jim’s family and close friends at this time.”

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