



Governance Group appointed for women in transport network



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As I signalled in last October's edition of *Deals on Wheels* (#278), the Women in Road Transport (WiRT) network has been busy setting up a formal Governance Group to succeed the original Oversight Group. Unfortunately, the process has taken a little longer than intended. However, it has been important to get it right and set the group up so that it can get on with the critical job of setting WiRT's strategic direction.

While the Oversight Group did a fantastic job to get WiRT off the ground and establish it as a resource for women in the industry, the fact was that it was only a temporary solution and WiRT basically outgrew it. The time has come to focus on the evolution and sustainability of the organisation as a tireless advocate for women.

The new group will provide guidance and direction to local, regional, and national road transport associations, interested transport companies, and workforce networks as well as providing for the sustainability and evolution of the organisation.

Region 2's representative on the group is Ian Palmer, chief operating officer at Regal Group. Ian joined the industry two years ago. He quickly saw that the industry was struggling with issues of compliance and health and safety while also struggling to embrace diversity.

Ian identifies three aspects he believes will ultimately drive the success of WiRT. Firstly, WiRT needs to work with other industry bodies to help drive the acceptance and importance of having

women in the industry. WiRT also needs to be active in helping attract women to the industry while also providing support to women who come up against some old-fashioned views.

Sharon Scott is National Road Carrier's appointment. She is National Corporate Services and HR manager for Waste Management and has had an affinity with trucks her whole life due to her father working for a trucking company and often taking her out on the road.

Sharon believes the biggest issue facing the industry right now is the shortage of drivers. Women who make up half the workforce are under-represented in the transport industry, so it makes sense to create more career choices for women.

Abbey Ray from NZ Express Transport was profiled in one of my columns last year. She is Region 4's representative on the group and is determined to support women in the industry and provide guidance where possible. Abbey rightly believes that it can be daunting going into a male-dominated industry, so making sure women in the industry know there is a helping hand when needed is going to encourage more women to enter the industry.

Region 5 has appointed Rhonda Didham of Moving Solutions. Rhonda doesn't see gender as an issue for our industry. In her opinion, what matters is if someone can do the job.

However, she does wish that the establishment could do more to make the industry work better for women. Being flexible with staff is important—

70 hours a week isn't what every person wants.

Rhonda sees work-life balance as important not only for women but also for men and believes it might also improve productivity.

Carol McGeady is executive officer at the NZ Trucking Association and while relatively new to the industry has an extensive background in marketing and business management. Carol has developed a number of successful programmes at NZ Trucking including the Share the Road Safely with Big Trucks campaign and Tackling Fatigue to educate drivers about health and well-being.

The Governance Group's final member is Donna Williams, who has been seconded. Donna is head of customer experience and marketing at NZI. As such, Donna has learnt a lot more about commercial motor vehicles and what it takes to manage a fleet. Donna is keen to see the industry make the most of the skills available in this country irrespective of gender and ethnicity. By thinking more broadly, she thinks we can utilise these skills to fill gaps where traditionally we haven't been able to.

As the Region 3 representative and current Chair, I am looking forward to working with this talented group of people and moving WiRT onto even bigger and better things. Please feel free to contact us via the Women in Road Transport Facebook profile, the WiRT section on the RTF website, or by sending an e-mail to wirtnz@gmail.com. ■