

## EMPLOYMENT

### Growing our workers

#### The challenge

The industry has material ongoing worker shortages including drivers. This shortage has existed for several years but has been exacerbated by the lack of supply of drivers from overseas following COVID-19 restrictions, heightened domestic and international competition for workers generally and a driver population currently skewed to an older demographic.

In addition to this being a serious weakness in the overall supply chain, worker shortages leads to pressure on existing drivers as well as unsustainable wage inflation.

Other factors impacting operators' ability to secure sufficient numbers of drivers include an insufficient pathway to residency for migrant truck drivers (we note a policy is being implemented to support a two-year pathway) and fewer people gaining class 1 driver's licence, a prerequisite for a class 5 heavy vehicle combination licence.

#### What is National Road Carriers' position?

It is important to note that some of the causes of worker shortages are caused by global macro-economic issues rather than anything over which the industry or individual operators have any control.

However, there are levers available to both government and industry to increase the attractiveness of the industry to current and potential workers including ease of access. These include longer-term investments (such as reducing shortages by increasing supply through improving supply chain infrastructure) as well as more immediate initiatives such as:

#### **1. Making it as easy as possible to attract quality truck drivers from overseas and domestically**

- Implement immigration policy changes to provide a clear and simple path to residency for immigrants who are truck drivers.
- Improving the Class 1-5 process to encourage young people to obtain licenses.

#### **2. National Road Carriers and its members are committed to being good employers with safe and respectful workplaces.**

- The industry is committed to continuously improving the industry's attractiveness. This includes highlighting the industry's contribution to New Zealand's future as well as continuing to strengthen the diversity and inclusion of the trucking industry.

- The industry recognises the opportunity for creative approaches to alleviating the skills shortage including greater flexibility in how roles are filled (for example, part-time, shorter shifts) to attract a broader range of applicants.

### **3. Supporting pathways into the road transport industry**

- Raising awareness with schools on career pathways into the road transport industry, emphasising all roles, and the technological advances in managing freight & logistics.
- Assisting the development, awareness and growth of industry training programmes and qualifications.