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Stink bugs hit heavy vehicle imports

Heavy vehicle imports have taken a hit after brown marmorated stink bugs were found on Auckland-bound shipping vessels.

But industry leaders say the true extent of the problem won't show up in new registration figures for weeks or even months.

Hino general manager **Michael Doeg** says the issue has had a big impact on his business, with trucks on three ships unable to unload in Auckland.

It's a situation he has never encountered before.

He describes it as "an anomaly along the lines of an actual disaster".

Doeg says he's pleased with the company's February results but the true impact of the stink bugs is yet to come.

"There was very limited arrival of new stock for the month.

"The impact will be over the next few months as we start to deplete our landed stock."

Keeping customers informed of the situation is a priority and "they understand it's a situation outside of our control," he says.

Isuzu general manager **Colin Muir** says his company had a "significant number" of trucks on two of the ships.

No Isuzu vehicles scheduled for February actually landed, leaving the company scrambling to keep its dealer network and customers up to date.

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Where did the bugs come from?

Exactly how stink bugs got on to the car carriers in Japan is unclear.

The source of the problem is still being investigated by the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI).

A ministry spokesman says at this point it can't definitively say whether the bugs stowed away on used vehicles, new vehicles, heavy vehicles or the ships themselves.

"The vessels themselves are probably the least likely source, although residual contamination from previous cargo can't be excluded. There may be more than one source."

An industry source told *Auto Media* there's "all sorts of accusations around".

"It could be on machinery like cranes and diggers working on construction sites and farms.

"It could be new vehicles that are manufactured and sit around for quite a while.

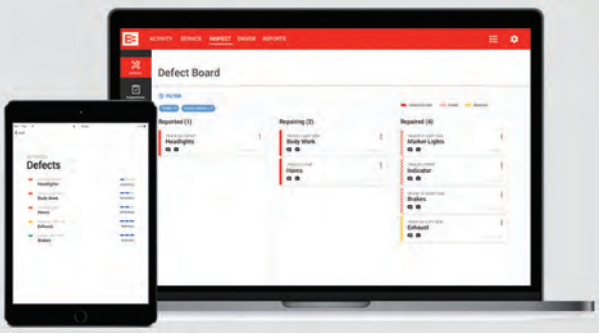
"It could be used cars or it could be the vessels themselves."

The *Tokyo Car* was recently fully discharged and left port after extensive biosecurity checks by MPI officers. The *Sepang Express* berthed at Ports of Auckland on Thursday.

It's understood the *Courageous Ace* and the *Glovis Caravel* are heading to Singapore to be treated before returning to New Zealand.

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Firm shuts after NZTA alert



Crack identified on the trailer's drawbar.



Cracks developed where the main body of the drawbeam attached to its side plates.

The engineering company at the centre of a NZ Transport Agency safety alert issued over faulty truck drawbeams, drawbars and towbars is closing down.

NZTA says all towing connections fitted by Peter Wastney Engineering must be assessed for new certification by a heavy vehicle specialist certifier.

The warning was issued in February and the agency says it requires the equipment be checked for signs of cracks "or other failures".

The alert is for almost 3000 truck trailers across the country and NZTA has written to the owners of 1800 heavy vehicles requiring urgent inspections.

NZTA operational standards manager **Craig Basher** says vehicles must be "discontinued immediately" if any signs are found.

The warning comes after several recent failures were identified in both drawbeams and drawbars certified by Peter Wastney Engineering.

"Independent reviews of those drawbeams and drawbars have identified that they were not adequately designed for the loads to which they had been certified," Basher says.

"The Transport Agency has investigated the failures of both drawbeams and drawbars and has enough reason to believe that the designs in general are significantly deficient to justify a reassessment to replace or re-certify.

"While the focus of this alert is primarily on towing connections, an inspection of all certifications (e.g. log bolsters, crane attachments, load anchors, chassis modifications, etc) by Peter Wastney Engineering Ltd is also recommended in addition to the usual walk-around inspection."

The agency has been aware of the situation since late last year with the most recent failure reported last month.

In August, a truck drawbeam certified by the company suffered a catastrophic failure, allowing the trailer to part from the truck.

Heavy Vehicle Certifying Engineers executive officer **Kevin Barclay** told *Radio NZ* there has never been an NZTA heavy vehicle safety alert of this nature before.

Steel fatigue is the major issue and cause of the cracks, Barclay says.

Peter Wastney, owner of Nelson-based Peter Wastney Engineering Ltd, told *TransportTalk* the situation has forced him to close the business.

"As a result of uncertainty about my future authority to certify, I have decided to relinquish it and to retire.

"I have appreciated the wide support I have had since this incident from those in the industry that I have had dealings with."

However, Wastney says it is not clear what caused the fault.

"Failure can be a function of design, material strength and usage, and to my knowledge the cause or causes of this failure have not been established," he says.

"Nevertheless, in September my authority to certify was suspended pending investigation.

"Last week, another trailer developed a serious crack in its drawbar.

"Despite having been in satisfactory service for some 13 years, I understand NZTA deemed that this was caused by design failure. Given the time in service, I believe this is unlikely.

"I have been issuing towing connection certificates for over 30 years and have been regularly audited by NZTA and my work has been found to be compliant," Wastney says.

"There are no other similar designs to those that failed currently operating and I am not aware of other such failures.

"I am confident there is no issue of public safety involved with my certifications and there is no good reason why existing certificates should not continue to apply.

"However, as a matter of normal prudent operation all equipment should be monitored regularly for signs of failure and if anything is found the operator must take appropriate steps to fix it, including presentation for re-certification.

"I am aware that every six months all heavy vehicles are required to have a thorough inspection at a testing station to ensure continued roadworthiness," he says.

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New Waste Management site takes shape

Waste Management's new Auckland site will help modernise the way it conducts business, managing director T**om Nickels** says.

The 5.2 hectare former Lion Breweries bottling plant at Springs Rd in East Tamaki is being cleared by owner Stride Properties before Waste Management moves its operations to the completed site in 2020.

"What we are doing is consolidating several old sites into one new site in Auckland," Nickels says.

It is a similar project to one the company did in Christchurch after the earthquakes but on a larger scale.

"It's a purpose-build. We're aiming for a six green star environmentally focused development.


Tom Nickels

"We will go 100% open plan. Currently we're in a 1970s building which is pretty representative of the era. It's not conducive to the way we would like to operate."

The buildings will total 8285 square metres, with an initial lease of 25 years locked in.

Along with offices for its Auckland and national operations, the new site will have a workshop for the company's trucks and a truck wash.

"We'll park 150 trucks there at night. Many of them will be converted to electric vehicles by then.

"We're very excited about it. It gives us the opportunity to think about the way we work."

Nickels says it took a long time to find an appropriate location.

"We needed a large industrial-zoned site that had transport options."

The development of the East Tamaki property means the company will vacate its Mt Wellington site when the lease runs out.

Stride chief executive **Philip Littlewood** says the development is exciting.

"We are delighted to be working with a great customer to deliver an outstanding real estate outcome for both parties.

"This is another example of Stride creating great places, that are well located and that meet our customer's long term requirements".

Mainfreight celebrates 40 years

Logistics and transport company Mainfreight is gearing up for its 40th anniversary.

The business was founded in New Zealand by **Bruce Plested** using a 1969 Bedford truck.

It went on to become a global supply chain operation with more than 240 branches around the world.

It celebrated the special milestone on March 6.

"This is when we take the time to thank our team who have been working hard and continue to work hard in order for us to pursue our 100-year vision," a company statement says.

"Our success is directly attributed to the hard work of each of our current 7534 team members and all the team members that have come before them.

"From our humble beginning in Auckland, New Zealand with just one man and one truck, the last 40 years has seen Mainfreight develop into a global supply chain provider.

"In creating a 100-year company, our focus goes far beyond this year, next year or any single region or division.

"Our 100-year vision drives every decision we make.

"This is not about reaching an end-point; it's a mindset that every day and every deed is about growing a strong, iconic, enduring business.

"Every decision takes us towards the company we want to be 100 years in the future."

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Twyford defends transport priorities

Transport minister **Phil Twyford** is defending the Government's funding strategy as the Opposition accuses it of diverting road taxes into "pet rail" projects.

National Party MP **Judith Collins** has slammed the Labour-led Government for its "obsession with light rail in Auckland" which comes at the expense of important regional roading projects, she says.

That was backed by National-led petitions in January aimed at saving several major roading networks around the country.

They focused on 10 "roads of national significance" in need of around $10.5 billion in upgrades which are "at risk of not going ahead" under the current leadership, the petitions said.

The roads highlighted include Wellsford to Whangarei, Auckland's East-West Link, Cambridge to Tirau, Piarere to the foot of the Kaimai Range, Tauranga to Katikati, Napier to Hastings, Manawatu Gorge, Levin to Sanson, Christchurch's Northern Motorway and Christchurch to Ashburton.

Collins says the Government is set on diverting road taxes for rail projects and that's against "an important principle, adhered to by successive governments, ensuring the specific taxes paid by motorists are invested in newer, safer and better roads".

"Road users pay taxes which are directly returned to them," she says.

"Mr Twyford has written to stakeholders saying a number of changes to the Government policy statement on land transport are being considered.

"Among the proposals is 'exploring how rail investment is incorporated within the GPS and the National Land Transport Fund'(NLTF).

"This is in spite of his office telling media ... that funding for road upgrades would not be redirected to rail.

"In his rush to erroneously claim that a number of roading projects aren't under threat because of the Government's obsession with Auckland rail, Mr Twyford has been saying different things to different people.

"The NLTF is paid for by road users to be invested in improving New Zealand's roading network and it should remain that way.

"The Government needs to check its priorities and ensure the taxes paid by road users are invested back in the roads they are using," Collins says.

Road Transport Forum chief executive **Ken Shirley** says trucking operators accept the high level of road user charges "due to the direct relationship the fund has to the provision and maintenance of our roading network".

"Using it as a slush fund to pay for other transport modes will breed a high level of resentment," he says.

"If the Government wants to expand the NLTF to other modes then it should investigate the feasibility of other modes contributing to it.

"For instance, there is no reason why KiwiRail and other rail users should not pay 'rail user charges' to maintain and develop the rail network. To do otherwise is cross-subsidisation," Shirley says.

But Twyford has hit back at the claims, saying National MPs are either being "disingenuous with the public or misunderstand how transport funding works to suggest Labour is diverting money away from roads and into rail".


Phil Twyford


Judith Collins


Ken Shirley

"The Labour-led Government has not altered any existing roading projects except Auckland's East-West link and officials are working to identify a lower-cost, better-value option there."

The National-led highway projects petition is simply a publicity stunt for "election campaign promises made by National in August and never costed or funded," Twyford says.

"To suggest the Government isn't going ahead with projects that don't exist is misleading. This is pure opposition politicking.

"It is not possible for the Government to take money from current roading projects in the National Land Transport Programme. Those projects are managed by the New Zealand Transport Agency at arm's length from government.

"Although the Government has not asked for any specific project to be reviewed other than the East-West Link, wider work is underway to look at how future transport spending can deliver a modern and sustainable transport system."

Twyford says the Government wants the NLTF to put more emphasis on safety to reduce the "shocking" road toll, more investment in regional roads and to develop modern rapid transit for cities.

"While the Government sets the strategic direction for transport spending through its Government Policy statement on land transport, it's important to note that the Transport Agency independently makes all operational decisions around which roading projects are prioritised and the timing of the work it carries out.

"Other than the East-West Link, ongoing roading maintenance, projects assessment and safety improvements are continuing as they did before the election."





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Motorhome giants team up

Two leading recreational vehicle (RV) companies are joining forces to expand global operations.

Tourism Holdings Ltd (THL), the world's largest renter of motorhomes and campervans, is partnering with United States company Thor Industries, the world's largest RV manufacturer.

The joint venture, named TH2, will combine assets and resources from both companies and other businesses in the industry.

They include road trip planning software and app company Roadtrippers; booking, rental and fleet management provider Cosmos; peer-to-peer RV rental service Mighway; and top Australia and New Zealand camping app CamperMate.



The venture aims to provide better "digital connectivity" to RV owners around the world for trip planning and booking, remote systems monitoring, roadside assistance and peer-to-peer RV and campsite rental.

It will also streamline an owner's record-keeping and enable dealers and manufacturers to provide service notifications and online vehicle manuals.

THL will contribute its Mighway business, Cosmos platform and shares in Roadtrippers and other interests, and around AU$3 million in the 50:50 partnership.

Thor Industries will contribute US$47m.

Acquiring technology-based assets has been a focus for THL, its chief executive Grant Webster says.

"We are very pleased to see the technology assets we have created and accumulated over the last five years underpinning TH2. The growth opportunities for TH2 under this new structure are immense.

"We look forward to adding our diverse owner on-road, in-trip insights to craft a digital offering that will dramatically enhance countless journeys."

THL chairman **Rob Campbell** says recent annual meetings had been told the company needed to "grow a global platform" in the RV sector.

"We have progressed down this path well... we now have a partner and set of assets that will turn our start into a compelling, winning global business," he says.

Thor Industries, based in Indiana, was founded in 1980 and listed on the New York Stock Exchange in 1984.

The company has a market capitalisation of around US$6.8bn and more than 17,000 employees. Its brands include Airstream, Heartland RV, Jayco and Livin Lite RV.

THL is the largest provider of RVs for rent and sale in Australia and New Zealand, and the second largest in North America.

The New Zealand company more than doubled its first-half results to December 31 with a net profit of NZ$22.8 million.

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Stink bugs hit heavy vehicle imports

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Muir describes it as a "unique situation" but Isuzu was fortunate to have "good levels of stock" to rely on in the short-term.

There was no impact on monthly data just yet but "that will catch up at some point".

Muir, who has just returned from a visit to Japan, had discussions with suppliers about the stink bug crisis.

He says it is unlikely any of the new trucks could have carried the bugs as they went straight from the factory to the ships.

"We were talking to them and making them aware of the situation. They are making sure nothing from their end could be an issue."

Fuso New Zealand general manager **Kurtis Andrews** says the company also had a number of trucks held up on the bug-affected ships.



Kurtis Andrews



Colin Muir



Michael Doeg

It also had stock on the ground although most of it was already sold.

Andrews says it's been "a big blow" to Fuso dealers and customers.

Shipping line staff are doing "all they can to rectify the situation and that's all we can ask for".

Genuine Vehicle Imports general manager **Hayden Johnston** told *Auto Media* the stink bug issue has already cost jobs in some parts of the industry.

"We've heard a few dealers and businesses in some regions, such as panelbeaters and compliance shops, have lost staff."

His company is lucky to be weathering the storm, he says.

"We're getting some relief now but four weeks is a long time for people who are not geared up to wear something like this."

A New Zealand Institute of Economic Research report estimates the economy could take a $4 billion hit if stink bugs got established in the country.

The report was commissioned by Horticulture New Zealand after the bugs were discovered on the ships.

It shows GDP could fall between $1.8 to $3.6 billion by 2038 and horticulture export value between $2 to $4.2 billion if there was an incursion of the bugs.

Known to feed heavily on a wide variety of plant species, stink bugs could attack grapes, kiwifruit, apples, citrus and stone fruit, corn and many other valuable crops.

"This is currently the number one pest threatening horticulture and we are fully supportive of action at the border to keep it out, including the recent moves to prevent ships contaminated with brown marmorated stink bugs from unloading their cargoes in Auckland," Horticulture New Zealand chief executive **Mike Chapman** says.

Meanwhile, removing and treating the bugs is a slow and complicated process.

"We've heard a few dealers and businesses in some regions, such as panelbeaters and supply shops, have lost staff."



Ministry for Primary Industries rules require 20% of the cargo to be heat-treated after fumigation before the ships are able to unload.

If any bugs are found during that process all cargo is to be reloaded on to the vessel and MPI can refuse it entry.

Heat treatment can take up to 30 days for each ship with docking priority given to non-high risk vessels.

Three car carriers with stink bug infestations – Armacup's *Tokyo Car*, Mitsui OSK Line's *Courageous Ace* and Toyofuji's *Sepang Express* - were turned away from New Zealand in early February.

MPI later directed a fourth bulk carrier from Japan, the *Glovis Caravel*, to leave New Zealand waters after the crew reported finding nearly 600 stink bugs, 12 of them alive, while the vessel was anchored near Auckland.

MPI border clearance services director **Steve Gilbert** says the "risk was too high" for the vessel to remain in New Zealand waters.

"It will now have to be treated offshore before it can return.

"Some of the carriers arriving in New Zealand require no further action but where there is contamination we have the option of denying entry.

"We firmly believe our actions to date have prevented stink bugs from getting past the New Zealand border and we welcome the support we have been getting from a range of industries."

The incident has also seen MPI introduce new measures to reduce the risk of the bugs arriving in vehicles and machinery from Japan.

The changes will require all used cars, trucks and machinery to be inspected and cleaned at an MPI-approved facility in Japan before export.

MPI biosecurity and environment manager **Paul Hallett** says the changes will "significantly reduce the chance of transporting dirty vehicles and machinery that could contaminate other cargo".

"The move is the result of an unprecedented spike in the number of stink bugs arriving at the border from Japan in bulk carriers," Hallett says.

"We are all keen to work together to consider solutions that avoid the need to turn vessels around at the border.

"This could include treatment prior to entering New Zealand waters or finding ways of fumigating the vessels here if any detections are made.

"There is agreement from all parties that New Zealand's biosecurity cannot be compromised." ■



Biggest crane at work

Hire Frankton owner Ross McFaul.

The only crane of its type in the Southern Hemisphere is now playing a key part in the New Zealand construction scene.

The PK200002L SH knuckle boom crane has been purchased by **Ross McFaul**, owner of Southland-based Hire Frankton Ltd.

The $1 million machine, nicknamed "Jock", is the largest knuckle boom crane produced by Palfinger.

Its 50-metre reach and ability to work in confined spaces are just two reasons for its well-earned international reputation.

One of three cranes working for Hire Frankton Ltd, it had its first day on the job in Christchurch last month as part of a demolition.

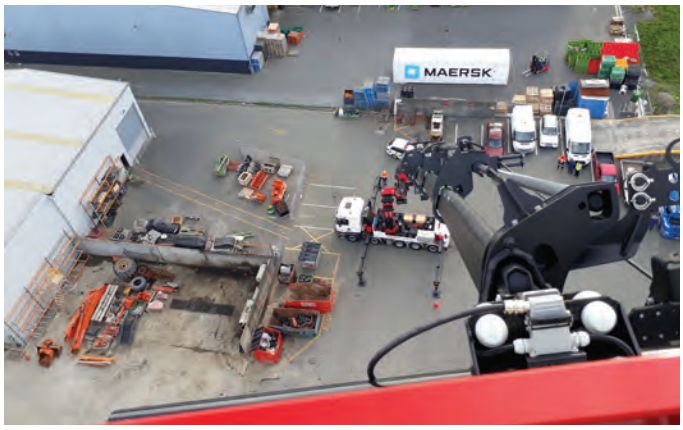
McFaul has been in the hire industry for more than 10 years and has noticed a lot of equipment innovation during that time.

He started his business as a hire and lease company near Queenstown in 2003, lending scissor lifts, diggers and tipping trucks to local contractors.

A downturn in building in the Queenstown region saw the company move to Invercargill and change its direction from hiring earth-moving equipment to hiring lifting equipment.

It bought its first knuckle boom crane, a PM36 on a FY700 Hino, in 2013. The following year it bought a second-hand PK56002.

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CRANES AND MATERIAL HANDLING



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McFaul says the market has changed with trucks requiring extra axles to carry heavier cranes and bigger loads because of the need for greater lifting capacity and versatility.

After much investigation, Hire Frankton placed an order in March 2017 with Gough Palfinger for a PK200002 knuckle boom crane fitted to a Scania R560 supplied by Cable Price, one of the biggest knuckle boom cranes on the market.

"For a crane of this size and reach, it is remarkably quick and efficient to set up," McFaul says.

"For example, we can set up on the side of the road or in narrow spaces between buildings with no disruption to traffic flow, no requirement for elaborate traffic management plans but with a safe and efficient result.

"I could park this crane on the goal-line of a rugby field and it could pick up a 500kg weight near halfway with the boom configured parallel to the ground, that's its reach."

The crane's extension boom and fly-jib have a reverse linkage system that can reach through low door openings and work inside a building.

The boom can even pass right through a building to operate on the other side. Its versatility is amazing and it is so easy to operate, McFaul says.

The PK200002L SH, or Jock as the crane is called, is operated with the Palcom 7 remote control. All safety features of the crane can be monitored from the remote control."

The crane was built in Austria at Palfinger where it was fitted and tested. McFaul and Gough Palfinger general manager **Duncan Phillips** underwent training and a handover in Austria.

Once in New Zealand, the crane was checked out at Gough Palfinger in Christchurch. The Gough Group owns the Palfinger dealership for New Zealand and Australia.

Some concerns were raised about Jock's size on the road, McFaul says.

"Getting the PK200002 on to New Zealand roads was not a straightforward task and I must thank staff at the New Zealand Transport Authority who have helped immensely on this project as there was an initial concern that this crane might be too big for our roads."





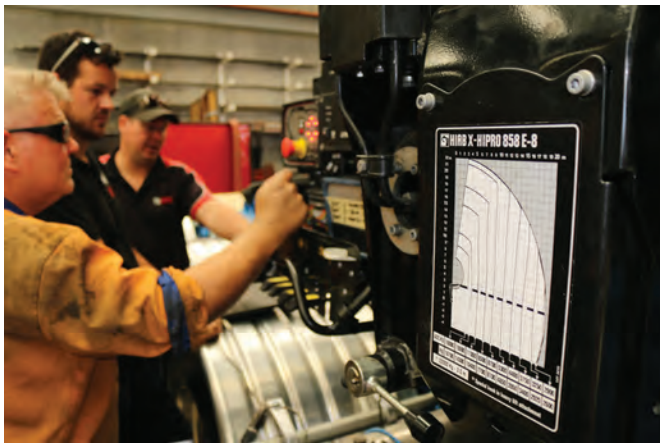


Companies team up for Hiab innovation

One of the largest Hiab mounted cranes in New Zealand has been installed at manufacturing company Tidd Ross Todd (TRT).

The Hiab has a maximum reach of 31.8m with jib and an endless slewing angle. It can lift up to 22 tonnes.

It was a difficult Hiab to mount given its size but the team at TRT, known for its innovate solutions, found a way to make it happen as quickly as possible.



Work got underway last November to complete the machine for Q-Transport Ltd, based in Waitara, Taranaki.

The Hiab team from Australia joined with TRT to take a closer look at the mounting of what is an unusually large piece of equipment.

The Hiab X-HIPRO 858 E-8 and jib 150X-6 was mounted to Q Transport's new Isuzu Giga 8 x 4 truck which was specially designed for the machine.

As nothing like the installation had been attempted on either side of the Tasman before, TRT designed the solution – an in-house deck based on the Hiab operation and equipment specifications.

TRT fabricated and fitted the deck around the fifth wheel and slider, fabricated and fitted the draw beam with a 50mm Rockinger coupling, brake and electrical wiring and a Duomatic coupling for trailer hook-up.

Looking to ensure that Q Transport could maximise its investment, TRT also manufactured a torsional box sub-frame to ensure the Hiab's operation was optimised, adding rigidity to the rear set of legs.

The purpose-built mounting solution was completed in-house at TRT's site in Hamilton, from hoses and fittings, to make the crane operational, to the grit-blasted steel work and electrostatic paint on the deck and frame that makes it look like one seamless unit.

Q-Transport owner and operator **Fred Quilter** is happy with the result.

The company works mostly in the Taranaki region and the new piece of equipment is used for a range of tasks such as portacoms and container delivery.

"It creates ease of placement for gear... it's like having a 50-tonne crane as opposed to 20-tonne crane and there's always something you can do with it," Quilter says.

Q-Transport specialises in logistics and freight with capabilities in over-dimensional loads, steel and associated products, line haul and metro services.

The company also hauls items from the region to other parts of the North Island and has a depot in Auckland's East Tamaki.

General freight such as steel, pipe, mesh, pallets, gas bottles and even chickens is all part of a day's work.



Confidence high as Isuzu truck finance grows



Isuzu Financial Services is helping a growing number of owner-operators into their trucks.

The service, a division of Heartland Bank, started more than three years ago, and provides lending through its 12-strong network of Isuzu Master Truck dealerships.

Senior relationship manager and commercial dealer **Chris Harding** says business is booming, from small operators to large companies.

"It's beginning to get momentum... it's not just a reflection of the market but the fact Isuzu dealers are buying into it as well and the benefits of the service," Harding says.

The service also provides enabler funding for Isuzu Truck dealers and the company is enjoying many partnerships within the transport and agricultural sector.

Harding says a large mix of customers have a range of needs. He does deals from tippers to B-trains and everything in between.

"There's a good mix across the board and we seem to be very busy.

"There's a lot of confidence in the market and people are still buying trucks."

A big part of the service is providing business support and consultation.

A team of financial advisors around the country provide a "common sense approach to the whole process".

If new operators need extra help, the finance team is able to ensure they understand all aspects of the transport industry, Harding says.

"We don't just throw them out the door; we try to be a good business partner."

The online service is built to be a fast and convenient way for customers to get conditionally approved funding before they visit a local Isuzu dealership.

Potential buyers answer up to seven questions to give them an idea of their finance options.

It offers up to 100% financing of the vehicle including GST, variable interest rates and flexible payment terms for up to a maximum of seven years.

We haven't reinvented the wheel when it comes to truck finance, but we have listened to our customers & learned from our own experiences to keep things simple. We understand one shoe doesn't fit all, so we accommodate as required, from a standard term loan for general cartage metro or line haul operator, to providing seasonal payments for operators in industries such as agriculture & honey/bee keeping.

Isuzu New Zealand general manager **Colin Muir** says the service provides the "certainty of being able to afford a new truck".

As well as streamlining the purchasing process, it provides flexible payment structures to cope with seasonal cash flow often typical in transport operations, he says.

Operating leases and finance leases are also available upon request as is unsecured lending through the Heartland Open for Business platform.





Apprentice 'proud to fix it'

Nikita Grindley

Nikita Grindley has fond memories of visiting custom car shows with her mum when she was a young girl and has loved cars ever since.

Now the 25-year-old is turning her passion into a rewarding career as an apprentice heavy diesel technician at Truck Stops in Wellington.

Working with trucks wasn't something she initially considered, given her affinity with cars.

But after completing the first year of an automotive pre-trade course, she saw the apprenticeship programme with Truck Stops advertised and couldn't pass up what she saw as a perfect opportunity.

"I never saw myself working in heavy diesel and was adamant I only wanted to work with light vehicles.

"But when I saw the apprenticeship programme with Truck Stops, it felt like fate. I'm so pleased I applied – I'm now working towards a career that I love and am really passionate about."

There's exceedingly high demand for the popular apprenticeship programme, Truck Stops Wellington branch manager **Chris Groves** says.

The programme is a very successful way to find apprentices who have the right motivation and attitude to learn and who become excellent qualified technicians, he says.

Grindley fitted the criteria perfectly.

"We had over 500 applicants for just 19 available positions around the country and Nikita really stood out.

"Since joining the company in March, she has progressed extremely well with her training. She is hard working and has an excellent attitude towards both her work and her training, and has quickly become a valuable member of our team," Groves says.

As part of the apprenticeship programme, Grindley is now completing a qualification through MITO.

"Being able to earn while I learn is the best," she says.

"I get paid to gain valuable experience at the same time which is a massive help. Then, once I'm qualified, it will open up so many opportunities for me – both within New Zealand and overseas."

Being a female in a male-dominated industry doesn't even rate a mention with her either.

"I just want to come to work and be judged on the quality of the work I do. At the end of the day, that's all that matters."

Truck Stops are very supportive of women entering the industry, Groves says.

"There are fantastic opportunities for them here. We already have a qualified female technician in this workshop and it's great that Nikita is able to learn from her too."

Knowing she could never work behind a desk all day, Nikita says she enjoys the variety of her job and being able to work with her hands. But it's constantly learning new things that really drives her.

"I tend to ask a million questions because I want to do things right the first time.

"We can be working on numerous makes and models of trucks on any given day and with all the different tasks that need to be performed, you definitely learn quickly.

"It's an awesome feeling to be able to repair vehicles that can be worth half-a-million dollars. I feel so proud that at the end of the day I can say, 'I fixed that'."

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Regions get access to $3bn fund

The reopening of the Wairoa-Napier line for logging trains is among key projects to benefit from the Government's $3 billion Provincial Growth Fund.

The announcement has also seen the establishment of a working group to investigate whether Northport is a suitable replacement for the Ports of Auckland.

Regional economic development minister **Shane Jones** officially launched the scheme in Gisborne last month with $61.7 million allocated for the first round of spending.



Work on the Wairoa-Napier line is underway. Photo credit: KiwiRail.

All regions are eligible for the funding which will be rolled out over three years.

It has the "potential to make a real difference to the people of provincial New Zealand", Jones says.

The Wairoa-Napier line will receive $5m for KiwiRail to re-establish the network. Work is already underway to get the track back in action six years after it was last in regular use.

It's expected the move will remove around 5700 trucks from roads in the area each year, with a focus on reducing traffic fatalities and carbon emissions.

KiwiRail chief executive **Peter Reidy** has welcomed the announcement as a strong signal in the Government's confidence in rail, he says.

"KiwiRail is committed to enabling sustainable and inclusive economic growth and the Government's investment in promoting rail in the regions will enable us to step up that work.

"This investment is a vote of confidence in our customers and our staff."

Along with the Wairoa-Napier line, the Whanganui line is also targeted for a revamp. They are good places to start, Reidy says.



Regional economic development minister Shane Jones.

"They are the projects that were 'shovel ready' and that we could begin straight away.

"We welcome this recognition of the contribution rail is making in adding value to New Zealand, not only through the efficient movement of freight and people, but in all of the areas highlighted in the recent *Value of Rail* report.

"The benefits rail delivers include reducing congestion on roads, cutting carbon emissions, making our roads safer and lowering spending on road maintenance and upgrades.

"Together they add up to more than $1.5 billion per year, and they are a key reason for the Government's financial investments today."

Reidy says moving logs by rail takes pressure off the roads, and reduces greenhouse gases – each tonne of freight carried by rail instead of heavy trucks means 66% fewer carbon emissions.

"The Wairoa-Napier road is not designed to cope with the growing volumes of logs now that the 'Wall of Wood' is coming on stream.

"Rail is the ideal way of getting that timber to overseas customers," he says.

Released alongside a raft of announcements from the Government's Provincial Growth Fund, the Upper North Island Supply Chain Strategy Proposal promises to have the findings of a supply chain review by July 2018, according to a Cabinet paper supplied to Auto Media Group.

The feasibility study is exploring options for moving the location of the Ports of Auckland and giving Northport serious consideration as an alternative.

"Understanding the drivers of, and uncertainties around, future freight and logistics demand is critical to ensure that New Zealand's supply chain is fit for purpose in the longer term," the document says.

"Moving the Ports of Auckland would have significant implications for other ports, coastal shipping, road freight and KiwiRail.

"Given the potential significant flow-on effects, an investigation could usefully consider the Ports of Auckland and Northport as part of an assessment of the freight and logistics system in the Upper North Island."

The review will consider national and regional economic development outcomes and transport outcomes.

Working group members will have a mix of experience in economics and business development, regional development, Māori development, transport and logistics and infrastructure management, investment and planning.

Northland will also receive $17.5m in the first round of funding for several projects, including the forestry sector and upgrading the Waipapa intersection on State Highway 10.

Northland Regional Economic Development Agency chairperson **Karleen Everitt** says the funding will strengthen regional economies and she welcomes plans to investigate the upper North Island as a logistics hub.

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Ohmio Automotion's Stephen Matthews, left, and Dave Verma in the Ohmio Hop.



London's Lord Mayor Charles Bowman tries the Ohmio shuttle at MOTAT in Auckland.

Ohmio's setting smart technology in motion

Kiwi autonomous electric vehicle company Ohmio Automotion expects to make its first commercial delivery in May.

The east Auckland company displayed a fully operational driverless test vehicle at the Digital Nations 2030 event in Auckland on February 19.

It took the Lord Mayor of London **Charles Bowman** for a ride at MOTAT the same day he was leading a business delegation here.

Founded in New Zealand, Ohmio has developed world-leading autonomous vehicle (AV) technology and plans to have its first self-driving vehicle in active service by May.

The first commercially ready model under construction is the Ohmio Lift. It can carry up to 20 passengers as a "last mile" transport solution.

Another is the Ohmio Hop – the smallest in a planned range of electric, self-driving passenger or freight vehicles, and the one displayed at Digital Nations 2030.

A freight-only version, the Move, is also planned among the four prototypes expected to be available.

The shuttles can have a variety of chassis for specific purposes, such as transporting up to 30 people or carrying freight, whichever body design buyers want. Parts can be swapped as well.

It is understood the freight version will probably be used in a major residential precinct to transport food, drinks and waste between buildings.

Ohmio is a new business from the HMI Global group of companies, a global intelligent transport systems (ITS) company which has expanded from Auckland into Australia, Asia and Europe.

It has developed scalable, connected AV technology so its vehicles are designed to connect with other vehicles, traffic management networks and positioning systems.

They can easily be deployed, alone or connected, forming efficient convoys that require less road space and can safely navigate their environment with sensors and artificial intelligence.

The connectivity of the Ohmio vehicles sets them apart from existing last mile AV vehicles.

HMI is raising $6 million to help fund the Ohmio projects and has spent nearly that already. The money will help expand Ohmio's engineering team from the current 20, assist with research and development and be put towards worldwide marketing.

A new Ohmio sells for about $400,000 and Ohmio Automotion chief executive **Stephen Matthews** hopes around 60-100 will be sold in the first year.

He reckons Ohmio Automotion could sell up to 2000 of its shuttles annually within about five years as world demand expands, particularly in the United States

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Ohmio's setting smart technology in motion

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and Asia.

Christchurch airport could trial the shuttles later this year.

Meanwhile, Ohmio representatives are in demand for various events similar to the Digital Nations 2030 summit.

Ohmio Automotion's research and development co-ordinator **Mahmood Hikmet** is among about 20 speakers at AI Day on March 28. It's described as "New Zealand's premier artificial intelligence event".

One of the Ohmio shuttles will be on display near the event at the ASB Waterfront Theatre in Auckland, presented by AI Forum NZ and NewZealand.ai.

Hikmet, who has just gained a PhD in electronic and electrical engineering from the University of Auckland, is a son of **Mohammed Hikme**t who founded HMI Technologies (Ohmio's parent company) with his brother **Ahmed** in 1999.

AI Day will explore opportunities, impacts on business, customers and workforce, developing an AI capability, benefits to people and society, and the future of AI.

An Ohmio shuttle is also expected to be on show during the Leading the Charge EV tour of New Zealand from March 14 to April 3.

Visit **www.ohmio.com** for more information.

Iveco NZ launches commercial parts network



Iveco Trucks New Zealand has launched an all-makes parts brand through a new deal.

The company has teamed up with Diesel Technic, one of the largest suppliers of aftermarket commercial vehicle parts worldwide, as part of the launch.

The Diesel Technic parts are stored at Iveco's Auckland headquarters in Wiri and will be distributed through 20 Iveco parts dealers nationwide.

Now supplying parts to more than 150 countries, Diesel Technic has been in operation since 1972.

It has an extensive product range of more than 30,000 parts, competitive pricing and a 24-month parts guarantee.

It specialises in European truck, trailer and bus parts, including everything from electrical components all the way through to major engine and suspension components.

Iveco parts business development manager **Elliot Barnard** says teaming up with Diesel Technic is an exciting opportunity.

"We have noted a gap in our local product range in New Zealand and after extensive market research we have come to the conclusion that as far as parts quality, range and pricing Diesel Technic was who we wanted to partner with," he says.

Iveco dealer development manager **Kristi Walker** says the partnership, which has been in the pipeline for the past two years, is all about "growing and strengthening the dealer network".

"We are proud to have one of the largest networks in the country and are pleased to be able to provide another revenue stream to our partners.

"This also is a win for Kiwi operators who will be able to see their vehicles serviced, regardless of brand, with quality parts in a cost-effective and timely manner."

The initial stock order of nearly $100,000 has landed at Iveco's Wiri site with monthly stock orders set going forward.

Any parts not initially in stock will be airfreighted as needed.



Ian Walker, IVECO NZ general manager

Iveco New Zealand general manager **Ian Walker** says it's the beginning "of a very exciting time" for the company.

Iveco is making "leaps forward in the commercial vehicle parts market which ultimately reflects in better product, better quality, better pricing and a better customer experience for all", he says.



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Trucks stay ahead despite delays



The new Fuso Enduro range is gearing up for release in 2018.

Total registrations of new trucks and buses ended the month of February up 6.1% to 894 from 815 in the same period last year.

Isuzu led the pack for total new truck and bus registrations for the month.

The company had a 25% market share in February and was up 16% year-on-year with 109 registrations, NZ Transport Agency figures show.

Hino was in second place with 68 units for the month and a 15.5% market share. It was up 51% year-on-year.

Fuso came third with 50 units and a 11.4% market share. It took a hit on its year-on-year result, falling 23% after registering 65 units in February 2017.

Mercedes-Benz followed with 28 and a 6.4% market share, up 21.7% year-on-year.

DAF had 27 units for February, up 80% year-on-year having registered 15 units in February 2017.

Fiat had 22, down 12% year-on-year; **Kenworth** 20, up 43% year-on-year; **UD Trucks** 17, down 10.5% year-on-year; **Volvo** 16, down 53% year-on-year; and **Iveco** 15, equal year-on-year.

Fuso New Zealand managing director **Kurtis Andrews** pointed to the stink bug crisis, saying "despite the obvious stock delays, the February result was no great surprise".

"There's a lot going on this year as we consolidate and bed in what we've developed and learnt over the past 18 months with a view to the long-term future of Fuso NZ, " Andrews says.

"The new Enduro range is currently launching at events around the country



Continued on page 22

NEW HEAVY TRUCKS OVER 23,001KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
ISUZU	39	22	77.3	20.3	61	40
HINO	28	15	86.7	14.6	42	31
DAF	25	14	78.6	13.0	46	25
KENWORTH	20	14	42.9	10.4	52	29
VOLVO	15	30	-50.0	7.8	32	49
MERCEDES-BENZ	10	1	900.0	5.2	16	3
FREIGHTLINER	9	4	125.0	4.7	13	7
FUSO	9	9	0.0	4.7	25	22
MACK	8	4	100.0	4.2	15	9
SCANIA	7	13	-46.2	3.6	19	22
OTHER	22	29	-24.1	11.5	59	45
TOTAL	192	155	23.9	100.0	380	282

NEW MEDIUM TRUCKS 9001-23,000KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
ISUZU	28	28	0.0	63.6	45	49
HINO	22	6	266.7	50.0	37	23
UD TRUCKS	11	11	0.0	25.0	24	20
FUSO	10	21	-52.4	22.7	20	35
IVECO	3	3	0.0	6.8	7	4
OTHER	7	8	-12.5	15.9	15	19
TOTAL	81	77	5.2	184.1	148	150

NEW LIGHT TRUCKS 3500-9000KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
ISUZU	39	35	11.4	27.3	49	56
FUSO	28	25	12.0	19.6	57	63
FIAT	22	25	-12.0	15.4	59	50
HINO	18	24	-25.0	12.6	35	33
MERCEDES-BENZ	16	16	0.0	11.2	39	23
IVECO	5	7	-28.6	3.5	10	15
FOTON	3			2.1	6	
OTHER	12	11	9.1	8.4	22	24
TOTAL	143	143	0.0	100.0	277	264

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and receiving a very positive response.

"We'll also have some more product, such as e-Canter, due in NZ later in the year.

"So 2018 for us is very much about preparing for the future. We expected there would be some blips along the way and February looks to be the first of those."

Registrations of heavy trucks over 23 tonnes saw solid year-on-year gains across the board for a number of dealers.

with 15 units having registered 30 trucks in the same period last year.

Southpac Trucks general sales manager **Richard Smart**, responsible for Paccar's Kenworth and DAF brands, says February was another strong month with nearly 26% market share on the two brands.

The company was unaffected by the stink bug problem, he says.

"In fact, with healthy New Zealand stock, we have actually picked up sales from Japanese clients who have

"The coming months are extremely strong for us. With a record order book at the present time, we will again deliver record numbers to the New Zealand market.

"Our Wacol, Australia factory continues to improve process efficiencies and adds more build space for New Zealand which we quickly fill.

"The shipping and stink bug scenario remains uncertain, however at this stage we have only been marginally affected.

"The reduction in available ships and any ongoing issues arising from this however may cause flow-on issues through the year. We are not sure how it will play out just yet."

Iveco country manager **Ian Walker** says his company also avoided the negative impact of the stink bug contamination in February.

It's been another big month of orders for the company which is experiencing "no slow down yet", Walker says.

Iveco Trucks New Zealand also launched an all-makes parts brand through a new deal with Diesel Technic, one of the largest suppliers of aftermarket commercial vehicle parts worldwide.

The Diesel Technic parts are stored at Iveco's Auckland headquarters in Wiri and will be distributed through 20 Iveco parts dealers nationwide.



Isuzu also topped the ranks in that category, registering 39 units in February, up 77.3% from last year's result.

It was followed by **Hino** which was up 86.7% year-on-year with 28 units, **DAF** up 78.6% with 25 and **Kenworth** up nearly 43% with 20.

Volvo were down 50%

build slots booked and no trucks to fill them," he says.

MTD Trucks national sales manager for Volvo **Clive Jones** says February was "a positive month" with a high number of deliveries arriving from the factory.

"These are now being processed and prepared for delivery to body builders.

Mixed results elsewhere

Meanwhile, total registrations of used trucks and buses had some mixed

Continued on page 23

NEW BUSES OVER 3500KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
FORD	6	1	500.0	27.3	16	7
MAN	4	4	0.0	18.2	10	6
ISUZU	3	9	-66.7	13.6	20	22
FACTORY BUILT	2	2	0.0	9.1	2	3
FUSO	2	2	0.0	9.1	13	13
OTHER	5	20	-75.0	22.7	28	69
TOTAL	**22**	**38**	**-42.1**	**100.0**	**89**	**120**

NEW LIGHT COMMERCIAL MAKES UNDER 3500KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% CHANGE	MARKET SHARE	YTD '18	YTD '17
TOYOTA	946	747	26.6	23.0	1726	1445
FORD	788	713	10.5	19.1	1596	1501
NISSAN	384	346	11.0	9.3	668	622
MITSUBISHI	368	282	30.5	8.9	686	501
HOLDEN	366	364	0.5	8.9	751	747
ISUZU	304	255	19.2	7.4	562	526
MAZDA	169	186	-9.1	4.1	341	340
VOLKSWAGEN	110	76	44.7	2.7	275	199
LDV	102	101	1.0	2.5	255	188
HINO	68	45	51.1	1.7	114	87
OTHER	511	619	-17.4	12.4	1179	1251
TOTAL	**4116**	**3734**	**10.2**	**100.0**	**8153**	**7407**

NEW TRUCKS & BUSES MAKES ALL WEIGHTS OVER 3500KG JANUARY 2018

Make	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
ISUZU	109	94	16.0	24.9	175	167
HINO	68	45	51.1	15.5	114	87
FUSO	50	65	-23.1	11.4	116	132
MERCEDES-BENZ	28	23	21.7	6.4	62	42
DAF	27	15	80.0	6.2	48	28
FIAT	22	25	-12.0	5.0	59	50
KENWORTH	20	14	42.9	4.6	52	29
UD TRUCKS	17	19	-10.5	3.9	39	37
VOLVO	16	34	-52.9	3.7	37	55
IVECO	15	15	0.0	3.4	38	27
Other	66	64	3.1	15.1	154	161
TOTAL	**438**	**413**	**6.1**	**100.0**	**894**	**815**

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Continued from page 22

results for February.

Hino is leading the pack in used truck registrations for the month. The company had a 25% market share for February, up 58% year-on-year with 49 registrations.

Toyota was in second with 42 for the month and a 21% market share, up 45% year-on-year.

Isuzu came in third with 36 and an 18% market share. It took a hit on its year-on-year result, falling 18% having registered 44 units in February 2017.

Mitsubishi was down 15% year-on-year with 23 registrations in February, **Nissan** stayed equal with 10, Iveco and **Mercedes-Benz** had five, **Fiat** and **Ford** had four each and **Mazda** had three.

Toyota reigned supreme in the new light commercial sector with 23% market share. It was up 26.6% year-on-year with 946 units registered in February.

It was followed by **Ford** with 19% market share, up 10.5% year-on-year with 788 units registered for the month.

Nissan, **Mitsubishi**, **Holden**, **Isuzu**, **Mazda**, **Volkswagen**, **LDV** and **Hino** were all bunched behind.



Tractor market up

John Deere dominated the new tractor sector with a 33.3% market share. It registered 43 new tractors last month, equal with its year-on-year result.

Kubota was behind with 17. It was a big year-on-year jump at the same time last year, it had registered just four.

Massey Ferguson was in equal position with a 13.2% market share after registering 17, up more than 140% year-on-year.

Continued on page 24

USED HEAVY TRUCKS OVER 23,001KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
IVECO	2	1	100.0	16.7	2	2
VOLVO	2			16.7	4	
DAF	1	1	0.0	8.3	1	2
OTHER	7	10	-30.0	58.3	15	20
TOTAL	12	12	0.0	100.0	22	24

USED MEDIUM TRUCKS 9001-23,000KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
HINO	7	2	250.0	31.8	13	4
ISUZU	5	3	66.7	22.7	10	7
NISSAN	3	3	0.0	13.6	4	4
OTHER	7	6	16.7	31.8	13	12
TOTAL	22	14	57.1	100.0	40	27

USED LIGHT TRUCKS 3500-9000KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
TOYOTA	40	26	53.8	26.1	72	47
HINO	38	27	40.7	24.8	57	44
ISUZU	30	39	-23.1	19.6	79	69
MITSUBISHI	22	27	-18.5	14.4	39	37
NISSAN	7	7	0.0	4.6	24	14
FIAT	4	1	300.0	2.6	14	3
MAZDA	3	6	-50.0	2.0	9	7
OTHER	9	10	-10.0	5.9	19	20
TOTAL	153	140	9.3	100.0	313	241

USED BUSES OVER 3500KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
HINO	3	1	200.0	30.0	3	1
MERCEDES-BENZ	3			30.0	3	1
OTHER	4	7	-42.9	40.0	10	12
TOTAL	10	8	25.0	100.0	16	14

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Isuzu leads in Oz

Across the ditch, there were no surprises in the latest Australian Truck Industry Council T-Mark market segment report on the leading truck makers' sales for February 2018.

Isuzu remained the front runner by a big margin, selling 1189 units in the year-to-date for a 22.7% market share.

Its dominance is illustrated by its February figures - 712 trucks sold in the month for 23.7% of the market.

By comparison, its nearest rival **Hino** sold 741 for the whole year-to-date (14.2%), 427 of them February (also 14.2%).

Third-placed **Fuso** sold 494 year-to-date (9.4%) and 293 in February (9.8%).

Behind them were **Kenworth** with 339 year-to-date, **Iveco** 290, **MAN** 232, **Volvo** 215, **Mercedes-Benz** 214, **Mack** 147, **UD Trucks** 101, **Scania** 65, **Freightliner** 62, **Fiat** 60, **Western Star** 51, **DAF** 49, **Dennis Eagle** 20, **Renault** 19, **Ford** 18, **International** 14, **Hyundai** 11 and **Cat** 5.

In the van segment, **Mercedes-Benz Vans** led with 364 sold year to date (7%), 198 of them in February (6.6%).

Renault Vans came in with 186 year-to-date (3.6%) and 102 for the month (3.4%).

Third-placed **Ford Vans** sold 154 year-to-date (2.9%) and 88 for the month (also 2.9%).

It was followed by **Volkswagen Vans** (78 year-to-date), **Fiat Vans** 66 and **Iveco Vans** 44.



Fuso's electric e-Canter range is due in New Zealand later this year.

USED TRUCK AND BUS MAKES ALL WEIGHTS OVER 3500KG JANUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% CHANGE	MARKET	YTD '18	YTD '17
HINO	49	31	58.1	24.9	75	50
TOYOTA	42	29	44.8	21.3	75	53
ISUZU	36	44	-18.2	18.3	91	78
MITSUBISHI	23	27	-14.8	11.7	42	41
NISSAN	10	10	0.0	5.1	29	21
IVECO	5	1	400.0	2.5	6	3
MERCEDES-BENZ	5	1	400.0	2.5	7	6
FIAT	4	1	300.0	2.0	14	3
FORD	4	5	-20.0	2.0	5	6
MAZDA	3	6	-50.0	1.5	9	7
Other	16	19	-15.8	8.1	38	38
TOTAL	**197**	**174**	**13.2**	**100.0**	**391**	**306**

USED LIGHT COMMERCIAL MAKES UNDER 3500KG FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	Market Share	YTD '18	YTD '17
TOYOTA	407	466	-12.7	42.9	848	870
NISSAN	203	191	6.3	21.4	413	388
HINO	49	31	58.1	5.2	75	50
FORD	48	35	37.1	5.1	93	65
ISUZU	47	45	4.4	5.0	104	86
MAZDA	41	94	-56.4	4.3	119	177
MITSUBISHI	41	40	2.5	4.3	77	73
CHEVROLET	19	15	26.7	2.0	32	34
HOLDEN	16	19	-15.8	1.7	38	32
FIAT	15	9	66.7	1.6	50	32
OTHER	62	53	17.0	6.5	123	119
TOTAL	**948**	**998**	**-5.0**	**100.0**	**1972**	**1926**

USED TRACTOR REGISTRATIONS FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	FEB '18	FEB '17
FORD	7	2	250.0	13.7	11	6
JOHN DEERE	6	13	-53.8	11.8	18	29
NEW HOLLAND	6	6	0.0	11.8	11	17
TRACTOR	6	7	-14.3	11.8	11	9
MASSEY FERGUSON	4	3	33.3	7.8	12	14
CASE	3	4	-25.0	5.9	6	6
OTHER	19	19	0.0	37.3	49	43
TOTAL	51	54	-5.6	100.0	118	124
DEUTZ-FAHR	4	5	-20.0	2.5	4	5
OTHER	14	13	7.7	8.6	14	13
TOTAL	**162**	**125**	**29.6**	**100.0**	**162**	**125**

NEW TRACTOR REGISTRATIONS FEBRUARY 2018

MAKE	FEB '18	FEB '17	% Change	% of Market	YTD '18	YTD '17
JOHN DEERE	43	43	0.0	33.3	98	86
KUBOTA	17	4	325.0	13.2	29	20
MASSEY FERGUSON	17	7	142.9	13.2	38	20
CASE IH	11	10	10.0	8.5	21	15
NEW HOLLAND	11	9	22.2	8.5	22	25
FENDT	6	6	0.0	4.7	19	9
TRACTOR	5	3	66.7	3.9	7	6
DEUTZ-FAHR	4	8	-50.0	3.1	8	13
OTHER	15	20	-25.0	11.6	49	41
TOTAL	**129**	**110**	**17.3**	**100.0**	**291**	**235**



Transport and freight boost industry growth

Growing demand in transport, freight and logistics has yielded solid half-year earnings for a number of New Zealand companies.

Kiwi firm **Tourism Holdings**, the world's largest recreational vehicle (RV) rental business, has more than doubled its first-half net profit in its latest results.

It posted a net profit of $22.8 million in the six months ending December 31.

That's a 102% rise on the previous year's result of $11.3m. Total revenue was up 43% to $209m.

The results were boosted by the strong performance of its recently acquired United States RV rental and sales company El Monte RV.

A non-recurring tax benefit and a lower tax expense due to new US tax legislation introduced in December 2017 also added to the good result.

The net debt of $178m is below the forecast of $200m.

Chief executive **Grant Webster** says Tourism Holdings increased its debt to buy El Monte RV and reduced debt "further than originally planned".

"The outlook remains positive and we will continue to grow in a sensible but global manner," he says.

Chairman **Rob Campbell** says most of the core businesses continue to improve "as well as seeing the El Monte RV business outperform our expectations for the calendar year".

The company also recently announced a joint partnership with US firm Thor Industries, the world's largest RV manufacturer.

"We remain focused, aware of our opportunities to improve what we have today while creating another exciting future," Campbell says.

Revenue up, profit down for Freightways

New Zealand company **Freightways** has reported increased revenue but lower profit in its half-year results.

The report to December 31 shows overall operating revenue for the express package services firm up 7.1% to $292.1 million.

However, net profit fell 7.6% to $31.4 million compared to $34 million the previous year, which included a $4.5 million one-time gain.

The express package and business mail division operates in the domestic market through New Zealand Couriers, Post Haste, Castle Parcels, NOW Couriers, SUB60, Security Express, Kiwi Express, Stuck, Pass The Parcel, DX Mail and Dataprint.

The firm has also made recent investments in aircraft and now has three Boeing 737-400s and charters a Convair when required. The introduction of a fourth aircraft is being considered.

The relocation of the Christchurch express package businesses from four independent sites to one purpose-built airside facility at Christchurch Airport was completed during 2017.

New Zealand Couriers also relocated to a larger Auckland site on the North Shore last October with Post Haste and Castle Parcels to follow in July.

The company says its New Zealand and Australia markets "remain positive" with growth in express package volume and year-on-year earnings growth.

Its overall capital expenditure for the 2018 financial year is expected to be around $16 million and operating cash flows are expected to "remain strong".

Heavy vehicle sales up

Another strong performer was the **Colonial Motor Company**.

Its half-yearly after-tax profit to December 31 jumped 15.9% to $11.9 million.

Growth in heavy truck sales and volume from its Kenworth and DAF brands was one of the key factors behind the result, according to a company statement released on the NZX.

However, a slowing rate of growth impacted on the profitability of its new car dealerships, which include Ford and Mazda.

"The car dealerships trading profit was lower than the record result a year earlier but above that achieved in both 2015 and 2014.

"Segment shifts within the market continue with the established pattern away from sedans and hatches into SUVs and light commercials.

"This trend affects Ford and Mazda differently. Mazda is strong in the important SUV segment while Ford is successful in the light commercial sector."

Looking ahead, CMC predicts the total new vehicle market will keep growing and says it has strong forward orders for heavy trucks.

"However, the pace of growth has slowed from a year ago and business confidence is more cautious."

Airport invests in freight

Improved infrastructure, new bus lanes and new freight-forwarding facilities have helped push up **Auckland Airport's** first-half profit.

Financial results for the six months ended December 31 show the airport's total profit rose 17% to $165.9 million.

Revenue increased 6.9% to $332.4 million while the interim dividend for the 2018 financial year is up 7.5% to 10.75 cents per share.

Auckland Airport chairman **Sir Henry van der Heyden** says improving travel times and flows around the airport "remained a top priority".

Infrastructure projects include improvements to the domestic forecourt for passengers, commercial transport operators and buses.

That includes a new outbound bus and T2 lane on Tom Pearce Drive.

The airport also partnered with NZ Transport Agency and Auckland Transport for a major upgrade of the State Highway 20A and Verissimo Drive intersection.

"Our property business has continued to grow too, and in the past six months we have completed a new 6000 square metre building

Continued on page 26

Continued from page 25

to accommodate the Ministry for Primary Industries and a new 7000sqm warehouse and office facility for international freight-forwarding specialist Röhlig Logistics.

"We also progressed the construction of the new 20,000sqm Bunnings distribution centre," van der Heyden says.

The airport company says full-year underlying profit will be in a range of $250 million to $257 million.

The projects are part of the airport's $1.8 billion infrastructure transformation plan by 2022.

Three more contact gates for international aircraft, a new domestic jet terminal and upgraded international arrival areas are also part of the project.

Ports going strong

New Zealand's port companies also experienced strong growth.

Increased container volumes, log exports and transhipped cargo is boosting results at the **Port of Tauranga**.

The company continues to grow with 12.8% increased revenue to $141.4 million and net profit up 12.6% to $47.1m in the six months ending December 31.

Total trade increased 13.4% from 11 million tonnes to 12.5 million tonnes for the period and container volumes grew 15.8% to 590,803 20ft equivalent units (TEUs).

Transhipped TEUs (cargo moved from one ship to another) increased by 47.6%.

Imports increased 20.7% from 3.9 million tonnes to 4.7 million tonnes.

Exports grew 9.4% to 7.7 million tonnes, with a 12.5% large increase in log exports marked by high demand and record prices in China.

Chief executive **Mark Cairns** says the transhipment figures are a real highlight.

"We are delighted by the amount of transhipment occurring from other New Zealand ports ... the largest increases occurring from the South Island ports and Napier," he says.

Its Auckland MetroPort also handled 8.4% more TEUs over the period with train trips between the two cities up from 78 per week to 86.

"We have the capacity to increase train frequency in future as we still have plenty of headroom on the route between Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga," Cairns says.

"KiwiRail's work to build passing loops in recent years has future-proofed our rail capacity."

Chairman **David Pilkington** says the results show Tauranga is the "hub and spoke" port network in New Zealand.

"Tauranga serves as a hub for New Zealand shippers looking to quickly and efficiently move cargo to and from North Asia and South America via big ship services.

"Tauranga is the only New Zealand port able to accommodate the larger container ships on these international services."

Meanwhile, weather conditions have led to solid results for New Zealand's southernmost commercial deep-water port in Bluff.

South Port New Zealand reported $4.9 million in earnings for the first six months of the 2018 financial year. It exceeds the $4.1 million result for the same period the year before.

Chairman **Rex Chapman** says the warm and dry weather during the half-year to December was a major factor in the strong result.

Dry weather has a negative impact on pasture growth which leads to an increase in stock food imports for the dairy industry, he says.

Large volumes of inbound fertiliser and strong log exports also boosted results.

"Market conditions for logs are buoyant and export volumes are expected to remain consistent with some potential upside."

After assessing the anticipated year-end result and future increased capital expenditure, the South Port directors have announced an interim dividend of 7.5 cents per share to be paid on March 6.

South Port estimates its full-year earnings will fall in the range of $8.65 million to $8.90 million.

Surplus up for rail

KiwiRail has posted a $15.3 million operating surplus for the six months to December, 39% ahead of the previous year.

Chairman **Trevor Janes** says it would have been a $40 million operating surplus had it not been for ongoing challenges posed by the Kaikoura earthquake.

"It is a credit to the 3400 people of KiwiRail that this result betters the December 2016 half-year and that the organisation is on target to meet its commitment to the Government for the third year running," Janes says.

"The underlying operating surplus of $40 million is a significant improvement on the prior half-year result of $23 million."

The result shows a 16% growth in intermodal ports revenue and an 8% increase in forestry revenue as New Zealand's "wall of wood" comes on-stream.

However, there were several issues to deal with, particularly in the South Island, he says.

"It has been a messy six months, particularly in the South Island, where weather disrupted the recovery we had worked hard to achieve by reopening the earthquake-affected Main North Line (MNL) months ahead of schedule.

"An ageing locomotive fleet in the South Island – which ranges in age from 32 to 57 years old due to a legacy of past underinvestment – also caused issues for customers when a significant and unexpected overhaul programme was required to keep locomotives running."

Janes says both issues created uncertainty of service for domestic customers and limited overnight services on the MNL.

"While the previous Government committed to funding any insurance shortfall of the rail rebuild, KiwiRail has had to absorb the on-going revenue impact, including restricted freight volumes."

The Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) took aim at KiwiRail's lower than expected growth, saying it was the result of "short-sighted thinking".

RMTU general secretary **Wayne Butson** says shutting down local manufacturing workshops in favour of locomotive imports from China played a role.

"These models have been a nightmare – unreliable, full of asbestos, and constantly delayed.

"The old DC locomotives wouldn't be running and requiring expensive repairs if KiwiRail had bought Kiwi-made and supported Kiwi manufacturing," Butson says.





X-Class sets safety benchmark

With the highly anticipated arrival of the Mercedes X-Class imminent in showrooms across New Zealand, private and fleet buyers can rest easy.

Fleets with a staunch five-star safety rating that are looking for a prestige pick-up can put the Benz on their list.

Mercedes-Benz is the first manufacturer in Australia and New Zealand to make autonomous emergency braking (AEB) standard on its entire ute range, earning praise from the Australasian New Car Assessment Programme for setting a commercial vehicle safety benchmark.

The X-Class has scored 78% in the ANCAP safety assist category, with its five-star rating applying to both the Australian and New Zealand market. Destructive crash tests give the range a 90% adult occupant protection, 87% in child occupant protection and 80% in pedestrian protection.

That includes all 4×2 and 4×4 drivetrains, cab-chassis and dual-cab body styles and all three Pure, Progressive and Power variants.

Its AEB city score was a perfect 3/3, while its AEB vulnerable road user score was 5.45 (out of 6).

It was also credited for its 60kmh-tested lane-departure warning, speed- limiting and seatbelt reminders.

However, ANCAP noted the lack of an active lane-keeping assistance, blind-spot monitoring, auto high-beam, emergency stop signal, fatigue reminder, reversing collision avoidance, and active bonnet or adaptive cruise control.

The X-Class scored 6.27 (out of 8) for the 64kmh frontal offset test, 7.63 (out of 8) for the re-introduced 50kmh full-width crash test, a perfect 8/8 in the side-impact test, and a near-perfect 7.85 (out of 8) in the new oblique pole test at 32kmh and at a 45-degree angle. In whiplash protection it scored 1.70 (out of 3).



James Goodwin

ANCAP chief executive **James Goodwin** says the X-Class has raised the bar.

"This is a game-changer for the ute market and puts pressure on competing brands," he says.

"The light commercial vehicle segment has generally lagged behind passenger cars and SUVs with regard to safety specification so the inclusion of AEB as standard across the X-Class range is to be commended."

ANCAP testing found the X-Class AEB system detected and either prevented or reduced crashes with other vehicles at low and high speeds, and was competent in detecting and preventing impacts with pedestrians.

Pricing for the X-Class sits between $53,000 and $69,000, with 13 different models on offer.



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Iveco's building across the ditch

Iveco has officially begun production of the Stralis AT at its Dandenong facility in Melbourne.

The "I" nomenclature has now been dropped, signifying the Stralis is no longer a fully imported truck and is built with Aussie hands.

It's the second Stralis model to be made locally, along with the famous ACCO garbage and concrete mixer platform now celebrating 40 years, and the Delta and Metro bus chassis models.

Parts such as door mirrors, wheel angles, trailer connections, wheels, batteries and even fluids are now all sourced within Australia.

Iveco favours the economies of scale that come with full-scale manufacturing, saying it offers a better business case and means more work for employees on the assembly line.

For Iveco customers, it means shorter lead times from order to dealer delivery.

Other benefits include investment in the Dandenong facility itself, including upgraded tooling and vehicle software calibration for systems such as adaptive cruise control and lane departure systems, which will help curtail heavy vehicle safety concerns within the Australian industry.

In-house collision avoidance suites will also help with future technology innovations to be developed, made and fitted to locally made trucks.

Euro-6 emissions-compliant Cursor engines in Stralis AT and AS-L models will also require the involvement of Australian Iveco engineers during the installation process and will further bolster the company's motto *Your partner for sustainable transport.*

With local engine work comes at least 300,000km per model of compliance and durability testing for Australian-focused tuning and validation in environments customers are likely to drive in, day-in day-out.

Iveco engineers analyse 600,000km of testing data each week and test-sample truck fluids every 25,000km. The testing is performed in conjunction with Fiat Powertrain, with telematics systems recording information half a world away.

Iveco Australia marketing manager **Darren Swenson** says upping local production and development proves the company's commitment to Australian manufacturing and engineering.

"Iveco is one of few truck brands that continue to manufacture here," he says.

"The addition of Stralis AT variants to local production, along with the validation of new power plants and other initiatives, is not only great news for the local workforce and our third party parts suppliers but also Australian truck buyers who can further reap the benefits that locally manufactured vehicles provide."

Iveco says the local support and investment are a testament to parent company CNH Industrial's commitment to Australia.









SR or SR5? We drive the updated Hilux

The Ford Ranger takes much of the market glow in new ute registrations but it should not be forgotten that a huge proportion of the working vehicle market still goes to old Kiwi favorite the Toyota Hilux.

Late last year the Palmerston North brand released a very slight update to the model. There were actually few changes to the vehicle itself, though it did ring in new changes.

Diesel models were gone and more automatics were introduced, including to the mid-range SR models, following the broader industry trend to automatic gearboxes.

TransportTalk got the chance recently to put both the SR two-wheel drive "PreRunner" and SR5 Hilux four-wheel drive to the test.

The SR bridges the gap between the basic work-tool S models and the flagship SR5.

Standard features include a wipe-clean vinyl floor, cruise control, daytime running lights, remote central locking, manual air-conditioning, hill start assist, locking rear differential, side steps and raised ride height on two-wheel drive models - giving it the PreRunner tag.

The SR features black steel wheels - and we think they look great, a durable alternative to alloys that look purposeful.

Both vehicles use the same 2.8-litre four-cylinder turbo-charged diesel engine. It produces 130kW and 420Nm and although those figures are not class-leading, performance is reasonable.

The six-speed automatic in the Hilux shifts cleanly. The updated model comes with a new 3500kg braked tow rating, bringing it up to pace with the Ford Ranger and Holden Colorado.

Our SR was fitted with the optional six-speed automatic. It is a smooth shifter - smart and unobtrusive.

No suspension changes have been made to the Hilux as part of the update but since our earlier drives of the model, it feels more refined, less harsh and with less crashing.

It is still firm, more so than the Ranger or Colorado, though that also makes it feel a little more stable through firm corners.

The classic unloaded-ute bounce is there, particularly in the SR, but isn't an unloaded ute a little unfulfilled?

The tray comes unlined - still a crime to us - with eight tie-down points. Buy the SR5 and you get a tailgate lock as well.

What else does the SR lack over the SR5? The multifunction display in the dash is only monochrome and there are also fewer functions meaning blanks rather than buttons on one side of the wheel.

The touchscreen infotainment system is a little clunky to use and there is no Apple CarPlay or Android Auto as seen in its main competitors.

The SR retails with the automatic for $40,960 and our manual SR5 review car comes in at $51,990 – almost an $11,000 step up.

But you do get a lot for your money. Features on the SR5 include Intelligent-Manual Transmission (i-MT) for manual transmissions, 17-inch alloy wheels, smart key entry and start, satellite navigation, LED headlights, fog lights and daytime running lamps, leather steering wheel and shift knob, climate control air-conditioning, alarm and carpet floor covering.

The manual transmission might be a dying breed but Toyota's unit is a good one, with a long, though relatively precise and light, shift. The diesel's huge torque means you don't need to shift often.

Toyota's "intelligent" shift system rev-matches on down changes to smooth out the process.

The SR5's interior is a step up from the SR, with the leather steering wheel nicer to hold and the carpet flooring reducing noise levels slightly.

We didn't get a chance to run the SR5, with its switchable low-range four-wheel drive, off-road during the test but past experience has proven to us the Hilux's credentials in this area.

What we did do is tow - pulling a caravan from Northland to Auckland, over twisty hill country and on the motorway.

It handled itself perfectly. The firm suspension prevented the caravan from influencing the ute's attitude in the same way we experienced recently in the LDV T60, and the brakes were more than up to the job of handling the extra weight.

Until now we have been a little bit out of love with the current generation Hilux but our recent drives, and the tweaks to refinement, have convinced us the king is back. It might not have all the gloss of a Ranger but its work-ready persona and solid engineering is impressive.

The big surprise was the SR, which proves four-wheel drive isn't really required for most uses and that while extras are nice, you don't need much for a great ute. And at its list price, it's an absolute bargain.



TRANSPORT TALK DIARY

TRANSPORT talk New Zealand editor Nigel Moffiet looks at the month gone by on **www.transporttalk.co.nz**



February 1

Port starts micro-grid research

Solar power will play an important part in Ports of Auckland's aim to become a leading sustainable port globally and emissions-free by 2040.

To this end the port has a pilot programme to establish a DC micro-grid for buildings at the company's sea port and inland freight hubs.

A container on Auckland's waterfront houses the first test installation.

February 2

Bridge project aims for bigger trucks

Reinforcement work is being carried out on Tukituki Bridge in the Hawke's Bay to allow for larger trucks and more freight.

The NZ Transport Agency is undertaking the maintenance on the State Highway 2 bridge with McNatty Construction. Work got underway on February 1.

NZTA regional transport systems manager **Wayne Oldfield** says the project is about creating more efficiency on the roads.

Fraudster targets freight company

A former employee of trucking firm Toll Holdings has been jailed by a Brisbane court for five-and-a-half years for major fraud.

Christina Tupu, 26, stole more than A$340,000 from companies Electrolux and Toll Holdings between December 2015 and April 2017. Around A$200,000 was stolen from Toll.

She paid back more than A$22,000 but used the rest to fund international flights, hotels, cruises and gambling.

February 5

New director for Port Otago

A new director has been appointed to the Port Otago board.

The Otago Regional Council announced the appointment of Thomas Campbell who has previous director and governance experience.

Campbell has had a long career in manufacturing for firms such as Rio Tinto while based at Tiwai Smelter.

LDV T60 ute range boosted

Chinese vehicle manufacturer LDV has boosted its T60 ute range with the arrival of a new manual 4WD single cab.

The light commercial LDV features a single cab chassis and comes standard with six airbags, active headlights, tyre pressure monitoring, cruise control and a 2.8 litre diesel turbo engine by VM Motori.

It's available in three colours: white, silver and red.

February 7

Penske deal to deliver 36 MAN trucks

Truck dealership Penske New Zealand is celebrating a "significant deal" with one of the country's largest freight firms.

It is set to deliver 36 MAN trucks to TIL Logistics Ltd, bringing the transport operator's total MAN fleet to around 200 units.

It makes TIL Logistics, who operate brands such as Hooker Pacific and Roadstar, the largest commercial operator of MAN in Australasia.

February 8

TRT welcomes new boss

Transport and machinery engineering company Tidd Ross Todd (TRT) has appointed a new chief operations officer to its team.

Lawrence Baker is stepping into the role and will be working alongside engineering director Robert Carden and manufacturing director Bruce Carden.

The appointment follows the recent retirement of managing director **Kevin Chubb** after 20 years of service at the New Zealand-owned manufacturing company.

February 9

ERoad offers up more shares

Strong investor interest in transport technology and services company ERoad has seen it increase its share purchase plan.

The firm has upped the size of the plan from $4 million to $6 million of ordinary shares.

A company statement says the decision will "provide its loyal retail shareholder base with an opportunity to participate".

February 12

Infratil weighs up NZ Bus investment

Publicly listed infrastructure investor Infratil is reviewing its investment in NZ Bus.

The country's largest public transport operator has a fleet of around 650 modern buses, 11 depots and more than 1300 employees.

It recently concluded negotiations to secure long-term deals for its Auckland and Wellington bus operations after losing major Wellington contracts in May 2017 to competition Tranzit (NZ).

February 13

New chairman for Eastland Group

Keith Sutton has been appointed chairman of Eastland Group, Eastland Network, Eastland Port and Gisborne Airport.

The Eastland Community Trust picked Sutton for the Gisborne-based role after joining the board of directors last year along with Fiona Mules.

He replaces **Nelson Cull** who stepped down at the company's annual meeting last August after eight years in the position.

Cavalcade help for Hospice

The Great New Zealand Tractor Trek has been raising money for a good cause.

A cavalcade of tractors, jeeps and trucks, led by trek founder Phil Aish, left Bluff to travel more than 2600km in 26 days to Cape Reinga.

Those involved collected donations for hospice services along the way.

February 14

Action promised on road toll

The Government is vowing to take action to reduce road deaths in light of a recent study.

The Ministry of Transport's annual Social Cost of Road Crashes and Injuries report estimates the total social cost of fatal and injury crashes rose from $3.87 billion in 2015 to $4.17 billion in 2016.

Associate minister of transport Julie Anne Genter says the study shows more needs to be done to prevent road deaths.

Industry meets over bug-affected ships

Members of the vehicle logistics, compliance and shipping trades will meet with government officials as the number of vessels found to carry brown marmorated stink bugs hits four.

Carriers Tokyo Car, Glovis Caravel, Courageous Ace and Sepang Express have all been found to carry the bugs, which have the potential to decimate the agriculture industry.

The ships are carrying a

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Continued from page 32

range of new and used cars and heavy machinery. Equipment is not available in New Zealand to fumigate ships of their size.

February 15

Rainbow truck celebrates pride

Firth Concrete and Fletcher Building have partnered to "loudly and proudly celebrate" the Auckland Pride Festival.

The companies were primary sponsors of this year's event which marks equality and diversity in the LGBTQ community.

A rainbow-coloured concrete truck took part in the float parade as part of the occasion.

HSV releases SportsCat pricing

HSV has released the pricing of its new Colorado SportsCat four-wheel drive utility range.

The vehicle will launch with a recommended retail price of NZ$73,990.

The high-series version, featuring rugged styling, premium suspension and braking packages, will start from NZ$80,990.

Bugs force inspection of car carriers

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is now inspecting all car carriers from Japan after the detection of brown marmorated stink bugs.

The stink bugs and other insects have been found on three ships carrying cars and heavy machinery during February, with another deciding not to berth in Auckland after the crew discovered bugs on board.

"The vessels now face additional inspection and fogging with insecticide to flush any insects out of confined spaces. All car carriers from Japan are now subject to the inspection and verification measures," a ministry spokesman told *AutoTalk*.

The measures are in place at Auckland and other New Zealand ports.

Fletcher Building's financial fallout

Fletcher Building chairman **Sir Ralph Norris** is stepping down in light of the firm's heavy financial downgrades.

The business recently announced a further $486 million in projected losses. It leads to a total projected loss of $660 million for the 2018 financial year in its Building and Interiors (B&I) division.

Norris says he will resign no later than the company's 2018 annual shareholders' meeting to allow for an "orderly transition" of the board.

February 16

Southpac wins Kenworth award

New Zealand's Southpac Trucks has been named Kenworth Dealer of the Year 2017.

The accolade is regarded as the one of the industry's most sought-after prize for dealers and is open to Kenworth distributors across Australia and New Zealand.

The award is based on a points system across five main areas including overall dealer performance, truck sales, parts sales, finance and customer support.

Lyttelton Port workers set to strike

Strikes are set for Lyttelton Port with workers voting unanimously in favour of industrial action.

Rail and Maritime Transport Union organiser John Kerr says the port company has ignored employer safety concerns and demands for compensation around roster changes.

The industrial action will include an overtime ban and full stoppages from March 3.

February 20

Heavy vehicle fraudster arrested

A scam involving tractors and trucks has seen a Thames man charged with fraud.

Police are calling on potential victims to come forward after the man was arrested.

He has been known to operate under the business names Absoloot Metals and Zhou Holdings, Coromandel/Hauraki police detective **Simon Everson** says.

February 21

New chief for Gough Group

Liz Ward has been appointed Gough Group chief executive.

She takes up the role on March 12 and will be based initially in the group's head office in Hornby, Christchurch before moving to Auckland later this year.

Ward will lead the next phase of the organisation's development, after the departure of long-standing chief executive **Karl Smith**, group chairman **Keith Taylor** says.

Fuel rises push up producer prices

Higher fuel prices contributed to the rise in producer output and input prices in the December 2017 quarter, Statistics NZ says.

Transport is among industries which had increased costs resulting from higher crude oil prices.

Producer output prices (the prices producers get for their goods and services) rose 1.0% in the December 2017 quarter. Input prices (the costs producers pay) rose 0.9%.

February 22

Project bidder exits City Rail Link

Months of delays have hit Auckland's $3.4 billion City Rail Link (CRL) project after the withdrawal of a preferred bidder from the process.

It will cause hold-ups for the release of tender documents.

CRL chief executive **Chris Meale** says the withdrawal is disappointing but won't prevent progress on the project tender and discussions have already started with another prospective bidder.

MPI sets new standard

New Imported Health Standard requirements for vehicles being imported from Japan are now available on the Ministry for Primary Industry's (MPI) website.

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association says the updated requirements reflect MPI's policy of keeping risk offshore where possible, after the discovery of stink bugs on ships from Japan.

February 23

Boost for regional rail

The reopening of the Wairoa-Napier line for logging trains is among key projects to benefit from the Government's $3 billion provincial growth fund.

Regional economic development minister Shane Jones officially announced the scheme in Gisborne with $61.7 million allocated for the first round of spending.

All regions are eligible for the funding which will be rolled out over three years.

Gita hits South Island freight

Work is underway to repair freight lines hit between Blenheim and Christchurch after recent storms.

Cyclone Gita caused landslips which closed the State Highway and the main north line between Picton and Christchurch along the Kaikoura coast.

KiwiRail is working alongside NZ Transport Agency to re-open the routes where 300,000 cubic metres of material has spread across 60 sites.

Details about port working group revealed

The working group that will investigate whether Northport is a suitable replacement for the Ports of Auckland is starting to take shape.

Continued on page 34

Continued from page 33

Released alongside a raft of announcements from the Government's Provincial Growth Fund, the Upper North Island Supply Chain Strategy Proposal promises to have the findings of a supply chain review by July 2018, according to a Cabinet paper supplied to Auto Media Group.

An Upper North Island Supply Chain Strategy and a feasibility study to explore options for moving the location of the Ports of Auckland, including giving Northport serious consideration will be in place by December 2018.

February 26

Top shareholder in Daimler AG

China's Zhejiang Geely Holding Group chairman and founder **Li Shufu** has become the top shareholder in automotive corporation Daimler AG.

Daimler AG, also the world's largest truck maker, is the owner of brands such as Fuso, Freightliner and Mercedes-Benz.

Safety alert on towing connections

A safety alert is being issued over faulty truck drawbeams, drawbars and towbars.

The NZ Transport Agency says all towing connections fitted by Peter Wastney Engineering must be assessed for a new certification by a heavy vehicle specialist certifier (HVSC).

The agency requires the equipment to be checked for signs of cracks "or other failures".

Commercial parts network launched

Iveco Trucks New Zealand has launched an all-makes parts brand through a new deal.

The company has teamed up with Diesel Technic, one of the largest suppliers of aftermarket commercial vehicle parts worldwide, as part of the launch.

The Diesel Technic parts are stored at Iveco's Auckland headquarters in Wiri and will be distributed through 20 Iveco parts dealers nationwide.

February 27

Motorway bridge work begins

The NZ Transport Agency is strengthening the Penrose overbridge on Auckland's Southern Motorway against vehicle strikes.

The bridge has been hit 41 times since 2008, with 32 smashes on the southbound side.

Collision protection beams are being installed to protect the State Highway 1 structure from more damage.

Ex-transport minister now leader

Former transport minister **Simon Bridges** has won the National Party leadership.

Bridges, who won the post after two ballots, told media the Labour-led coalition is taking the economy for granted.

"There's no point saying you support the regions when you mess with employment and immigration laws," he says.

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TRANSPORT TALK DIARY

TRANSPORTtalk Australia editor Scott Murray looks at the month gone by on **www.transporttalk.com.au**



February 7

Mercedes-Benz launches Sprinter

Mercedes-Benz Vans has unveiled its new Sprinter model, complete with state-of-the-art design, safety features and telematics.

It was revealed in Duisburg, Germany with Mercedes-Benz Vans chief executive Volker Mornhinweg saying it meets an "enormous range of commercial transport requirements".

That includes a 50-kilogram payload increase and an 80-millimetre lower loading edge for more convenience.

February 9

ATA urges mandatory ESC

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) has told the federal government it can save 148 lives by making electronic stability control compulsory on all new trucks sold in Australia.

ATA chairman Geoff Crouch says the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and Cities should enforce stability control on trucks as it responds to the department's regulatory impact statement (RIS) on the matter.

February 13

Road standards changes needed

Heavy Vehicle Industry Australia (HVIA) says has submitted changes in the Road Vehicle Standards Bill to the Department of Infrastructure.

HVIA points to a potential gap between Australian Design Rules and the Vehicle Standards Bulletin 6 (VSB6) regulations which affects the most common modifications made to heavy vehicles.

HVIA policy and government relations manager **Greg Forbes** says the industry consultation has highlighted a definition flaw.

February 15

Freightliner backs Brad Jones Racing

Supercars racer **Tim Slade** will wear new Freightliner and Alliance Truck Parts livery this year, competing in the Brad Jones Racing #14 Commodore.

Freightliner Racing team gets to use a Coronado B-double as part of the dual sponsor dealer with Alliance, with an unmissable yellow and black motif to match the race car.

After a single appearance on the Slade car in Townsville in 2016 and teammate **Nick Percat's** car in Winton last year, the Alliance Truck Parts brand returns full-time.

February 26

Mercedes X-Class sets benchmark

Mercedes-Benz is the first manufacturer in Australia to make autonomous emergency braking standard on its entire range of X-Class utes, earning a five-star ANCAP safety rating.

Australasian New Car Assessment Programme has given the imminent-to-market Mercedes ute critical praise for taking trade and commercial vehicle safety to a new level.

The X-Class has scored 78% in the ANCAP "Safety Assist" category, with the five-star rating applying to both the Australian and New Zealand market.

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Industry positive despite global warning

Predictions of doom and gloom for global financial markets made headlines at a recent World Economic Forum meeting in Switzerland.

A situation worse than the global financial crisis might be closer than we think, according to Professor William White, the Swiss-based head of the OECD's review board.

However, New Zealand's automotive finance industry is more positive about the future.

UDC chief executive **Wayne Percival** told *Auto Media* the company expects global economic growth to remain steady, with the outlook for the New Zealand economy also looking positive.

"The New Zealand finance industry has generally kept things fairly simple and hasn't offered highly speculative or complex products," he says.

"For UDC in particular, our focus is on financing productive, tangible assets.

"The quality of the applications we've received for motor vehicle finance continues to remain of a high standard and we are seeing no indication of this declining."

Motor vehicle lending was a key contributor to UDC's growth in the 2017 financial year, with its loan book passing $3 billion in November.

"The signs indicate continued strength in new car sales, through our broad connection with franchise dealers in wholesale, retail and equipment.

"We are also seeing a healthy investment in new equipment across a range of industries."

In 2018, UDC's main focus remains on its core business of financing vehicles and equipment, with another successful year on the horizon, Percival says.

Financial Services Federation executive director **Lyn McMorran**, whose organisation represents many automotive lenders, acknowledges that a downturn will happen eventually.

"I think all our members know these things are cyclical. It's a bit like the property market when people keep thinking prices will continue to rise.

"They don't. There will be a downturn at some stage."

However, in the short term, the automotive finance industry continues to perform well.





Wayne Percival Lyn McMorran

"We're not seeing any sign of it happening yet, not in the auto industry.

"Dealers are selling record numbers of vehicles so financiers are handling record amounts.

"In the short-term, arrears levels are at record lows - people are paying their loans back."

Many financial services companies are more robust after lessons learned from the global financial crisis a decade ago, McMorran says.

"They developed credit processes which allowed them to survive through that."

But a change in interest rate levels could affect the market, she says.

"In such a low interest rate market, money is cheap. At some point that's going to have to change.

"If that happens we might see a slowdown in the number of vehicles being sold."

However, because most vehicle loans are on a fixed rate, McMorran says existing finance contracts probably wouldn't be affected.

"It would affect new finance borrowers. People would be excluded from finance or couldn't get as much as they can at the moment.

"People taking on debt have to be prepared for interest rates to go up. Can they afford to take on the level of debt they are borrowing?"

McMorran says a change in economic circumstances makes credit-related insurance a factor that needs consideration.

"Always having another way out, rather than having a vehicle repossessed, is desirable."

Yorston recognised for three decades of fostering children

Long-time industry figure Malcolm Yorston and his wife Brenda have been recognised for more than 36 years fostering children.

Malcolm, who is currently Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) technical manager, travelled to Wellington with Brenda to receive the Excellence in Foster Care award from minister for children Tracey Martin.

"You don't foster children to get awards," he says.

"You do it to help the kids. To be recognised is very humbling."



Malcolm Yorston

The pair began fostering children in the late 1970s after Brenda's mum Betty died.

She was fostering a young boy at the time, so Malcolm and Brenda took over his care.

"We actually adopted him when he was 16. We fostered kids in Christchurch and kept on fostering when we moved up to Auckland.

"We've had well over 100 kids through our home over the years."

Malcolm says fostering children is a rewarding experience.

"You can make a difference in a kid's life, particularly when you see some of the older ones come in from an abusive situation.

"You spend time with them, give them love, try to look after them and keep them safe. You don't see much response to start with.

"Then they start showing the love you've been giving them."

One of the most rewarding elements of fostering children is seeing them placed in happy, safe homes.

"You've helped get them out of the situation they were in and into a better place than they were previously."

Malcolm also spent three years as chairman of the Family and Foster Care Federation, which is now known as Fostering Kids New Zealand.



Heavy EVs charging ahead

Trucks, buses and other heavy vehicles are a huge part of the electric revolution, not-for-profit group Drive Electric says.

Drive Electric member ABB, which offers a variety of charging solutions for large vehicles like buses, says there is huge potential in heavy EVs.

ABB New Zealand managing director Ewan Morris says there is a large amount of interest in electrifying New Zealand's bus fleet but it's early days.

"There are some pilot/trial projects being run in order to gain experience. Some of the major cities have signalled a desire to adopt this technology," Morris says.

"Buses are good candidates for electrification. Buses, and many aged buses in particular, use diesel fuel which contributes to air pollution. Electric buses emit no greenhouse gases which is better for the environment and for people walking near and around the buses."

Other benefits include a quieter experience for passengers and lower running costs for operators.

The impact that charging heavy vehicles will place on the electricity grid depends on whether they charge overnight or at various points throughout the day, along with the number of electric buses on the road, Morris says.

"It is important that the grid impact is considered up front as part of the overall system design.

"Technologies such as battery energy storage combined with advanced power management controllers are able to help reduce the impact on the grid."

Auckland Transport (AT) has ordered two electric buses which are set to run on the City Link route.

"We will use the vehicles to test the viability of electric buses in Auckland, looking at elements such as battery life, ability to cope with hills and passenger loading," AT bus services manager **Darek Koper** says.

"This is a very exciting opportunity for Auckland to take a big step towards achieving the aim of a zero-emission fleet from 2025."

The buses built by Alexander Dennis have been jointly funded by AT and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

Change is also on the horizon in the trucking sector, with Drive Electric member Waste Management leading the way.

It is on the verge of completing a pilot programme, which will see five of its trucks switch from diesel to become environmentally friendly electric vehicles, its managing director **Tom Nickels** says.


Tom Nickels

"Three of those trucks are in service in New Zealand. The other two are in Amsterdam with EMOSS – the company that converts our trucks – and are due back here in a couple of months.

"What we have seen so far gives us great confidence that this is the right track."

The next step is to convert trucks from diesel to electric power here in New Zealand, with a specialist EV conversion workshop at Waste Management's main Auckland site.

"We have ordered 20 kit sets from EMOSS. The first conversion has already begun," Nickels says.

"So far, we've outperformed what was expected."

With more than 800 trucks in its fleet, the company has made sure to convert a variety of vehicles during the pilot, including a box-and-body truck which focuses on supermarket collection, a side-load truck for wheelie bins as well as rear-load and skip-bin trucks.

Going electric has also meant new challenges for drivers, engineers and mechanics, Nickels says.

"The drivers use different techniques. We've had great difficulty getting drivers out of the pilot trucks.

"When you've got an electric motor and batteries, diesel mechanics are not what you need there. You need electrical technicians and engineers."

Nickels is encouraging other companies to think about investing in electric technology.

"It's a tremendously exciting opportunity across the transport sector.

"I think all enlightened companies that care for the environment should definitely be looking at it. I know some of them are thinking about it.

"It seems to make sense in every dimension."



A vision for road safety

The social cost of serious road accidents was around $4.17 billion in 2016, a Ministry of Transport report says.

Its annual Social Cost of Road Crashes and Injuries report released recently shows the 7.8% rise on 2015's figure parallels the similar rise in the road toll.

In per-crash terms, it translates to an average social cost of nearly $5 million per fatal crash, nearly $1 million for a serious injury crash and more than $100,000 for a minor injury crash.

The figures are pretty sobering and although it might seem a little callous putting a value on the loss of a life, it does put into perspective the impact the rising road toll and frequency of serious accidents has on society and our economy.

The prevalence of trucks is often blamed for the increase in the accident rate, a natural assumption given the strength of New Zealand's economy and the growing freight task.

However, the number of new vehicle registrations tells a very different story.

Between 2011 and 2016 the number of heavy trucks registered in New Zealand rose by around 12,000. Over the same period, the number of light passenger and light commercial vehicles increased by over half a million.

So, the perception that there has been a massive surge in the number of trucks is a bit of a myth - it is really the public's increased exposure to trucks because of the rapidly expanding light vehicle fleet.

In a serious truck-versus-car collision, it is very rare for the truck to be at fault; truck drivers are responsible for only around 25% of the serious accidents they are involved in.

The problem is that in well over 80% of these accidents, it is the smaller vehicle that comes off second best. It is this fact alone that makes the truck the bad guy.

So, instead of blaming one set of road users or another, all road user groups should be focused on advocating for the improvement of our roading infrastructure.

It is no secret many of our regional roads and lower level state highways are just not safe enough.

It is encouraging that the new Government has signalled an emphasis on improving the safety of those routes and on helping local authorities maintain them.

A $22 million suite of minor initiatives for regional roads was announced before Christmas and a longer-term strategy is in the pipeline.

Widening shoulders, eliminating unnecessary slopes and poor cambering, and removing ditches that run alongside roads are important steps. Median barriers and fencing also need to be considered where appropriate.

One of the biggest long-term decisions the Government will need to make is whether or not to adopt the "Vision Zero" philosophy gaining popularity in some overseas jurisdictions. Ministers have signalled a desire to at least consider the policy and its implications.

First developed in Sweden, Vision Zero aims to achieve a roading network with no fatalities or serious injuries whatsoever.

Since 1997, Swedish roads have been built with safety as the exclusive priority. Low urban speed limits, pedestrian zones and barriers separating cars from cyclists and oncoming traffic are practical applications of the policy.

On the surface, it all seems very sensible stuff and I am sure many in our industry would welcome a greater separation of traffic. However, the policy does come with some fishhooks.

Under a Vision Zero approach, all roading projects would need to comply with its aims – zero fatalities and serious accidents. Traffic flow and productivity would take a backseat.

Obvious accident hotspots such as intersections would require a complete redesign, for example.

I've been told by New Zealand Transport Agency officials that traffic lights which promote a steady flow of traffic would give way to a greater emphasis on roundabouts which, although responsible for a greater number of minor accidents, are less likely to result in a serious accident or fatality because of the much lower speeds required to use them.

As we know from recent experiences in Blenheim and one or two other places, some roundabouts are not exactly sympathetic to the requirements of heavy vehicles so the prospect of more of them might not initially please too many truckies.

Assuming NZTA and its contractors learn from recent mistakes, Vision Zero does represent an important step in road design and traffic management policy.

It is certainly a lot more significant than a simple rebranding exercise and could have a significant impact on the nature of our roading network in the years ahead.

A former MP and minister of the crown, **Ken Shirley** became the chief executive officer of the Road Transport Forum New Zealand (RTFNZ) in 2012. The forum was set up as a national body in 1997 to responsibly promote and advance the interests of the road transport industry, and its member road transport operators. Email: ken.shirley@rtfnz.co.nz



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Giving time to learn trade

Doesn't the internet make life easier for those of us who need more knowledge?

It's easy to download a photo, a definition or a piece of legislation without moving from our desks.

Unfortunately, the social side also unleashes the beast of arrogant "perfect" people who slam others because they are anonymous and don't have to answer for their own skills, often venting because they too might have been that person they are slagging off.

Gone are the days when we could jump in a truck and have time to learn our trade. Some mistakes end up on social media before we can reverse out of them.

The lack of face-to-face accountability makes it easy for this sort of bullying to take hold and cause a groundswell of supporters for no other reason than it makes them all feel like they've elevated their status for a minute or two.

If someone calls them out on this, then they feel the guilt.

Maybe it's time to consider the damage we are doing ourselves. When someone gets vocal about someone else, usually the other person laughs or joins in just to be in the conversation.



Meryn Morrison was appointed chair of Women in Road Transport in 2016 to be a leading female voice in the industry. It's about promoting a positive image and positioning the road transport sector as a professional career choice for women.

I urge you to stop and give no feedback. If you feel you can, be courageous and just say "No – they're allowed to learn".

What the verbal-vicious person doesn't realise is that most of the time others look at them, judge them and make a mental note not to go there again so it rebounds on that person.

Sure, we can all vent but better to do it with a trusted friend or colleague who won't spread it around and realises that if there's a problem, you need to get it off your chest. That's different to just out-and-out criticism because someone is learning.

So where does the title of my article come in? There needs to be more emphasis on the good side of human reaction and behaviour. This side of humanity surely outnumbers the verbal-vicious people mentioned above but remains silent for the most part.

I am usually overwhelmed by the generous nature of truck drivers who also tell it like it is but then forgive and forget mistakes and issues.

We owe it to ourselves to let this beautiful side of our nature come through and allow the real feel-good factor to make our day go better. The real release of "feel good" benefits our health and our next actions on the road.

I've been to too many funerals just lately and all of them tell of the person and how they made us feel. These people made us feel good, made us laugh and we enjoyed some good times or funny events with them.

We start with "Remember when we..." Truck drivers and transport people have a lot of those stories.

I urge you to think about the bigger story when some verbal-vicious person slags off someone they don't know for a quick moment of fame. Everyone is allowed to learn and hopefully we do it every day.

Regions get access to $3bn fund

Continued from page 16

"Much of the focus has previously been on what's known as the 'golden triangle' - Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga. The inclusion of Northland into an integrated logistics study will lead to a 'growth diamond' that can provide opportunities and solutions for Northland, Auckland and the upper North Island as a whole."

Tairawhiti-East Coast, Manawatu-Whanganui and the West Coast of the South Island are also areas targeted for investment through the scheme.

"We are being bold and we are being ambitious because this Government is committed to ending the years of neglect," Jones says.

"Nearly half of us live outside our main cities. If this country is to do well, then our provinces must thrive.

"We are providing an immediate boost to these areas by investing $61.7 million into forestry initiatives, tourism ventures, rail and roading projects, and supporting these regions to develop their proposals further to help them get off the ground."

An independent advisory panel and a newly established regional economic development unit will help ministers and officials allocate the $3bn.

"Our provinces are full of ideas and proposals. I have been heartened by the aspirations of so many businesses and investors, local councils, iwi and community groups and I'm pleased to say that we now have a mechanism to see these realised," Jones says.

More than $6m is going towards revitalisation of the Whanganui Port and upgrade of the town's rail line. Gisborne and the Hawke's Bay will get a boost to tourism and forestry projects with $8.6m in the first round.

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