

Trucking Frustration



TruckSure
By Trevor Toohill

Big heavy rigs result in a big mess when things go horribly wrong out there on the road.

This year has already been a real nightmare on New Zealand's roads and we have seen daily headlines reporting death, injury, and destruction on a scale that is quite extraordinary.

Tourists are getting blamed. Truckies are grabbing headlines – mostly unfairly.

Holiday makers and the general motorist have contributed their share to the news.

The big thing is this though – any motorist who tangles with a truck is going to come off second best.

To do nothing is not an option and transport operators need to have a stronger voice, opinions, and media response.

Truckies are getting hammered in the press – it's always the truck that hit the car, when as we all know in the industry it is mostly the car driver making the mistake and ploughing into an unsuspecting truckie.

The injury and trauma caused to the driver is immeasurable and unfair reporting just adds insult to injury.

Sure we are still seeing too many unforced errors and crashes caused by some truck drivers but considering the distances travelled and frequency of trips our professional drivers do a pretty good job.

So how do we bring the situation back to some form of acceptable normality?

Is there a common cause?

Is there a fix to the current trend?

Whatever the answer it is not likely to be a quick fix.

Rental car companies probably have the biggest short term responsibility. They control the tourist behind the wheel at the very initial stage of the hire.

They have a responsibility and to some extent have a level of culpability.

Driver education and experience vetting at the point of sale would increase

awareness of our road rules, signage, speeds, and most importantly intersection laws and travel direction.

It is unlikely that driver road testing or lengthier examinations would be feasible due to the sheer numbers being processed. But, anything would be better than taking their money and throwing the keys at them as it would appear to be the case now.

However we all know it is not just about the tourist drivers isn't it?

They make up some of the numbers having accidents but compared to all drivers on the road their numbers are

“To do nothing is not an option and transport operators need to have a stronger voice, opinions, and media response.”

not significantly out of proportion. The exception being the high profile head on and intersection collisions.

So what else is happening to exacerbate travel dangers on our roads making the situation progressively worse now than it was in previous years?

My two cents for what it's worth – road conditions!

New Zealand has a very unique roading network comprising motorways and rural connections stretching up and down some very long and narrow series of corridors.

Very few kilometres of our network are dual carriage motorways and what motorways we have are generally in pretty good condition with good directional separation.

Motorways are not the problem.

Lack of dual carriage highways with protection barriers is!

Poor road surface condition is!

Travelling recently in Australia and elsewhere highlighted the vast difference in the way traffic is moved.

Roads are wider, signage is better, and the road surfaces are superior in almost every developed county when compared to New Zealand.

NZ Governments have progressively allowed our roads to deteriorate into a high level of decay and this now requires an expensive fix. Road surfaces are the worst they have been in decades. Particularly our state highways.

The surfaces are dangerous and road markings, rumble strips, and signage are unacceptable.

Travelling on them requires a higher level of concentration which results in unwarranted fatigue.

Fatigue and concentration - a dangerous mix!

Billions of dollars are being allocated and spent on “roads of national importance” but this is at the expense of the existing network.

Our most significant roads of national importance are our existing ones.

Let's get those up to scratch first.

A billion dollars diverted from the holiday highway north of Auckland to repair and upgrade existing roads would be a good start.

Secondly, and after these upgrades are completed, all of our principal highways should have dual carriageways with directional separation.

So the questions are asked and it will be interesting to observe if they get answered.

Rental car and motorhome companies step up and educate.

NZ government step up and put the emphasis on making our existing roads safer.

We all deserve to come home.

Feel like discussing any trucking issues? www.trucksure.co.nz 



MultiSure

0800 287 287

www.trucksure.co.nz



TruckSure

‘We've got trucking covered’