

20 July 2020

We write to you on behalf of the Driving Change Network regarding the role of driver licensing in aiding the COVID-19 recovery.

The Driving Change network consists of a diverse range of stakeholders including community providers, iwi, industry, philanthropy and local government organisations, that are committed to creating an equitable driver licensing system in Aotearoa

We recognise the significant barriers present in the current system and exist to provide collective voice and leadership to enable positive change.

The Targeted Training and Apprenticeships Fund (TTAF) is a fantastic initiative but the members of our network are concerned that this fund will not allow equitable, or swift access into these priority workforces without the additional inclusion of supported class 1 driver license training. Class 1 licences are a prerequisite to many trade apprenticeships as well as the other driving classes funded through the TTAF.

We want New Zealand's economy to recover quickly, we want a brighter, more equitable future for Aotearoa, and this is why we are bringing this concern to your attention.

It is our belief, that without a step back, to see what additional training is needed to participate in our growth industries, this initiative will not have the desired outcomes.

Our concerns are as follows:

- The industries targeted through the TTAF, will require class 1 driver licences as a prerequisite (as do 70% of all jobs)
- Excluded and disadvantaged groups will be further excluded from participation in the workforce unless their driver education is subsidised or free as part of the TTAF scheme
- At the moment, access to get a driver licence is not equitable, and this has been compounded by the impacts of COVID-19, resulting in substantial wait times to undertake restricted and full licence testing. With stronger support and education for drivers, we'd expect to see more prepared test takers, resulting in fewer failures and re-tests thereby reducing testing delays and individual costs.

What we'd like to see:

- Funded support for driver education including class 1 driver license testing and the defensive driver licensing course, included as part of the TTAF.
- Engagement with the Driving Change Network to work on a longer-term plan to removing the significant barriers present in the current system.

“The road transport Industry is facing a significant shortage of new drivers coming into the industry. With an average driver age of 57 years, and 25% of the drivers aged over 65 years it is critical that any impediments for new drivers are removed. Not having a Full Class 1 Licence is a significant impediment to starting a career in the road transport industry.”

**David Boyce, CEO
NZ Trucking Association**

“We find that a lack of a Class 1 Restricted Drivers Licence is a major impediment to employment in Kawerau. Access to resources to support young people to prepare for this licence is important, so too is the ability to undertake this test locally. Without our rangatahi reaching this milestone, they are unable to easily take up trades training or other employment opportunities currently being made available by the TTAF.”

**Su Cammell, Project Manager
Industrial Symbiosis Kawerau**

“The Alternative Education (AE) sector has and is working with rangatahi that have been excluded from mainstream education and a high percentage of these rangatahi do not return to mainstream education. This means providers of AE then look to more practical pathways for our students once they exit our service and one of those pathways is that of the TTAF or the MPTT (Maori Pacific Trade Training) one of the barriers that providers face is the ability to access resources and funding for the Class 1 restricted licence. The Alternative Education National Body supports the concerns and solutions that the Driving Change Network is recommending.”

**Joe Graham, Chair
Alternative Education National Body**

“Through the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and our engagements with mayors across the country, we are consistently told that a lack of access to driver training and testing remains a major barrier for young people when connecting into the work force. We need to ensure that skill development pathways remain accessible for young people, especially in a post Covid world. A driver licence is a prerequisite to trade and service employment pathways, alike the Driving Change Network, MTFJ believes that greater support is needed for young people to obtain a driver licence.”

**Max Baxter, Chair
Mayor’s Taskforce for Jobs**

Our experience of working with men released from prison is that being able to gain a full class one driver license greatly enhances their ability to both gain employment and to retained it. This in itself aids in no small part to the process of reengaging and being an activity part of the local community, reducing re-offending and creating safer happy communities for all. For this reason we are supportive of this request.

**Carey Ewing, Re-integration Manager
Pathway Trust, Christchurch**

Within our business we require all potential operators to obtain their class 1 licence before we can commit to train them on any site machinery. If an interviewee can demonstrate they already possess a class 1 they have a distinct advantage over ones without within the recruitment process. The holding of a class 1 licence makes them more attractive as an employee in a number of additional ways such as being able to travel around sites within company sites, the ability to collect materials / tools from local suppliers and most importantly their ability to readily get to work.

**David Wyeth
Senior Project Manager, HEB Construction Ltd**

“With 93% of freight in New Zealand moved by road, we need a sustainable supply of truck drivers. One of the barriers is the length of time it takes to get the appropriate licence. To ensure the vast number of newly unemployed, and those entering the workforce at one of the worst economic times in our history have the opportunity to work in our industry, we urge the government to urgently look at the driver licencing system and to better align it with training objectives and getting people into work, faster. “

**Nick Leggett
Chief Executive, Road Transport Forum**

We look forward to your reply and to meeting with you to discuss this further.

Ngā mihi nui,

The Driving Change Network

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