



TASMANIAN TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION



FINAL REPORT

A report on the project conducted by the Tasmanian Transport Association, funded by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative Program, with the support of the Federal Government, to improve the mental and physical health and wellbeing of Tasmanian Truck Drivers.

Conducted by the Tasmanian Transport Association.

Acknowledgements

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- Rural Alive and Well (RAW) as TTA's prime delivery partner in the Open Road program
- Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA)
- Royal Flying Doctor Service – Tas (RFDS)
- National Transport Insurance (NTI)
- Transport Workers Union (TWU)
- TWUSUPER – now Team Super
- Bonney Energy – Epping Forest Ampol Road House
- Bennetts Petroleum – Mood Food Truck Stop at Kempton
- Tasmanian Policy Exchange – conducting the Key Learnings Impact Report
- University of Tasmania
- NHVR HVSI Team – for regular check ins, encouragement, support, and guidance
- TTA Directors, Members and the broader transport community for supporting the program

Disclaimer

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
Program Overview.....	5
Objectives.....	5
Target Audience	5
Delivery Period	5
Funding Partners	6
Project Partners	6
Key Achievements.....	6
1. Collaboration at the Core- Aligning for Driver Wellbeing	6
2. Awareness Raising.....	8
3. Industry Capacity Building.....	8
4. Direct Intervention	9
The Tasmanian Truck Driving Workforce.....	10
Program Impact with Tasmanian Workforce.....	13
Engagement with Truck Drivers	13
Referrals to Support Services.....	13
Outcomes against Program Aims.....	14
Open Road: External Review.....	16
Recommendations for the Future	18
Conclusion	21
Audit Report / Acquittal Statement	22

ATTACHMENTS:

Case Study 1: Open Road – Raising Awareness

Case Study 2: Open Road – Truck Stop Health Checks

Case Study 3: Open Road – Capacity Building

Case Study 4: Open Road – Direct Intervention



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Executive Summary

The *Open Road Truck Driver Health and Wellbeing Program* was initiated and delivered by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA) to respond to the specific physical and mental health challenges experienced by truck drivers within Tasmania's freight transport sector.

This initiative was funded through the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, with support from the Australian Government. The program was delivered in partnership with Rural Alive and Well (RAW) and further supported through collaboration with the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA) and the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania (RFDS).

Additional support was provided by NTI and TWUSUPER (now Team Super). On-the-ground delivery of truck stop health checks was made possible through the generous support of TTA members, including Bonney Energy at Epping Forest and Bennetts Petroleum Mood Food.

The *Open Road* program was designed to enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of transport workers—primarily truck drivers—through the delivery of three core objectives:

- Raising awareness
- Building industry capacity
- Providing direct intervention

This final report presents the program's key achievements, incorporates evaluation findings from the Tasmanian Policy Exchange (University of Tasmania), and outlines recommendations to support ongoing investment and long-term program sustainability.

Importantly, the success of the *Open Road* initiative has led to the allocation of additional funding by the Tasmanian Government, enabling the continuation and expansion of the program for a further two-year period.

The report is further supported by four case studies that highlight the program's practical application and the distinctive outcomes achieved across its three strategic focus areas.

These are attached to this report and are:

Case Study 1: Open Road – Raising Awareness

Case Study 2: Open Road – Truck Stop Health Checks

Case Study 3: Open Road – Capacity Building

Case Study 4: Open Road – Direct Intervention



Program Overview

Objectives

The *Open Road* Program was established as a comprehensive, multi-faceted model aimed at encouraging truck drivers to seek advice and access appropriate support for mental and physical health and wellbeing challenges. The program design acknowledged the inherent limitations in reaching drivers directly, due to the nature and demands of their work, and therefore sought to also influence the broader transport workplace environment. This was achieved through strategies to raise awareness and build internal capability within transport businesses.

In developing the program, consideration was also given to the limited recognition—within both the industry and the wider community—of the essential contribution truck drivers make to the Tasmanian economy and to the functioning of Tasmanian businesses. The program specifically aimed to address the occupational stressors and situational pressures that negatively affect the physical and mental wellbeing of drivers.

To this end, the *Open Road* Program was structured around three core objectives:

- **Raise awareness** of the mental and physical health and wellbeing challenges faced by truck drivers.
- **Build capacity, capability, and confidence** within the transport industry to support healthier, safer, and more inclusive workplaces.
- **Deliver direct interventions** to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of drivers across Tasmania.

Target Audience

The *Open Road* Program was designed to engage the following key stakeholder groups:

- **Tasmanian road freight transport workers**, with a particular—though not exclusive—focus on truck drivers.
- **Transport operators, business owners, managers, supervisors, and peers**, who hold a unique position to recognise early signs of physical or mental health concerns and provide timely support or intervention.
- **Industry stakeholders and support organisations**, whose involvement is critical to building a coordinated, sector-wide approach to improving health and wellbeing in the freight transport industry.

Delivery Period

The *Open Road* program was delivered between mid 2023 to November 2024.



Funding Partners

- The Australian Government, NHVR's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative Program
- Industry support via the Tasmanian Transport Association, members and partners

Project Partners

The project has been characterised by a collaborative effort, where industry members, service providers and those agencies providing health and wellbeing support, have all worked together in alignment to deliver improved health and wellbeing opportunities for Tasmanian truck drivers.

The key project partners were:

1. Rural Alive and Well (RAW)
2. Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA)
3. Royal Flying Doctor Service Tas (RFDS)
4. The University of Tasmania – Tasmanian Policy Exchange

Key Achievements

1. Collaboration at the Core- Aligning for Driver Wellbeing

Collaboration has significantly strengthened the *Open Road* program, with alignment around shared goals enabling diverse stakeholder groups to work cohesively despite their differing backgrounds and perspectives. As a result, the program has truly become greater than the sum of its parts. By aligning under the *Open Road* banner, each stakeholder group has contributed its unique expertise while maintaining alignment with its own organisational vision and mission. *Open Road* has demonstrated that individual branding and corporate priorities can coexist comfortably within a unified, collaborative framework where goals and values are aligned.

The *Open Road* program has:

Built and demonstrated the power of cross-sector collaboration, uniting government, industry, industry associations, unions, industry service providers, health providers, and researchers under a shared vision to support the health of Tasmania's truck drivers.

Established strong and probable enduring partnerships with **RAW Tasmania**, **Royal Flying Doctor Service**, **TTOOA**, the **University of Tasmania**, the **Department of State Growth**, and freight businesses across the state.

Delivered an integrated approach that extended program reach, amplified messaging, and created lasting industry and community connections.



The *Open Road* program partners can be depicted as:

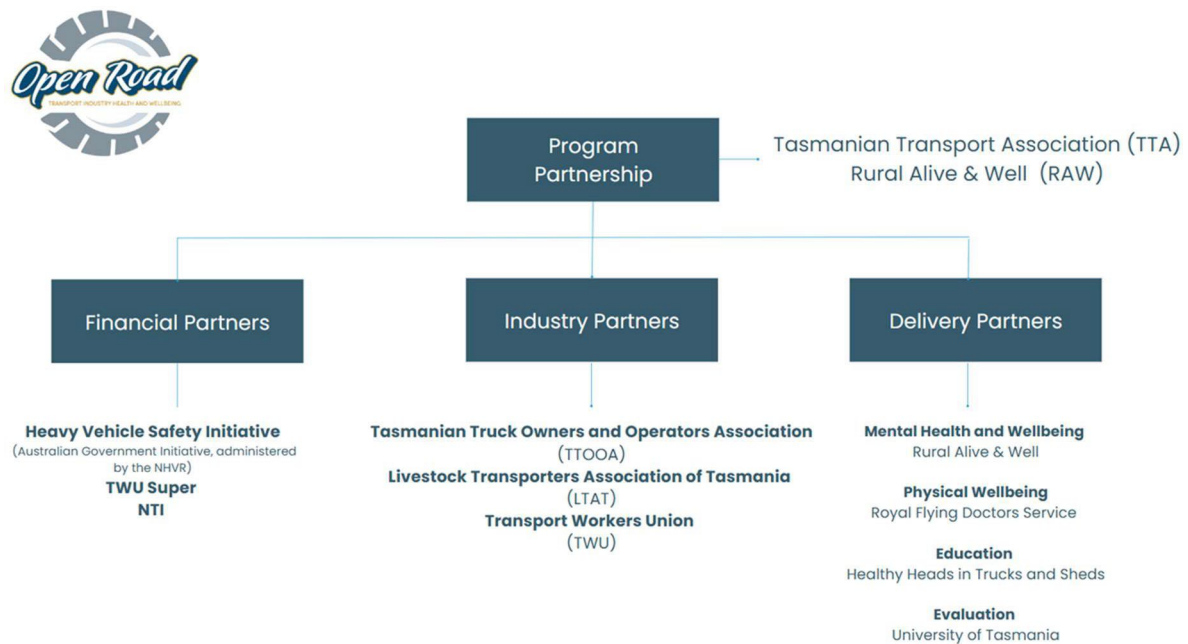


Figure 1 - Open Road Program Partners

In design, the program drew on expertise available from both Tasmanian and national programs including the road map and frameworks established by Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds, however the program in delivery was a uniquely Tasmanian response in the context of Tasmanian partners and stakeholders.



Figure 2 - Open Road Delivery Partners

2. Awareness Raising

The *Open Road* program has been guided by a committee comprised representatives from key stakeholders committed to improving driver health and wellbeing including TTA, RAW, TTOOA, University of Tasmania, NTI, and the TWU.

Open Road achieved broad industry awareness through Directors and members of the TTA and the associated stakeholders.

In operation, *Open Road* has been a highly visible industry led campaign, across several domains. The program has been active on the ground, at:

- Transport industry workplaces – with more than x transport industry workplace visits
- Pop up health clinics held at the two main truck stops on key Tasmanian freight routes; Epping Forest and Mood Food
- Industry truck runs, state field days and shows
- Workplace and industry barbeques and breakfasts
- Delivered industry-wide health promotion campaigns across social media, radio, print and television media and at key freight and agriculture events.

The program leveraged key local and national events including a launch during National Road Safety Week.

For more information on the Awareness Raising strategic objective, see **Case Study 1- Raising Awareness: Opening Up.**

3. Industry Capacity Building

- Partnered with RAW to appoint a dedicated *Open Road* Facilitator. This person was recruited from the transport industry and had a strong background in road transport, as a truck driver across many sectors and as an endorsed heavy vehicle driver licence trainer and assessor. RAW provided full training and mentoring to support the professional development of the facilitator.
- Conducted toolbox talks and briefing sessions in transport businesses throughout Tasmania.
- Presented at TTA State Conferences and the Livestock Transporters Association of Tasmania state conferences, to ensure key transport leaders build awareness of the program and services available.
- Supported key Tasmanian transport workers to access professional development programs especially those available through Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds
- Providing support to other drivers to increase peer-to-peer learning and collaboration.

For more information on the Awareness Raising strategic objective, see **Case Study 3 - Capacity Building: capability and confidence**



4. Direct Intervention

- Partnered with RAW to provide on-site mental health outreach and referral support
- Deployed the *Open Road* facilitator and RAW team immediately on the death or serious injury of a worker, whether work related or not, to provide critical support for peers and work colleagues
- Launched pop-up health clinics at high-traffic road house locations including Epping Forest and Mood Food, in partnership with RFDS and TTOOA, offering free and confidential blood pressure checks and smoking cessation services, in roadhouse settings, reducing access barriers for drivers.

For more information on the Awareness Raising strategic objective, see **Case Study 2 – Truck Stop Driver Health Checks**, and **Case Study 4 – Direct Intervention: 1:1 Driver Support**.

Raising Awareness: Opening up
Using a multi-channel, grassroots and industry-focused awareness campaign to open up conversations about health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian Transport Industry.

OVERVIEW
The Open Road Transport Industry Health and Wellbeing Program is an initiative developed and delivered by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA), in collaboration with Rural Alive and Well (RAW), the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA), and Royal Flying Doctor Service Tas (RFDS) with the objective of improving the mental and physical health of truck drivers within Tasmania's transport sector.

OPEN ROAD
Funded by: The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative supported by the Australian Government.

Truck Stop Driver Health Checks
A practical model for awareness raising and direct intervention to drive improved mental and physical health outcomes in the Tasmanian Transport Industry.

OVERVIEW
The Open Road Transport Industry Health and Wellbeing Program is an initiative developed and delivered by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA), in collaboration with Rural Alive and Well (RAW), the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA), and Royal Flying Doctor Service Tas (RFDS) with the objective of improving the mental and physical health of truck drivers within Tasmania's transport sector.

OPEN ROAD
Funded by: The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative supported by the Australian Government.

Capacity Building: Capability & Confidence
Building the internal capacity and capability of supervisors and peers in the transport industry to identify, respond to, and confidently support worker health and wellbeing.

OVERVIEW
The Open Road Transport Industry Health and Wellbeing Program is an initiative developed and delivered by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA), in collaboration with Rural Alive and Well (RAW), the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA), and Royal Flying Doctor Service Tas (RFDS) with the objective of improving the mental and physical health of truck drivers within Tasmania's transport sector.

OPEN ROAD
Funded by: The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative supported by the Australian Government.

Direct Intervention: 1:1 Driver Support
Direct intervention providing 1:1 non-clinical support proves effective for workers in the Tasmanian transport industry.

OVERVIEW
The Open Road Transport Industry Health and Wellbeing Program is an initiative developed and delivered by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA), in collaboration with Rural Alive and Well (RAW), the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA), and Royal Flying Doctor Service Tas (RFDS) with the objective of improving the mental and physical health of truck drivers within Tasmania's transport sector.

OPEN ROAD
Funded by: The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, supported by the Australian Government.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness of health and wellbeing for Tasmanian truck drivers.
- Build industry capacity and capability to support and improve driver health and wellbeing.
- Provide direct intervention to assist driver health and wellbeing.

TTA
Tasmanian Transport Association

RAW
Rural Alive and Well

RFDS
Royal Flying Doctor Service

Open Road: Case Study 1

Open Road: Case Study 2

Open Road: Case Study 4

The Tasmanian Truck Driving Workforce

This section is lifted from the report “Open Road New Learnings” by the Tasmanian Policy Exchange. It is included to provide context for the program in Tasmania. Citation: Hyslop, S., Eccleston, R., Moran, F., Johnson, L. & Hills, A. (2024), *Open Road: New learnings*, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania, October 2024

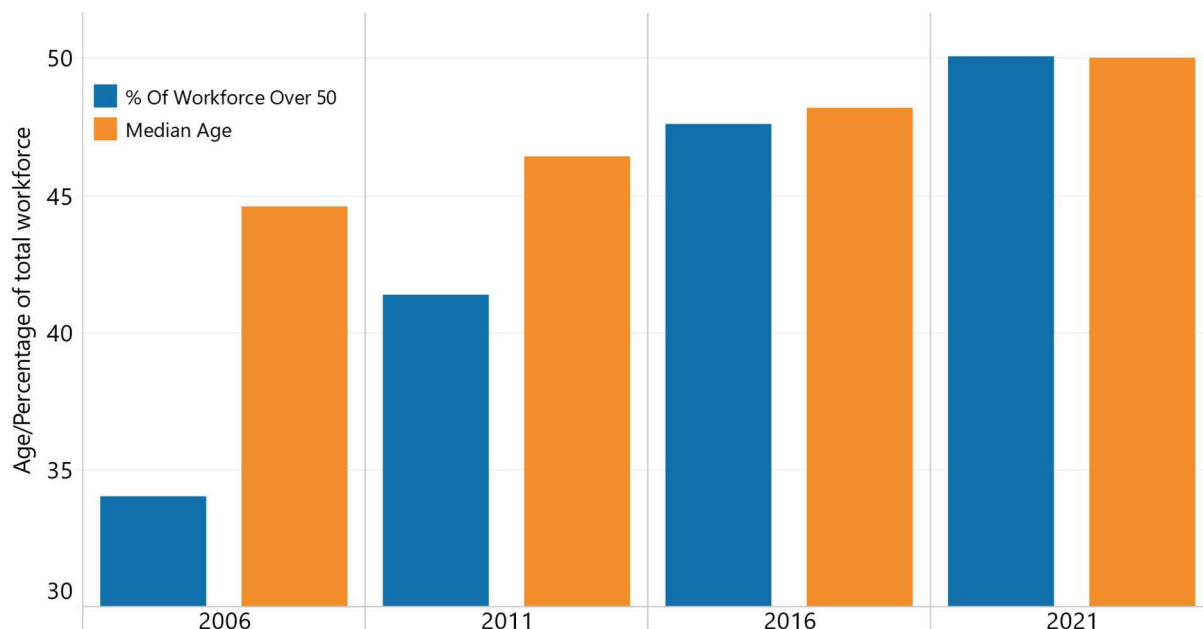
At the 2021 census there were 4010 truck drivers living in Tasmania, which is the second largest state or territory trucking workforce as a proportion of the population (see Table below).

Only Western Australia has more ‘truck drivers per capita’, so the truck driving community is a significant and important workforce in Tasmania.

Connected to this, as a relatively remote island the Tasmanian community and economy is highly dependent on a safe, sustainable and efficient road transport system.

	Population (2021)	Trucking workforce (2021)	Workforce gender breakdown	Truck drivers as share of population (%)
Western Australia	2,762,200	20,332	90.9% male, 9.1% female	0.73
Tasmania	569,800	4,010	96.8% male, 3.2% female	0.70
Queensland	5,265,000	3,6751	94.7% male, 5.3% female	0.69
Australia	2,5766,600	161,560	95.6% male, 4.4% female	0.63
South Australia	1,806,600	11,289	96.9% male, 3.1% female	0.62
Victoria	6,559,900	39,768	97.6% male, 2.4% female	0.60
New South Wales	8,095,400	46,966	96.5% male, 3.5% female	0.58
Northern Territory	249,300	1,252	91.7% male, 5.3% female	0.50
Australian Capital Territory	453,300	1,180	97% male, 3% female	0.26

Concerningly, the truck driving workforce in Tasmania is ageing fairly rapidly. At the 2006 census, the median age of Tasmanian truck drivers was 44.6 – it is now over 50 – see Figure below.



Both nationally and in Tasmania, truck driving is a very heavily male-dominated workforce: on average, just 4.4% of truck drivers are female (and only 3.2% in Tasmania). There is a gender pay gap, but, perhaps surprisingly, the median weekly pay of female truck drivers in Tasmania is slightly more than that of male truck drivers – see Figure below.

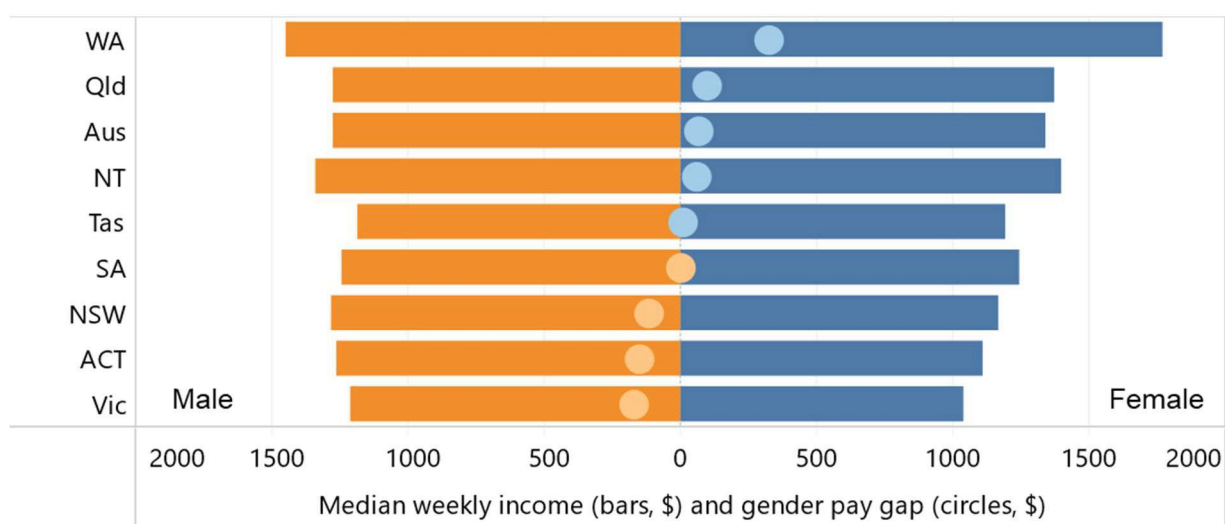


Figure: Median weekly income of truck drivers by state and sex, 2021 (data source: ABS)

Potentially indicating the impact of the profession on relationships, truck drivers are the second most likely group of employed persons in Tasmania to report their marital status as separated or divorced (only real estate agents are more likely to experience relationship breakdown). Around 12.3% of the general employed population in Tasmania is separated or divorced compared with 18.5% of truck drivers.

Interview participants corroborated the above issues and factors as affecting truck drivers in Tasmania and were emphatic that truck drivers need focused health and wellbeing support. Many participants referred to the heavy ‘weight of responsibility’ that drivers carry as part of their job. Issues for drivers commonly referenced in the interviews included:

- The need for drivers to be constantly alert and vigilant when driving
- Often being at the frontline when people are angry – for example, when prices are down for farmers or at work sites where there are protesters
- Enduring unsafe driving from other vehicles on the road
- The long periods of time being sedentary at the wheel
- Sometimes not being respected and recognised for the important skillset that they hold and the essential role they play in the food chain
- The “usual” issues that can impact mental health such as workplace challenges, alcohol, drugs, gambling and relationships issues
- The ageing cohort of truck drivers in Tasmania
- The difficulties of accessing healthy food options while on the road
- Drivers are often first on the scene at vehicle crashes

In addition, all participants felt that truck drivers generally have not been focused on health and wellbeing. In the words of Participant 5, “it’s a bit of a bloke thing to not talk about health matters”. Other participants expressed that there has been some stigma around asking for help and so, traditionally, truck drivers have got on with the job no matter the issue that they may have been facing.

Key insights

- Per capita Tasmania has a relatively high share of truck drivers
- Tasmania’s cohort of truck drivers:
 - Is ageing and heavily male-dominated
 - Is the second highest occupation group to experience marital separation or divorce
 - Experiences relatively high incidences of health and mental health conditions
 - Has been reluctant to seek help for health and wellbeing issues
 - Has worked in an industry in which health and wellbeing support has not necessarily been treated as a priority

Program Impact with Tasmanian Workforce

Engagement with Truck Drivers

The *Open Road* Program achieved strong engagement with truck drivers across Tasmania, through both group-based and individual interactions. Between May 2023 and November 2024, an average of 66 engagements per month was recorded, with peak months exceeding 100 interactions. In total, approximately 1,800 truck driver engagements were documented over the course of the program.

These interactions occurred across more than 300 workplace visits, where program goals, objectives, and available support services were actively promoted. Engagement activities included a range of methods such as truck stop events, workplace visits, Toolbox Talks, and inbound phone calls to Rural Alive and Well (RAW) from drivers and operators seeking advice or support.

The program reached businesses of varying sizes and across all sectors of the Tasmanian freight industry, with activities undertaken in a regions of the state—including more remote and regional areas. A higher volume of activity was noted in the North and North West, reflecting the demographic distribution of the freight workforce in Tasmania.

Key topics discussed during driver interactions remained consistent throughout the program and included:

- Personal relationships
- Mental and physical health
- General situational stressors
- Workplace-specific concerns
- Practical wellbeing strategies
- Industry downturns
- Anxiety about uncontrollable events
- Seasonal and economic variability
- Suicide risk
- Cost-of-living pressures

Referrals to Support Services

Referrals to specialist support services, particularly for mental health counselling, remained steady throughout the life of the program. On average, approximately five referrals were made per quarter, with a peak of ten referrals during the October to December 2023 quarter.

In total, around 30 truck drivers accessed specialised support through the program. These interventions were critical in supporting drivers experiencing serious challenges. Notably, RAW's established networks enabled faster access to specialist services for participants than would typically be possible outside the program, significantly improving response times and outcomes for those in need.

Outcomes against Program Aims

The *Open Road* Program was designed to deliver meaningful improvements in health and wellbeing outcomes for Tasmania's road freight transport workforce. This section outlines emerging evidence against the program's key aims, based on qualitative interviews, program data, and stakeholder feedback.

1. Increasing Awareness

There is clear and consistent evidence that the *Open Road* Program has contributed to a growing awareness of the importance of mental and physical health in the transport industry. All interview participants observed a cultural shift toward the normalisation of help-seeking behaviours, with *Open Road* facilitators reporting an increase in industry-based contacts to Rural Alive and Well (RAW). Notably, participation in truck stop health clinics has significantly increased over the life of the program.

While awareness is growing, stakeholders identified further opportunities to enhance program visibility. Suggestions included:

- Establishing a truck driver reference group to advise on program direction
- Launching a dedicated program website
- Leveraging social media to reach younger demographics
- Deepening relationships with transport businesses
- Embedding *Open Road* as a permanent and recognised industry resource

These strategies could support the program's continued growth and long-term integration into Tasmania's freight industry landscape.

2. Building Better Workplace Culture

Shifting workplace culture is a long-term process, but early signs are highly encouraging. Many trucking businesses have shown strong support for the *Open Road* initiative by:

- Hosting Toolbox Talks on-site
- Referring employees to the program
- Promoting and respecting the program's confidential nature

These early adopters are helping set a positive precedent and laying the groundwork for broader cultural change across the sector.

3. Strengthening Resilience, Coping Skills, and Industry Capacity

Progress in this area has been more modest, largely due to operational challenges. The planned rollout of in-person mental health training by RAW was delayed, in part due to scheduling conflicts and the parallel availability of similar training offered free of charge through another federally funded initiative. Industry capacity building has occurred through the Fast Five talks in the workplace with workforce teams and the program has increased capacity of industry to

identify and intervene in driver health and wellbeing, by reaching out to the program facilitators – either TTA or RAW.

Despite these challenges, the objective remains central to the program’s long-term strategy. There is strong potential to revisit delivery models and partnerships to ensure this critical component is advanced more, moving forward.

4. Supporting Intervention and Recovery

This objective has shown particularly strong results. Truck stop engagement events and the outreach work of RAW have provided accessible and trusted entry points for drivers to discuss their concerns and seek help. Interviewees were particularly enthusiastic about the tangible outcomes being achieved through these activities.

Case studies collected by program officers illustrate the program’s ability to support drivers facing a range of personal and professional challenges. RAW’s involvement has been instrumental in enabling timely and effective referrals to specialist healthcare services.

5. Building an Evidence Base

The program has taken important initial steps toward establishing a robust evidence base. A baseline survey of truck drivers and operators has provided useful insights into current attitudes and practices related to workplace health and wellbeing. To support ongoing evaluation, it is recommended that the survey be re-administered at regular intervals to measure change over time.

Additionally, biometric data—such as blood pressure measurements collected by Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) staff at truck stop events—offers a valuable opportunity to track driver health outcomes longitudinally. This data could provide important evidence of the program’s impact on physical health if consistently collected and analysed.

Open Road: External Review

The Tasmanian Policy Exchange was engaged to conduct an independent and external key learnings and impact report on the program. Their review included literature reviews and interviews with program facilitators, stakeholders and participants.

The report by Hyslop, S., Eccleston, R., Moran, F., Johnson, L. & Hills, A. (2024), *Open Road: New learnings*, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania, October 2024, made a number of observations about the success of the program to date and the opportunities for improvement to the program, for the future:

The following factors were seen as critical to the successful first phase of the *Open Road* program:

- Its industry-driven nature, with employees who understand the nature and impacts of truck driving
- Strong collaboration and a shared commitment to improve driver health and wellbeing between different organisations across a diverse range of stakeholders and supporting organisations.
- Tailoring program activities to take place at locations and times that encourage take up of the program.
- Confidentiality for truck drivers accessing the *Open Road* program.

The Report identified opportunities for improvement:

Some planned initiatives (such as capacity building/formal mental health training and nursing student involvement) had not yet occurred, or not to the extent hoped, ostensibly due to difficulties coordinating activities with other organisations.

Some disappointments were where the timing or funding of other, national programs, and/ or the departure of key contacts from organisations, hindered the realisation of specific initiatives or delayed the rollout of the program. As studies of other initiatives have found, collaborative, continuing relationships between relevant organisations are simultaneously critical to the success of a program, and one of the most difficult elements to build and maintain. It is apparent that at times there were difficulties in bringing together and negotiating the role of different stakeholder bodies.

If we could improve something it would be better alignment with other organisations...co-design can be challenging. We can learn that we can co-exist – we each have a role to play and contribute something different.

(Participant 7)

While collaboration in general has clearly been a strength of the program to date (see Section 7.2), driven by motivated individuals and organisations, the need for more strategic planning, the application of a ‘design thinking’ methodology and formal agreements were recognised in order to embed the program and provide certainty in the case of key people leaving their organisations.

Relationships have been built through informal conversations, friendships. It's good to have connections, but [the program] also needs a structure that ensures continuity (Participant 3).

Key insights

- Clarification of roles and expectations of outputs could have perhaps been more formalised at the start of the program.
- The relationships that have been key to the success of *Open Road* are largely dependent on key people and have not been supported by an underlying frameworks or formal arrangements.

Recommendations for the Future

The report by Hyslop, S., Eccleston, R., Moran, F., Johnson, L. & Hills, A. (2024), *Open Road: New learnings*, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania, October 2024, made the following recommendations for the future of the Open Road program, all of which are supported by the Open Road Steering Committee and TTA.

In conducting this formative evaluation, we found clear indications that the *Open Road* program, in its first 18 months of operation, has established itself as a valued initiative in an area of real need: the support of Tasmanian truck driver health and wellbeing. This is largely due to the determination and collaboration of individuals and organisations all having a shared commitment to this important task.

As described, the data around truck driver physical and mental health and wellbeing clearly points to the need for a program such as *Open Road* in Tasmania. The *Open Road* program's scope and activities are in line with initiatives in other jurisdictions across Australia, and consistent with the evidence base from the literature. Successful features of other programs (industry-driven, collaborative, flexible and multi-faceted, on-the-ground, tailored to industry environment, program initiatives customised to specific cohorts/ subsections of the industry) have been recognised and adopted as fundamental design features.

The program has largely overcome some initial (and likely inevitable) teething problems to successfully gain the support and assistance of relevant organisations and collaboratively deliver activities such as the truck stop clinics and outreach service.

Preliminary findings suggest a scaled-up, sustained version of the *Open Road* program will likely deliver on all five aims of the program (see Section 7.3).

From this point, it is recommended the program builds on its strengths and continues to consolidate and embed the program into the transport industry landscape in Tasmania. The following is a list of potential initiatives and/or changes that have emerged during the evaluation that could be adopted to further improve the *Open Road* program.

1. **Promoting and growing brand recognition and awareness.** Suggestions by interviewees included that this could be facilitated through media, social media, development of a website and inclusion of the program in private or mandated government induction training. Remote access of information has been identified as important by studies.³⁰ A series of targeted short videos could be developed to further disseminate messages regarding the *Open Road* program. In addition, information about the program needs to be repeatedly shared at industry meetings and through all the current channels such as the ongoing Toolbox Talks. Continuing reminders to prioritise the health and wellbeing of truck drivers will lead to increasing social license for the initiative.
2. **Expanding the range of services offered at the pop-up truck stop events.** All

interviewees were excited about including a wider range of services at future truck stop clinics, such as diabetes and dental checks. *We need to think about what else we can do, how we can evolve so that we're not a 'one trick pony'* (Participant 2).

3. **Scheduling regular and more frequent pop-up truck stop events.** Participants agreed that ideally truck stop clinics would be embedded into an ongoing schedule: *So that drivers know that once a month or so there will be a truck stop set up, so it becomes normal* (Participant 3).
4. **Supporting a heightened focus on physical health and nutrition.** Interviewees were keen to see *Open Road* increase its scope of activities, for example, supporting the installation of exercise equipment at rest stops and introducing healthy eating initiatives. It was suggested that healthy (and appealing) meal options could be subsidised through collaboration with existing providers on certain days. Studies have pointed to promising initial results from interventions with individualised coaching or depot-based fitness training. Competitions were also suggested as a way to encourage behavioural change.³¹
5. **Convening an *Open Road* driver reference group.** It was suggested that such a panel could make drivers 'agents' (Participant 3) of the program, amplifying the message, awareness and effectiveness of the *Open Road* program. It would not only ensure programs were delivered in a contextually appropriate manner, but "would give the drivers a sense of ownership and responsibility – ultimately change has to come from within" (Participant 2). Several studies emphasised the importance and effectiveness of working with "end-users-and stakeholders" in planning and refining successful and sustainable interventions.³²
6. **Developing a more comprehensive data collection.** While this first phase of the *Open Road* program was underpinned by the operator survey, the project team may like to re-consider the type of data it would like to continue to collect into the future to "help us understand the nature of our issues better" (Participant 3), to provide evidence, measure success, and aid in refining the program. This might mean that a survey that targets truck drivers (including owner-operators) in addition to organisers that is deployed at regular intervals. In addition, program officers may like to use anonymised health information collected at truck stop clinics, such as blood pressure levels, to attempt to measure the ongoing impact of the *Open Road* program.
7. **Cultural sensitivity training.** It was suggested that such training could be offered to encourage "being inclusive as we see different cultures and ethnic backgrounds coming into the industry" (Participant 1).
8. **Advocacy on behalf of truck drivers.** It was suggested that *Open Road*, as it matures, could be used as a vehicle to lobby businesses and/or government on behalf of drivers and the industry. This could be around systemic issues such as hours of work and other social and environmental determinants of health.³³ It was suggested that guidelines could be developed for how the media reports on road crashes involving trucks, as often the prevailing framing "causes anxiety and trauma"

among truck drivers (Participant 3).

9. **Formalising project documentation.** The program could consider creating formalised agreements (such as a memorandum of understanding) with partnering bodies to ensure continuity and consistency to consolidate coalitions, and for when key contacts leave roles, and/or inform new individuals or organisations. This may or may not involve funding relevant parties to ensure specified services. Periodic and formalised reviews assessing activities and progress against the established aims of the program could support iterative improvement.
10. **Promoting truck driving as a career in Tasmania.** Participants were concerned about the ageing demographic of truck drivers in Tasmania and were keen that the genuine skillset of truck drivers be acknowledged and appreciated in the community. They were also keen to communicate that truck driving is a career that has a lot going for it. “It is hard work so we need to invest in it and demonstrate that it’s a genuine career path” (Participant 1).
11. **Ongoing and embedded funding.** The desire for continued and increased funding was also cited by interviewees as an important mechanism to improve the effectiveness of the *Open Road* program. Participants were concerned that funding needs to be ongoing and not dependent on short-term grants so that the program builds its social license and becomes a trusted part of the Tasmanian trucking workplace landscape:

The funding stream needs to be embedded for the longer term... people can be reluctant to engage if they think it’s going to disappear. People don’t want to see the seed, they want to see the plant (Participant 7).

Conclusion

The *Open Road Truck Driver Health and Wellbeing Program* has made a significant and positive contribution to improving the health, wellbeing, and safety of Tasmania's road freight workforce. Through targeted awareness-raising, engagement with transport businesses, and the delivery of direct support services, the program has succeeded in establishing a strong foundation for cultural change within the industry.

Over the course of the program, nearly 1,800 truck drivers were directly engaged through workplace visits, truck stop events, and outreach activities. The program's flexible and industry-informed approach enabled it to reach drivers in regional and remote areas and deliver tailored support where it was most needed. Importantly, increased engagement with Rural Alive and Well (RAW) and high participation at health clinics reflect a growing openness within the sector to discussing and addressing health and wellbeing issues.

While some components—such as in-person training to build industry capacity—faced delivery constraints, the program has demonstrated strong momentum and sector-wide support. Early results suggest that *Open Road* is not only increasing awareness but also shifting attitudes and practices within transport workplaces.

Made possible through the Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative and the strong support of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) program managers, the *Open Road Program* has demonstrated that targeted, industry-led health interventions can make a real and measurable difference in the lives of truck drivers and the businesses that depend on them. As Tasmania's freight task continues to grow, it is critical that the health and wellbeing of this essential workforce remains a policy and industry priority.

The continued commitment of the Tasmanian Government to fund the program for a further two years provides an important opportunity to consolidate gains, strengthen partnerships, and expand the program's reach. With strategic support, *Open Road* has the potential to evolve into a nationally recognised model of workforce health promotion in the freight transport sector.

The findings and case studies presented in this evaluation provide compelling evidence of the program's value and future potential. With ongoing investment, strong collaboration, and a shared commitment to driver wellbeing, *Open Road* can continue to lead the way in building a healthier, safer, and more resilient freight industry.





Raising Awareness: Opening up

Using a multi-channel, grassroots and industry-focused awareness campaign to open up conversations about health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian Transport Industry.



OVERVIEW

The **Open Road Transport Industry Health and Wellbeing Program** is an initiative developed and delivered by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA), in collaboration with Rural Alive and Well (RAW), the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA), and Royal Flying Doctor Service Tas (RFDS) with the objective of improving the mental and physical health of truck drivers within Tasmania's transport sector.

The Tasmanian economy and broader community are critically dependent on a safe, efficient, and sustainable road transport industry, with truck drivers forming the foundation of this essential workforce. In the context of increasing freight demand, it is imperative that the health, safety, and wellbeing of these workers are given the highest priority.

In an industry defined by self-reliance, long hours, isolation, and an entrenched culture of simply "getting on with it," many transport workers are hesitant to speak up about stress, fatigue, or health issues—particularly when their job depends on meeting strict commercial fitness standards.

Traditional support services often don't reflect the unique demands of life on the road, and may not be accessible by drivers. The Open Road program was created to respond to this gap—raising awareness about the importance of developing and maintaining good physical and mental health, and highlighting the critical need to seek support before issues escalate.

OPEN ROAD

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Objectives:

- Raise awareness of health and wellbeing for Tasmanian truck drivers.
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- Provide direct intervention to assist driver health and wellbeing.





BY INDUSTRY, FOR INDUSTRY

The Open Road program was designed not only to deliver support services, but to drive a cultural shift—making it acceptable to talk about challenges, making support visible and accessible, and normalising help-seeking across the transport industry. While the program directly encouraged drivers to seek advice and support for health and wellbeing, it also worked with managers and operators to foster workplace environments that actively support driver wellbeing. At its core, the program featured an integrated approach to physical and mental health, grounded in evidence-based, peer-to-peer support within a broader framework of workplace awareness and engagement. Its success has been underpinned by an industry-led structure and strong stakeholder collaboration, ensuring that the program is relevant, trusted, and embedded in the real-world context of Tasmanian transport.

THE APPROACH

Stakeholder Steering Committee - The Open Road Steering Committee was formed with representation from key organisations committed to improving driver health and wellbeing, including RAW, the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association, the Transport Workers Union, NTI, Team Super (formerly TWUSUPER), the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania, and the University of Tasmania.

Corporate Buy-In - Directors of the TTA, representing many of Tasmania's largest transport employers, received regular updates and provided strategic guidance to the program, ensuring strong industry alignment and leadership support.

Collaboration to Extend Reach - Working together under the unified Open Road banner, the program's partners amplified its reach and visibility. This collaborative approach significantly boosted awareness and strengthened industry engagement.

Leverage Key Events - The Open Road program was officially launched during National Road Safety Week, using the momentum of this national campaign, and aligned its outreach and activities with key industry events, including R U OK? in Trucks & Sheds Day to promote visibility and engagement.



LOCAL EFFORT, INFORMED BY NATIONAL STRATEGY

The Open Road program used a range of strategies to raise awareness and initiate interventions at industry, company and individual worker level.

The program design was influenced by the workplace strategies in the National Roadmap for Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds (HHTS), including:

- Increasing awareness
- Building better workplace culture
- Building resilience, coping skills and industry capacity
- Supporting intervention and recovery
- Building an evidence base.



MAKING IT VISIBLE: INDUSTRY AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

- **Industry Conferences and Forums** - Open Road has been profiled at major events including the TTA Annual State Conferences and the Livestock Transporters Association of Tasmania conference, and at industry forums such as Agfest. These platforms have allowed business owners, fleet managers and policymakers to hear first-hand the importance of driver wellbeing and become aware of the opportunities to take action in their own organisations.
- **Truck Stop Events** - TTA, RAW Facilitators, Tasmanian Truck Owners & Operators Association, Royal Flying Doctor Service - amongst others - set up mobile engagement points at high-traffic truck stops like Epping Forest and Mood Food Kempton. Drivers were offered a cuppa, a chance to chat, and info about the program—no pressure, no sign-ups, just support.
- **Workplace Visits** - Transport businesses across Tasmania have hosted RAW for Open Road briefings, Fast Five toolbox talks, and informal tea room drop-ins. The RAW team often cook up a BBQ as a conversation starter and to create the informal setting that supports drivers to open up. Posters, flyers and contact cards reinforce the message and stay behind as quiet reminders of where to turn.
- **Truck Shows and Public Events** - The Open Road team has participated in truck shows, field days and safety expos—meeting drivers, families, and community members and reinforcing the link between wellbeing and road safety. These events have helped expand the reach beyond the workplace.
- **News, Print, Digital and Social Media** - The program has regularly featured across all media types.



OPEN ROAD'S FACILITATOR:

RAW appointed a well-known and highly experienced former truck driver to the role of Transport Industry Open Road Facilitator, following comprehensive professional development. Her industry background brought immediate credibility to the program and significantly expanded its reach and impact within the industry.



RAW is excited to announce a new industry partnership, bringing tailored mental health and well-being support to the situational stressors experienced by people in the Tasmanian Transport Industry.

The new program, Open Road, is made possible with thanks to the Tasmanian Transport Association and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.

The successful applicant will have a passion for and strong understanding of the Transport industry.

You will love people, regardless if they are having a great day, or a bad day, and you will have a strong desire to help build a thriving transport industry across Tasmania.

If you think that's you, read more below

["Show me the PDF"](#)



OPEN ROAD - BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAM

The Tasmanian freight transport sector plays an essential role in the state's economy and communities. Transport workers and especially truck drivers face unique physical and mental health challenges, including long hours, isolation, limited access to healthcare, and high physical demands. These challenges can affect individual wellbeing, workplace safety, and retention in the sector. Compared to other occupations, truck drivers engage in low levels of physical activity. This stems from the sedentary nature of driving and long workdays. Low levels of physical activity, combined with a poor diet, is correlated with increased rates of obesity, higher levels of fatigue, and challenges regarding quantity and quality of sleep. In turn, these issues are linked to higher rates of chronic health issues including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and mental health disorders.

In response to the need to support this essential workforce, the TTA proposed Open Road — a wellbeing initiative informed by stakeholder feedback, workforce data, and insights from previous TTA projects. Open Road is designed to complement existing road safety efforts by targeting the root causes of driver fatigue, health decline, and psychological stress.

(Hyslop, S., Eccleston, R., Moran, F., Johnson, L. & Hills, A. (2024), Open Road: New Learnings, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania, October 2024)

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From 2023 - 2024, the Open Road project was funded by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's Heavy Vehicle Safety Initiative, supported by the Australian Government. The success of this program was recognised by the Tasmanian Government, which has committed further financial support to enable the program to continue in 2025 and 2026.



Mental Health
& Wellbeing

Physical Health
& Wellbeing





Truck Stop Driver Health Checks

A practical model for awareness raising and direct intervention to drive improved mental and physical health outcomes in the Tasmanian Transport Industry.



OVERVIEW

The **Open Road Transport Industry Health and Wellbeing Program** is an initiative developed and delivered by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA), in collaboration with Rural Alive and Well (RAW), the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA), and Royal Flying Doctor Service Tas (RFDS) with the objective of improving the mental and physical health of truck drivers within Tasmania's transport sector.

The Tasmanian economy and broader community are critically dependent on a safe, efficient, and sustainable road transport industry, with truck drivers forming the foundation of this essential workforce. In the context of increasing freight demand, it is imperative that the health, safety, and wellbeing of these workers are given the highest priority.

In response to identified health and wellbeing challenges, the TTA, RAW, the TTOOA, and the RFDS Tasmania collaborated to provide a series of Truck Stop Health Checks. These events enabled effective connections with drivers in a familiar and practical setting. Conducted on high volume freight routes at Bennett's Mood Food in Kempton and Bonney Energy's Ampol Roadhouse in Epping Forest, these events raised awareness about health and wellbeing and provided free, confidential, on-the-spot health screenings and support.

OPEN ROAD

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Objectives:

- Raise awareness of health and wellbeing for Tasmanian truck drivers.
- Build industry capacity and capability to support and improve driver health and wellbeing.
- Provide direct intervention to assist driver health and wellbeing.





THE CHALLENGE

Truck drivers face barriers to traditional mental and physical health care access:

- Irregular hours and shift patterns
- Social and geographic isolation
- Stigma around mental health and seeking help

These barriers can result in delayed diagnoses and chronic health risks. There is a close relationship between physical and mental health.

THE APPROACH

Principles:

1. **Accessibility** – Bring the health service to drivers.
2. **Empowerment** - Give drivers the information and tools they need to take steps to improve their health and wellbeing.
3. **Confidentiality** – Create a safe and private environment. No findings reported to employers.
4. **Connection** – Provide immediate follow-up support and referrals.
5. **Trust** - services offered by trusted professionals.

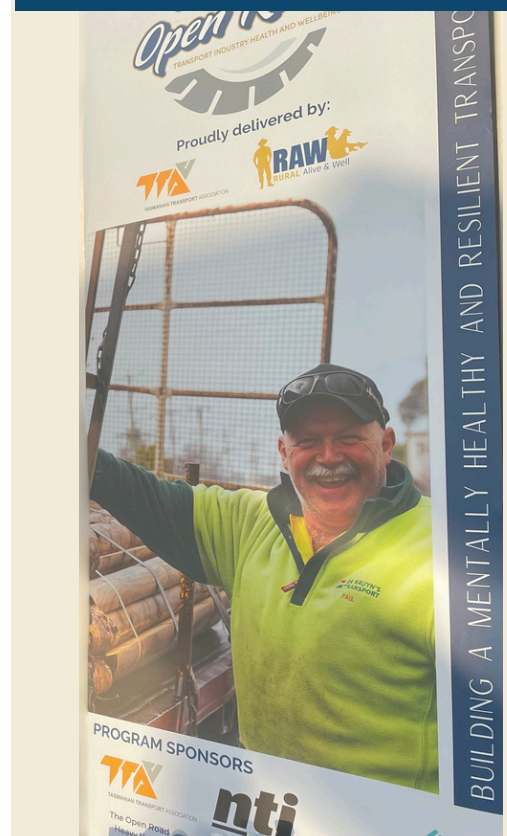
Services Offered:

- Access to Rural Alive and Well facilitators.
- Blood pressure checks, smoking cessation support through Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania.
- Conversations with health and mental health workers.
- Referral pathways to GPs, EAPs and other services.
- Free healthy food, coffee, water for all truck drivers who engaged with the program at the truck stops.



"It's a good wake-up call. I haven't had my blood pressure checked in years. This made me stop and think."

– Truck driver,
Epping Forest





KEY LEARNINGS

- **Meet drivers where they are.** Familiar environments reduce resistance.
- **Early conversations matter.** Awareness precedes behaviour change. Encourage and support drivers to take part in what might be a life-saving health check.
- **Trusted voices open doors.** RAW facilitators with industry experience build confidence and rapport. TTA, TTOOA, and RFDS have strong acceptance.
- **Visibility drives attendance.** Branding, banners, social media and support from transport operators encourages drivers to stop by for a chat.
- **Respect and acknowledgement is critical.** Smile! Engage with drivers by thanking them for all that they do.
- **Small interactions lead to big change.** One health check often leads to further support and follow-up.
- **Provide clear information.** Explain what the checks mean and give the driver a card with key information from the check up that they can refer to later.
- **Harness the power of collaboration.** By joining forces as professional organisations united in a goal to improve health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian transport industry we can drive positive change.

The Truck Stop Health Check model has proven to be an effective strategy to raise health awareness and promote wellbeing in Tasmania's transport industry. It offers a replicable approach that meets drivers where they are and empowers them to take their first step toward better health and wellbeing.



Having someone to talk to right there made a huge difference. It was easy, no judgment, just someone checking in."

— Truck driver, Kempton

CONVERSATIONS

Common Topics Raised in Conversations:

- Fatigue and sleep
- Blood pressure and other health concerns
- Loneliness and relationship stress
- Cost of living and financial pressures
- Workplace challenges
- High concentration and stress on the road





OPEN ROAD - BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAM

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Mental Health
& Wellbeing

Physical Health
& Wellbeing





Capacity Building: Capability & Confidence

Building the internal capacity and capability of supervisors and peers in the transport industry to identify, respond to, and confidently support worker health and wellbeing



OVERVIEW

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The Tasmanian economy and broader community are critically dependent on a safe, efficient, and sustainable road transport industry, with truck drivers forming the foundation of this essential workforce. In the context of increasing freight demand, it is imperative that the health, safety, and wellbeing of these workers are given the highest priority.

Transport operators in Tasmania face increasing pressure to support employee wellbeing, often without dedicated HR departments or formal mental health frameworks, particularly for small and medium sized businesses. Frontline managers, schedulers and drivers themselves are often unsure how to respond to signs of mental or physical health issues. The need was clear: build capability at every level of the industry to create healthier, safer, more supportive workplaces. In response, the TTA partnered with RAW to focus on making sure that transport operators and peers have the capability and confidence to look out for and support transport workers.

OPEN ROAD

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Objectives:

- Raise awareness of health and wellbeing for Tasmanian truck drivers.
- Build industry capacity and capability to support and improve driver health and wellbeing.
- Provide direct intervention to assist driver health and wellbeing.





THE CHALLENGE

Truck drivers in Tasmania, like their counterparts nationwide, face long hours, remote conditions, and a 'get on with it' work culture. These conditions contribute to increased rates of fatigue, isolation, untreated health conditions, and mental health concerns—many of which go unspoken and unaddressed. Traditional mental health campaigns often miss this audience. Many drivers don't see themselves reflected in mainstream messaging, few opportunities exist for tailored outreach in the transport environment, and transport workers have unique situational stressors best understood by others in the industry. Further, many transport workers and supervisors feel unprepared and unqualified to respond to mental health situations in their workplace or identified in their peers.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD CAPACITY, CAPABILITY, AND CONFIDENCE

A key to the success of the Open Road program is its structured, relationship-based approach to building capacity, capability, and confidence in Tasmanian transport workplaces. Through a three-step integration model—**site introductions, team meetings, and Fast Five toolbox talks**—RAW embeds wellbeing support across all roles. Between visits, RAW staff return regularly for casual check-ins, helping to break down stigma and reinforce that support is always available. By embedding support through staged, thoughtful engagement, the Open Road program is building real capability in the transport sector—not just to react, but to prevent. Depots are now places where wellbeing is part of the conversation, and where both workers and leaders know how to seek support, offer help, and respond with confidence. The Open Road program also connects businesses and workers with free, funded training, where available, eg through Healthy Heads in Trucks & Sheds (HHTS).



CAPABILITY BUILDING

"RAW just gets it. Their talks are about what we deal with out on the road—not textbook stuff."
— Depot Supervisor, Brighton

Beyond the toolbox sessions, RAW also engages with workers through casual one-on-one or small group conversations on-site. RAW workers drop in during break times, morning tea, or shift handovers to have open chats with staff. These unstructured engagements help break down stigma, build rapport, and create a culture of early help-seeking.

"Open Road and RAW has given us the tools and the trust. Now we know who to call—and we know it makes a difference."
— Supervisor, Northern Tasmania



STRATEGIES TO BUILD CAPACITY, CAPABILITY, AND CONFIDENCE

RAW Toolbox 'Fast Five' Talks

One of the most effective interventions has been the rollout of short, sharp workplace presentations called "Toolbox Fast Five" talks. Delivered by RAW facilitators, these talks are customised to the transport situation and cover practical wellbeing topics such as:

- Recognising signs of fatigue and stress
- Starting a conversation with a mate who might be struggling
- Self-care on the road
- Work/life boundaries and family stress
- Where and how to access support

These sessions are intentionally informal, practical, and delivered during toolbox meetings, pre-starts, or team huddles. They are designed to spark conversations—not to lecture—using relatable language and real-life examples.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

This approach has fostered genuine confidence in the Open Road program. One transport company, after developing a relationship with RAW over several months, reached out immediately for support following the sudden death of a driver. RAW responded quickly, providing onsite support to help staff navigate the difficult time.

Importantly, workers understand they don't need to formally join the program to access support. Many simply want a confidential space to talk through an issue—something RAW offers without pressure or obligation. These informal conversations are central to building trust and are followed up at an agreed time. Feedback from participants consistently reflects a sense of reassurance, with many reporting they feel more settled and confident knowing help is there.



The Open Road program's commitment to building capability and capacity in Tasmania's transport sector is delivering measurable cultural change. By embedding practical wellbeing tools, fostering on-site conversations, and connecting industry to funded national training, the program is helping workplaces become healthier, more connected, and better equipped to support their people.

"The roads are tough. The job is tough. But Open Road makes it just that bit easier for all of us to look after each other."



OPEN ROAD - BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAM

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Mental Health
& Wellbeing

Physical Health
& Wellbeing





Direct Intervention: 1:1 Driver Support

Direct intervention providing 1:1 non-clinical support proves effective for workers in the Tasmanian transport industry.



OVERVIEW

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The Tasmanian economy and broader community are critically dependent on a safe, efficient, and sustainable road transport industry, with truck drivers forming the foundation of this essential workforce. In the context of increasing freight demand, it is imperative that the health, safety, and wellbeing of these workers are given the highest priority.

In response to identified health and wellbeing challenges, the TTA partnered with RAW to establish a program of direct intervention, where mental health and wellbeing outreach workers with transport industry backgrounds provide 1:1 support for drivers experiencing periods of stress. Referrals may come from transport businesses, customers, or the participant may self refer. RAW's support includes using the RAW Gauge to stimulate discussion and awareness, RAW conversations, regular check ins, and timely referrals to specialist services based on the nature of the participant need.

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- Provide direct intervention to assist driver health and wellbeing.





THE CHALLENGE

Truck drivers face barriers to traditional mental and physical health care access:

- Irregular hours and shift patterns
- Sedentary work and physical strain
- Social and geographic isolation
- Stigma around mental health and seeking help

These barriers can result in delayed diagnoses and chronic health risks.

THE DIRECT INTERVENTION MODEL

The **direct intervention** component is central to Open Road's mission. Through the Open Road partnership, RAW delivers one-on-one psychosocial support tailored to the specific needs of truck drivers. This includes:

- **Face-to-Face Engagement:** RAW outreach workers meet drivers at truck stops, depots, industry locations, or their home - where ever the driver prefers - making sure that drivers know that support is accessible during their normal work routines.
- **Confidential Support:** Emphasising privacy, drivers are assured that their interactions remain confidential, encouraging openness and trust.
- **Personalised Assistance:** Support ranges from managing situational stressors to referrals for clinical services, addressing issues like sleep disturbances, relationship challenges, financial stressors, and mental health concerns.

IMPACT

At any point in time, there are participants entering, exiting, and receiving support from the program. The direct intervention model works formally with an average of 6 drivers per month. Around 2000 transport workers have engaged with the program.



SUPPORT SNAPSHOTS

Anger Management and Workplace Reintegration:

A middle-aged driver, referred by his employer, received weekly support over four months to address anger and other situational stressors that were affecting his driving and personal life.

Through targeted interventions and referrals, he successfully returned to work and continued to receive informal support.

Crisis Intervention and Ongoing Support:

A driver, experiencing sleep problems, workplace pressure, and suicidal thoughts, sought help after a workplace visit by an Open Road facilitator. RAW provided immediate face-to-face support, developing strategies to manage anxiety and improve communication, leading to sustained well-being improvements over five months.



THE RAW GAUGE

At the heart of RAW's direct intervention work within the Open Road program is a practical and effective tool known as the RAW Gauge. This tool is provided to workplaces and individuals as a self-assessment tool that can be used to monitor their personal gauge both at work and at home. This gauge is particularly helpful for our Tasmanian Truck drivers who can easily relate to the gauge model.

The RAW Gauge is a structured conversational framework that helps individuals identify and respond to stress-related issues across different areas of a driver's life. Rather than relying on clinical or diagnostic tools, the RAW Gauge is non-clinical, strength-based and interactive. It can be used in one to one sessions with outreach workers to help the individual explore challenges without judgment, stigma, or pressure.

The Gauge examines six core life domains that are common sources of stress or wellbeing pressure:

1. **Work** – including fatigue, workload, management relationships, job security, and workplace conflict.
2. **Family & Relationships** – pressures from home life, parenting, separation, or loneliness.
3. **Physical Health** – concerns about sleep, diet, chronic conditions, or injuries.
4. **Mental & Emotional Health** – stress, anxiety, depression, or substance use.
5. **Finances** – income security, debts, financial strain.
6. **Community & Social Connection** – isolation, disconnection from peers, lack of local support.

Using the Gauge during conversations with drivers enables RAW to:

1. Create a snapshot of the driver's wellbeing across key areas.
2. Identify situational triggers—such as a recent life event, a change in work conditions, or health concerns.
3. Co-develop strategies and action plans based on what the driver feels ready to work on.
4. Track progress over time through follow-up visits.

It works, because it respects time and confidentiality, allows conversations without stigma, is conversational not diagnostic, and can be used anywhere that suits the driver.



Through the RAW Gauge, individuals can quickly detect escalating stress before it leads to serious mental health issues or safety risks on the road. Drivers have described it as “a check-in that helps me get my head straight” and “a way to look at what's going on without it feeling like a therapy session.”

The tool has contributed significantly to RAW's success in building trust in the transport industry and providing timely, targeted support. It's helping to normalise mental health conversations in a workforce that often sees resilience as “just toughing it out”.



1800 729 827
RAWTAS.com.au



HOW DOES YOUR GAUGE LOOK?

It's okay for your temperature gauge to move up and down, but when you spend too much time between 250°C - 300°C, it's time to get in contact with RAW



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The Tasmanian freight transport sector plays an essential role in the state's economy and communities. Transport workers and especially truck drivers face unique physical and mental health challenges, including long hours, isolation, limited access to healthcare, and high physical demands. These challenges can affect individual wellbeing, workplace safety, and retention in the sector. Compared to other occupations, truck drivers engage in low levels of physical activity. This stems from the sedentary nature of driving and long workdays. Low levels of physical activity, combined with a poor diet, is correlated with increased rates of obesity, higher levels of fatigue, and challenges regarding quantity and quality of sleep. In turn, these issues are linked to higher rates of chronic health issues including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and mental health disorders.

In response to the need to support this essential workforce, the TTA proposed Open Road — a wellbeing initiative informed by stakeholder feedback, workforce data, and insights from previous TTA projects. Open Road is designed to complement existing road safety efforts by targeting the root causes of driver fatigue, health decline, and psychological stress.

(Hyslop, S., Eccleston, R., Moran, F., Johnson, L. & Hills, A. (2024), Open Road: New Learnings, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania, October 2024)

Open Road has been informed and delivered as a collaboration with professional organisations supporting the transport sector, including Rural Alive and Well (RAW), the Tasmanian Truck Owners and Operators Association (TTOOA), the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania (RFDS). The strategic framework of Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds was used to inform the program design. A wide range of organisations have supported the program including - NTI, Team Super, De Bruyn's Transport, Strait Link, Bonney Energy, Team Global Express, Rayner Transport, Veolia Environmental Services, Tasmanian Heavy Haulage, TasRail, SeaRoad Logistics, SRT Logistics, the Livestock Transporters Association of Tasmania, Healthy Heads in Trucks and Sheds, and Bennetts Petroleum. We thank these and all organisations and individuals who have engaged with and supported Open Road.

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Mental Health
& Wellbeing

Physical Health
& Wellbeing

