

Life Membership Award

Kate Bucknell – presented by Jeff Mear

Today, we have the rare opportunity - and distinct honor - to recognise a true cornerstone of our Federation. And let's be honest, she's probably already written the minutes for today's meeting before we leave.

Most people change jobs every few years... Some change industries... Some change outfits before morning tea. But Kate Bucknell? She's given us 36 years of unwavering service, dedication, and-let's be honest - occasional reminders to "get our act together."

Kate joined the Truck Trailer Manufacturers Federation back when health and safety meant "try not to weld near your jandals," and a data backup was just someone with a second filing cabinet.

Over almost four decades, Kate has been:

- Our secretary, our historian, our organiser-in-chief
- The first to arrive, the last to leave, and often the only one who remembered what we agreed to last time
- And of course, the ever-patient shepherd of our paperwork, policies, and people

She has tolerated our forgetfulness, deciphered our chicken-scratch handwriting, and reminded us -gently but firmly - that 'reply all' exists for a reason.

But Kate's work didn't stop at the Executive table. Behind the scenes, she has been one of the strongest advocates for our industry with NZTA and government regulators. When submissions needed writing, meetings needed attending, or standards needed defending, Kate was already there - briefcase in hand, data in folder, and an iron will behind her pleasant smile.

She's fought for clarity in regulations, reason in policy, and recognition of the vital role our industry plays in moving New Zealand forward - literally. And I think we all agree, if Kate had been left in charge of NZTA, the entire system would run like clockwork – and be colour-coded.

Whether it was negotiating with bureaucrats, translating government jargon into plain English (a feat in itself), or simply making sure the voice of our Federation was heard - Kate did it with grace, grit, and that signature look that said: "You really should have read the agenda before you got here."

Let's not forget the countless AGMs, minutes, constitutional rewrites, and policy reviews she's managed to keep orderly - even when the rest of us weren't. Her laptop might be newer, but the work ethic? That's pure vintage excellence.

So tonight, we don't just celebrate 36 years of service - we celebrate 36 years of stewardship, advocacy, and integrity. Kate has been the Federation's compass, its conscience, and, truthfully, its greatest constant.

Kate, it is with deep gratitude and enormous respect from your executive team and members, we present you with the Life Achievement Award. You've served our industry tirelessly, guarded our Federation fearlessly, and represented our members with high class and conviction.

Ladies and gentlemen join with me to congratulate Kate

Jeff Mear.



Kate started her journey in the Transport Industry in 1975 after two years studying at Auckland University for a degree in Social Sciences. A holiday job working for Avon Trailer Equipment exposed her to a significantly more interesting life and when offered a full-time job selling spare parts for the company, it was a no-brainer.

The job involved visiting the customers who had Avon Trailers, checking if they need any parts or had any service issues. During the 10 years she worked for the company, Kate learned to weld and regularly helped in the workshop, wiring up

the lights on the trailers they built. She became the manager of the parts side of the business and hired other women to assist with the parts sales, covering the North Island.

In 1986, Kate went out on her own, establishing JOST Transport Efficiency Ltd, importing and distributing transport related products including Dayton, Jost and Hendrickson. In 1988 she set up Transcom Engineering Ltd to undertake fitments to trucks – 5th wheels, tag axles, dangerous goods equipment, using goods imported through the sister company Jost Transport Efficiency. During the next 6 years the company won a tender to build 10 Fire trucks for NZ Fire Service and also won a tender to provide total corrosion protection program for NZ Fire Service Trucks throughout NZ.

In 1994 Jost Transport Efficiency was bought out by BPW Australia in order to grow their interests in New Zealand. Renamed BPW Transort Efficiency, Kate remained with the company for 20 years as General manager, achieving 30% market share for BPW axle and suspensions. She left the business in 2015.

In 2016 Kate established Transport Equipment Solutions to import and distribute Jost products. In 2018, JOST Australia bought the business and Kate remained as General Manager until 2022.

She joined The Institute of Road Transport Engineers of New Zealand 1990, became Treasurer in 1995, and National Secretary in 2002 and still holds that position today. She convened and managed their last 9 biennial International Conferences.

Kate joined the NZTTMF in 1989 and became Secretary in 1992. She has been heavily involved with the development of the Manufacturer and Repair Code of Practice, taking the project over from Geoff Walsh when he passed away in 2017.

Kate was inducted into the NZ Road Transport Hall of Fame in 2021.