

## Are you on Channel?

*Identifying the levels and triggers of depression in heavy vehicle drivers in WA*



### Summary

At the 10<sup>th</sup> Transafe WA Road Transport Industry Safety Forum held in Perth in June 2016, organisational psychologist Dr Nicholas Mabbott delivered a presentation '*Depression in the heavy vehicle industry in Australia*'.

In his presentation Dr Mabbott outlined that the overall incidence of depression in the Australian population sits at around 11.6 per cent, but the few studies that have been conducted all suggest higher rates of depression in the truck driving industry, with estimates varying from 13 to 21 per cent (Source: *Depression in the heavy vehicle trucking industry*, Chalmers, 2016).

**Significantly, he also noted that depression can make a driver up to 7x more likely to be involved in a crash.**

**A depressed driver behind the wheel of a heavy vehicle presents a significant risk.**

In the audience at the forum, Noreen Petrovic, a heavy vehicle auditor, asked what industry can do to address this risk. Working for many years at the coalface with owner/operators and small to medium fleets, Noreen had become increasingly concerned at the number of drivers with poor mental health and in significant distress due to the various pressures of the job.

A group was formed including representatives from:

- Transafe WA
- The Livestock and Rural Transport Association of WA
- Toll Group
- QUBE
- Goldstar Transport
- WesCEF
- Payne Haulage
- NH Petrovic Auditor
- Beyond Midnight Consulting
- Road Safety Commission

## Progress

Utilising the combined expertise of the group, Dr Nicholas Mabbott is developing a driver survey. It is intended the survey target 500-1000 responses to provide a good picture of the prevalence and triggers of depression in the road transport industry in WA so as to inform strategy, policy and programs to address the issue.

As the Australian freight task is predicted to triple by 2050... 26% over the next decade to 2026 (Source: National Transport Commission) a mentally healthy workforce is imperative to the safety of all road users.

The **Are you on Channel?** project is very much about adding to other programs addressing mental health in WA by taking an industry specific approach.

## Get involved

The group is currently seeking funding in order to roll-out the survey. Research assistants will be trained and visit truck stops and depots throughout the state to complete the surveys with drivers. No personal details will be recorded – the surveys will be anonymous.

**WA's Road Safety Commission have committed \$50,000 to the project provided the amount can be equalled by industry. The onus is on industry to get this important project underway.**

**Yes! We care about driver health and our organisation would like to help tackle the issue of depression in heavy vehicle drivers in WA...**

<b>Name of organisation</b>	
<b>Contact person</b>	
<b>Contact phone</b>	
<b>Contact email</b>	

<b>Sponsorship level</b>	<b>What it will enable</b>	<b>Tick here</b>
\$1000	<i>Assist us to get well-trained research assistants into the field to gather quality data, analyse the data, and use it to deliver strategy to address this important issue.</i>	
\$2500		
\$5000		
\$10000		
Other amount	\$	
<b>TOTAL</b>	Please send me an invoice	\$

\*\*\* Return this flyer to [executive.officer@transafewa.com.au](mailto:executive.officer@transafewa.com.au) \*\*\*

### Some of the ways your contribution will be acknowledged:

- Logo and acknowledgement in media releases
- Logo on hard copy surveys
- Logo on website
- Logo on final report and recommendations

Thank you!

**Group contacts:**

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