

Don Hutchinson - Member since 1995

Don commenced in a regulator role with the Ministry of Transport's Traffic Engineering Branch back in 1980. Whilst employed there he completed a NZCE in Civil Engineering and then went on to the University of NSW to complete a postgraduate in Transport Planning, Management and Control. Don found traffic engineering very interesting from the perspective that outcomes were harder to control than Civil Engineering works due to the unpredictable nature of humans and how they interact with other road users and the road environment.

As an inquisitive young engineer, he became interested in how to better manage the heavy vehicle fleet so that it was safe and productive.

That led to directing the size and mass of the fleet along with vehicle configurations. Don joined IRTENZ in 1995 and has been a member ever since.

Don was an early adopter of utilising Performance Based Standards (PBS) to benchmark new innovative vehicles against standard vehicles to introduce a range of policies and permit regimes along with new legislation with the Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Rule and the introduction of Static Roll Threshold legislation to NZ,

His involvement in further development and improvement in vehicle size and weight didn't stop there and he has been instrumental to introducing the recent HPMV scheme.

He was also responsible for writing the Truck Loading Code, parts of the road code, and myriads of other heavy vehicle safety initiatives.

At a mid-career point Don moved into senior management roles and worked closely with the other Ministries and Ministers to improve the rule set for NZ vehicles. More recently Don returned to a practitioner's role where he plans to stay, albeit at less hours shortly before merging into retirement.

Don reflects on his career highlights –he said “working with the industry to gain their perspectives, there's something new to learn every day and sometimes we don't give enough credit to the truck operators, trailer builders and businesses that surround this remarkable freight industry. There's certainly been some difficult matters to deal with, mainly the investigations into fatal crashes for the coroners or court witness for misbehaved operators”.

Don is very well respected across the Heavy Transport Industry – he has worked closely with a number of industry associations including Transporting NZ, National Road Carriers, Log Transport Safety Council, NZ Truck-Trailer Manufacturers Federation, Motor Industry Association, and of course IRTENZ. He tends to offer solutions rather than obstacles and in those 40 plus years has helped these groups achieve numerous industry initiatives across the line.

It is with great pleasure on behalf of our Council we award Don Life Membership of IRTENZ.

Dom Kalasih, Immediate Past President, November 2023

