

MEDIA RELEASE



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NOELENE WATSON TO RETIRE AS ATA CHAIR

Noelene Watson will retire as the Chair of the Australian Trucking Association at the organisation's annual general meeting on 5 April 2017.

Mrs Watson was first elected as Chair of the ATA in 2014 and re-elected last year. She is the Managing Director of Don Watson Transport, one of Australia's leading refrigerated logistics companies.

Mrs Watson said it was time to retire from the demanding role and hand over to another industry leader.

"Under my leadership, the ATA campaigned for strong practical road safety measures, including the reforms to the truck safety laws that will come into force next year," Mrs Watson said.

"We also stood up for owner drivers and small family trucking businesses. I'll never forget the chilly April morning when I watched our truck convoy against the Road Safety Remuneration Tribunal roll up to Parliament House."

Mrs Watson said that one of her personal goals as ATA Chair had been to work for better health for truck drivers.

"The ATA pressed the NTC and Austroads to upgrade the truck driver medical standards. As a result of our work, the standards now warn treating doctors against relying on subjective measures of sleepiness to rule out a patient having sleep apnoea," Mrs Watson said.

Mrs Watson said she had also sought to promote a more professional perception of the transport industry.

"I believe it's the ATA's job to stand up for our industry when it's attacked. I well remember the day in 2014 when the ATA media unit phoned me to say that Cardinal George Pell had insulted Australia's professional truck drivers by comparing them to paedophile priests. I stood up for our industry and our drivers then, and would do it again. I have no regrets," she said.

"More positively, I had the privilege of helping to present the National Trucking Industry Awards for three years to some amazing people. I also had the chance to honour the winners of the Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian Award, which recognises heroic and selfless acts by drivers in the course of their work."

"I would like to thank all of the ATA's directors and councillors for their support, and particularly our Vice-Chairs during my period in office: Geoff Crouch, David Smith and Tim Knowles.

"I would also like to thank the ATA's Foundation Sponsors: BP, NTI and Volvo Trucks; our major sponsor, PACCAR; and our other sponsors and event partners," she said.

Mrs Watson will remain a member of the ATA board and its council.

Media contact:

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