

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## NOELENE WATSON ELECTED AS PEAK TRUCKING BODY CHAIR

The Australian Trucking Association (ATA) today elected well-known refrigerated transport operator Noelene Watson as its new Chair.

Mrs Watson is the Managing Director of Don Watson Transport, one of Australia's leading refrigerated logistics companies. The company operates a fleet of more than 70 line haul prime movers, more than 100 data logged refrigerated pantechnicons, B-doubles, container trailers and stock crates, and a fleet of rigid vehicles for local deliveries. The company has depots in Melbourne, Wodonga, Sydney and Brisbane and cold stores in Wodonga and Sydney.

She has been a director of the ATA since 2004 and is a past director and treasurer of NatRoad, one of the ATA's member associations.

Mrs Watson said one of her goals as ATA Chair would be to work for better health for truck drivers.

"I want to promote better health and wellbeing for our drivers in the transport industry, and especially the support services available to our drivers. Our drivers are away from home for so much time that they don't have access to all the services that should be made available to them," she said.

"I'd also like to see drivers treated in a professional manner while fulfilling their transport task. This is a big issue for our drivers on the road. They quite often aren't treated professionally, and it then reflects back on our own businesses, and it's left to operators to deal with this.

"I'd like to promote a more professional perception of the transport industry to the public, and work with member organisations to achieve our common goals."

Mrs Watson thanked the outgoing Chairman of the ATA, David Simon, for his work over the last four years.

"David has worked tirelessly with the NHVR, the NTC and politicians on behalf of transport operators and the ATA. He's been a marvellous public face for our industry," she said.

"David's easygoing manner and his intellect on all transport related issues have meant David's counsel has been sought and respected by many of his peers.

"David's passion for the ATA is evident in the amount of meetings he's attended, the miles he's travelled, and the time he's spent away from his family on behalf of our industry," she said.

The ATA elected the president of the Australian Furniture Removers' Association, Andrew Garrety, as its new treasurer/secretary, following the retirement from the role of Kathy Williams. Mr Garrety is a director of Chess Moving Canberra.

Mrs Watson paid tribute to Kathy Williams's contribution to the ATA.

"Kathy instigated and implemented all the processes that have seen the building paid down to the level that it is," Mrs Watson said.

**A safe, professional and viable trucking industry**

The ATA welcomed two new directors, Austin Vella and Gordon Martin.

Austin Vella is from Vellex, a family owned and operated business that provides freight distribution and logistics solutions across the eastern states of Australia. Vellex's operations include a specialised plant distribution division, PlantLogix, which delivers nursery stock daily across NSW and Victoria.

Gordon Martin is the chairman of the Martin Group of Companies, which operates 115 trucks and employs 180 people in the livestock and bulk haulage sector. Mr Martin started operating in 1958, when he began carting gravel with one tipper in the Merriwa Shire of New South Wales.

Western Australian trucking operator Mark Sullivan announced his retirement from the ATA board, although he will continue as chair of the ATA safety committee.

Mr Simon said that Mark Sullivan had been involved in the ATA council and board since 2008.

"He's brought some really healthy views and discussions to the board. I want to acknowledge his efforts: being an owner-driver in Western Australia and committing to travel to Canberra to attend meetings and also chair the safety committee has been a big commitment, so thank you," Mr Simon said.

Kathy Williams, Mike Almond AM, Andrew Garrety and Trevor Martyn were re-elected unopposed as ATA directors.

The elections were held at the ATA's annual general meeting in Canberra today.

**A high-res image of Noelene Watson is available for media use by emailing [kathleen.bakon@truck.net.au](mailto:kathleen.bakon@truck.net.au).**

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*About the ATA: The ATA is the peak body that represents the trucking industry. Its members include state and sector trucking associations, major logistics companies and businesses with leading expertise in truck technology.*