

For Immediate Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BRIDGESTONE BANDAG HIGHWAY GUARDIAN – NSW HERO RECOGNISED



Bridgestone and the **Australian Trucking Association** have honoured Phil Berger of Kerin Kay Transport as the latest recipient of the **Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian** award.

The Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian award honours the great community service performed by professional truck drivers who go above and beyond the call of duty to assist those around them during the course of their normal work.

On Friday, November 21 last year, Phil was caught in an extensive traffic jam on his way to get a load of fuel in Sydney. With temperatures soaring to around 40°C and vehicles parked at every point on the roadway, he was ready for a long wait until the traffic cleared.

A few cars over Phil noticed a lady leave her car with a young boy in tow, sitting him under the shade of a tree by the roadway. When they remained out of the car for several minutes, Phil got out himself and asked if everything was okay.

It wasn't – three-year-old Cruz was suffering from severe heatstroke and dehydration, and his mother, Debra, had run out of bottled water in the extreme heat. Phil promptly moved Cruz and Debra to the comfort of his air-conditioned cab, and gave Cruz cold water and grapes to aid his recovery. When the traffic began to move, Phil escorted them back to their car and Cruz was taken directly to hospital.

Cruz spent several days in hospital, with doctors uncertain how he would have fared without the reprieve of the truck cab. Debra realised that she had never exchanged details with Phil,

and turned to Facebook to find him again. Forty-thousand shares later, she tracked him down to express her thanks.

“The Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian Award recognises truck drivers who go out of their way to help others and make the road a safer place to be,” Andrew Moffatt, Managing Director of Bridgestone Australia Ltd, said.

“Worthy candidates don’t necessarily need to put their lives on the line – they just have to show consideration for the needs of others. Our newest Highway Guardian did just that.

“Phil Berger showed genuine compassion for two complete strangers and his actions helped save a little boy’s life.

“As a proud supporter of this ATA initiative, Bridgestone is enormously pleased that Phil has been inducted as a Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian.”

Phil said he was a little overwhelmed by the attention.

“If there’s someone in need, I’m always going to pull over. That’s just what we do,” Phil said.

“There wouldn’t be a trucker I know that wouldn’t have done the same thing. I’m sure if my family was in the same situation, there’d be a bloke or lady there to help out.

“I got him a little truck with a fuel tanker for Christmas – his mum said that if he hadn’t been so sick, Cruz would have been really excited about being in the cab of a big truck.

“I did what anyone would do – it was all about making sure the little fellow was okay.”

ATA Chair Noelene Watson said Phil’s actions were a perfect illustration of the big heart of the trucking industry.

“Trucks and truck drivers play a huge role in communities right across Australia. As professional drivers, they take great pride not only in the safe delivery of their goods, but also in caring for those who share the road with them,” Mrs Watson said.

“That’s exactly what Phil has done. By taking the time to notice others in need, and going out of his way to provide assistance, he made a huge difference to a young child and mother in a difficult situation.

“We’re delighted to recognise Phil’s compassionate actions by presenting him with the Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian Award, and hope this award continues to bring the trucking industry and our communities closer together.”

Phil was presented with his award at the ATA’s 25th Anniversary Dinner in Hobart as part of its Trucking Australia 2015 event.

Potential Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian candidates can be brought to the ATA’s attention at any time by emailing ata@truck.net.au. For more information about the award, go to www.highwayguardian.com.au.