

For Immediate Release
Bridgestone media contact: Annie Gant
+61 8 8267 6888 or 0434 611 399
Australian Trucking Association media contact: Kathleen Horne
02 6253 6900 or 0409 524 120

Bridgestone Australia Ltd.
196 Greenhill Road
Eastwood, S.A 5063, Australia
Phone: +618 8206 0200
Fax: +618 8206 0399
URL: www.bridgestone.com.au

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

05 May 2016

SELFLESS TRUCK DRIVER RECOGNISED FOR ACT OF COMPASSION



Victorian truck driver **Matthew Mitchell** has been announced as the latest recipient of the **Bridgestone Bandag Highway Guardian** award – acknowledging his compassionate efforts to comfort a fatally wounded motorist after a car crash in Pakenham earlier this year.

Matthew was one of the first people to arrive at the scene of the crash, which involved a ute and a small car. After checking on the passengers in the first vehicle, he walked to the second vehicle to see if help was needed. It was there that he discovered the driver was slumped over the steering wheel.

“I couldn’t get the door to open, so I reached in and wound the window down. I tried to feel for a pulse, and tried to get the lady to respond. I couldn’t be sure, but I felt like there was maybe something there, so I told her to just hang on, help’s coming,” Mr Mitchell said.

“The emergency services over the phone asked if we could get her out, but we couldn’t, so they told us to just lay her down. I was holding her head and telling her to wake up, squeeze my hand.”

Tragically, when the paramedics arrived they delivered the sad news – confirming she had passed away.

“I got out, walked away, and burst into tears,” Mr Mitchell said.

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.

Bridgestone Australia and New Zealand Managing Director Andrew Moffatt said Matthew's actions showed a man of true character.

"Matthew found himself in an extremely difficult and stressful situation," Mr Moffatt said.

"Not only did he act calmly and rationally to reduce the danger of the situation, including having the foresight to disconnect the car battery, he also acted with great kindness and compassion.

"This was a tragic incident and we all wish there had been a different outcome. It is a sad but clear reminder of the importance of road safety. It also reinforces the value of this award which is all about highlighting the great work many truck drivers are doing every day to make the road a safer place."

Australian Trucking Association Chair **Noelene Watson** said it was a devastating situation for all involved, but that Matthew's actions showed exactly the qualities that made a Highway Guardian.

"It's a tragedy any time someone sets out on our roads and doesn't make it back home. Our hearts are with the family and friends of the woman who didn't make it out of this crash," Mrs Watson said.

"Unfortunately, our Highway Guardians can't save everyone. But Matthew's act of compassion and care meant that she didn't suffer alone – he was there to provide company and reassurance. There can be no greater act of kindness than this."

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