

Women in Transport: Examining the Motivations, Challenges, Support and Opportunities for Women in Trucking

Research Project Brief

Project Goals and Expected Outcomes

The project aims to generate evidence-based insights that support women's participation and success in the trucking industry. Specifically, the research seeks to move beyond identifying challenges alone, and instead also highlight women's strengths, motivations, and contributions to the trucking industry. In doing so, the project aims to inform practical supports, organisational practices, and industrywide initiatives that can help women not only enter but thrive in trucking careers.

Our research investigates the following broad themes with anticipated practical contributions:

- **Motivations:** Understanding why female truck drivers join the industry can help better attract and retain talent
- **Challenges:** Identifying challenges faced by female drivers within a male-dominated industry, in areas such as but not limited to workplace health and safety, gender discrimination, gender gaps in workspace design and equipment, and work-family conflict, can inform the development of policies and practices
- **Support Mechanisms:** Learning how female truck drivers cope with these challenges can provide valuable insights for peer support, organisational strategies, among others
- **Opportunities:** The research seeks to identify resources and interventions at various levels (individual, team, organizational, industry, national) that can assist female truck drivers to thrive in their careers.

Research Method

The research team applies a **mixed-method data gathering approach**. This includes:

- **Interviews and focus groups:** These methods aim to capture the experiences of female truck drivers, providing in-depth qualitative data that can highlight the unique aspects of working as a female truck driver. Aside from truck drivers, participation of key informants and organisations working with female truck drivers and the trucking industry in general would be invaluable in providing real-world insights.
- **Anonymous surveys (via QR code):** These will aim to capture broader information, specifically regarding workplace health and safety experiences within the trucking industry, potentially offering comparative data.
- **Document analysis:** These methods help review programs, policies, and practices to identify strengths, best practices, and gaps that need to be addressed

Research Support Opportunities

There are two ways to support this research.

First, by distributing through email and social media posts the survey invitation to drivers and workers within the road transport industry. A survey invitation graphic is available from the primary researcher. This may be distributed amongst your networks. While the research focus is on women's experiences, *participation is open to all genders* and recognises the importance of diverse perspectives.

Second, sharing leads or referrals to prospective participants who work in trucking (e.g., truck drivers, trucking company owners) or related roles (e.g., customers), and who may wish to participate in interviews or focus groups.

Please contact the primary investigator for more details about these support opportunities. The research team is very open to other ideas on how your organisation can support this research.

Value of Participation

By supporting this study, organisations contribute to:

- An evidence base aimed at strengthening inclusion, safety, and sustainability in Australia
- Practical insights that can inform industry practices and policy discussions
- Efforts to recognise and support women's contributions in the transport sector

Research Ethics Approval and Team Expertise

This research has received ethics approval from the University of New South Wales Canberra (iRECS8909). The research team brings significant expertise relevant to this project:

- **Dr. Catherine Deen (Primary Investigator):** Her research on gender and the vocational experiences of vulnerable workers aligns well with the focus on empowering women in a male-dominated industry and understanding their unique experiences.
- **Associate Professor Sharron O'Neill:** Her background in work health and safety (WHS) and contributions to global policy debates in this area are highly relevant to understanding and potentially improving the safety experiences of female truck drivers.
- **Dr. Vindhya Weeratunga:** Her expertise in human resource management, employee well-being, and the future of work can contribute to identifying effective HR practices and support systems within PHHG.
- **Dr Briony Lipton:** Her expertise is in sociology, women and leadership, vulnerable workers, and how gender shapes understanding and experience of work, workplace inequality, work health and safety, and the relationship between organisational structures, practices, policies, and workplace cultures.

Contact Details:

If you or your organisation wishes to participate, please contact:

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