



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Annual Women's Lunch audience inspired by guest speakers**

The Victorian Transport Association was thrilled to host a record-breaking crowd at its Annual Women's Lunch, held yesterday at The Ivory, Elsternwick after three previous false starts due to COVID restrictions last year. The event has become one of the most popular on the VTA calendar since the inaugural lunch in 2015, with attendance steadily growing over the years to the more than 200 that attended yesterday.

Guests heard from a number of inspiring speakers on empowerment and strategies and tactics to experience success and fulfilment in life and at work, with operators in attendance also provided guidance on how to support women in transport, as well as attract and retain them in the industry.

Victorian Minister for Ports and Freight Minister Melissa Horne outlined steps the Victorian Government was taking to attract more women to the transport industry, with a focus on the [Freight Industry Training for Jobseekers Project](#) that will see the VTA train candidates to secure long-term job opportunities to ensure essential supplies get to where they need to be. The program has a specific focus on women, who currently make up just 16 per cent of employees in the sector.

[Play Like a Girl Australia](#) Founder and former VFLW player Holly Bailey also addressed attendees, providing an inspiring presentation about her experiences growing up as an athlete in a male-dominated environment and the importance of embracing traditionally feminine qualities like connection, vulnerability and openness.

"It is wonderful to see the transport industry moving away from the stereotype of a gender dominated workplace," said VTA CEO Peter Anderson in welcoming attendees. "For too long our industry has not understood that greater value is brought to the workplace when there is greater diversity of people.

"Transport is, and will be, labour intensive for quite some time yet. People are the hardest resource to manage. It is people that makes our industry work and how those people work is what makes our businesses successful. Having an environment where all people are working to their own individual potential is an exciting atmosphere that we experience every day in transport," he said.

Anderson said an example of this inclusive perspective is the VTA Driver Delivery Program where over 200 people have been trained and placed into the industry as drivers, with over 15% of those placements being women, where there has been an industry average of only 7%.

"A small improvement that could be regarded as too slow but one that we are trying to build upon, and it must be noted that of the placements to date over the past three years we have not had a single report of accident by the drivers, female or male," Anderson said.

In her remarks, Ports & Freight Minister Melissa Horne reflected on how recent labour shortages in the freight industry came about.

"Yes, COVID-19 was the most immediate cause," she said. "But the pandemic was simply the tipping point for many industries that, for generations, have traditionally recruited from only half the Victorian workforce.



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“For a very long time this approach has hamstrung industries that form the cornerstone of our economy – infrastructure development, construction, freight, logistics and transport. These industries have deprived themselves of the talents of 50 per cent of the working population. The Victorian Government is committed to changing this for good.”

Peter Anderson praised the industry for providing career pathways, rewarding effort and embracing change.

“Understanding what is important to the people that are engaged, to ensure that all individuals reach their potential in the workplace is a cornerstone of good management and effective culture. The future of our industry is about people, diversity and culture. We sometimes move too slowly but we will always keep moving,” he said.

**Ends...**

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