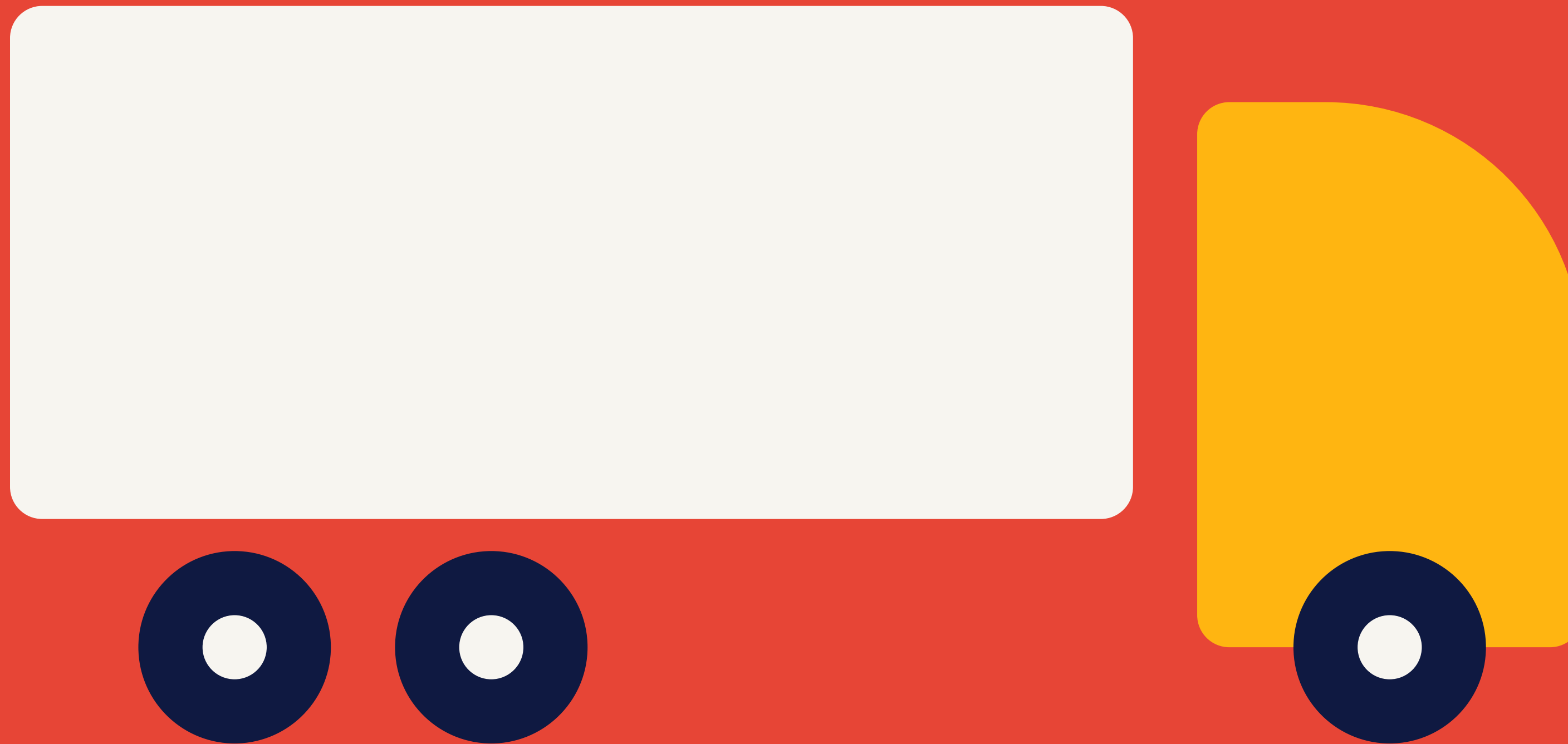


# women on the road.

stories from women in transport



human forward.

Stories from women on the road explores the challenges faced by women in the industry and what some have done to succeed in a male-dominated landscape.

These stories take a deep dive into the experiences of female truckies, owners of truck-driving companies and recruiters of talent in the transport sector to shed light on how a gender balanced workforce can lead to improved business outcomes.





gabby

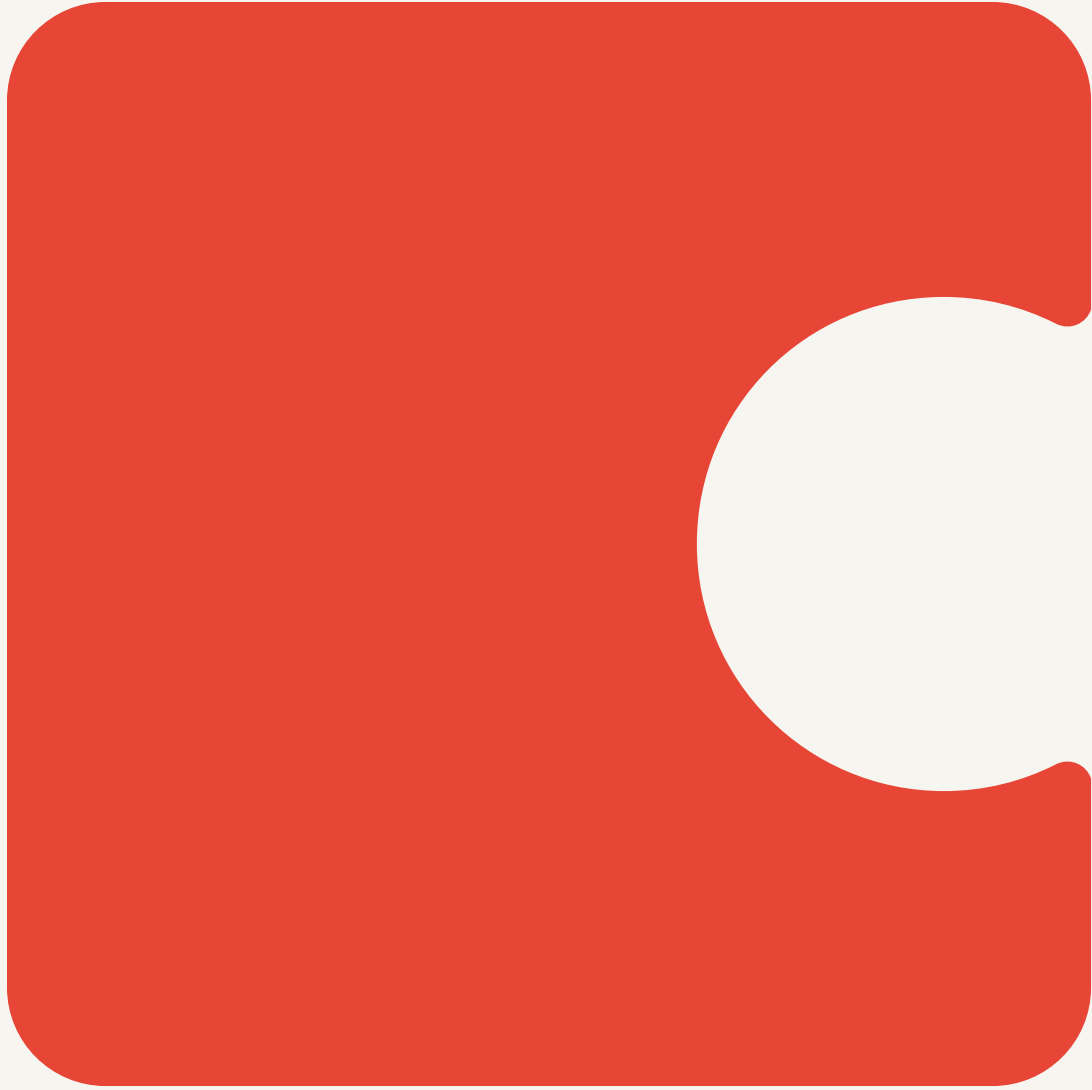
bennett

Gabby Bennett was born to be a truckie. Her mother owned a trucking business and Gabby grew up around trucks from an early age. It was then a natural progression for her to get behind the wheel. Being surrounded by a supportive group of friends and family, she instantly felt like the truck driving industry was where she belonged.

“My friend of nine years suggested I enter the truck driving industry. I’ve been driving trucks full time now for about a year and a half. The day I got my license, I started driving around Adelaide and got my experiences up fairly quickly. I felt so lucky to have experienced quite a welcome atmosphere in the industry”, she says.

Gabby Bennett  
Young Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia





Even with the long hours of driving that limits the time you can spend with family Gabby was keen to step out of her comfort zone and give truck driving a go.

“To me, it seemed like a hard job but I knew it was something I wanted to be a part of”, she says.

**Gabby Bennett**

**Young Career Truck Driver**

**Member of Women in Trucking Australia**



Even with her passion, Gabby's journey met with a few bumps in the road. Starting off as a young female in the industry, Gabby faced challenges when it came to her strength. She was required to take on physically demanding tasks. Yet, Gabby remained resilient.

"It was thanks to the support from women in the industry that enabled me to keep on striving through the toughest of times", she says.

Gabby Bennett

Young Career Truck Driver

Member of Women in Trucking Australia



Trucking is an industry Gabby can see herself in the long term. The job brings rewarding experience everyday, from testing her physical strength, to building her mental health and her relationship with others.

“Travelling, learning, getting out on the road and being able to experience the countryside has made me a stronger person. I’m quite active, I like to be in the truck and physically challenge myself. Meeting new truck drivers on the way who share the same passion as me has definitely made me stronger physically and mentally”, she says.

**Gabby Bennett**  
**Young Career Truck Driver**  
**Member of Women in Trucking Australia**



Now, Gabby encourages women and young people who are interested in trucking to enter the industry. She understands that whilst many young people struggle with being away on the road she highlights the many positive experiences people can have driving.



“The transport industry has opened doors for me and I’m keen to see more women joining. It would be great to see that kind of support from men in the industry who openly accept women”.

Gabby Bennett  
Young Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia



Gabby knew few other women truckies until she met with Women In Trucking Australia. Alongside other like minded women, she felt like she was able to connect and work together to break that stigma that transport is a male dominated industry.

“There was a time that I wanted to give up. But during these times, the girls from Women In Trucking gave me inspiration to keep going. They remind me to look back to why I started and helped me get through challenges. Now, I don’t have any regrets”, she says.

Gabby Bennett  
Young Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia



lyndal  
denny



From being tailgated by trucks to becoming a truckie, Lyndal Denny's story of becoming a truck driver is an unusual one. But, after being tailgated one too many times, Lyndal was fed up and wrote to the Editor of the local newspaper detailing her terrifying encounters.

To her surprise, she was met with an unprecedented community response that Lyndal wasn't alone in her experience.

It was from here that Lyndal knew a change needed to be made. She established a grassroots campaign to target aggressive truck driver behaviour which planted the first seeds to her career as a heavy vehicle driver.

“I set up a community campaign that female drivers can report to, this went national and then global. It enabled women to report a truckie on the website. I then decided to get my truck license and look behind the curtains”.

Lyndal Denny  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia



Lyndal quickly worked her way up through the license classes and set off in search of work as an Aussie truckie.

She soon discovered that very few women drive trucks and saw the need for a formal advocacy group to support Australian female truckies. In 2019, Lyndal established Women in Trucking Australia.

Despite her rocky introduction into the industry, she felt that she had been warmly welcomed into a vocation where hard work and humour form the backbone of the trucking ethos. What's more the sector presented many opportunities to newly-licensed female drivers.

“I’ve never worked so hard or laughed so much as I’ve done during my eight years as a truckie. I’ve met the most incredible people, almost died of anxiety more times than I care to remember, cried blood, sweat and tears, climbed mountains and worked with and witnessed the good, the bad, the ugly and the outright hilarious! Most importantly, I’ve proven to myself that I really can do anything I set my mind to”.

Lyndal Denny

Career Truck Driver

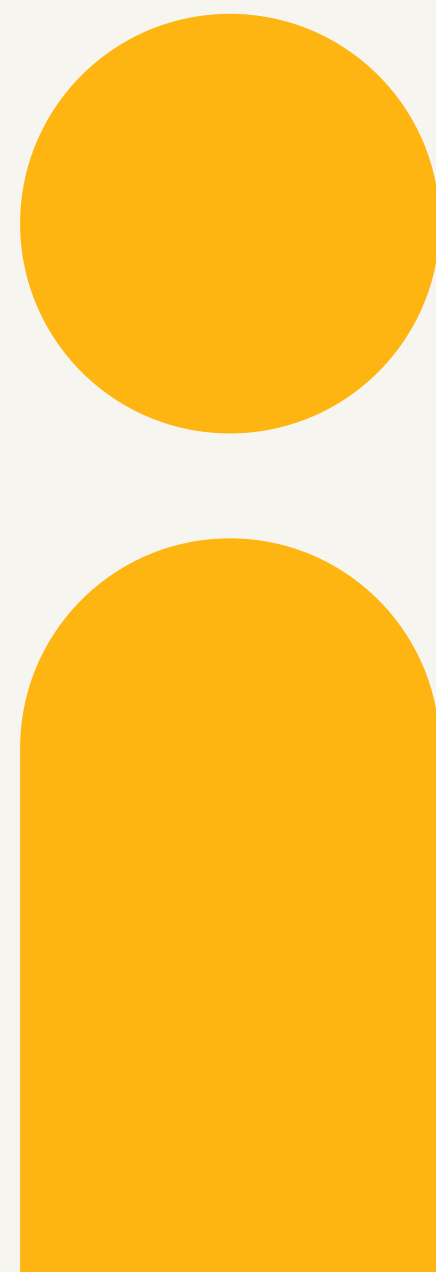
Member of Women in Trucking Australia

Lyndal feels that the best aspect of her career in trucking is her journey of personal growth and resilience, especially on an all-expenses paid tour of the country.

“I’m the same person I always was, but these days mistaking my kindness for weakness would be unwise. I’m extremely confident in my abilities and proud of what I’ve achieved. Female truckies all come to that same place of quiet confidence and strength. Ours is a journey of growth – a metamorphosis into more capable, resourceful well-rounded women.”

Lyndal Denny  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia





She encourages anyone, particularly women, to consider trucking as a career.

“The people I’ve met, the places I’ve been, the experiences I’ve had and the men and women I work with, have all brought a rich diversity to my life. I’d strongly encourage any woman considering a trucking career to take the next step”.

Lyndal Denny  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia

However, Lyndal believes that the industry-wide gender-bias still remains, and when it comes to female vehicle recruitment, there's work to be done. She says that to attract more women, companies must begin to turn good intentions into concrete action and begin to make evidence-based recruitment decisions.

“The time has come to take the “Women not Welcome” shingles down from recruitment department doors, to increase the numbers of women on interview panels, to mask gender on short-listed applicants, to introduce gender bias awareness training, to introduce and monitor EEO policies and procedures, to consider targets and quotas and to educate recruiters on the considerable benefits women can bring to the table.

What must be recognised is the determination and commitment these newly licensed female truckies have displayed and - as a flow-on consider them as serious contenders for jobs on offer.”

Lyndal Denny  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia



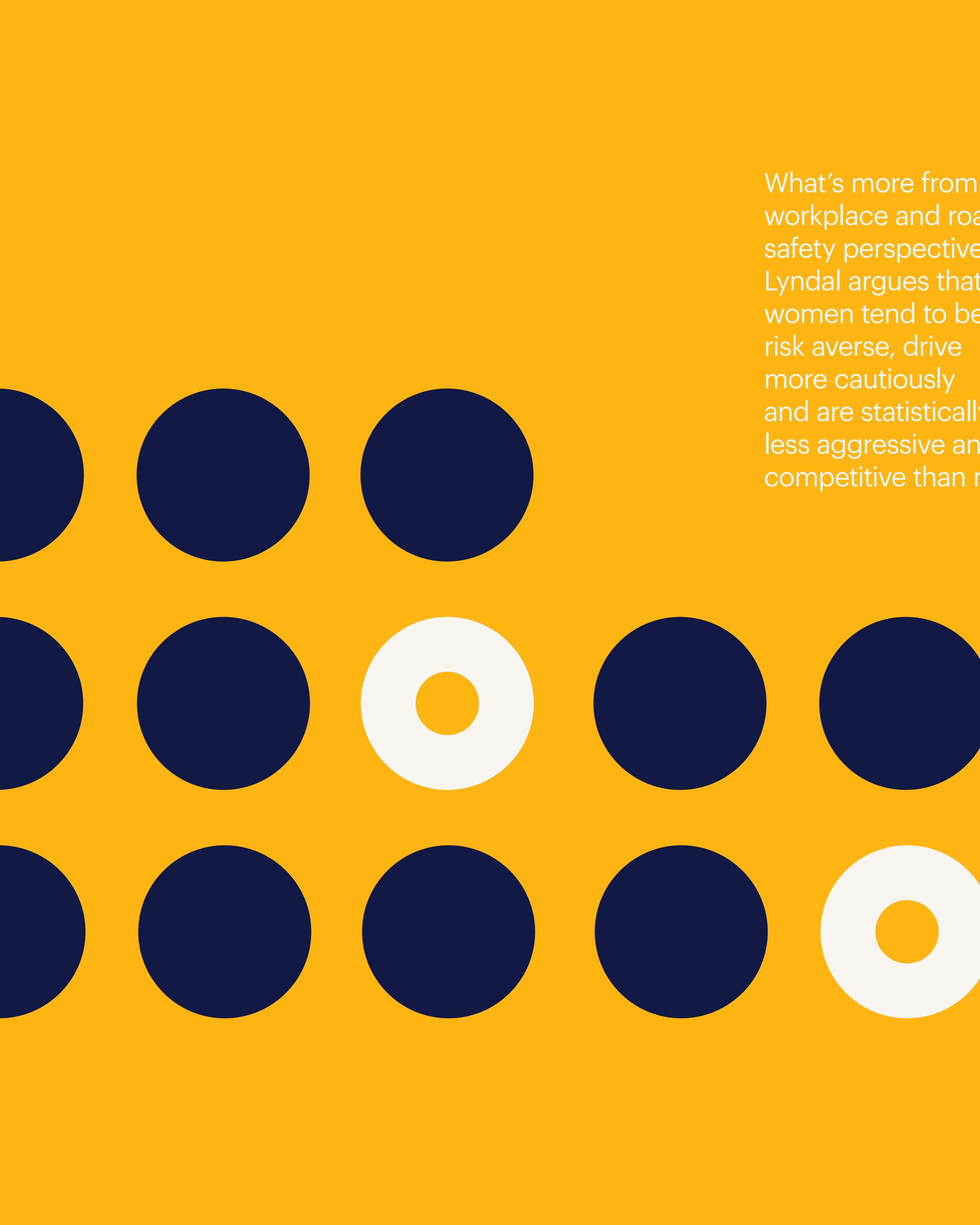


Lyndal believes that a female workforce can outperform their male counterparts.

Women are detail-oriented, organised, and more adept at listening, communicating and multitasking. These are only a few of the attributes and benefits that women can provide for better customer engagement”, she says.

Lyndal Denny  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia





What's more from a workplace and road safety perspective, Lyndal argues that women tend to be risk averse, drive more cautiously and are statistically less aggressive and competitive than men.

“Women are less likely to speed, are more accepting of the reasoning behind road rules, less likely to initiate road rage incidents, more likely to wear a seat belt and generally display a greater sense of obligation to obey road rules. They also have lower representation across the board in terms of drink-driving, road crash and drug-driving statistics. Today these same traits in female heavy vehicle drivers serve to have a cumulative, positive impact on safer roads, productivity, profits and client and shareholder satisfaction”, she says.

Lyndal Denny  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia

With so many benefits on offer to organisations who hire women it is crucial that businesses do more to attract great female drivers. Lyndal says that flexibility is key to ensuring higher female driver retention rates.

“Twenty-first century trucking offers an enormous variety of options to drivers – much driving work can dovetail into school hours and if that doesn’t suit, many businesses offer three eight hour shifts daily. Auto and manual, bonneted and cab-over trucks, twist lock container work through to chains and ratchets on mega loads, local, regional and long-distance work, casual through to full time work – the possibilities are endless.

Lyndal Denny  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia





With a goal to achieve gender balance by 2035, Women In Trucking Australia focuses on identifying funding streams to enhance training and employment opportunities for women looking to pursue heavy vehicle driving careers.

By connecting female heavy vehicle drivers nationally, Women In Trucking Australia creates strong support networks and advocates for real employment opportunities for all female truckies.

[Click here](#) to learn more about becoming a member with Women In Trucking Australia.



natalie

kascak

## the road to success for female truckie natalie kascak

Our career paths are rarely linear. Often, excited by the possibilities of something new, we deviate from the path we were on. After an unsatisfying year of studying medical science, Natalie Kascak wanted to change course and do something outside her comfort zone. So, she decided to get a truck driver's license.

At first, Natalie was told that truck driving wasn't a career for women, but this made her even more determined to attend driving school, get her license and land a job. She knew that the industry was male-dominated, but this fuelled her to challenge stereotypes and prove that women can drive trucks too.

“When I first started as a truck driver 14 years ago, male drivers would double take when they saw me behind the wheel. I was nearly scared off by men who told me that truck driving was back breaking work. In reality, it's not like that. Especially today, there are a myriad of different driving roles and equipment that helps mediate the physical aspects of the job”, she says.

Natalie Kascak  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia



“In over a decade of truck driving, I’ve never encountered a company that offers a maternity leave scheme. Family oriented women feel that they cannot consider truck driving as a career. Many women also want to return to truck driving after they’ve had a child, and are not met with any support. It’s just not good enough. The transport industry must be more flexible, offering part-time or casual hours to support women”, she says.

Natalie Kascak  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia

Whilst some men were surprised to see a woman like Natalie behind the wheel, she had several male cousins, friends and mentors who instilled her with confidence, giving her further motivation to get stuck in.

Natalie is also part of Women in Trucking Australia and suggested that for young women looking to enter the transport industry, it’s important to have a support network.

Women in Trucking Australia provides a platform where younger drivers can ask questions of those who are more experienced. Considering how isolated long haul drives can be, it’s important that a sense of connection is fostered in the community.



Natalie also believes that change must begin at the management level if transport companies want to attract more women. Employing women at every level will make the industry more accessible and enticing for young females considering career options.

“In order to see change, we should start at the top. It’s ok to employ female drivers but a lot of males in operation roles don’t know how to engage, or tend to not treat women the same way. Companies should employ women into operation or managerial roles with a male that does the same job. When they employ women in management, that will encourage women to feel okay in that environment and supported by their female peers.”

Natalie Kascak  
Career Truck Driver  
Member of Women in Trucking Australia



mark

mazza





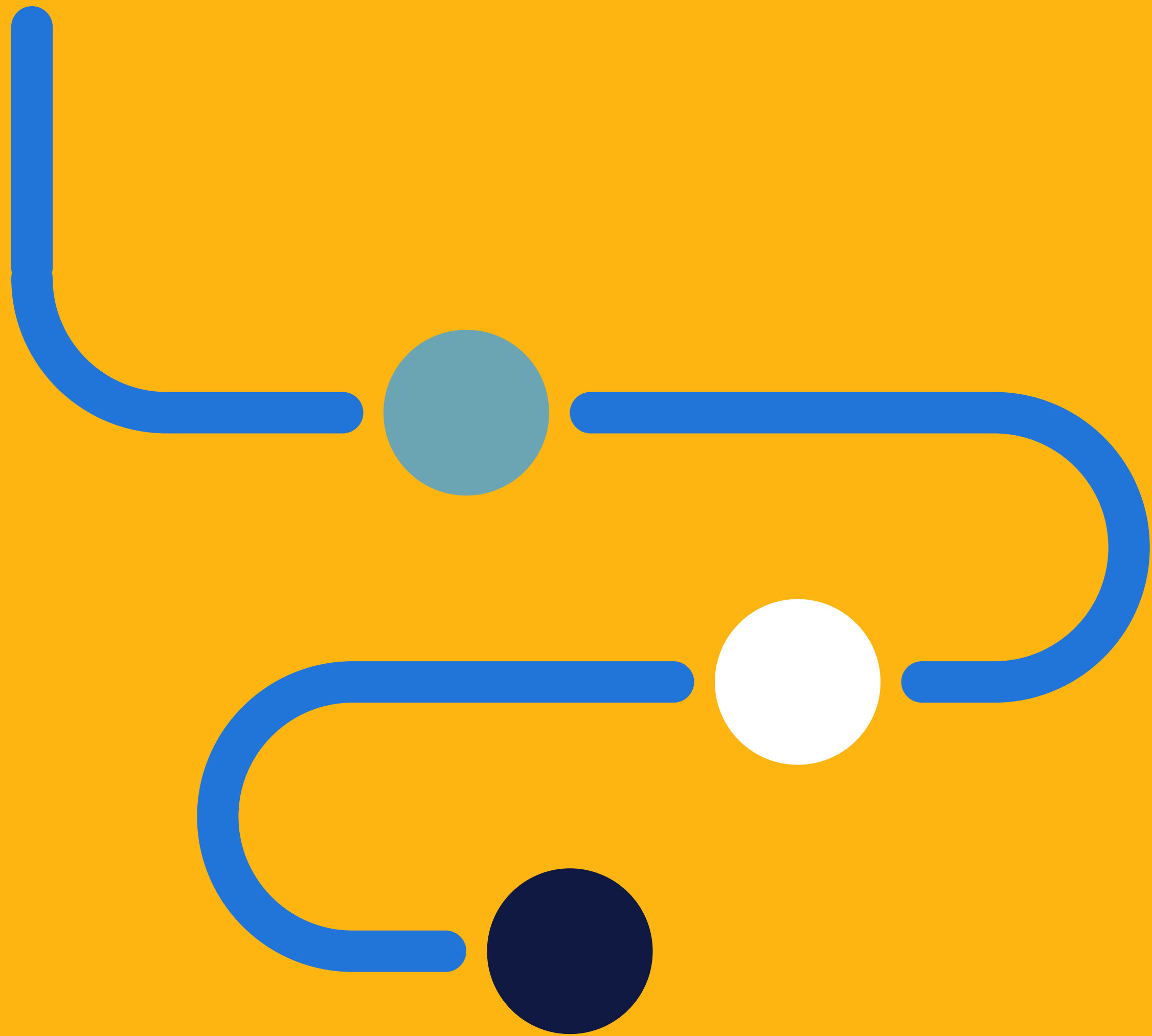
Even in a pandemic, the trucks keep rolling. Drivers continued to work long hours delivering critical supplies across the country in a time of need. Yet, like many Australian industries, transport has experienced tough times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and business restrictions.

But with a drivers shortage already impacting the sector, for business owners like Mark Mazza, CEO of South West Express (WA), finding drivers has become a major business challenge, exacerbated by the state's border closures. His company already employs female drivers and will take any who apply for available jobs.

“There has been a massive requirement in supermarket trade for transport as people start to panic buy and stock up. However, there is a massive shortage of drivers in Western Australia as a significant number of drivers fly in and out, and some can't get into the state without going into quarantine for 14 days”, Mark says.

Mark Mazza  
CEO of South West Express





With an existing shortage already creating problems before lockdown, long term Mark feels that driver education is key to training new talented truckies who can go on to have careers in the industry. However, with limited to no learning facilities in Western Australia, Mark says things need to change.

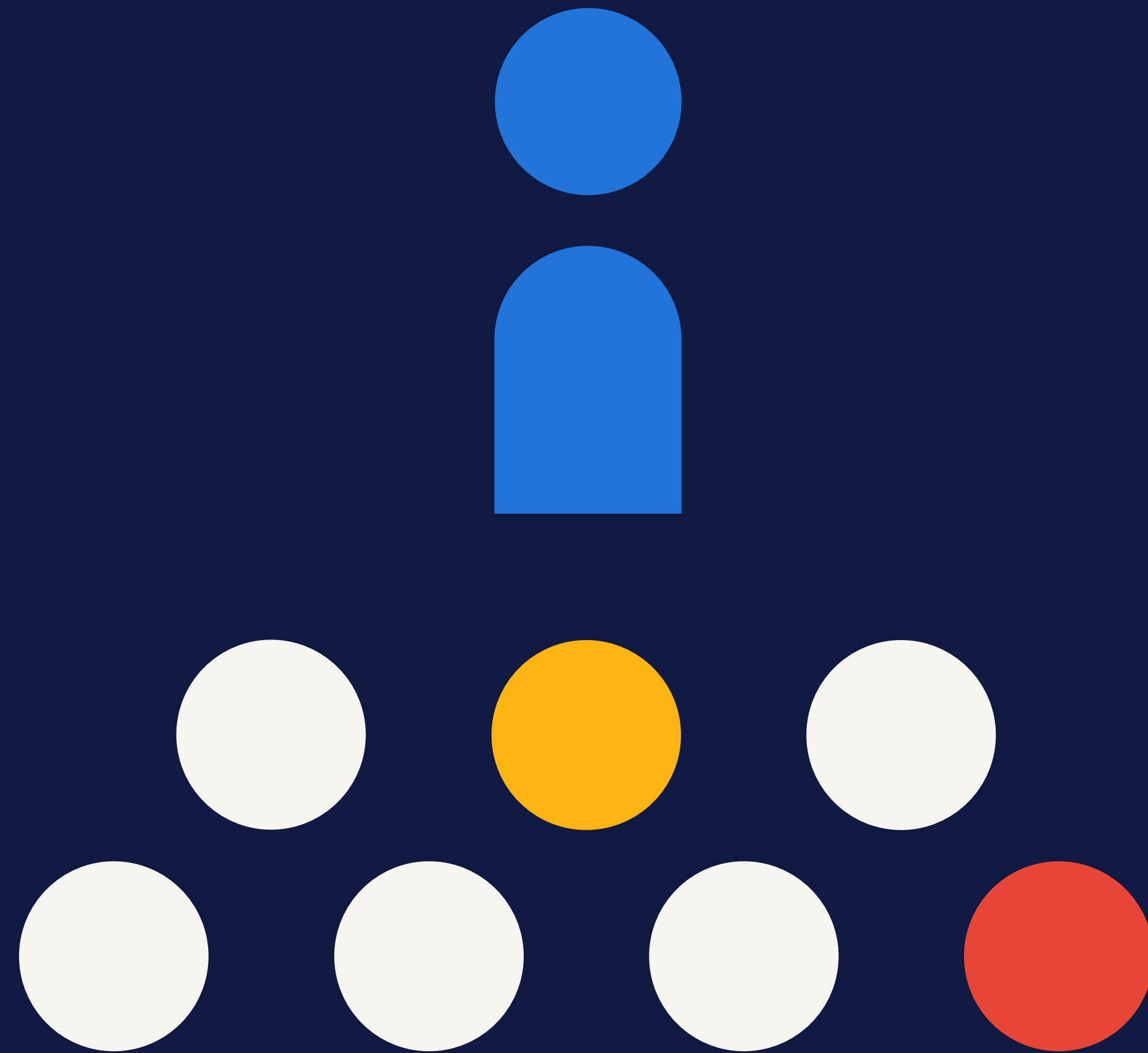
“We don’t have an apprenticeship scheme because transport is not seen as an industry by the government. In Western Australia, we have schools for the mining industry and numerous schools of agriculture, but neither industry can function without transport linking them. What we need is apprenticeships for men and women drivers. A conduit from the education system to the industry after school”.

Mark Mazza  
CEO of South West Express

Those drivers that Mark trains up are in high demand and often poached by the mining industry because of the attractive salaries, which his company can't compete on.

“The government needs to implement an efficient and supportive solution in schools to promote and encourage male and female students to see transport as a potential career opportunity.” He says.

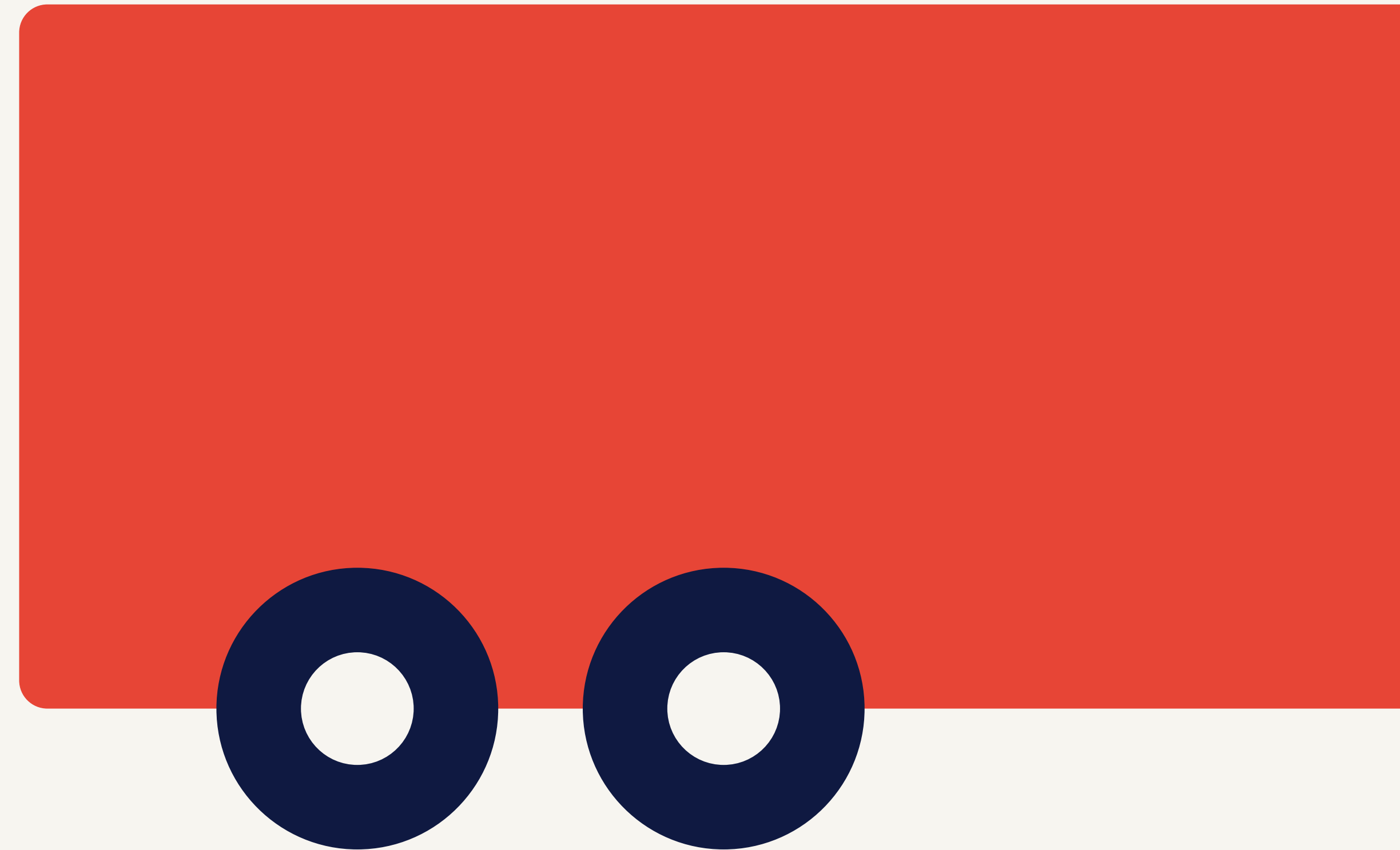
**Mark Mazza**  
CEO of South West Express



“No parents want their children to enter the industry that’s considered less than safe. We in the industry need to do school tours with trucks and get young prospective truck drivers to go through the trucks and see what our industry has to offer”.

Mark Mazza  
CEO of South West Express

According to Mark, the media has always been negative towards the transport industry and there is a need to lift the self-esteem in the eye of the general public. There is also a lack of recognition for the work done by transport workers, and he hopes that by taking on proactive approaches in schools, perceptions will change, in turn attracting more women to the sector.



With the good pay rates and being able to work with reputable transport companies, Mark says that the transport industry can be a very rewarding job.

21st century trucks have been advanced especially technologically wise. He believes that the industry can also do more in attracting female truck drivers especially with the talents they can bring.



“I see little differences in hiring men or women. Once they get on the job the male drivers treat them like any other. I would encourage women to see truck driving as an exciting career that can pay well”.

**Mark Mazza**  
CEO of South West Express



lauren  
bourke

Without trucks Australia stops. The rallying cry for drivers across the country may be an old one, but the iconic slogan still rings true. And it's becoming a reality.

Recruiting truck drivers for the transport sector I am keenly aware that Australia is in a truck driver crisis. There is a real risk that there will not be enough truck drivers in Australia to accommodate the predicated freight increase of 80% in the next decade.<sup>1</sup> Something has to be done to keep Australia moving forward.

Whilst the transport industry has long been dominated by men, tapping into women as a new talent pool would help to remedy truck driver shortages and also lead to improved business outcomes such as increased safety, productivity and workplace culture.<sup>2</sup>

Randstad's latest report, **Women in Transport** will take a deep dive into the challenges faced by women in the industry, looking at case studies of what some have done to succeed. The report includes detailed insights on what drivers are key to attracting the best female talent and how a gender balanced workplace can lead to improved business outcomes.

Given the negative portrayal of the sector by the media, what's surprising to many is that the transport industry is highly technical, innovative and deeply connected to business across Australia. The vital role truck drivers play in our economy should be lauded. Instead, this great community of Aussie battlers driving the length and breadth of this great southern land is hidden away. If we are going to attract men and women to this industry we must shine light on the great opportunities to be had.

# women in transport.

Lauren Bourke  
National Transport Manager  
Randstad

Understanding how to best attract female talent to the transport industry is imperative if companies want to motivate women to pursue truck driving as a career. Randstad's 2020 Employer Brand Research (REBR) investigated employee drivers, motivators and preferences and in the transport section found that the top 5 most attractive benefits of the transport industry includes flexible working hours (82%), vacation benefits (77%), working from home (71%), health care (66%) and training (66%).

Although some of these benefits align with what women want at work, women also indicated that they are looking for companies which provide a good work-life balance (58%) and a pleasant working atmosphere (44%). To attract more women to the transport sector, companies should be looking to create welcoming company cultures and aim not to burden staff with unreasonable workloads.





In my role as the National Transport Manager at Randstad, I see how dynamic and rewarding this industry is for those who drive. There is no reason why women should not consider a career in transport.

There are several misconceptions about the sector which I believe are both holding companies back from recruiting female talent and discouraging women from entering the sector. Like all industries, transport can be challenging. However, current media depicts unrealistic imagery of the transport sector, positioning it as tough, dirty work that is only suitable for men. This portrayal is not representative of the many career possibilities that transport has to offer. To attract more female talent, companies should look to avoid perpetuating these stereotypes and generalisations.

The transport sector also has a lot to learn from the mining sector, another traditionally male oriented industry. Mining companies, like Rio Tinto, BHP and others that have started to build a gender balanced workforce to benefit from increased productivity, fewer instances of violence on sites and increased revenue. Recent research from PWC found that across 500 mining companies that they surveyed, those with 25% or more female board members had a net profit margin that was 49% higher than average.<sup>3</sup>





The feedback I have received from managers of transport companies across Australia who have taken on female truck drivers has been positive. Managers have told me that when compared to their male counterparts, women often; take better care of their trucks, keeping them clean and in good condition, are better spoken with external clients, leading to less instances of conflict, take more care when they are behind the wheel and are more diligent when it comes to paper work.

Currently, women only make up 16.9% of transport roles and 4.5% of the CEOs in transport businesses. To reap the benefits of gender diversity in the same way as mining, the transport sector must strive to attract and retain more female talent.

I conducted an interview with my transport and logistics team to get their perspectives about how to attract more women to the truck driving industry based on their experience recruiting in the transport sector. Many voiced concerns that transport companies are only interested in employing older drivers who are already experienced. This is acting as a barrier that is preventing younger women from entering the sector.

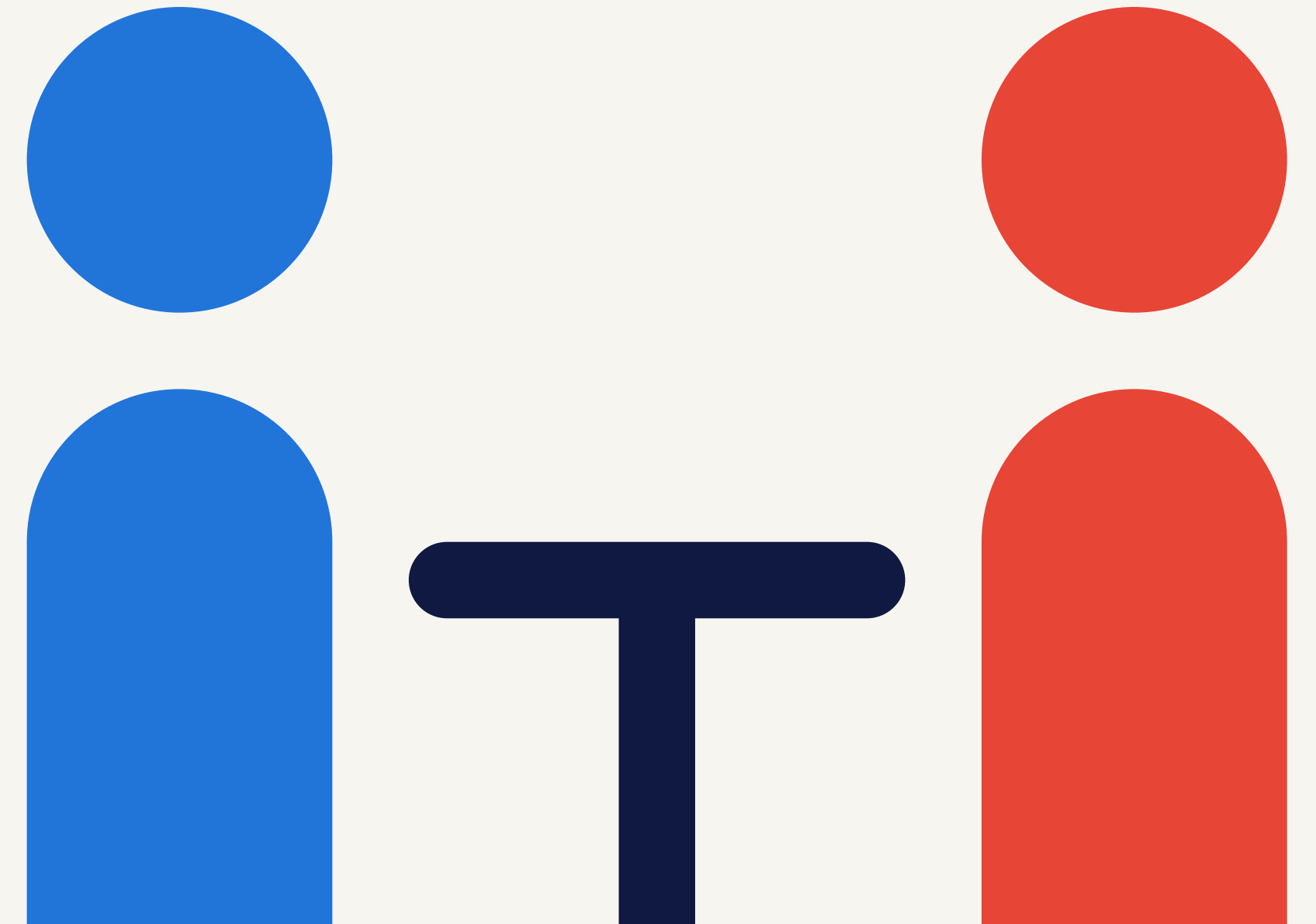
To meet the demands of the growing freight industry, companies should be looking to hire younger women, giving them the opportunity to develop long-term careers in transport. Offering good career development opportunities will help logistics firms attract top talent.

There are also a few basics that freight companies can improve on if they are to tap into the female talent pool. To attract female truck drivers, companies should install female amenities whilst also investing in driver assisting technology to make loading and unloading trucks less physically demanding.

Providing better entitlements and perks for women will be beneficial in attracting them into the industry. Employers could provide stronger support and consider making reasonable adjustments to the workplace to accommodate mothers or pregnant women, for example, they should roll out structured maternity leave programs that enable women who have had children to easily return to the workforce. This could be achieved through offering part time or casual hours for new mums wanting to come back to their old truck driving jobs.

“The transport industry needs more women at all levels. Gender balance would help to make businesses stronger. It also brings benefits to the entire workforce – a more inclusive culture and more empowered ways of working. Yes, there may be obstacles, but they can be overcome when companies make the cultural leap to embrace diversity as central to their future success”.

Lauren Bourke  
National Transport Manager  
Randstad



<sup>1</sup> Rail Freight In Australia 2017.  
Available at [https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/  
listing/speech/rail-freight-australia](https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/listing/speech/rail-freight-australia)

<sup>2</sup> Australian Mining, Mining for Diversity.  
Available at [https://www.australianmining.com.au/  
features/mining-for-diversity/](https://www.australianmining.com.au/features/mining-for-diversity/)

<sup>3</sup> PWC, 2013, Mining for Talent.  
Available at [https://www.pwc.com/gr/en/publications/  
assets/mining-for-talent.pdf](https://www.pwc.com/gr/en/publications/assets/mining-for-talent.pdf)



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