

**TRANSPORT WOMEN**  
AUSTRALIA LIMITED

## ***Women Working in Transport – A Snapshot The Follow Up***

Transport Women Australia Limited (TWAL) have conducted this research in response to the many queries we receive involving the numbers of women involved in and participating in the transport industry in this country. We included women working in all modes of transport and covered as many areas of Australia as possible.

Of the 165,609 people represented in the survey, 29,000 of these were women working in the transport industry, which is 17.5% of the represented workforce.

Transport Women Australia Limited has received many and varied comments in relation to questions asked in this survey.

The intent was to have a snapshot as it would be next to impossible to receive responses from every woman working in transport in Australia.

What we have achieved is an overall view which we could arguably say is a true picture of “Women Working in Transport” in Australia.

When looked at in conjunction with the responses from all the questions, we get an even better picture of a “woman currently working in the transport industry”.

She is most likely aged 36 to 45 years and working in the private sector in a large road transport company in an office/admin role in NSW earning between \$56,000 and \$80,000 per annum.

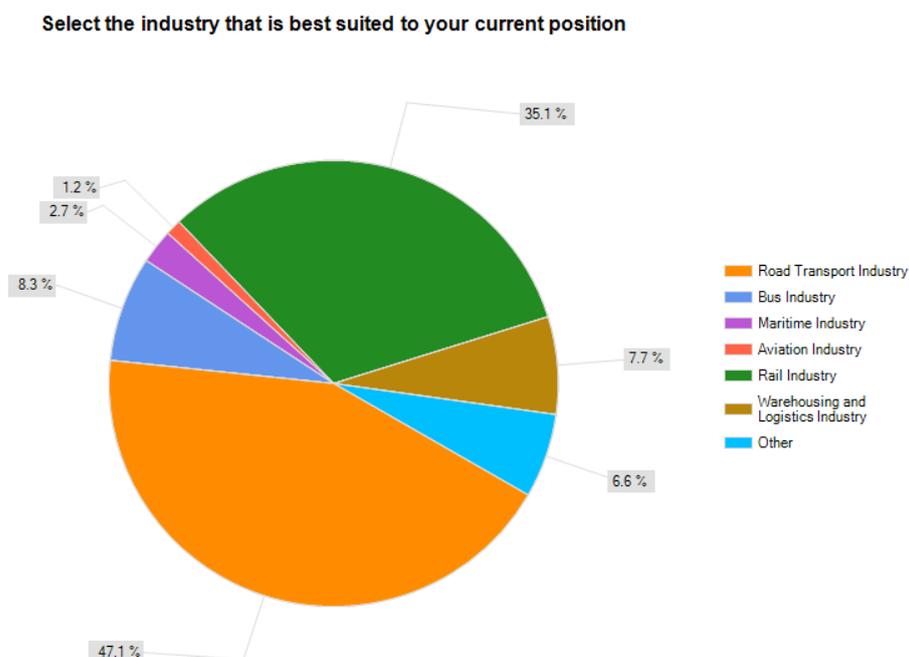
She works full time and worked her way up to the position with 'on the job' training and qualifications and has been working in the industry for over ten years. Her plan is to stay on indefinitely.

She is aware of the challenges of being female in this industry, but feels that the opportunities are there if she wants to grab them and works hard to hold on to those opportunities.

She is optimistic for the future of women in this industry, noting that change is already happening and that on the whole, it is heading in the right direction.

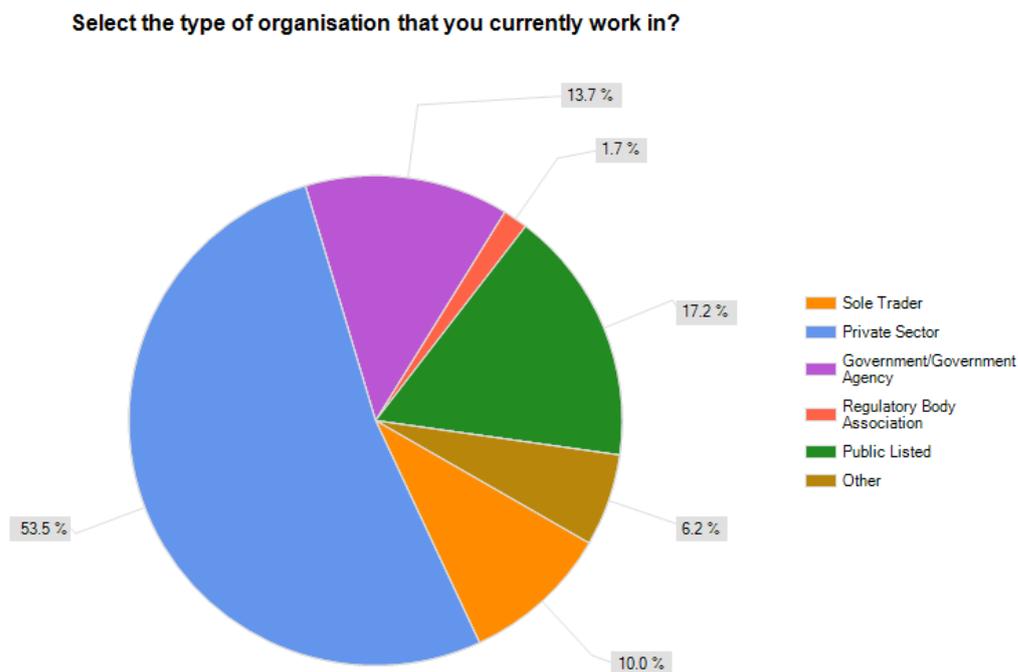
### Question 1: Select the industry that is best suited to your current position

Respondents were asked this question to gauge which sector of the transport industry they fit into, when in reality, they may not consider it to be a part of the transport industry at all. Although the majority of respondents were from the road transport sector - 47.1%, the rail sector accounted for 35.1% of respondents. The bus, warehousing & logistics, maritime and aviation sectors all came in at numbers under 10% each. The road transport sector's responses covered areas such as refrigerated, waste, oil & gas, livestock, freight forwarding, road safety, transport planning and systems engineering, along with many other career roles.



## Question 2: Select the type of organisation that you currently work in

This question was asked to give a picture of the types of organisations our respondents were from, and as expected, the majority of responses were from those in the private sector with 53.5% of respondents. The government and publicly listed companies came in at 13.7% and 17.2% respectively, with sole traders making up 10%. Regulatory bodies & associations were at 1.7% and 6.2% categorised themselves as 'other'.

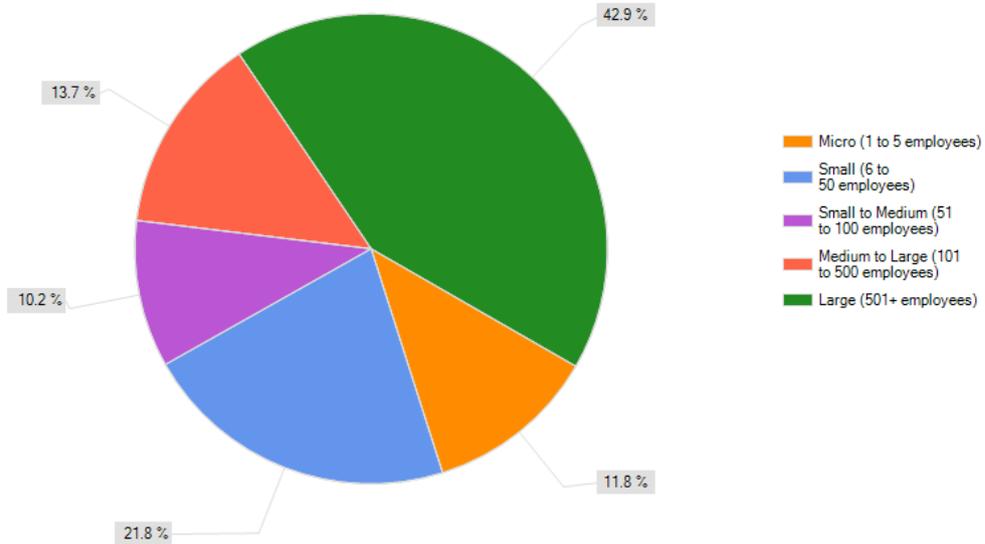


## Question 3: Select the size of the organisation you currently work in

In order to glean information on what size company our respondents came from, this question was asked and answered pretty much as we expected. Companies with more than 501 employees made up the bulk of responses at 42.9%, with small companies (i.e. 6 to 50 employees) coming in at 21.8%. Medium to large companies (i.e. 101 to 500 employees) covered 13.7% of respondents, while micro sized companies (i.e. 5 employees or less) came in at 11.8% followed by small to medium companies (i.e. 51 to 100 employees) covering 10.2%.

These figures confirm the belief that there are more women involved in the larger transport companies and organisations with only 33.6% of women working in companies with fewer than 50 employees.

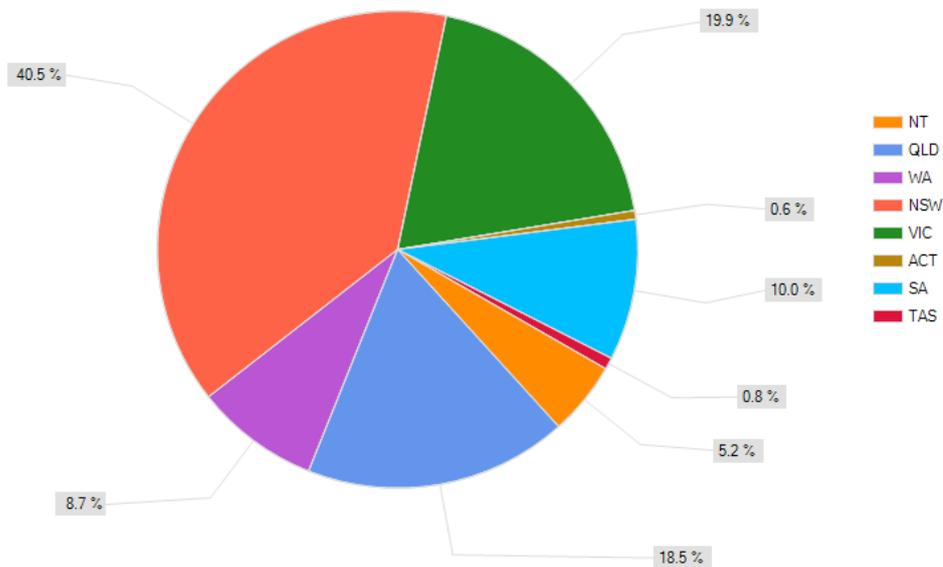
**Select the size of the organisation you currently work in**



**Question 4: Select the state you are based in**

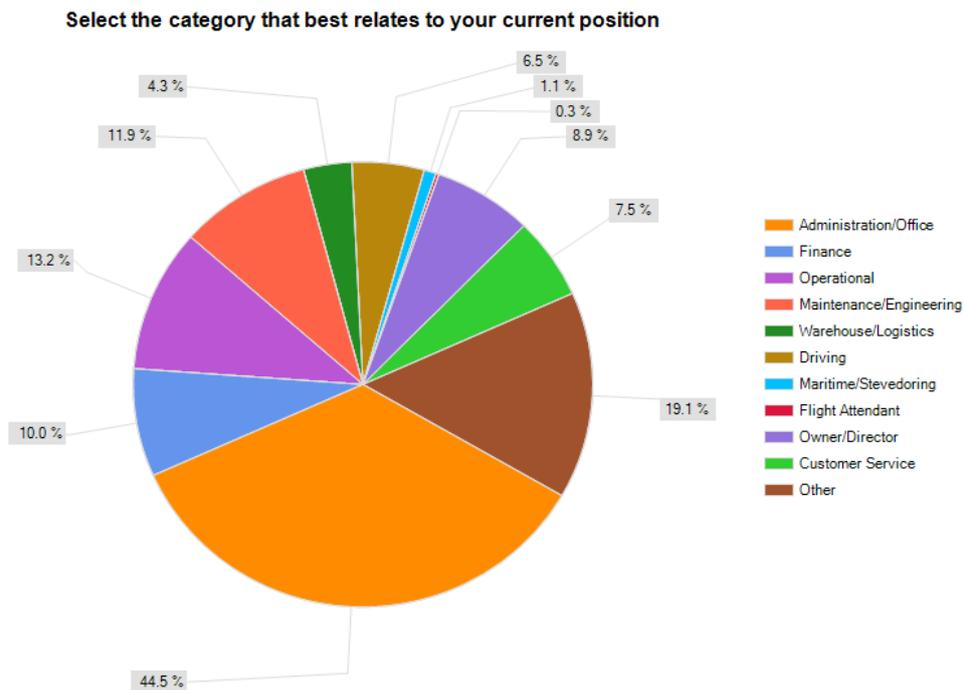
The majority of responses came from New South Wales with a total of 40.5%, followed by Victoria and Queensland with 19.9% and 18.5% respectively. Tasmania and Australian Capital Territory had the lowest percentages, which reflects their size and demographic.

**Select the state you are based in**



### Question 5: Select the category that best relates to your current position

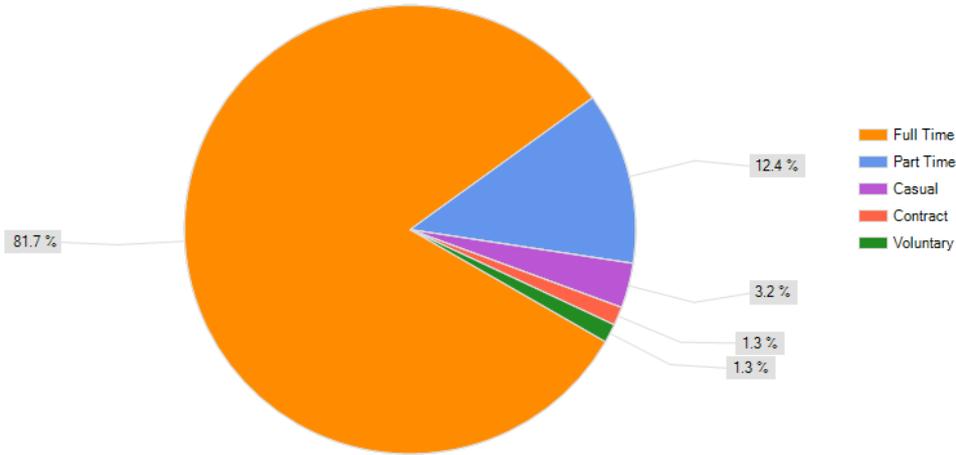
For us to be able to differentiate the different roles that women can hold in the transport industry, we needed to categorize them. As expected, the highest percentage was women with roles in administration/office areas, at 44.5%, with women in driving positions holding 6.5% of the responses. Operations and engineering roles had 11.9% and 13.2% respectively. The smallest percentage was 0.3% from flight attendants, but this could be attributed to the participation rate for the aviation industry which was minimal. Anecdotally we know that there is a high rate of females employed in the aviation industry.



### Question 6: Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

The workforce is made up of many different types of working arrangements, and we tried to ascertain which types of employment our respondents had. 81.7% of those surveyed were in full time roles, with a small minority having casual (3.2%), contract (1.3%) and voluntary (1.3%) roles. Part timers accounted for 12.4% of the respondents. Some of the roles mentioned included driving, accounts, maintenance, compliance, HR, corporate affairs, training, health & safety, sales and management.

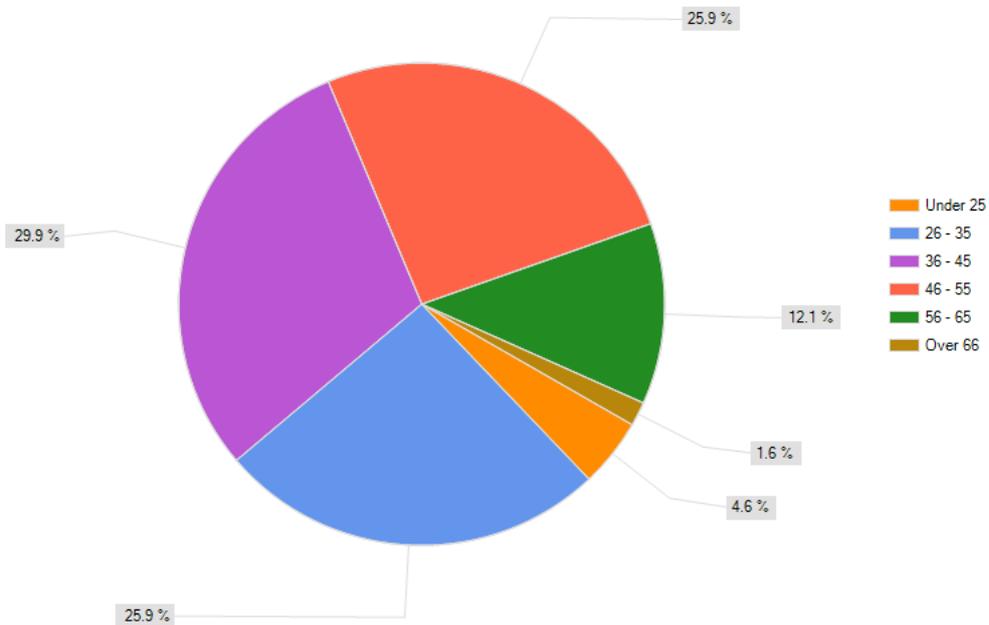
**Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?**



**Question 7: What is your age?**

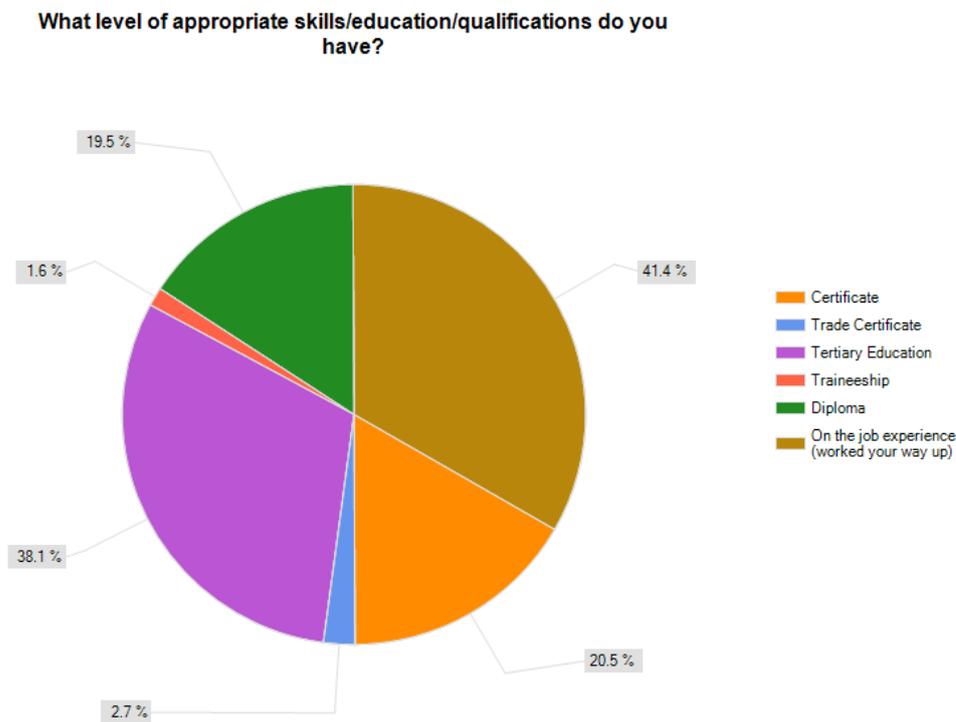
The age of the respondents indicated a lack of younger women being involved in the transport industry with only 4.6% being under 25. The largest group was the 36 to 45 age group with 29.9%, followed by 25.9% of respondents aged 26 to 35, and again for the 46 to 55 age group. The percentages then reduce with age, with the over 66 age group having just 1.6% of responses.

**What is your age?**



### Question 8: What level of appropriate skills/education/qualifications do you have?

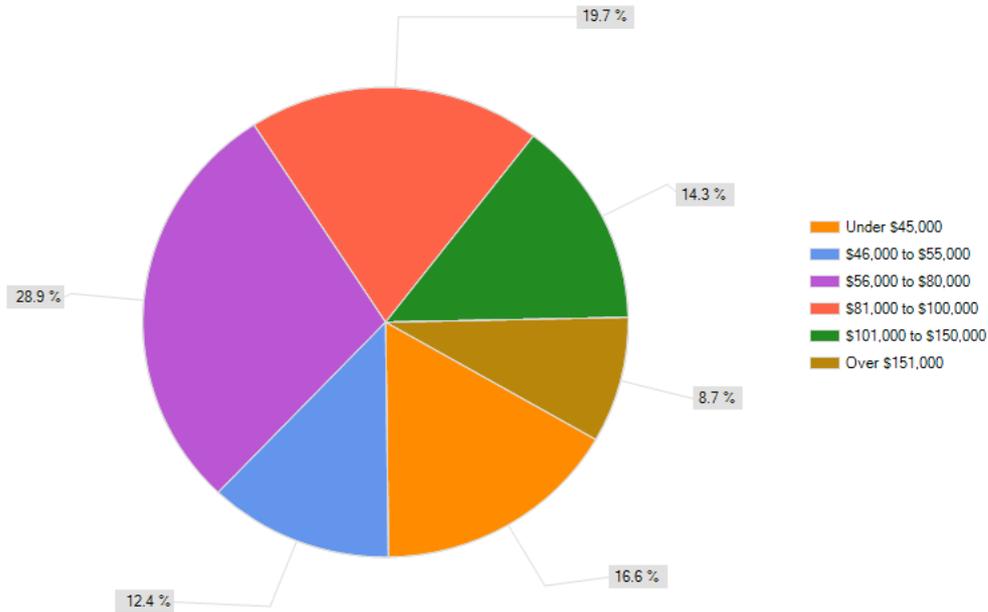
This question was asked to gain an idea of the type of training or education level of our survey respondents. On reflection, we could have joined three of the categories together as technically a certificate qualification and a diploma would be gained through a tertiary institution. However, the majority of women (41.4%) stated that they had 'on the job' experience with only 1.6% involved in traineeships. Under the tertiary banner, we had 38.1% state they had tertiary qualifications, with 19.5% stating a diploma and 20.5% a certificate qualification. Trade certificates, which would encompass apprenticeships, came in at 2.7%.



### Question 9: Select your income bracket

This was the only question that we made optional in the survey, although the majority chose to answer it. Interestingly, 8.7% of respondents indicated that they earned over \$151,000 per annum, however, the majority (28.9%) said that their income was in the \$56,000 to \$80,000 range. The entry level range, being under \$45,000 came in at 16.6% of respondents.

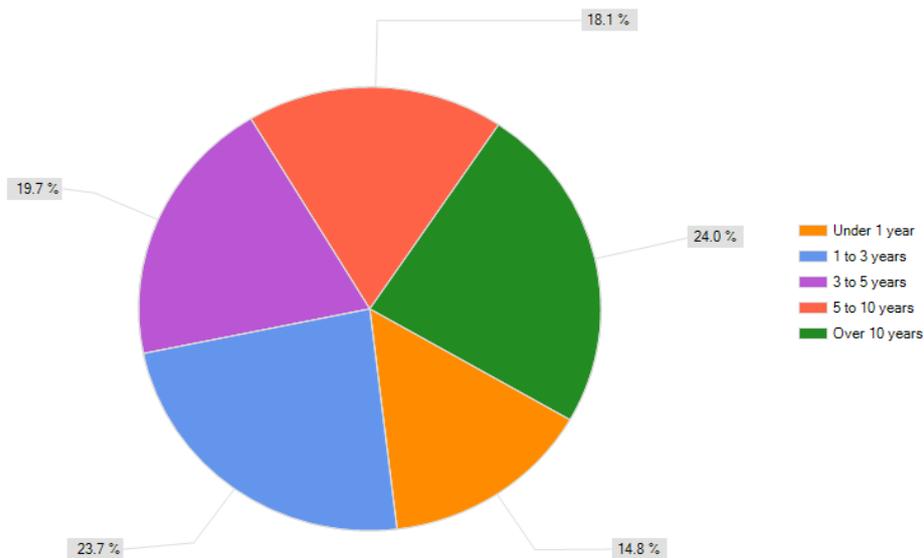
**Select your income bracket (excluding superannuation)**



**Question 10: About how long have you been in your current position?**

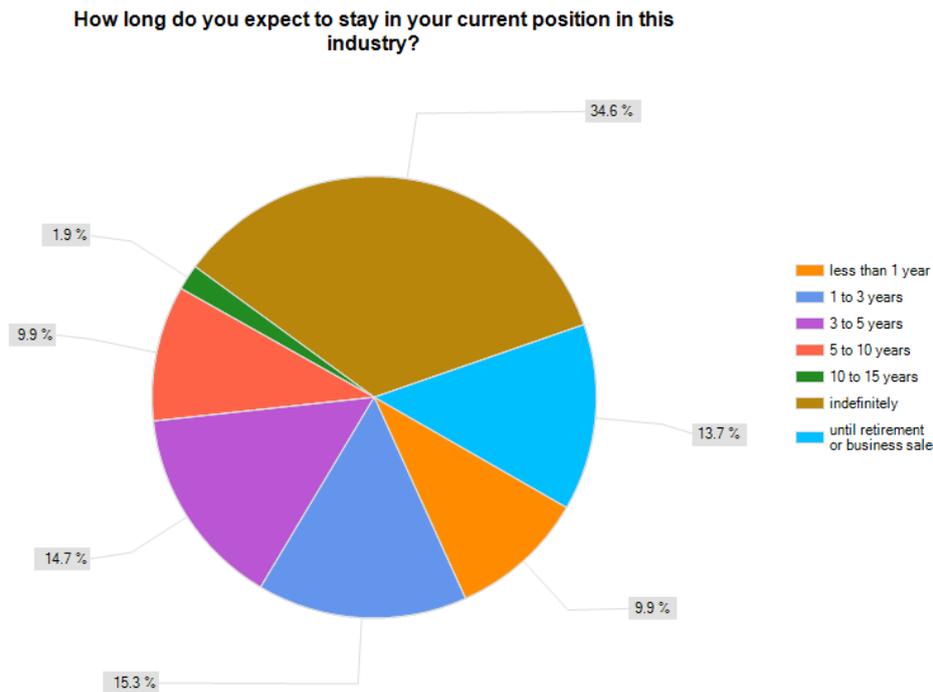
This question was to establish whether the respondents were long time industry people or recent entrants and gave us a background picture. 24% had been in the industry for over ten years. The next highest percentage was for those who had been in the industry for 1 to 3 years with 23.7%.

**About how long have you been in your current position?**



**Question 11: How long do you expect to stay in your current position in this industry?**

As we contemplate how to get new females into the industry, we need to establish how long those already here plan on staying. The overwhelming majority (34.6%) indicated that they would be staying on indefinitely in the transport industry or until they retired or their business was sold (13.7%). There were a small number of respondents (9.9%) who were very clear about leaving the industry within the next year, some even citing that they were leaving within weeks. Some of the comments indicated a desire to ‘work my way up’ the corporate ladder, and quite a few answered “as long as possible”.



**Question 12: Please comment on your views about the challenges faced by females in your industry**

Our aim with this question was to establish what our respondents consider to be the challenges they either face themselves, or see in their own sector of the industry.

There were comprehensive answers in relation to challenges that females face overall in this industry with an overwhelming 72.13% saying they have faced or they believe that there are challenges to be faced by women. 16.39% of respondents indicated that they believed there were no challenges with 7.49% citing family/work-life balance/maternity leave or children as being problematic. 3.98% of respondents made no comment. We have categorized the different areas these challenges fall into as follows and included some comments made by respondents below.

➤ **Discrimination**

- “Being undervalued in comparison to men doing the same job”
- “Misogyny, discrimination, bullying, lack of respect”
- “Men with no experience get promoted & trained into their new salary, while women with experience stay in lower ranking positions”
- “Pay differences, intimidation, undervalued”
- “Discrimination, lack of respect, cronyism”
- “Pay less than a male in the same position”

- “Boys club alive and well, particularly within industry organisations. Females are viewed as suitable to perform admin duties but most certainly not to represent the views of industry or negotiate with government”
  - “Capabilities questioned & not taken seriously”
  - “Males assuming you are the office girl”
  - “Difficulty getting other males to accept if you are in a senior position, and they expect that you will just take the minutes at a high level”
  - “Double standards – male getting angry is acceptable, a female getting angry is emotional”
  - “Great deal of discrimination & a glass ceiling”
- **Level Playing Fields**
- “Understanding a man’s world & trying to get them to see issues”
  - “Dealing with customers and suppliers on same level as male counterpart”
  - “Old fashioned views on women (they should get the coffee & know nothing about vehicle mechanics or business)”
  - “Males accepting direction from women”
- **Lifestyle**
- “Lack of facilities for women”
  - “Toilet stops on highway – few & far between”
  - “Juggling act with home and work”
  - “Expected to do it all – super mum, super wife, and super business woman”
  - “Flexible working hours”
  - “Recognition”
- **Strength/Ability**
- “Changing tyres”
  - “Knowledge of mechanics & knowing where and what to do if a breakdown occurs”
- **Dismissive/Rude**
- “Not being listened to”
  - “Not taken seriously”
- **Capabilities**
- “Understanding different regulations”
  - “Takes a long time for men to realise we are capable”
  - “Lack of interest in giving women operational experience. Keep us confined to the desk”
  - “People skills, especially in family business”
- **Sexual Harassment**
- “Rail still stuck in the 1950’s, pig headed men who think that women are there for one thing and that a slap on the bum is the best way to say “you’re doing a good job toots””
- **Lack of Respect – both male and female**

- “Lack of respect or acceptance of capability from third parties (i.e. suppliers) who want to speak to ‘the person who is authorised’ or ‘knows the industry’”
- “Attitudes towards women.... ‘that bitch’ in the office/factory”
- “Being ignored & dismissed”
- “Bad language in front of women”
- “Bitchy women & not giving other women a chance”

**Question 13: Please comment on your view of the opportunities for females in your industry**

The majority of respondents (67.3%) answered that there were plenty of opportunities for women in the transport industry, but noted that you need to work harder and be more persistent to achieve them. It was also mentioned that you should be prepared to ‘step outside the box’ and embrace change, be it in your roles or even changing companies.

Quite a few comments were also made with regard to needing a “thick skin” and good sense of humour to survive working in the industry.

26.37% of respondents answered that they felt there were not opportunities for women in the transport industry, and 6.31% gave no response either way.

Some pertinent comments given were:

- “It’s not really promoted as a female career, however there is no reason why females would not be able to undertake the role”
- “If a female wants to do the job, the opportunities are endless”
- “If you have the mental passion and drive, anything is possible”
- “The opportunities are great if the female is interested and proactive”
- “As the industry becomes more sophisticated in its approach, the opportunities are increasing”
- “There are ample opportunities within my own business from yard assistant/forklift operators right through to senior management, however when we advertise, the response is traditionally 90% male”
- “The opportunities are not obvious, and they are certainly not presented on a silver platter, but they do exist if we ask for them”
- “there is more opportunity now than ever before, I know a lot of females in the industry”
- “there are plenty of opportunities, particularly given the labour shortages”
- “Women today have a much better opportunity to establish themselves within positions of authority and general transport duties, due to equal opportunity legislation, data showing that women are not as rough on equipment as men, and evidence showing that women are equal to or better at the job they are given”
- “In the right environment, the sky is the limit!”
- “Great – give it a go and believe in yourself – sell yourself”
- “Every individual at our company has a chance to apply for all vacancies. If you can prove you have the skills and the attitude required to do the job, and have the support of the key staff, you will be successful”

**Question 14: In your company, what would you say the number of female employees/workers is?**

It varied per company, but the total was 28,939

**Question 15: In your company, what would you say the number of male employees/workers is?**

It varied per company, but the total was 136,670.

**Question 16: Do you have any suggestions/ideas on how we could make the transport industry more “attractive” and user friendly to women?**

To further educate us on what respondents think would make the industry more attractive to women, we got many and varied responses. We have listed some of them in categories to give you an idea of the general feel of the responses. This is by no means the entire list of responses, merely a sampling of some of them.

- **Lifestyle**
  - “Sell the lifestyle”
  - “Higher pays and more family friendly”
  - “Cater for women to bring children to work – have a room set aside”
  - “Time events so that women don’t need time off work or to arrive late”
- **Image**
  - “Let them know trucks are easier to drive – automatic transmissions etc”
  - “Promote other women in the industry to encourage newcomers”
  - “Change the blokey image”
  - “Send women to employment expos to promote women in the industry”
  - “Lift the profile in women’s magazines etc”
  - “Use of industry champions ‘to promote’”
- **Training**
  - “More female driver trainers”
  - “Don’t wait til secondary school – promote to females at an earlier age”
  - “Traineeships/apprenticeships for females”
  - “Offer a weeks’ school or training ‘on site’”
- **General**
  - “Networking and mentoring”
  - “Invite companies to make a public pledge to increase female participation by 2020”
  - “Use our high profile women as guest speakers at universities etc to encourage participation”
  - “Work experience”
  - “Showcase women in transport like mining and defence do”
  - “Invite the women as well to transport events – not just the husband”
  - “Networking between organisations and sexes”
- **Development**
  - “Encourage and support the training & professional level of female drivers”
  - “Leadership courses for women”
  - “Teach women to be more assertive”
- **Drivers/Amenities**
  - “Better roadside and workplace amenities”
  - “Provide female ‘fit’ site and work gear”
  - “Pink trucks!!”

## **Conclusion**

As an organisation we think that this survey illustrates what we already believed to be the case, that there are already a lot of women working in this industry who really don't consider that they are in the transport industry at all, and that the majority of those jobs fall into the office/administration field. Those at the coal face tend to face some difficulties because of their gender, but generally don't find it too hard to cope with citing the need for a thick skin. Those working in this industry on the whole seem to love it and not want to leave it any time soon. Their overwhelming message seems to be "put yourself out there and have a go, but don't be precious about it". The jobs are there if you want to fight for them, you just have to look outside the typical stereotypes.

## **Recommendations**

We were given many different suggestions on how to attract more women into the industry, and just as many suggestions as to how to attract youth. Some of the suggestions were great but would be considered as a very long term solutions and some required a lot of backing financially.

Our best recommendation that can be implemented quickly and successfully would be to use successful higher profile (non-stereotypical) women to highlight and promote the transport industry as worthwhile and respectable – via print, virtual and social media, in editorials and advertising campaigns. We also think that it would be valuable to utilise an industry "champion" as a face to front a campaign, which should cover the types of roles available and career paths etc. It should be able to illustrate that you can be feminine and still get the job done i.e.:– current Transport Woman of the Year or previous winners. By getting this campaign up and running, you could cover both the female and youth categories especially if the campaign was also incorporated with a concerted effort to be at all high school career days and expos to highlight what career prospects there are in the entire transport industry spectrum. If you mentioned a career in transport to a bunch of high school kids they would most likely only think about one in the drivers' seat, we need to educate them from an early age of the opportunities in this wonderful industry that are just waiting for them to grab hold of.

## **Disclaimer**

The views noted in this report prior to the conclusion were taken directly from the survey responses and in no way indicate what individual board members or the board as a whole believe.

- Survey by way of Survey Monkey
- Survey questions compiled by the board members (current and previous) and administration of TWAL
- Survey responses and report compiled by Chair Pam McMillan and Administrator Fiona Riley