

TLI Connect

Women in transport

In 2014, women made up just 7% of the Australian road transport workforce. But Followmont Transport is deliberately breaking with tradition in this male dominated industry and encouraging women to play a vital role at all levels of the business.

‘Our focus is our people,’ states CEO, Mark Tobin, ‘We have a strong female workforce of drivers, supervisors, warehouse personnel and administrators. It’s all about engagement, empowerment and ownership’.

Twenty-seven year old Alice Carter agrees. As the Manager of People and Culture for Followmont, she wants more women and young people to embrace the excellent opportunities available in transport and logistics. ‘We are passionate about what we do and that passion is contagious. People think I’m strange because I absolutely love my job. There is just something about transport, it’s addictive! I enjoy the fast pace and new challenges every day.’ And she’s happy to overcome stereotypes in the industry. ‘People see the blonde hair and young face and can sometimes make a quick judgment, but it’s great to challenge this stereotype’.

Overcoming stereotypes is something Followmont’s Senior Payroll Officer, Jan Bullion, knows all about. Jan started her career in transport in 1978, licenced to drive trucks from the tender age of 17. ‘I love Mack Trucks! I was lucky to find an employer back in the late 70’s who gave me a chance to learn the ropes. But I had to earn my way. Only when I’d learnt to change the tyres, fix the engine and chain the plant equipment, then I got to drive!’ Jan drove trucks for more than 20 years before becoming a Despatch then Payroll Manager in various transport businesses. ‘I’ve driven millions of kilometres and met thousands of people in this industry. A woman can have a full and rewarding career in transport’.



Jan Bullion, Alice Carter and Nyree Paitai

Nyree Paitai has worked in warehousing since 1997 and supervises up to 50 staff as one of Followmont’s Warehouse Team Leaders. She believes there are many career options for women in the transport industry. ‘Encouraging and motivating others is the key to being a good leader. Finding out people’s strengths and playing to them. This job is unpredictable and it challenges me every day but I love it!’

‘A woman can have a full and rewarding career in transport.’

Further north, Tania Osborne oversees the Cairns Depot as the Operations Manager. Tania is the only female Ops Manager in the company, and has responsibility for long haul and local drivers, mechanics, administration staff, loaders and supervisors. ‘Basically everyone comes under my umbrella!’ Initially coming from a tourism background, Tania has really enjoyed the transition to transport. She believes one of the benefits of having female managers is an alternative style of dealing with people. ‘Male managers can be direct, black and white and sometimes confrontational. But I still get the results I need using a softer approach’.

With positive female role models across the business, Followmont Transport are reaping the benefits of a diverse workforce and gradually changing the face of the Australian transport and logistics industry.