

Olympic Spirit

Success, spirit, strength, determination. All words which sprung to mind as I watched our Aussie athletes do battle with the rest of the world. And road transport too played an unsung, but important, part in the Games' success.

One can only be awe-inspired at the guts, grit and determination the Olympic and Paralympic athletes display. What drives them? Is it the possibility of winning? Could it be the chance to be the best in the world? I believe it is all of these. And more. I think I speak on behalf of most people when I say that the Olympic games to me personally was a time to sit back and applaud the absolute courage and determination these young people display.

The Olympic games is not just about what happens on the track or in the pool it's about personal determination and courage. Congratulations in particular to Anne Maree Forder for her Bronze Medal; an athlete many in the industry supported.

On reflection, it's also important to mention that the Olympic Games

responsibility for the Olympic success. Professional drivers – both male and female, young and old – are, sadly, on the decrease. Many older drivers, who have been on the road for up to 30 years or more are hanging up their driving boots.

This leaves the question for transport operators to ponder. How do we attract professional drivers to the industry? I don't have the magic answer. All I do know is that the recent ridiculous media-bashing of truckies – stereotyping drivers as drugged-up zombies – cannot help.

Mention the word 'pilot' and the public automatically expresses respect for the profession. Truck drivers rank somewhere near politicians (and journalists – Ed). Yet, the truck driver shares similar responsibilities to airline pilots in terms of safety and skills.

training. Put less emphasis on getting the freight to the other end and more on how we get it there in a professional and safe manner.

It seems to me that we often put more resources into our vehicles than we do in our people. It's important to remember, though, that without drivers we have no business.

If each and everyone of us, including our drivers, believe in what we do – and always conduct ourselves in a professional, ethical and safe way – I personally believe the industry will go a long way to resolve the current driver shortage. And, of course, turn-around the stereotypical image of a truck-driving bogeyman. Truck-driving can be, and should be, regarded as a responsible, skilled and safe profession.

It's up to us all to take every opportunity to project the industry's image positively – even if the outcome is not always the one you expected. Improvement and achievement do not come from standing back and watching. It comes from working together to achieve a common goal. If we go back to the Olympics analogy, it's about training day-in, day-out for the chance of winning gold and making a difference. It seems like hard slog, but the end result is worthwhile.

Web site worthy of a peek this month include:

1. www.atsb.gov.au - Australian Transport Safety Bureau;
2. www.valhallamoon.com - Relationship information and advice.

Until next month, thank you and stay safe!

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would not have been made possible without the support of the truck industry. Whether your individual or company contribution was by supplying fruit and vegetables for the scores of tourists, delivering uniforms for the Australian team, or whatever, it's time we stood up and congratulated each and every driver.

The industry and the general public should express their pride and appreciation of an enormous logistical task well-done. What drivers do very often goes above and beyond the call of duty. It's for the love of the job and such a courageous effort deserves applause.

Unfortunately, there is not enough praise. Good work often goes unnoticed in this industry. For the professional driver, having the support of family and friends behind the scenes is imperative. They, too, share

Let's face it. Most people would recoil in horror if their son or daughter expressed an interest in road transport as a career path. So, is the transport industry at risk of attracting the wrong type of people? Possibly. The fact is, driving trucks is not that different from a medal winning performance. It takes skill, determination, continual training and commitment.

Image, it seems, plays an important role in public perceptions. Ask any transport operator/driver why the truck's chrome is so shiny and clean and I guarantee the answer will have something to do with image. If it looks good, it shows the operator cares for his equipment.

The big question is: Are we personally doing enough to project a positive image of trucking as an attractive career path? Perhaps we might look more at education and