

# SETTING THE TREND

**KENWORTH AIMS TO STEP AHEAD WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF ADVANCED SAFETY SYSTEMS — WORDS BY CHRIS MULLETT**

**AS** the market leader in heavy truck sales in the Australian market, Kenworth, and its sister product DAF Trucks, have the ability to form a formidable combination as it brings the best of European and North American together through a common national dealer network under the PACCAR Australia brand.

The culture of the company has been one of an almost gentlemanly approach to the industry, never criticising its competition but always surprising the other makes each year when the Kenworth brand dominates the heavy truck sales segment.

Part of the reason for the PACCAR brand success is of course customer service, and with undoubtedly the most comprehensive and supportive dealer network it's been a recipe for success that continues to exist with strength.

The Kenworth brand heads strongly into the year with the Cummins ISXe5 engine and the PACCAR MX13 providing excellent results in truck operations where either high weight multi-combinations or single trailer and volume loading B-double activity rules the day. But, as any truck observer will attest, the industry is looking for new ways of taking efficiencies further, while making a substantial effort to improve safety levels and reduce driver fatigue.

The man charged with the task of matching expectations with reality is Brad May, who, with 22 years service to PACCAR Australia on his CV, takes on a new role as director of sales and marketing.

*PowerTorque* caught up with Brad in Melbourne recently to discuss what lies ahead in terms of technology upgrades, in particular for Kenworth products in this coming year.

"We have focused recently on improving the OH&S type of safety with systems in place as factory fit options to ease the daily task of the driver and to remove or reduce any opportunity for them to become injured going about their daily routine," said Brad.

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"This includes addressing the day-to-day things like sight glasses in radiators, reducing the effort required to open or close bonnet assemblies and generally reducing the risk of any personal injury such as back or neck strain or muscular injury. Climbing in or out of a vehicle must be assisted by clear line of sight with well illuminated steps, grab handles need to be easily identifiable and in easy to find locations.

"But as well as refining what we would accept as sensible areas of design, we are also bringing in the availability of a suite of additional active safety assistance features that have not been associated with American products in this country.

"We launched our TEBBS electronic braking system with ABS several years ago. Now, for 2016, we have added a further suite of options available that include Lane Departure Assistance and our version of adaptive cruise control, which we call Active Cruise and Brake (ACB).

"The latest versions of these benefits feature a more intelligent radar on the front of the vehicle that in turn enables us to use more of the brake force available from the truck when trying to reduce the impact speed prior to an impending accident.

"Once you have sight and touch, and the higher levels of computer technology, we can then influence the driver.

"In these situations we are really trying to find ways to reduce the impact of a driver fatigue situation. Where the driver is not concentrating, we can use the radar system to initiate generating greater effort in braking efficiency, so the truck can do more than just maintain a gap from the vehicle ahead.

"The lane departure warning system is essentially having a camera in the windscreen looking for white lines and lane drift. We have seen that option taken up by larger fleets for safety issues.





**Advanced radar system offering superior adaptive cruise control that is reactive to provide higher braking efficiency to minimise risk of collision.**

“It’s new technology in a sense of an American product made available in Australia. We are continuing to look at blind spot assist but have not yet released that, as we want to be able to offer a real-world value to the customer.

“The technologies will progress in application through being relevant and affordable. I think we have been proactive, and we consequently have to utilise our strengths in this business to suggest options to our customers.

“In the future there will undoubtedly be a greater emphasis on promoting disc brakes. We now offer both Dana and Meritor disc brakes, the first time we have offered both options.

“We see the trend of AMTs (automated manual transmissions) now reaching over 20 percent of our build rate, up considerably from the previous 14-15 percent of two years ago. The take-up is rising and we are working continuously with Eaton to match the best fuel economy and to get the best optimised package.

“We currently have no plans to introduce 24-volt electrical systems throughout our complete range, although if the market wanted it we could provide it. The compatibility of electrical systems between trucks and trailers is becoming easier to solve with the increasing use of LED lights that reduce circuit demands and voltage drops.

“There’s a lot of additional work going on in the US with emission reductions, burning less fuel, less drive to steering pumps and compressors. That technology is being developed.



“Our future is embedded in a global organisation. When we talk about development of new technology we have global brothers in the US and Europe. So it’s more than ever an engineering connection that is far greater than it’s ever been to provide access to develop and adapt leading-edge technology,” concluded Brad.

# ROOM AT THE TOP

Recent structural changes to the senior executive line-up of PACCAR Australia sees the current managing director, Mike Dozier, take up the role of PACCAR vice-president and general manager – Kenworth Truck Company, based in the US.

After three years in the role of managing director, he leaves PACCAR Australia as market leader in the heavy-duty segment of the Australian truck market.

Following eight years as director of sales and marketing – PACCAR Australia, Andrew Hadjikakou will replace Mike Dozier as managing director. In this new role, Andrew will lead PACCAR Australia’s ongoing development of new products and services that will exceed the expectations of its growing and dynamic markets. 

