

The West Australian

# WorkWHEELS



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## Safety tick to Cascadia

Rig ups the standard for freight trucks

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I've driven down one of the busiest steep descents in the country in a range of truck combinations — and in certain conditions, it's frightening.

The Mt Ousley hill is about 50km south of the greater Sydney metro area and runs down the scarp to Wollongong.

For the high volume of transport companies running freight between the two cities,

it's the only way down. The average gradient is 9.6 per cent and the maximum, near the bottom is a dangerous 25.7 per cent.

With cars cutting you off regularly, especially halfway down when the road narrows to two lanes, there are three critical rules for survival: get in the right gear, get in the left lane and stay on your game.

Added to the general freight volume is a big fleet of gravel

and sand tipplers which spend much of their life grinding up the incline or crawling down fully loaded.

Cleary Bros Transport had Mt Ousley firmly in mind when it bought its latest tipper and quad-axle dog combination for carting sand and aggregate between Sydney and Wollongong.

The rig runs at 57.5-tonnes with Performance Based Standards approval and so the braking and safety technology was critical to the company's decision.

The Port Kembla firm chose the new Freightliner Cascadia 116, with a high level of vision from a steeply sloping bonnet and a wide suite of electronic safety features to protect the driver and other road users.

Its advanced safety technology includes active emergency braking with pedestrian

detection, lane departure warning and SideGuard Assist, which uses radar to detect people and objects down the side of the truck when it is about to turn left.

The Cascadia has a 13-litre Detroit DD13 engine with 505hp and 2508Nm of torque. The engine powers through Daimler's automated manual transmission.

Cleary Bros director Brett Cleary said the Cascadia was setting a new standard for safety the rest would have to follow.

"Safety is absolutely paramount for our company and there is nothing else out there that has this level of safety in a conventional truck," he said.

The company said the Cascadia's safety features weren't limited to the advanced driver aids such as adaptive cruise control and AEB.

The optional wing-mounted

side mirrors have been a big hit.

I first drove a test Cascadia with these mirrors at the Freightliner test track in Oregon and was surprised at how much easier it made manoeuvring.

If I were buying a Cascadia, it's an option I'd tick every time, particularly if there was B-double work on the agenda.

Cleary's Steve Crandell said the company's trucks operate in areas where there can be heavy traffic and pedestrians.

"The safety technology in Cascadia is way in front of what else is available," he said.

Drivers have had a positive reaction to the Cascadia, saying the cabin layout and ease of access to all controls was a strong point.

But ultimately, it's the truck's safety package that is likely to bring more Cascadias to the rigs that frequent the Mt Ousley hill.

