

Up to the standard

THE PROLIFERATION OF AFTERMARKET PARTS OF DUBIOUS QUALITY AND ORIGIN PROMPTED **TCK AUSTRALIA** TO HAVE ITS TOW COUPLING PINS TESTED AND CERTIFIED BY APPROVED AUSTRALIAN AUTHORITIES.

Due to a lack of standards enforcement for fitment of aftermarket parts in Australia, countless generic parts retailers have flooded the market with alternatives that may not be safe to use. Often referring to safety-critical parts such as tow couplings, understanding the difference between trustworthy components and others is crucial.

To give industry clarity that its tow coupling pins meet the necessary requirements, TCK Australia Managing Director, Graeme Rowlands, took on the task of having its components certified by approved Australian authorities to Original Equipment (OE) specifications. "Even though there is no enforced standards, we understand the concerns about non-

compliant parts being supplied to the market and wanted to give customers peace of mind that there is an aftermarket option that is proven," Graeme says. The TCK coupling pins are designed, developed and manufactured in Australia, and are tested and certified compliant under a range of Australian standards, Graeme says. "The performance and functionality



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requirements say that automatic pin couplings must comply with Australian Standards 2213.4-1998 50mm pin type couplings and drawbar rings for trailers or ISO 8755 to meet ADR 62 standard," he explains. "TCK coupling pins meet both those standards and are also compliant with ECE 55-01, the appropriate United Nations Regulation." Initial help for development came from the School of Mechanical Engineering at The University of Adelaide, wherein a series of destructive tests were completed and provided the yield points of all the OE parts just prior to failure. "The project team also provided material composition specifications, and we selected a recommended Australian-

made metal," Graeme says. TCK also engaged Dr Robert Casey of Mechlab at the School of Mechanical Engineering at the University of New South Wales to provide advice. Robert read the documentation, Standards and ADRs to distinguish what was required for the coupling pins to gain certification of compliance from a two million maximum load cycle test sequence. The latest tests were carried out with the supervision of Bob Wright of Smedley's Engineers, using Monash University's test facilities in the Institute of Railway Technology in Victoria. "Our certification of nominated products advises of compliance to the

required ADRs and Standards," Graeme says. "TCK's entry into the domestic and international heavy vehicle spare parts market has created a conundrum for some, as it is a rare occurrence for an aftermarket part to be introduced into the market that is certified for use in an OE application." According to Graeme, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) has stated that because the TCK coupling pin has been tested and identified as comparable to the OE part, use of this component during maintenance or repair is acceptable.

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