



Loyal driver of the Kenworth T610 SAR, Les Jeffery, has been an integral part of the RSSSG operation for more than 50 years.

The best connections

ROY SHEPHERD SAND, SOIL & GRAVEL (RSSSG) RUNS A SMALL FLEET OF TRUCK AND DOG TIPPERS FROM ITS BASE ON THE FAR SOUTH COAST OF NEW SOUTH WALES. ITS LATEST ACQUISITION IS A KENWORTH T610 AND SLOANEBUILT THREE-AXLE DOG TRAILER, HITCHED TOGETHER BY A RINGFEDER COUPLING COMPLETE WITH THE LATEST AIR-RELEASE PIN.

How do you recognise a driver's continuous half-century of sterling service with the same company?

Well, if you're Roy Shepherd Sand, Soil & Gravel you buy a shiny new truck and dog combination with all the bells and whistles including an air-release Ringfeder coupling for him to drive.

RSSSG was founded in the early 1960s by Roy Shepherd at Moruya, a seaside town some 300km south of Sydney. Having left school at age 13 to join his father in a

logging operation, Roy soon amassed plenty of experience with trucks.

Initially acquiring one truck which he drove himself, in 1968 Roy employed a strapping young driver by the name of Les Jeffery to drive a new 1968 model Perkins-powered International ACCO rigid tipper.

Extraordinarily, Les has remained with the company ever since, with his loyalty and exemplary driving record recently rewarded by the fact that he is now the proud operator of a new Kenworth T610 SAR rigid

tipper, punched by a 600hp Cummins X15 feeding into an Eaton 18-speed manual transmission. Hitched to this via an air-release Ringfeder coupling is a Sloanebuilt three-axle dog trailer featuring BPW axles, suspension and an Edbro Hoist.

"We decided we wanted to provide Les with the best truck we could in recognition of his outstanding service to the company," says RSSSG Operations Manager and son of Roy, Norm Shepherd. "So we spec'd this one up nice, picked

the best options, and the air-operated Ringfeder was one of those options.

"I reckon the success of our business can be heavily attributed to having a good employee like Les right from the start. He's been driving for us for 50-plus years and never had an infringement for speeding or overloading."

Norm goes on to explain that the terrain around Moruya is fairly mountainous, with the trucks regularly travelling up the Brown and Clyde Mountains delivering to Cooma and Queanbeyan respectively.

"Our terrain here is pretty much all hilly and winding roads, which the new 600hp

Fast Fact

The air-release Ringfeder coupling uses the readily available air pressure from the trailer supply connection to mitigate the manual effort from the process of unhitching the trailer.

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Kenworth takes in its stride," he says.

These days the company's work revolves predominantly around supplying sand for concrete production and sand supplies to the local council, as well as soil and other materials to landscape supply yards and private customers.

Some of these yards are quite tight, requiring the trailer to be unhitched before entering. It's at these times that Les really appreciates the convenience of the air-release Ringfeder. "The air-operated Ringfeder works really well," Les affirms. "With the manual release version if you travel on unsealed roads and have the drawbar at different heights to the coupling this makes it hard to retract the pin. In the past I've had to get another person to put weight on the handle while I gently rocked the truck back and forth to allow the pin to retract.

"With this new air-operated unit I haven't had an issue. It's simply a matter of plugging the Ringfeder air line into the trailer brake release connection on the truck. Then when you get back in the cab and release the maxis the air pressure acts

on the pin and it usually pops straight out. Occasionally you might have to move the truck back and forward a bit on the clutch but that's about all."

Les says he really appreciates the simplicity of the air-operated Ringfeder unit, particularly that it just never gets jammed and releases quickly every time.

"I like the air-operated Ringfeder because of its simplicity and the fact that it's virtually maintenance-free; I can't really foresee anything going wrong with it in the long term."

Norm agrees, voicing his opinion that it's the ideal solution for the company's operations where regular unhitching is required.

Norm also mentions the excellent product support he's received from BPW Transpec and, in particular, VBG Ringfeder Product Manager, Wayne Koppman.

"Wayne's been great," he remarks.

"Moruya is a bit remote from Sydney but Wayne has visited us twice since we bought the truck just to see how we are going with the new product.

"We specify BPW running gear on all our trailers and we've always found their after-sales service very good; this is just another example of that."

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The air-release Ringfeder coupling takes the hard work out of unhitching the trailer.