

# MACK TIME



## *It's all a question of Super-Liners, Granites and Tridents for the Load Ranger fleet*

**B**orn of hard-working Romanian migrants, Load Ranger owner Danny Josef's formative years were spent in and around all manner of earthmoving equipment. The story goes that he was more than capable of driving a bobcat at the tender age of five, part of an upbringing that most certainly laid the path to Danny's later professional life.

"My grandfather started a house demolition and excavation business and in time that resulted in my father and eventually myself working with him. Like many migrants of that era my grandfather was a dedicated hard-working man, at one stage operating a truck in which he did furniture removals during the day and at night would use the truck to deliver 'KitKats'," recalled Danny.

For some time, Danny worked alongside his father in the demolition operation, but something didn't sit quite right with him in this type of business.

"I liked the demolition business but I didn't like the way, as a consequence of the working environment, the equipment got knocked around. I have a real passion for equipment and like it looking good. Some say I have OCD, but if I see something broken, I like to get it fixed," said Danny.

In 1998, Danny saw an opportunity to break away from the demolition area a bit and start a civil construction business. The Civil Management Group was formed and run by Danny and his father until 2005. In that seven years the business flourished working on housing estates and roads in the Sydney region, then expanding into the Hunter Valley area to include a couple of quarries and concrete plants.

"The company's expansion into the Hunter Valley allowed us to be completely vertically integrated, supplying our quarried raw materials to our own concrete plants as well as supplying concrete to third party operations for use on road and housing sub-divisions," said Danny.

The subsequent individual sale of both the Civil Management Group and Construction Materials Group to independent buyers resulted in Danny being unemployed for a while. His next challenge was to relocate to Indonesia where he ran his own civil consulting business for about six years, prior to selling that business and heading back to Australia.

On his return to Australia, Danny was employed to start and manage a bulk haulage company on behalf of its owner. This business was very successful however Danny eventually decided he would get more satisfaction out of



running this type of business for himself. That was 2018 and saw the inception of the Load Ranger enterprise.

The Load Ranger business operates out of Kemps Creek in Sydney's west, a location which not so long ago consisted of chicken and vegie farms and small rural plots. This area has now become a pivotal location to service Sydney's booming infrastructure projects.

"Our core work is basically all infrastructure projects servicing roads and tunnels. Sydney is expanding and I don't think the tunnelling will stop for another 15 years. We are currently relocating a lot of material from the road tunnels to the Badgerys Creek airport site," said Danny.

Starting with a single 2009 Mack Trident, Load Ranger has seen rapid growth over the last two years to now boast a fleet of 22 truck and four-axle dog combinations and 25 employees operating in and around the Sydney basin, with a further six-eight trucks poised to join the fleet this year.

Included in the latest fleet acquisitions are two new 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary Mack Superliners (one of which had been delivered for *PowerTorque's* visit), and two 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary Mack Trident models still pending delivery. The remainder of the fleet are exclusively Mack Tridents, backed up by two Mack Granite 10-wheelers.

To celebrate 100 years of Mack Trucks in Australia, Mack has released 100 commemorative models of Superliner and Trident trucks. Each one is individually numbered with a year between 1919 and 2019 and the truck's build number. The centenary-edition models feature 100-year insignia logos and upgraded features such as unique seat trims, door logos, bonnet badging and laser-cut alloy bumpers, heralding the centenary.

The first of Load Rangers' Superliner Centenary Anniversary models features an MP10 engine rated at 700 hp and is build number 88 while Danny chose the year of 1948, which acknowledges the year of his mother's birth.

Load Ranger operates in accordance with Mass, Maintenance and Fatigue legislation in what is nearly standard practice in the bulk-materials haulage sector. Prime contractors on major worksites are virtually demanding PBS vehicles to cut congestion, not only on surrounding roads but to reduce truck movements on worksites.

"I have always loved Mack trucks, ever since I was a kid. Our entire fleet is Mack based. The Macks are comfortable and fuel efficient and the Mack engine and mDrive AMT are perfect for what we do," said Danny.

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“We are also seeing a trend among new drivers who are only qualified to operate automatics, so with that in mind to have a greater choice of driver candidates we need to have the equipment that suit that applicant pool.

“Additionally, the mDrive transmissions reduce the incidence of shock loading and clutch slippage, reducing maintenance costs. They are easy to drive and also reduce driver fatigue.”

It's unusual to see a fleet which is entirely dedicated to one truck brand. Often there will be a trend toward one make with a few alternative makes trialled throughout the years, hanging about in the background.

Danny's explanation of this is simple: “The reason we buy Macks is the after-sales service. We have never missed a day's work. That's not to say we don't suffer any mechanical issues because, just like any make, we do. It's just the fact that VCV Sydney West - the Mack dealership at Huntingwood - is open 24 hours a day.

“If we encounter an issue the truck can be dropped off, repaired that night and picked up again at 3am, ready for work. It's this kind of service availability and back-up that makes all the difference. It's paramount to us.

“Mack Trucks also takes the time to understand our business, working closely with us to develop a short-wheelbase, wide-axle truck to make the most of the 19 metre PBS regulations and maximise our payloads.



Danny Josef - founder and managing director of Load Ranger



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“This involved some re-engineering including running an underslung exhaust to get the trucks bin as close as possible to the cab. This exhaust configuration also reduces the tare weight by 300kg,” explained Danny.

To boost the company’s bottom line and reduce operating costs, Danny has had the Load Ranger drivers trained and assessed by driver trainers from Mack.

At no cost, the driver trainers go out with the drivers to help educate them on how to get the maximum efficiency from the trucks, including better use of the two-stage throttle system, operating in the optimal rev range and to anticipate traffic flows more efficiently to reduce fuel

consumption. A Dynafleet system monitors performance and scores are recorded for later evaluation.

Danny says that by taking part in the driver-training programme he saw fuel efficiency increase from 1.2-1.3 km/litre to 1.8 km/litre, which saved around \$1500 in the first week.

Commonality in equipment doesn’t stop with the trucks either, with Load Ranger using Sloanebuilt bodies and trailers across the entire fleet. A mix of aluminium and steel Bisalloy bodies are used for the truck bins and trailers, depending on the allotted tasks, with payloads under PBS of up to 40 tonne.



“In previous businesses I have used different brands of bins and trailing equipment and had some issues. The Sloanebuilt product is second to none and the service levels they provide, from the initial builds to back-up service or maintenance, is exceptional. We can send a new truck over to Fred and the team and it’s built ready to work in three weeks. You just don’t get that anywhere else,” said Danny.

Upon receiving the further eight trucks this year, Danny suggests that the company fleet size will cap there, at which point he will look at refreshing some older models in the yard.

“This should see us turn over the trucks in around four years, which should still attract good resale figures and provide a solid proposition to a used buyer with around 400-500,000 kilometres on the clock.”

There is however one exception, with Danny saying that the first 2009 Trident he started out with is not going anywhere. “That one’s a keeper,” said Danny. 

