

LASTING TRIBUTE

A father's touching tribute to the son who took his own life will provide a poignant reminder at this year's International Truck Trailer and Equipment Show.

FOR ROWAN – TWO WORDS that weave a heartbreaking story of loss but have been turned into a travelling symbol of hope.

Last March, Rowan John Membrey took his own life at the age of 17. Despite a loving family and a promising future as a BMX rider, he became depressed while using the drug crystal methamphetamine (also known as ice) and it proved too much for him to bear. However, rather than conceal his son's suicide due to depression, his father Craig – of Membrey's Transport and Crane Hire in Melbourne's outer suburb of Dandenong – has immortalised Rowan's memory on a truck which is being used to promote the work of mental health organisations such as beyondblue.

"When you lose someone, all you can think about are the good times," says Craig. "This is all about my son – to ensure his memory lives on. Beyondblue has no financial backing so everything that we can do will help this worthy organisation. We need to get the message out and the Kenworth is our tool to do so."



The truck – a Kenworth T904 with a Drake 3x5 extendable trailer – has an impressive sparkling grille and classic white and dark green paintwork. Rowan's name and the beyondblue insignia feature prominently on the sides.

The leather cabin interior, with gold-plated dashboard with wooden trim and gearstick, shows a lot of time and love has been poured into this impressive piece of machinery, and a personalised plate – **4 ROWAN** – leaves no doubt of its emotional significance.

Its crowning feature is an airbrushed mural on the rear of the cab of images of Rowan at various stages of life, from a smiling school photo to dynamic images of him doing what he loved doing most – BMX riding. Artist Craig Rogers spent around two months airbrushing the images of Rowan using photos supplied by family and friends. It's hard to believe the grinning young man depicted in the mural could succumb to the most desperate of outcomes.

But this mobile shrine is being used to promote awareness of depression – the most common mental health issue and a condition that 20 per cent of all Australians will experience at some point of their lives – and Craig is involved in continual fundraising for support programs. The truck was unveiled at the Castlemaine Truck Show in November last year and subsequently awarded 'Pig of the Day' on the show's opening day. It has since been on the road across the state and we're lucky enough to feature it at this year's ITTES in Melbourne. As well as raising money for beyondblue, Rowan's name has been linked to fundraising projects such as 'Ride for Rowan', a BMX ride organised by his friends in April last year for suicide support helpline Lifeline. The event involved 80 participants and more than 150 spectators. 'Bubblegum Ice Cream day', a nod to Rowan's favourite flavour of ice cream, was held in five Cold Rock outlets across Melbourne and also contributed to Lifeline. It was organised by Rowan's sister Kim, and took place on 26 November, the day that Rowan would have celebrated his 18th birthday.



In memory of Rowan John Membrey CIMC Vehicle Australia have donated to beyondblue

CIMC Vehicle Australia's General Manager Hector Ojesa recently met with Craig at the Membrey yard and it was after hearing Craig speak so passionately and strongly about his venture to create awareness that Hector decided to get on board and help support Craig.

"Although I did not know Rowan, I am sure his story has touched many hearts and I personally felt the least I could do was to support this extraordinary cause," says Hector. "I am fortunate to have a supportive team at CIMC and they are 100% behind me and my decision."

Beyondblue is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related disorders in Australia. Beyondblue works in partnership with health services, school, workplaces, universities, media and community organisations, as well as people living with depression, to bring together their expertise around depression.

If you would like further information about depression, please call beyondblue on 1300 224 636 or visit beyondblue.org.au.



MEMBREY'S TRANSPORT
& CRANE HIRE **PH (03) 9554 4000**